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## Gardner-Webb Review, Volume 1, 1997

Kevin Binfield

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# GARDNER-WEBB REVIEW

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# GARDNER-WEBB REVIEW

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# PERFORMATIVE DEVICES IN THE POETRY OF HELEN LEIGH

JEANNA FORD

As one studies the British literature of the late eighteenth century, it becomes obvious that the period's canon is gendered male. This is not to say that there are no women in the anthologies that we read today; there are a few whose works have been included in an expanded canon, and some recent collections concentrate on women authors of the period.<sup>1</sup> But the expansion of the canon has not adequately addressed two problems: First, why was it such a problem for women of the past (and the not too distant past) to gain an audience for writings that, as it has become evident today, are just as interesting and as intelligently written as those works created by the mind of a man? Second, what different strategies did women authors use, with different degrees of success) to find audiences?

Perhaps the most frequently (and earliest) anthologized Romantic-period woman writer is Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. According to Wollstonecraft, women must gain respect in order to rise in the ranks of society. To do this they must stop putting elegance ahead of virtue, and obtain "character as a human being," as opposed to character of one sex or another.<sup>2</sup> Wollstonecraft does focus on upper-class women, holding as her main concern the advancement of women through an education that teaches them independence of thought and how, through the use of reason, to attain virtue. Women were taught that being beautiful was everything and that "every thing else

<sup>1</sup> *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th Ed., Vol. 2 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), includes among Romantic period authors Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Shelley, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Charlotte Smith and Felicia Hemans – all women of the upper classes. More specialized collections (featuring work by many more women authors) include Jennifer Breen's *Women Romantic Poets, 1785 - 1832: An Anthology* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1992), Roger Lonsdale's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Andrew Ashfield's *Romantic Women Poets, 1770-1838: An Anthology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). For recent critical volumes treating women authors, see, Paula Feldman and Theresa Kelley, eds., *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995) and Stephen Behrendt and Harriet Kramer Linkin, eds., *Approaches to Teaching Women Poets of the British Romantic Period* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in M.H. Abrams, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th Ed., Vol. 2., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), pp. 101-126, (103); hereafter cited in the text as Wollstonecraft.



is needless" (Wollstonecraft 105). Wollstonecraft argues that without knowledge and virtue there can be no morality and that educated women would not only make better wives and more rational mothers, but also would be able to provide for themselves when left alone (Wollstonecraft 120, 124). These ideas that are implanted into the minds of women of the upper classes are the obstacles that they must overcome in order to be independent and achieve the goals they want to set for themselves, such as writing books or poetry.

For all that Wollstonecraft says of the connection between education and virtue for upper-class women, her omission of lower-class women makes a reader realize just how many more obstacles a poor woman must face when wanting to be more than a housewife. Rich women were expected to be beautiful and to keep their beauty for as long as possible, while poor women were expected to maintain, usually through their own physical labor, households to their husbands' satisfaction. This includes bearing and raising children, and helping outside and inside. When would these women have found any time for the intellectual pursuits, such as reading and writing, that Wollstonecraft argues would improve the minds of upper-class women? Furthermore, were they able to write, how would they go about finding an audience?

Wollstonecraft had benefitted from her membership in the Joseph Johnson circle – a group of progressive artists and writers, William Godwin and Joseph Priestly among them, who met regularly at Johnson's home. In contrast to Wollstonecraft, whose existing audience among the Johnson circle and readers interested in the work of circle members did not require an extraordinary effort on Wollstonecraft's part simply to be read, the Derbyshire servant-maid Elizabeth Hands, in *The Death of Amnon, a Poem; with an Appendix, Containing Pastorals and Other Poetical Pieces* (Coventry: N. Rollason, 1789), employs a number rhetorical strategies to create an audience for her work. Hands, both a woman and a servant, depends initially for a readership among the people who underwrote the publication of her volume, but manages through her prefaces and a number of performative devices in her poems to create a template for her readers (with some measure of success at the time, judging from reviews in the 1790 *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Monthly Review*).

One other woman author who encounters both class and gender obstacles and who employs rhetorical devices to surmount those obstacles is Helen Leigh, a woman whose poems are fascinating yet ultimately ignored. I suppose it should be considered a great feat that Leigh's poetry has made it into any current British Literature collections at all.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult for the scholar who knows little about

such authors to understand the feeling and depth that Leigh, a curate's housewife, put into her single published volume of verse, *Miscellaneous Poems*, and into her descriptions of all that she saw happening around her. It is obvious from reading her works that she is well-educated, although the manner in which her education was acquired is unknown. Her poetry reveals that she is familiar with conventions of fables and pastoral dialogues, and several allusions indicate wide reading in Greek mythology. Leigh's poems possess wit, charm, humor, morals, and descriptions of what she saw unfolding before her in the world. Despite their qualities, the poems are almost entirely ignored today. The fact of their being ignored suggests a critical approach that focuses attention on the obstacles that she would have encountered and on the strategies by which she might have to create an audience receptive to her work. That approach is performance theory, outlined first by Judith Butler and later by others such as Jill Dolan and Timothy Scheie.

Performance theory concentrates critical attention on the creation, playing out, or manipulation of ideological, gendered, or class positions within local, highly particularized contexts. Dolan remarks that we all have "calling cards," and on these calling cards our "race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and other categories" appear. She also points out that we always tend to be apologizing for either the privilege that one of these categories gives us, or apologizing for simply being in one of these categories.<sup>4</sup> Scheie focuses on the fact that "all gendered identity is performance," suggesting that we, as either males or females, "perform" our gendered roles.<sup>5</sup> Most of the attention in Butler, Dolan, and Scheie has been devoted to gender, instead of the various other categories – class, sexuality, ethnicity – mentioned by Dolan and Scheie. However, in our examination of Leigh's works, the issues of class position as well as gender will be addressed. Elizabeth Hands appears to have been somewhat successful in her publishing venture, but the reception of Helen Leigh's poetry while she was still alive is unknown, but it is unlikely that it received much critical attention.

It is quite certain that Leigh, due to her gender and class, would have felt that there was little chance of her publishing her volume. She did, however, have a large number of subscribers, as did Hands in her book. Leigh had pages of them, to

<sup>3</sup> Only a few of Leigh's poems have been anthologized. See, for example, Lonsdale's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, pp. 420-21, and Breen's *Women Romantic Poets*, pp. 7-9

<sup>4</sup> Dolan, "Geographies of Learning: Theatre Studies, Performance and the 'Performative,'" *Theatre Journal* 45 (1994), 418.

<sup>5</sup> Scheie, "Body Trouble: Corporeal 'Presence' and Performative Identity in Cixous's and Mnouchkine's *L'Indiade* ou *l'Inde de leurs rêves*," *Theatre Journal* 46 (1994), 31.

whom she humbles herself in her "Preface" and even apologizes for daring to write these poems from her lowly station in life.

Actually, Leigh is alluding to the fact that her gender and class are themselves an apology. She is saying that she cannot do more to apologize than her humble existence already does:

Though an Apology is undoubtedly requisite for the Publication of the following Sheets, I must confess that I have, in Reality, no plausible one to make, if declaring myself the Wife of a Country Curate, and Mother of seven Children, will not be deemed sufficient. My most grateful Acknowledgments are due to those Ladies and Gentlemen who have so generously patronized this Work; and shall ever remain Their most obliged Humble Servant, H. LEIGH.

(Leigh, "Preface" unpaginated)<sup>6</sup>

She seems to feel that the mention of her motherhood and that she is the wife of a country curate (a learned man who assists a rector but does not gain for himself the same privileged status as the rector) makes her station in life self-evident. John Locke writes that knowledge is self-evident "where that agreement or disagreement is perceived immediately by it self, without the intervention or help of any other..."<sup>7</sup> Leigh does not require the intervention of other characters (created in her texts) to demonstrate her humble state. This technique is quite a different approach from the one that Hands employs in her volume. Hands actually uses intervention in her "Supposition Poems" by creating characters of the upper-class that disapprove of her work even prior to having read it. In doing this she creates the same effect that Leigh does by foregrounding her humble station (in terms both of class and gender), yet Hands does not rely on the self-evidence of her situation as Leigh does.

The apologies in Leigh's works do not stop with the "Preface"; rather, her apologies for the fact of her writing saturate her individual poems. In a poem almost daring for its time, "The Natural Child," Leigh begins the first stanza with an apology:

Let not the title of my verse offend,  
Nor let the Prude contract her rigid brow;

<sup>6</sup> All references to Leigh's works are to her *Miscellaneous Poems* (Manchester: C. Wheeler, 1783); hereafter cited in the text as *Poems*.

<sup>7</sup> Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 591.

That helpless Innocence demands a friend,  
Virtue herself will cheerfully allow."

(*Poems* 10)

It seems almost as if excuses are made as to why she is writing on such a topic: "Helpless Innocence demands a friend," or, in other words, "I am doing it for the poor babe's sake." Here again, Leigh is writing about something that obviously occurred often in her time period and area, and it was something she felt strongly enough about to address in her work.

"The Natural Child" is a very important work of Leigh, because she addresses a number of issues and ideas very subtly. As she refers to the newborn child as "helpless innocence," she is rejecting the accepted Christian idea of the time of natural depravity, or, the belief that humans are born sinful and only through salvation can they be allowed into heaven. Leigh opposes this idea by describing the infant as innocent. Her performative role in this poem is that of friend. When this mode of performance is contrasted to other roles that are mentioned in the poem, such as prudes and men, it is obvious that she is siding with the child. As readers of this poem, those who are addressed directly should feel the effects and examine their actions and where they stand. This is especially true for the men, for her primary objective seems to be to portray the father of the child as the child's foe. "His crime entails on thee a load of woe, / And sorrow heaps on thy devoted head," Leigh writes, again performing her duty as the child's friend and defending it against the one whose betrayal it will always feel. Leigh also uses a play on words here, since "entail" is a legal word dealing with the inheritance of property. She remakes this problem into one of law, pointing out that this poor child only inherits crime and sorrow, not the property that would rightfully be his, had the child been born within a marriage.

In outlining the performative approach, Butler quotes Simone de Beauvoir's claim that "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman."<sup>8</sup> She goes on to explain that if one gender portrays over and over actions they really do not feel deep inside, then the face that they present is a "structured identity" (Butler, "Performative Acts," 520) and therefore part of the performative. This would be due to the fact that the gender (in Butler's argument) that is acting out these unfelt actions is performing, as if on stage. It is the culture that places such performances on us as a gender.

<sup>8</sup> Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40 (1988), 519; hereafter cited in the text as Butler, "Performative Acts."

With women writers' in the time of Leigh, true feelings were often kept quiet and not expressed in writing and poetry due the pressure society put on them to focus on motherhood and being a dutiful, pretty wife. Leigh herself nods to that social pressure in her "Preface" by declaring herself "the Wife of a Country Curate, and Mother of seven Children." The combined self-definition (wife and mother) reveals Leigh to be one of those who has acted according to the moral strictures placed upon women of the time. Nevertheless, despite her own position squarely within the prevailing moral code, Leigh defeats this pressure and defends the innocent "Natural Child." Indeed, partly because of the performance, Leigh's manipulation of her twin roles as wife-mother and advocate for an illegitimate child makes it difficult for a man or woman to criticize her for writing the poem; to criticize would make them seem as cold-hearted to the child as the men or prudes she is discussing. In terms of performance, Leigh attempts to influence the audience's reception of the poem through rendering the wife-mother-poet as the sympathetic middle ground, opposed both to the sexless (female) prude and irresponsibly sexual father.

This idea encourages a closer look at the female characters in Leigh's poems, in order for us to understand what makes Leigh overcome this part of her structured identity, and to observe whether or not there are elements of the performative in these characters. Women in Leigh's poems typically are portrayed as weak, meek, loyal, and superfluous. In Leigh's poems, these characteristics are used in two distinctly different ways – in order to poke fun at the characteristics themselves and as a part of the characters' personalities. For example, in "The Lady and the Doctor; an Anecdote," Leigh satirizes a woman who would rather wear make-up and die than live and have to be seen in public without any make-up on:

You astonish me, Doctor! but, such is my case,  
That I may as well die, as leave painting alone;  
For, shou'd I appear in my natural face  
Amongst my acquaintances – I shou'd not be known.

(Poems 83)

This is one way of making fun of the superficial and shallow side that Leigh obviously saw in the women of her time. This portrayal of women places Leigh's own performance as a woman writing poetry above other women. Leigh does apologize at times for her gender, as mentioned before, but it is poetry such as this that cleverly points out, subtle as it may be, the superior woman that she is.

Gender is not the only issue treated by Leigh. Leigh must perform in two arenas – gender and class. Referring to the main character as "the Lady" seems to be her first stab at the upper-class, but the poem is written in third person. The speaker of the poem is not the Lady. The speaker reveals the feminine silliness of the "Lady" (making it a class matter) through self-evidence. She lets the Lady speak for herself, thereby letting her show herself to be a fool. In doing this, Leigh defines who she is by demonstrating who she is not. She clearly sees herself as above the simple, appearance-conscious women who think everything in life depends upon the way that they look.

Leigh's role in "The Lady and the Doctor" is entertaining and biting, but her role in "The Natural Child" is more positive. Leigh does not actually enter into the poem with the Lady at all. Rather, it seems that she is recounting a story that she has heard. In "The Natural Child," on the other hand, she creates a speaker who has taken a stand, and is communicating a point that she believes is very necessary and long overdue. She also seems to express the idea in "The Natural Child" that the blame has been laid on the wrong person (the woman) and that wrong needs to be made right.

In a way, her apologies are another clever way of "getting her foot in the door" with certain readers. Women may read her, if they were upper-class and educated enough, and think that her station was beneath theirs. Most would probably read out of their curiosity as to how and what a woman outside of high life could write. Men would read with similar intentions, but her apologies coupled with the brilliantly written poems would almost be condescending, as if she were laughing at them for believing when they began to read her work that she was a woman, and therefore must be untalented.

Another good example of such teasing appears in the poem, "A Specimen of Modern Female Education." In this poem, her teasing criticism is aimed at both the female sex and the upper class. Leigh speaks about a young rich girl, spoiled by her mother from birth with no hope of ever making anything of herself. The poem is witty and clever, but the message is perfectly clear, as in almost all of Leigh's poems. Not even the language used by the upper class is safe from her chastisements. After a particularly bad episode in which Maria, the spoiled brat, "slapp'd her Mistress [the governess] in the face," the mother gave the child "a most trimming lecture" (*Poems* 18-19). Upper-class readers might assume that Leigh, whose language is ordinary and (as they might further assume would be fitted to her social position) plain, would not exactly be adept at imitating the substance and style of the language of her social superiors. Generally, her poems are set in the

straightforward language that one might expect from a curate's wife, until she uses the discourse of the upper classes as a tool to tease or expose those who believe that they are much better than her because of their social class:

"You've misbehav'd; – kiss me, my dear,  
 "Indeed it was not right to hit  
 (Then burst into a laughing fit)  
 "Your Governess upon the face;  
 "You ought to suffer some disgrace  
 "For such behaviour--nay, don't cry,  
 "I'll send you something, by and by,  
 "A fine gold watch; and see, what's here,  
 "Some pretty trinkets--take 'em dear,  
 "And give your Governess a kiss . . . ."

(*Poems* 19)

The child in the poem never gets properly punished for anything throughout the story and is never taught to be, as one might expect, a good child.

There are particular poems in Leigh's literature that use animals as the characters instead of humans. Most of these poems hold some sort of wisdom, moral, or lesson. She labels each one of them as "fables," and is again performing a gender specific task of storytelling. These "stories" are also examples of performance. She is not using herself now as a tool to communicate some point, but rather she is using something other than a human being to do so. However, in these poems, the animals represent some human folly, and are performing some act that requires correction or assistance. For example, in "The Owl; a Fable," the owl is the center of the story, but instead of being a wise old owl, this owl is young and fool-hardy. The crow, a bird not usually associated with wisdom, turns out to be the smarter of the two. The objective of the owl was to marry, and knowing that this is what people did, almost as a rule, in Leigh's day, it is easy to see why such an objective was chosen. As a woman, marrying was just what one had to do. The owl wished to marry an eagle, and tried to prove it could be done by flying to meet her during the day. The owl is nocturnal, and could not do so, but died trying to prove that he could. Leigh's closing stanza summarizes her point:

If to shine in a sphere that's above us we aim,  
 We may chance to encounter with nothing but shame:

Had the Owl, in some cavern, sought out for a wife,  
'Tis a hundred to one he'd been happy for life.

(*Poems 25*)

Not only does Leigh's common idea that one will marry come through in this poem, but also her social acumen: One must marry her or his own. Leigh is most probably referring to social class, another way she performs what is listed on her "calling card." One who tries to marry above her or his station will be humiliated; therefore, one should stick with someone in her or his own rank.

"The Worm and the Butterfly" is another good example of Leigh's poetry that is obviously a fable. This poem ostensibly demonstrates that one should be contented in one's own social class. In this poem, Leigh seems to be making a statement about stations in life, by using the voice of the lowly worm, who left the ground and attempted to climb high upon a plant:

"Why did I forsake my cabbage-leaf to die?--  
"Under its shade, tho' more obscure  
"I liv'd – yet still I liv'd secure;  
"And, if I must confess the truth,  
"The cabbage better pleas'd my tooth.

(*Poems 27*)

She seems to be addressing the fact that lower stations in life, though "obscure," are also "secure." The Worm rejects the high ideas and hopes it had before, and accepts its humility, just as Leigh humbles herself in the "Preface." It is obvious that Leigh could perform "upper-class" nearly as well as those who were members of the upper-class and reading her poems, all the while considering her lower-class. In this poem, she has the worm speak his lesson, that he should prefer his life the way it is, although Leigh knows that some long for the privilege of being in a higher station. The end of the fable sums up the lesson without ignoring the longing:

"Henceforth, contented in my state,  
"Patient, the happy change I'll wait,  
"Rejoic'd to be a Worm, since I  
"May one day be a Butterfly."

(*Poems 29*)



By using lessons in her poems such as "do not try to marry above your social class" and "be content with being in a lower class," Leigh most probably appealed to the upper-class readers, whose prejudice left them feeling that they were above the poorer people, and that those poor should just stay in their own place. By teaching these morals to others, the leisure-class audience would agree with her work and recommend her to others.

In all of her poems, Leigh tends to emphasize the fact that she is a woman. She does this first by her apology (mentioned earlier), but she also does this oppositionally, by the way men are regarded (and the way in which she regards them) in her poetry. First of all, men are not portrayed in a very favorable light in the majority of her poems. But men of the privileged classes take some especially hard blows. For example, in "The Pursuit of Pleasure," both Henry and William yearn after happiness, but Henry goes about seeking it in the wrong way, drinking and spending the large amounts of money that he had until it was gone; he dies, then, in poverty and anguish. William has little money, but, having been raised according to the ways of virtue and truth, he finds happiness. Among men, those with little money are good in heart and spirit, and fare better than those with money. The weakness of those men who have wealth and power and a disposition to misuse both frequently subject them to attack by Leigh.

At times, Leigh's strategies resemble those of Amelia Lanyer, who defends Eve in her poem, "Eve's Apology in Defense of Women." Lanyer defends women by arguing such points as the fact that a man, Pontius Pilate, was responsible for the death of God's son, and that it is unreasonable to believe that Eve, and all women descending from her, could be more sinful than that. She also insinuates that since men are so strong, and women are so weak, then man should have refused the forbidden fruit; therefore, women are guilty, but men are more so. Like Wollstonecraft later, Leigh challenges the Enlightenment determinist notion that women "have weaker, more delicate sensory and mental powers than men and therefore are intellectually (and probably morally) weaker."<sup>9</sup> This is this same idea that we find proffered in "The Natural Child."

Other males in Leigh's volume fare badly. In "Bellario and Miranda: Suicide Providentially Prevented," it is Bellario, the husband, who gives all of the couple's money away thoughtlessly and puts them in financial jeopardy, yet is too afraid to tell his wife, so he sets up a plan to kill himself. He is called away momentarily, and Miranda walks in on his death scene. After this, Bellario's life is saved by Miranda:

<sup>9</sup> Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 43.

When, rash Bellario, on self-murder bent,  
Return'd to execute his intent,  
And found her thus – he blushed with shame –  
While she another Niobe became,  
And sunk, dissolv'd in tears – but here the muse  
Hopes she the Grecian painter's veil may use;  
To hide the scene she has not skill to paint,  
And wanting words to tell the soft complaint  
Miranda utter'd – but let this suffice,  
Her woe-fraught reas'ning op'd Bellario's eyes.

(*Poems* 54)

It is the woman who, through "reas'ning," dissuades Bellario from his self-destruction, but in this passage there is another tactic used by Leigh to lower or humble herself, and that is in the line, "But here the muse / Hopes she the Grecian painter's veil may use; / To hide the scene she has not the skill to paint." She is labeling herself unskilled. This is a direct contradiction to what the reader is reading, for what is written on all of these pages is very skilled. It would seem that what she hopes to accomplish by this tactic is to gain the respect of her audience, especially her male audience. Leigh frequently uses such a soft, subtle and sensible approach to her writings. She humbles herself often; this is all part of her performance. If she plays the role of the innocent, unworthy female, and then she writes spectacularly, she gains respect and admiration. Those of upper-class or male status will not be able to believe that such a lowly woman would be able to write such poetry, and, due to the surprising realization, more people will read her poetry.

One last thing that Leigh does that is interesting is to locate herself as hailing particularly from Middlewich, a village southwest of Manchester. When one does this in writing, it would be assumed by the readers that this would mean that some of the writings would be addressed to people in that area, or about the people of that area. Indeed, Leigh starts her book out with very localized and particular references, for example, identifying her volume in the title page as "Miscellaneous Poems, by Helen Leigh, of Middlewich." However, she moves from that specific place to very generalized tales, stories with morals and characters and themes that could apply to anybody reading it in any location. Why would she do this? I believe that Leigh is giving herself a location, or, as Jill Dolan says, "a geography"; she is personalizing her work. Telling of her family and apologizing for herself also give her a location in the scheme of things, and personalizes her work. The same is

accomplished by identifying her home. Afterwards, however, she expands this, and writes on topics anyone can read and understand. She opens herself up to her readers, letting them see what she believes and feels.

Through an array of performative devices – identifying her own gender, class, and geography, employing humility tropes, positioning herself and her sympathetic speakers in opposition to objectionable men and women characters, and rendering human conflicts in poetic fables--Helen Leigh prepares her audiences to receive her volume as an insightful work by a person who might not otherwise find a readership. Her performance in her poetry is quite remarkable. It is hard for me to write that sentence without adding, "for a woman of her station in life." It appears as though she has accomplished the performative tasks that she set out for herself.

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# RESURGENT FUNDAMENTALISM: THE EVOLUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

MICHAEL OWENS

It may be suggested by some that the conservative movement currently seen in political, social, and religious circles is a relatively new movement with a defined objective. This paper will demonstrate that this same movement is the evolutionary product of the fundamentalist movement which began during the latter years of the nineteenth century, and this can be observed most clearly through an analysis of the Southern Baptist Convention. It will be further demonstrated that fundamentalism, in its origin, is a reactionary movement; it experiences growth and success as it identifies an enemy and forms a plan of action, seeking to effect change.

Some might suggest that fundamentalism ceased to exist as a movement by the end of the 1920s. However, this paper will show that the movement declined until it had another adversary to “react to.” Such is the case of modern fundamentalism. While it has many similarities and obvious connections to its predecessor, modern fundamentalism is not the same movement known to Americans in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Modern fundamentalism is, however, the evolutionary product of this movement; complete with its own enemies, leaders, and agenda.

## Historical Context of Fundamentalism

The historical movement known later as “fundamentalism” did not have its origins with a single creator dissatisfied with the status quo; rather it developed within the context of tremendous social and religious upheaval. At the close of the Civil War, many Americans – especially, if not specifically, those in the North – viewed the Union victory as divine approval for the “progress” that the nation was making. The war brought to an end the tremendous evil of slavery in the United States. Popular songs of the period such as “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” equated the war effort with Christian progress. It is clear that, by this time, American Christianity was identified with the freedoms of democracy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), p.9; hereafter cited in the text as Marsden, *Understanding*.

In the period that followed the Civil War, it seems that no one seriously doubted that the United States was a “Christian” nation. George Marsden writes,

American civilization, while never “Christian” in a strict sense, was held together in part by a shared set of values that had a large Protestant component. Children were taught from an early age to play by the rules, and virtually everyone knew of the Ten Commandments, the value of work, and the idea that virtue should be rewarded . . . . The most popular grade school textbooks of the era were McGuffey’s Eclectic Readers. . . . From them generations of America’s public school children learned lessons that included “Respect for the Sabbath Rewarded,” “The Goodness of God,” “Religion the Only Basis of Society,” “The Righteous Never Forsaken,” “The Hour of Prayer,” “Work,” “No Excellence Without Labor,” “The Character of a Happy Life,” “Sowing and Reaping,” “My Mother’s Bible,” and “The Bible the Best of Classics.”

(Marsden, *Understanding* 2-3)

The years following the Civil War witnessed the increased development and growth of cities. Protestantism had grown up in an era of villages and towns, and so its institutions were adjusted to such settings (Marsden, *Understanding* 13). This form of Christianity, however, would begin to experience a time of tremendous change as rural towns transformed themselves into vibrant cities resulting from the influx of people moving into urban areas. In 1870, 9,900,000 Americans (26 percent of the nation’s population) lived in towns and cities with at least 2,500 people. By 1930, this number had risen to 69,000,000, and the national proportion to 56 percent.<sup>2</sup>

As cities all across the country began to grow, the emerging milieu provided more intense commercial pressure, greater access to higher education, and more opportunities for contact with representatives of diverse religious and ethnic groups (Noll 364). People began to be exposed to those with new and different ideas. This increase in social and religious diversity posed challenges to the “traditional” American Protestantism. One of the major challenges came from the rise of American universities. Colleges and universities, both public and private, began to develop a new form of higher education, often imitative of the German

<sup>2</sup> Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), p. 364; cited as Noll.

seminar system. At this time, there was a tremendous appeal inherent in the German model of academic life. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the German emphasis on specialized, advanced scholarship became increasingly attractive (Noll 364-65). It was on such a model that Andrew Dickinson White, the founding president of Cornell University, promised that his institution would “afford an asylum for Science—where truth shall be sought for truth’s sake, where it shall not be the main purpose of the Faculty to stretch or cut sciences to fit ‘Revealed Religion’” (Noll 366).

## Science and Religion

In the decades following the Civil War, tremendous upheaval was taking place on all fronts – socially, economically, mentally, and spiritually. With the rapid development and continued growth of cities and universities, a traditional Protestantism was faced with a dilemma as to what position should be taken either for or against the fruits of modernity. The target ultimately became science. Many contemporary scholars began to espouse views that would lead to the study of science and the Bible in separate spheres. Until this time, science and the Bible were understood to be complementary. Scientific knowledge was to underscore biblical accounts. 1859 witnessed the first in a series of events that would lead to a confrontation between science and the Bible. The debate would be over the historicity of a cosmic creation as described in Genesis as opposed to the theory of evolution espoused by Charles Darwin in his *Origin of Species*, written in 1859.

When applied generally, the evolutionary perspective seemed even more devastating to traditional Christian beliefs (Noll 367). From the evolutionary perspective, humankind was advancing from simpler to more complex forms – from a primitive to a more sophisticated existence. According to historian Bruce Kuklick, this evolutionary perspective of humankind was founded in a

loyalty to science that would enable human beings to achieve existential integration most adequately. Mankind would make its greatest advance when the scientific method was applied to questions of ethics. Control would grow ever more rich and complex. The quality of human experience would change for the better and, consequently, human selves also.

(Noll 367)



## Religious Climate

Traditional Protestantism at this juncture might be characterized by two notions: "God's truth was a single unified order and... all persons of common sense were capable of knowing that truth."<sup>3</sup> Such "truths" were the product of Scottish Common Sense Realism, which in 1870 was considered to be, without question, the American philosophy (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 14).

Common Sense Realism maintained that the human mind was constructed in such a way that we are capable of knowing the real world directly. Marsden writes: "Some philosophers, particularly those following John Locke, had made our knowledge seem more complicated by interposing 'ideas' between us and the real world" (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 14). This suggests that ideas are the objects of our thought, and it is through these ideas that we understand or apprehend external things (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 15). Marsden continues:

David Hume raised the question of how we can know that these ideas correspond to what is actually there. The answer of Thomas Reid, the principal formulator of the Scottish Common Sense philosophy was . . . that only philosophers would take this skeptical doctrine seriously with its absurd implications. Everyone in his senses believes such truths as the existence of the real world, cause and effect, and the continuity of the self. The ability to know such things was as natural as the ability to breathe air.

(Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 15)

For Hume, there was no substance.<sup>4</sup> He felt all that we apprehend is a succession, a stream of ideas, one following the other.<sup>5</sup> While Hume may not be considered an atheist, he did question the existence of God, and in the same manner he tested self and substance by means of empiricism.<sup>6</sup>

While traditional Protestantism might have embraced such a mindset, there were many whose perspective had been altered by the influence of the evolutionary view of humankind and society. This seems especially true among advanced

<sup>3</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), p. 15; cited as Marsden, *Fundamentalism*.

<sup>4</sup> For a more complete discussion of this topic, consult Hume's *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

<sup>5</sup> S.E. Frost, Jr., *Basic Teaching of the Great Philosophers* (New York: Anchor Books, 1942), p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), p. 287.

biblical scholarship of the period. By this time, German higher criticism had been in developing stages for more than a generation and had found acceptance in many American colleges and universities. Noll suggests that

[t]hese new academic conclusions were, however, probably not the critical factor in promoting new approaches to Scripture. It was rather that the more general religious climate had changed in such a way as to provide an eager reception for such notions. As John Dillenberger and Claude Welch once put it, "the new conception of the Bible which came to characterize Protestant liberalism [did not originate] simply as a reaction to the discovery of historical criticism. In fact, the situation was more nearly the reverse. It was new conceptions of religious authority and the meaning of revelation which made possible the development of biblical criticism."

(Noll 368-69)

It was out of this religious climate, with its traditional history yet seeming tolerance of new views, that emergence of what has been termed the "Social Gospel" was allowed. The Social Gospel's message sought to promote change in the political, social, economic, and religious arenas. At the close of the Civil War, there seemed to be a social awareness or concern that previously had not been present. People began to concern themselves with social issues such as poverty, workers' rights, the liquor traffic, slum housing, and racial bitterness.<sup>7</sup> The vanguard of the movement went far beyond the earlier Christian emphasis on almsgiving to search for the causes of human suffering and a campaign to reconstruct social and economic relations upon a Christian pattern (White and Hopkins 6).

One of the most popular novels during the period was Charles M. Sheldon's *In His Steps*. In this book, Sheldon crafts a story around a pastor, Rev. Henry Maxwell, who felt that he was being led by God to challenge his congregation to live a life characterized by asking before every action one question: "What would Jesus do?" At one point, Rev. Maxwell compiles a list of a number of things that "Jesus would probably do in this parish":

<sup>7</sup> Ronald C. White, Jr., and C. Howard Hopkins, *The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), p. 6; cited as White and Hopkins.

(1) Live in a simple, plain manner, without needless luxury on the one hand or undue asceticism on the other. (2) Preach fearlessly to the hypocrites in the church no matter what their social importance or wealth. (3) Show in some practical form His sympathy and love for the common people as well as for the well-to-do, educated, refined people who make up the majority of the parish. (4) Identify Himself with the great causes of humanity in some personal way that would call for self-denial and suffering. (5) Preach against the saloon in Raymond. (6) Become known as a friend and companion of the sinful people in the Rectangle. (7) Give up the summer trip to Europe this year.<sup>8</sup>

The Social Gospel found a tremendous amount of support throughout the country, but it most strongly appealed to those who had little voice in society. Emerging at a time when cities were beginning to experience astronomical growth, when factories were signaling the coming of an industrial age, and when people were beginning to look at the Bible more skeptically, the Social Gospel was very appealing. This movement sought to bring social activity to the forefront of the “Christian agenda.” Those who supported the movement felt that Christianity had focused too much attention on the future with notions of “heaven” and “eternal life,” and in doing so neglected the life that is presently lived.

## Conflicting Voices: The Voice of Tradition

It has been suggested that the most famed evangelist of the day was Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899). After moving to Chicago shortly before the Civil War, Moody became an active member of the Young Men’s Christian Association, one of the most influential voluntary agencies founded as a result of antebellum revivals (Noll 288). In 1873, Moody invited a friend and song-leader, Ira Sankey (1840-1908), to join him on a preaching tour of Great Britain. The meetings were so successful that they remained for two years.

When Moody and Sankey returned to the United States, they were everywhere in demand (Noll 288). Unlike his successor, Billy Sunday, Moody spoke calmly and plainly, dressing like a conventional businessman. His simple message was founded on “Three R’s”: Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Evangelization was the focus of his ministry. Moody said, “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a

<sup>8</sup> Sheldon, *In His Steps* (Pittsburgh: Whitaker House, 1897), pp. 66-67.

lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can'" (Marsden, *Understanding* 21). While the Social Gospel appealed to many during this period, there were those who, especially after the Civil War, felt that the answer to the nation's and the world's problems could not be found in social solutions. Evidence of this mindset can be seen in the popularity of pre-millennialism, which maintained that society would not get any better until Jesus' return, when he would establish his earthly kingdom. Moody and his associates preached and believed in the doctrine of pre-millennialism. This stance did not lead them, however, to a position of complacency and apathy towards society. Moody cared a great deal for people but felt that social advancement and progress would not heal their ills. He was probably motivated to spread the Gospel with more fervency because of his millennial view. Moody felt a tremendous sense of urgency to spread his message in an attempt to "save all you can" (Marsden, *Understanding* 22).

In 1886, Moody established a Bible institute (later to be known as the Moody Bible Institute) that trained laymen in evangelism. Near his Massachusetts home, Moody began the Northfield Conferences, out of which grew one of the largest missionary organizations of that era, the Student Volunteer Movement (Marsden, *Understanding* 22).

## The Voice of Change

One of the most famous preachers of this period was Henry Ward Beecher (1818-1887). His father, Lyman, was a Congregationalist similar in fame to Charles Finney. From 1847 until his death in 1887, Beecher pastored the Plymouth (Congregationalist) Church in Brooklyn, New York, where he was considered a "popularizer of 'new theology'" (Marsden, *Understanding* 18). While there, Beecher

reassured his audiences that Christianity progressed with the modern age. One need not worry about the literal accuracy of biblical doctrines. The oaks of civilization, he said, had evolved since biblical times. Should we then "go back and talk about acorns?" The religion of the modern age, moreover, was a matter of the here rather than a question of strictly orthodox doctrine.

(Marsden, *Understanding* 18)

This liberal thought incited many of those who would become leaders and organizers within the fundamentalist movement.

One of Beecher's counterparts who was nearly as influential was Phillips Brooks (1835-1893). He viewed the nature of humankind as essentially good

rather than inherently sinful. Like most popular preachers of his day, he placed great faith in America as a nation. Brooks, a Boston Episcopalian, had a nationwide reputation as a preacher, author, and hymn-writer ("O Little Town of Bethlehem").

## Millennial Views

Of the issues that divided those in the field of religion, there were none any more divisive than millennial doctrines. At the beginning of the twentieth century, post-millennialism was widely accepted within popular culture. It maintained that Christ's return will follow a vast, world-wide revival, and in essence, Christian humanity would usher in the return of Christ. Post-millennialists maintained that "a thousand years or a protracted period of righteousness, must intervene between the present time and the advent of Christ."

In contrast, pre-millennialists suggested that the millennial reign of Christ would follow the rapture of the church and the seven-year tribulation period. Dispensationalism has its roots in pre-millennial theology. Dispensationalism promoted the division of the teachings of the Bible into separate "dispensations" or ages. In each of these ages, God is said to act from common principles but with varying mandates (Noll 376). Within this school of thought, a specialized interpretation of apocalyptic literature plays a very prominent role. Dispensationalists maintain that the entire scope of history can be divided into varying dispensations, the last of which is the "church age." This is to be the last dispensation before the return of Christ. The most influential formulation of dispensational teaching appeared in 1909, when the Oxford University Press published a Bible annotated by C.I. Scofield (Noll 378).

Those who maintained a post-millennial stance were, most often, proponents of the Social Gospel. In the early years of the twentieth-century, both post-millennialism and the Social Gospel experienced tremendous support. The two stances were supportive of one another in the sense that post-millennialism maintained that mankind would usher in the return of Christ. The only way that the world will be able to do this is through social activity and development--in essence, the Social Gospel.

Perhaps the greatest articulator and supporter of the Social Gospel was Walter Rauschenbusch. In reference to the Christian faith, he said, "We have a social

<sup>9</sup> Charles R. Eerdman, "The Coming of Christ," *The Fundamentals* (Los Angeles: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917), 4: 310.

gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it up.”<sup>10</sup> He went further to say:

The social gospel is, in fact, the oldest gospel of all. It is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” Its substance is the Hebrew faith which Jesus himself held. If the prophets ever talked about the “plan of redemption,” they meant the social redemption of the nation

(Rauschenbusch 24)

While Rauschenbusch attempted to portray the Social Gospel as an addition to modern religion rather than a subtraction, his attempt clearly was an attack on pre-millennial evangelicals, who were not as concerned with social redemption as they were with the redemption of the individual.

Few works can show the tremendous support for the Social Gospel than popular hymns of the time period.<sup>11</sup> There were in existence numerous hymns that emphasized the social condition of humankind. Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s hymn on labor and conflict states:

From street and square, from hill and glen,  
Of this vast world beyond my door,  
I hear the tread of marching men,  
The patient armies of the poor.

Not ermine-clad or clothed in state,  
Their title-deeds not yet made plain,  
But waking early, toiling late,  
The heirs of all the earth remain.<sup>12</sup>

Charles Kingsley’s hymn of aspiration and faith looks forward to “that perfect day.” Proponents of the Social Gospel maintained that it was their social efforts that would allow that perfect day to come. Kingsley’s hymn states,

<sup>10</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology of the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), p. 1: cited as Rauschenbusch.

<sup>11</sup> See June Hobbs, *I Sing for I Cannot Be Silent: The Feminization of American Hymnody* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Mabel Hay Barrows Mussey, ed., *Social Hymns of Brotherhood and Aspiration* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1914), p. 59; cited as Mussey.

From Thee all skill and science flow,  
All pity, care and love,  
All calm and courage, faith and hope;  
O pour them from above.

And part them, Lord, to each and all,  
As each and all shall need,  
To rise like incense, each to Thee,  
In noble thought and deed.

And hasten, Lord that perfect day  
When pain and death shall cease,  
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth  
With health and light and peace;

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,  
And ever green the sod,  
And man's rude work deface no more  
The Paradise of God.

(Mussey 8)

## A Changing World

With the dawn of a new century came a tremendous sense of optimism. As the Social Gospel was the predominant mindset, many, if not most, Americans were very positive about the nation and world in which they lived. There existed the notion that the nation was being used by God to bring about a social climate that would be suitable to effect Christ's return.

When World War I began and the United States finally became involved in the conflict, these positive notions began to change. It was during this time that the world began to see the destructive potential of humankind. With inventions such as the machine gun and poisonous gases, people began to become skeptical as to how progressive the nation and the world was. The invention of the airplane afforded soldiers a new weapon on the battlefield, one that would revolutionize the ways in which wars are waged. Because of such inventions and advances in technology, the destructive and killing powers of humankind were increased exponentially. Marsden notes that, until this period in American history,

The United States had stayed off the center stage of world affairs. Prewar America, despite its problems of assimilating so many diverse peoples, had been remarkably optimistic. No challenge was too great to be mastered by American idealism and know-how. . . . American idealism was overwhelmed by dissension. Although rearguard actions were fought to keep America Protestant, the fact of the matter was that the age was over when the United States was in any significant sense a bastion of Christendom

(Marsden, *Understanding* 50-51)

This segment of American history witnessed not only rapid technological advancement, but also tremendous change in the social climate. In 1917, the war against alcohol was temporarily won with the victory of prohibition. This struggle had been waged for a number of years and achieved the unity of both Protestants and Catholics over the issue. After witnessing the most violent war in human history, many proponents of the Social Gospel began to think more critically about the world and the society in which they lived. It appeared to many that humankind had not progressed as far as it once was thought to be. Many were left wondering: If humankind were so good, how could such a war have occurred?

World War I left American society with an awareness of the world around it that had previously often gone unnoticed. This new awareness prompted the emergence of such interdenominational groups as the Interchurch World Movement. The purpose of the group was to unite Christian benevolent, missionary, and spiritual efforts throughout the world (Marsden, *Understanding* 54). This organization, however, was short lived. By the summer of 1920, the Interchurch World Movement was in ruins, while during the same year, President Woodrow Wilson's desires were left unfulfilled when the United States declined to join the League of Nations.

## The Emergence of Fundamentalism

Noll states that discontent among white Protestants with the course of American civilization came to a head early in the twentieth century in a movement known as fundamentalism (Noll 381). The term "fundamentalism" was first used by Curtis Lee Laws, editor of the Baptist paper *The Watchman-Examiner*. He coined the term to describe those who were ready "to do battle royal for the Fundamentals" (Marsden, *Understanding* 57). When making mention of "the



Fundamentals,” Lee was referring to a widely circulated set of books called *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, published between 1910 and 1915. R.A. Torrey writes in the preface:

In 1909 God moved two Christian laymen to set aside a large sum of money for issuing twelve volumes that would set forth the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and which were to be sent free to ministers of the gospel, missionaries, Sunday School superintendents, and others engaged in aggressive Christian work throughout the English speaking world. A committee of men who were known to be sound in the faith was chosen to have the oversight of the publication of these volumes.<sup>13</sup>

These books contained nearly one hundred essays written by leading evangelicals. Together they defended those things seen as “fundamentals” of the faith that newer forms of thought had called into question.

While there were numerous subjects discussed, there are considered to be five fundamentals or points of fundamentalism – the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the miracle-working power of Christ.<sup>14</sup> Each of these doctrines were considered by Torrey to be essential to the Christian faith, and fundamentalists “were supposed to accept as the irreducible quintessence of their faith” (Sandeem xix).

The first fundamental, inerrancy of scripture, also includes a particular understanding of inspiration. Evans and Berent explain:

The doctrine of biblical inerrancy, as it is adopted by most fundamentalists, essentially maintains that the entire Bible was dictated, word for word, directly from God to the biblical writers, and that because it was all dictated by God it must all be true, completely free from error. While those inerrantists may allow for flexibility in their interpretation of certain verses—viewing them sometimes as, for example, allegory, symbolism, or poetry . . . they

<sup>13</sup> Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), xix. This five-point compilation was used as a declaration that was adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in 1910 and reaffirmed in 1916 and 1923. Many would list the following five fundamentals: (1) The inspiration and infallibility of scripture. (2) The deity of Christ. (3) The substitutionary atonement of Christ's death. (4) The bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead. (5) The literal (and described most often in pre-millennial terms) return of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Rod L. Evans and Irwin M. Berent, *Fundamentalism: Hazards and Heartbreaks* (La Salle: Open Court, 1988), p. 25.

will still hold the presumption of the innerancy of the Bible, and try never to sway from that presumption.

Inerrancy stems from an understanding of inspiration. If the biblical texts were indeed “God-breathed,” how then could they contain error? In his essay on “The Inspiration of the Bible,” contained in *The Fundamentals*, James M. Gray, dean of the Moody Bible Institute, asserts that inspiration is not revelation, illumination, human genius, nor is it the inspiration of men but of books. In reference to the biblical characters Moses, David, Paul, and John, Gray writes that “however fallible and errant they may have been as men compassed with infirmity like ourselves, such fallibility or errancy was never under any circumstances communicated to their sacred writings” (*Fundamentals* 2: 11).

The second fundamental issue as it dealt with the virgin birth, included the deity of Christ. It was deemed as essential that Christ was indeed God and indeed man. The form through which he came had to be that of a virgin, or he would have been a sinful creature. In his essay on “The Virgin Birth of Christ,” James Orr writes:

As one of Adam’s race, not an entrant from a higher sphere, He would have shared in Adam’s corruption and doom—would Himself have required to be redeemed. Through God’s infinite mercy, He came from above, inherited no guilt, needed no regeneration or sanctification, but became Himself the Redeemer, Regenerator, Sanctifier, for all who receive Him.

(*Fundamentals* 2: 260)

The substitutionary atonement of Christ was also an essential truth for fundamentalists. For those who doubt the historicity of Christ’s actual death, there is, then, no redemption. In his essay entitled “The Atonement,” Franklin Johnson attacks the moral influence theory as inadequate. He states:

The theory makes the death of Christ predominantly scenic, spectacular, an effort to display the love of God rather than an offering to God in its nature necessary for the salvation of man. It struggles in vain to find a worthy reason for the awful sacrifice. Hence it may be charged with essential immorality. In any case, the work of Christ, if interpreted in this manner, will not prove “the power of God unto salvation.”

(*Fundamentals* 3: 69)

For fundamentalists, there is a fourth necessary truth – that of the bodily resurrection of Christ. To fundamentalists, the so-called spiritual resurrection of Christ was a totally inadequate concept. They maintained that Christ's resurrection was a corporeal resurrection, and through this act, the Christian's regeneration was confirmed.<sup>15</sup>

The miracle-working power of Christ was also seen as essential for fundamentalists. This was closely related to biblical inerrancy or at least biblical interpretation. Intertwined within this doctrine is the return of Christ. Fundamentalists maintain that Christ will exercise a literal, bodily return, known as the second coming (Dobson 11).

Fundamentalists were experiencing success in the articulation of their theological positions, but they were opposed by someone with equal fervor, and perhaps greater popularity, in Harry Emerson Fosdick.<sup>16</sup> On May 21, 1922, shortly before the annual meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention, Fosdick delivered a controversial message entitled "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" This sermon so captured the liberal sentiments of the moment that it received wide publicity, appearing in at least three journals as well as in a widely distributed pamphlet (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 171). Fosdick, a Baptist, delivered this message while serving as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New York.

The Southern Baptist Convention at this time was dominated by conservatives many of whom embraced *The Fundamentals*, while Northern Baptists and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. were in the heat of a divisive battle over the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

## Evolution Controversy

While fundamentalism was beginning to organize itself as a movement, it soon found one of its greatest enemies—evolution. One of the pillars of modernism in the early 1920's, Darwin's theory of evolution, was a seemingly infinite source of contention and strife. A figure who would eventually play a prominent role in this debate and who would also have an indelible impact on fundamentalism was William Jennings Bryan. Although he was actively involved in politics, even running for president four times and serving Woodrow Wilson as Secretary of State until 1915, Bryan said that he was "much more interested in religion than in

<sup>15</sup> Ed Dobson, et al, *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), p. 8; cited as Dobson

<sup>16</sup> For a complete view of Fosdick's life and his criticism of fundamentalism, consult his autobiography, *The Living of These Days* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1956).

government” because “the most important things in life lie outside the realm of government. . .” (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 132). After Bryan joined the fundamentalist movement, the goal of the fundamentalist message became the passage of anti-evolution laws in every state.<sup>17</sup>

By 1923, several Southern states had adopted anti-evolution laws, while the strongest legislation was passed in Tennessee in 1925. The first major challenge to that law came in the same year when John Scopes was charged with teaching evolution in the classroom. William Jennings Bryan was the prosecutor in the case, and Scopes was to be defended by Clarence Darrow, an agnostic and America’s best known defense lawyer at that time.

The court found that Scopes was guilty as charged, but the decision was later reversed due to a legal technicality. Although the prosecution won the case, it seemed that Bryan and fundamentalists were the true losers. At the close of the trial, Bryan allowed himself to be questioned by Darrow. During the debate, Bryan could not offer any answers to questions that might be posed by an atheist or even by one who denounced a literal interpretation of the Bible. Bryan could not answer how Eve could be formed from Adam’s rib, where Cain got his wife, or where the fish came from that swallowed Jonah (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 186). Marsden writes, “Modern liberal culture was fighting back against the efforts of ‘bigots and ignoramuses’ (as Darrow describes them) to retard its progress, and ridicule was perhaps the most effective weapon” (Marsden, *Fundamentalism* 187).

Regardless of the outcome of the trial or the debate, Bryan maintained his stance, with increased fervor. According to C. Allyn Russell, Bryan accused liberals of “disturbing the harmony of the church and robbing Christian theology of its true meaning.” Russell continues:

In a sermon with the intriguing title “They Have Taken Away My Lord,” Bryan affirmed that the modernists “have robbed our Savior of the glory of a virgin birth, of the majesty of His Deity, and of the triumph of His resurrection . . . and are attempting to put in His place a spurious personage, unknown to the Scriptures, and as important to satisfy the affections of Christians as a painted doll would be to assuage the sorrow of a mother mourning for her first born.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ference Morton Szasz, “William Jennings Bryan, Evolution and the Fundamentalists,” *Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (New York: Saur Publishing, 1993), p. 179.

<sup>18</sup> Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 179-80.

The end of the Scopes trial marked what many viewed as the end of fundamentalism. While fundamentalists technically won in the courtroom, they were defeated in the court of public opinion. Bryan's faltering attempt to defend fundamentalism against Darrow's questions led many to feel that fundamentalism could be characterized as anti-intellectual, tradition-bound, and out-dated in the modern world.

## Fundamentalist Analysis

It would be advantageous to offer several basic characteristics of this early fundamentalist movement. First, it had a nebulously defined, albeit large, enemy—modernism. For fundamentalists, modernism included everything from higher criticism to evolution. Second, it was biblically focused. This is shown in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, which reveals that twenty-seven articles dealt with the Bible, nine with apologetics, eight with the person of Christ, and only three with the Second Coming of Christ (Dobson 3). Third, fundamentalism also was evangelically minded. As a response to the Social Gospel, fundamentalists felt that no human efforts could usher in the return of Christ; he could return at any moment, and the efforts of the Church should be focused on spreading the Gospel. Finally, fundamentalism was divisive. Because of the absolutist mentality of the stance, it was not tolerant of other views. For fundamentalists at this period in history, the Bible was God's Word. To question it or deny it a literal interpretation is to question God, after all it is his word. This made an attack upon fundamentalism difficult at best.

## Fundamentalism's "Demise"

While many felt that the Scopes' Trial marked the end of fundamentalism, the events of future decades would prove differently. There were still at this time some out-spoken, vociferous preachers espousing the "truths" of fundamentalism. One such person was J. Frank Norris, the former pastor of First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. During his years in Fort Worth, Norris led his congregation to experience tremendous growth, from a membership of 900 in 1911 to 12,000 in 1928, with an average attendance in Sunday School of 5,200.<sup>19</sup>

Norris was also a figure of tremendous controversy. In 1926, he delivered a sermon in which he described the mayor of Fort Worth and his associates as a "two by four, simian-headed, sawdust-brained, bunch of grafters" (Shurden, *Not a Silent*

<sup>19</sup> Walter B. Shurden, *Not A Silent People* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 1995), p. 58; cited as Shurden, *Not a Silent*.

58). The following week, a friend of the mayor came into Norris' office where the two had an argument. Norris killed the man and claimed self-defense, although the victim was not armed. Someone also set fire to the church, causing eight thousand dollars in damage. Someone twice attempted to burn the pastor's house down, and finally someone succeeded in burning the church down. Norris was subsequently charged and tried for arson but was later acquitted.<sup>20</sup> During the 1914 Fort Worth Pastor's Conference, Norris was expelled for calling a fellow pastor a "long, lean, lank, yellow suck-egging dog" (Fletcher 120).

In the years following the Scopes Trial, especially the late 1940s and the decade of the 1950s, the United States witnessed an era during which religion was popular. While many thought that fundamentalism was dead, it was, in fact, only beginning to change its shape. This can be witnessed best by examining the controversies surrounding the modern Southern Baptist Convention.

## Modern Baptist Controversies

Southern Baptists have always been a people accustomed to conflict. Perhaps no controversy would be as influential in the shaping of a denomination as the fundamentalist-moderate debate that violently erupted in 1979.

There were a number of events that directly led to what many have termed the "takeover" of the Southern Baptist Convention. The first major controversy in the modern era of Southern Baptists came in 1961 over a book by Ralph H. Elliott. He was the first contracted professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, and, because of the controversy that followed, left the Convention, and retired from the American Baptist Church (Fletcher 205).

In 1961, Elliott completed his book, *The Message of Genesis*, published by Broadman Press, an extension of the Sunday School Board. The major controversy surrounding this book was based on Elliott's understanding of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Some time after the controversy was over, Elliott discussed the book:

[In] My comments about the first eleven chapters of Genesis . . . I suggested we are dealing with theological fact, not day-by-day physical history . . . the seven days of creation. The most bitter critics felt God created the earth in seven literal twenty-four-hour days. I just cannot buy this. And there was a question of

<sup>20</sup> Jesse C. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention: A Sesquicentennial History* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 120; cited as Fletcher.

whether Adam was just one man, or if he represents mankind. I raised the possibility the answer was mankind.

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 70)

Until the Convention met in 1962, the debate had been confined primarily to Baptist state papers. In a September article of the *Kansas Baptist Digest*, one critic wrote: "Southern Baptists are at the crossroads in the publication of this book. In this book we are not facing a matter of ecclesiology or polity. This concerns the very heart of the gospel. It is an undercutting of the doctrine of revelation" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 71).

The conservative attack against Elliott was led by K. Owen White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston. White wrote an article in October of 1961 based on 2 Kings 4:40. In the article entitled "Death in the Pot," he attacked Elliott's work as undermining the historical accuracy of the Bible. This article was then sent to all Baptist state papers, to the seminary presidents, to the Sunday School Board, and many others (Fletcher 207). In the article, White quoted from Elliott's book and described it as "liberalism, pure and simple," but went further to say that "The book in question is 'poison.' This sort of rationalistic criticism can lead only to further confusion, unbelief, deterioration, and ultimately disintegration as a great New Testament denomination" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 71).

Many conservatives were outraged that such a work was written by a Southern Baptist who was teaching in one of the Southern Baptist Seminaries. For them, it was just as appalling that the book was published by Broadman Press, an extension of the Sunday School Board. Paul Pressler of Houston, Texas, a figure who would later play a prominent role among conservatives in the Convention, sent a letter to Millard Berquist, the president of Midwestern Seminary in which he said that he was praying that "Dr. Elliott will be quickly dismissed for his denial of the inerrancy of Scripture" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 207).

As the Southern Baptist Convention met in 1962, it was consumed by the Elliott controversy. The existence of controversy was due to the fact that Elliott had a great deal of support. In the same issue of *The Baptist Standard* that contained White's article was a critique by Robert H. Craft, a Kansas pastor. Craft writes, "The author leads the reader through an exhilarating and fruitful study of the delicate problems conservative scholars have too long neglected in the study of Genesis" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 71).

Presiding over the Convention that year was Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. His skillful handling of motions, as well as

his presidential address, were designed to control damage (Fletcher 208). During the convention, five resolutions were submitted in reference to Ralph Elliott. Those that passed included the creation of a special committee to present to the 1963 Convention a confessional statement, similar to the 1925 Memphis Confession. By standing vote, the Convention adopted the motion made by White, which stated, "That the messengers to this Convention, by standing vote, reaffirm their faith in the entire Bible as the authoritative, authentic, infallible Word of God" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 73). Another White resolution passed easily; it stated:

That we express our abiding and unchanging objection to the dissemination of theological views in any of our seminaries which would undermine such faith in the historical accuracy and doctrinal integrity of the Bible, and that we courteously request the Trustees and administrative officers of our institutions and other agencies to take such steps as shall be necessary to remedy at once those situations where such views now threaten our historic position.

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 208)

Elliott was eventually dismissed from the seminary, not for his teaching, but for insubordination, as he refused to promise the seminary's trustees that he would not allow the book to be reprinted (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 73). An editorial in *The Christian Century* said,

The issue is not heresy or the right of a professor to teach such mild biblical criticism. The issue is a much more vast one: control of the Southern Baptist Convention's academic institutions and, through this, of the training of the ministry.

(Fletcher 207)

By the 1963 Convention, Elliott was already gone, making the passage of a revised confession of faith, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, somewhat anti-climatic (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 74).

## **The Broadman Commentary Controversy**

It seemed that the Convention had hardly recovered from the Elliott controversy when another formidable conflict began. Again, this controversy



surrounded a book, specifically the commentary on Genesis in the first volume of the *Broadman Bible Commentary* by G. Henton Davies, an English Baptist. The commentary was a project conceived in 1957, and approved by the Sunday School Board in 1961. When the first volume was released in 1969, few could have imagined the controversy that would follow. The contention about the commentary dealt with Davies' treatment of the sacrifice of Isaac. He questioned whether God would indeed make such a demand of Abraham. Davies answered his own question:

Our answer however is no. Indeed what Christian or humane conscience could regard such a command as coming from God. How then did this conviction arise in the mind of Abraham, since we believe that God did not put it here? The question can only be answered in part. Abraham's conviction that his son must be sacrificed is the climax of the psychology of his life.

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 76)

W. Ross Edwards, editor of Missouri's Baptist paper, *Word and Way*, wrote a stinging editorial critique of the volume:

The writings of Dr. Davies are not suitable for "a mighty army marching forth to victory." He sounds more like a drummer boy beating a retreat. . . We believe that Southern Baptists cannot grow spiritually on a diet like Dr. Davies offers. I'm not prepared to "eat it."

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 76)

Just prior to the 1970 Convention, a group of Southern Baptists met in an "Affirming the Bible Conference." Edwards was at that meeting and said that a vocal minority of liberals had "challenged Bible-believing Baptists" since 1962, and the meeting was called because "we want Southern Baptist liberals to know that there is a limit to our patience" (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 77).

At the Convention, Gwin T. Turner of California made the following motion:

That because *The Broadman Commentary* is out of keeping with the beliefs of the vast majority of Southern Baptist pastors and people this Convention requests the Sunday School Board to withdraw Volume 1 from further distribution and that it be rewritten with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint.

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 77)

Two months after the Convention, the Sunday School Board, followed the request of the Convention and voted to withdraw Volume 1 of the commentary from distribution and sale.

1969 witnessed another important debate, again surrounding the publication of a book. This time conservatives drew criticism over W. A. Criswell's *Why I Preach the Bible is Literally True*. The book was released just after Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston. In it Criswell writes,

As theological liberalism that denies the Word of God has destroyed other churches, the same theological liberalism will destroy us. There is no exception to this judgment, whether individual congregations or in denominational associations. Like many others we can continue to exist, having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof, but we shall be dead, spiritually dead, evangelistically dead . . . . In the spirit of the captain of the conquering armies of Israel, Joshua of old, I am prepared to say that as more me and my people we shall serve the Lord, stand by the Book, preach its treasures, love its words, serve its Savior, and humbly seek to obey His mandates.<sup>21</sup>

As was suspected by many conservatives, the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion in 1969 criticized the book and its promotion by the Sunday School Board. Fletcher writes,

The professors' move, based upon their belief that Criswell's book denied the historical-critical approach to the Bible, encountered an immediate backlash. A few letters to editors and one editorial called for investigations by trustees of Baptist schools into what their professors were teaching about the Bible.

(Fletcher 238)

## The Beginning of the Take-Over

Few presidential elections have had more impact on the Southern Baptist Convention than that of 1979. It was this year that Adrian Rogers, pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, was elected president. During

<sup>21</sup> W. A. Criswell, *Why I Preach the Bible is Literally True* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), p. 225

that year, three figures played prominent roles in what would become a dramatic change in the Convention – Adrian Rogers, Paige Patterson (then president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, Texas), and Paul Pressler (a layman and judge from Houston). Shurden writes,

Beginning in the spring of 1979, Pressler and Patterson designed and announced a ten-year plan whereby Fundamentalists could gain political control of the Southern Baptist Convention. Garnering a following by proclaiming that “liberalism” had invaded the entire denominational system . . . they discovered that they could use the appointive powers of the SBC presidency and thereby dominate the denomination.

(Shurden, *Not a Silent* 85)

Following the 1979 election, until 1990, all of the seven presidents were, as described by Shurden, “Fundamentalists” (Shurden, *Not a Silent* 85).

Thus begins the problem in terminology. Are those conservatives who exist and presently lead the Convention “fundamentalists”? If so, what is their relation to the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century? Are those who have been labeled fundamentalists indeed simply stridently evangelical?

## Conclusion

Marsden suggests that “a fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something” (Marsden, *Understanding* 1). While this simple definition often served as a litmus test for a fundamentalist, Marsden further suggests that fundamentalism is a “twentieth-century movement closely tied to the revivalist tradition of mainstream evangelical Protestantism that militantly opposed modernist theology and the cultural change associated with it” (Dobson 3). Marsden goes further in an attempt to clarify the terminology by suggesting the characteristics of an evangelical:

- (1) the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture—a high view of the authority of Scripture and of its trustworthiness—though not necessarily involving inerrancy; (2) belief in the real, historical character of God’s saving work recorded in Scripture; (3) eternal salvation only through faith in the atoning work of Christ; (4) the importance of evangelism and missions—since that is the kindest thing you can do for other

persons; and (5) the importance of the spiritually transformed life—a trait that all other Christian groups have.<sup>22</sup>

Marsden's efforts lie at the heart of the matter in this subject, for one cannot exactly define the terms "fundamentalist" and "evangelical" in the modern world and especially in Southern Baptist circles. One must resort to identifying those characteristics which have historically distinguished these groups of people.

At the very heart, a fundamentalist is an evangelical. More precisely, as Joel Carpenter remarks, "fundamentalists are evangelicals, but not all evangelicals (are) fundamentalists."<sup>23</sup> Because of this perceived distinction, many Southern Baptists have attempted to avoid the label of "fundamentalist" for the more positive "evangelical."

In an effort to characterize modern fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention, it is necessary to observe the special attention placed on the Bible. Fundamentalists in the early portion of the twentieth-century were also dedicated to placing tremendous importance on the Bible, but inerrancy for them was not the issue. The enemy for early fundamentalists was modernism. The fundamentalist's perceived need was to rescue the Bible from modernists who had accepted higher criticism. Among Southern Baptists at the time, this was of little issue. Southern Baptists in the 1920's were predominantly conservative and there was little debate over the issues that were polarizing denominations in other portions of the country.

It is also important to note the manner in which both modern and historical fundamentalism has been shaped and influenced by outspoken leaders on both sides of the issue. In the early portion of this century, persons such as Billy Sunday, with his pulpit dramatics and personal charisma, articulated for many the tenets of fundamentalism. At the same time, contributors to *The Fundamentals* were able to offer an intellectual articulation of their stance. In opposition to them were characters such as Harry Emerson Fosdick, whose outspoken criticism of fundamentalism caused controversy in both Baptist and Presbyterian denominations. In the modern era of Southern Baptists, fundamentalist arguments were most often offered by pastors of very large and influential churches. Adrian Rogers, who is considered by many the driving force of the fundamentalist resurgence among Southern Baptists, is pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, which boasts a membership exceeding 25,000. Likewise W. A. Criswell, presently pastor emeritus of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, which claims a

<sup>22</sup> George M. Marsden, "Contemporary American Evangelicalism," in *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), pp. 28-29.

<sup>23</sup> Robert K. Johnston, "Varieties of American Evangelicalism," in *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), p. 41.

membership of more than 28,000. Analysis of both historic and modern fundamentalism reveals a support of persons as much as doctrine.

The operative question is whether fundamentalism, as it is witnessed today, is the same movement that it was in the early twentieth century. Obviously, the two are connected and share many similarities. There are, however, glaring differences which may suggest that modern fundamentalism is the evolutionary product of its historic predecessor.

Perhaps the most easily identifiable and important of these differences is the political activity of modern fundamentalism. Baptists often are considered to mirror what is going on socially. This notion is apparent in both fundamentalist movements. In the early twentieth century, alcohol was considered by many outspoken citizens to be one of the greatest social ills, and these sentiments resulted in prohibition. Consider then the oratorical subjects of one of the most popular Baptist preachers of that period, Billy Sunday. In one of his more famous messages, "Get on the Water Wagon," Sunday says,

I am the sworn, eternal, uncompromising enemy of the liquor traffic. I ask no quarter and give none. I have drawn the sword in defense of God, home, wife, children and native land, and I shall never sheathe it until the undertaker pumps me full of embalming fluid . . . .<sup>24</sup>

The intolerance of alcohol was popular in the social and political arena, and the popularity of intolerance was mirrored by the preaching of that day.

The traditional fundamentalist movement was indeed politically active. One of its most famous supporters, William Jennings Bryan, actually ran for president four times. Modern fundamentalism is also politically active, but is exponentially more active than the earlier movement.

The presidential election in 1976 was important as it highlighted Jimmy Carter's position as a "born-again" believer and a Southern Baptist. Just three years later, Adrian Rogers, in 1979, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. This incident is considered to be the turning point which signaled the beginning of the fundamentalist domination of the Convention. In 1980, the United States elected one of the most conservative national politicians in modern history – Ronald Reagan.

In the political arena, issues such as homosexuality, abortion, the feminist movement, and prayer in schools become rallying cries for conservatives. Reagan's

<sup>24</sup> Lyle W. Dorsett, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p. 181.

conservative position on these issues earned him nearly uncritical support by certain church and denominational leaders across the country. This was true of the Convention as well. The fundamentalist leadership of the Convention was in full support of President Reagan's agenda and it seemed as though they were able to attach their conservative theology to conservative politics as though the two were equal. Modern fundamentalism, with few exceptions, fully endorsed the politics of the Republican party as embodied by President Reagan.

The conservative nature of society during this period gave rise to Christian political groups such as the Moral Majority, founded by Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. Falwell's church affiliated itself with the Southern Baptist Convention in October, 1996. In 1980, Falwell published a book entitled *Listen America!* In the prologue, he writes,

Shortly after President Reagan had won his very difficult congressional battle for his economic program, a pro-Reagan conservative commented, "I just hope it isn't too late to save the country." . . . But the real battle for America's survival lies in her ability to re-arm morally . . . I believe we [pro-moral people] not only can, but we must win this race. We have already won some significant battles along the way. These include the virtual burial of the Equal Rights Amendment . . . the Hyde Amendment which cut off tax money for welfare abortions and the upholding of the amendment's constitutionality by the Supreme Court; the crushing defeat of the television networks' attempt to denigrate the airwaves with gratuitous sex and violence; the support of creationism bills in half of the 50 state legislatures . . . and, of course, the mighty effect in the 1980 elections caused by the mobilization of millions of heretofore uninvolved pro-moralists, born-again Christians, and religious people in general.<sup>25</sup>

These intensely political remarks show the clear correlation between modern fundamentalists and conservative politics, which is best exemplified by the Republican party. Fundamentalists in the Southern Baptist Convention attempted to link their theological and political convictions to say, in essence, that theological conservatism results in political conservatism.

<sup>25</sup> Jerry Falwell, *Listen America!* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980), p. i.

This intense political activity was not characteristic of traditional fundamentalism. It developed in many ways as a reaction to the Social Gospel, which by its very nature lends itself to social and political activity. As a reactionary movement, fundamentalism had a decreased emphasis on such involvement and focused primarily on theological “purification” and evangelization.

Modern fundamentalism is also different from its traditional predecessor in that it is more focused. Historic fundamentalism was against modernism in general. It sought to effect change both in society and in churches. As one observes fundamentalism today, its denominational focus is apparent. Instead of simply expressing contentions to society at large, modern fundamentalism has attached itself to denominational structure. In the Southern Baptist Convention, fundamentalists were able to accomplish their goals through the appointive powers afforded to the president. If fundamentalists were able to gain sustained control of the presidency, they could ensure fundamentalist control of the denomination.

Through analysis of the traditional and historic varieties of fundamentalism, it is clear that the two are reactionary movements. When society experiences a period of tremendous change and development it should be expected that the period of change will be followed by a period of conservative reaction. It should be noted that both movements came to prominence after periods of great social activity and change. The historic movement came about after the Civil War, the Social Gospel, tremendous technological development, and World War I. Similarly, modern fundamentalism experienced a resurgence after enduring World War II, the turbulent and volatile 1960's and the Vietnam conflict. While these movements share many characteristics, they have many differences, and these differences reveal the evolutionary development of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a reactionary movement, and will respond according to its environment; when the environment changes, fundamentalism changes. As an evolutionary religious movement, modern fundamentalism exemplifies “survival of the fittest.” The fundamentalist leaders of the Convention organized a powerful political machine that was underestimated by moderates. By the time moderates realized what was happening, fundamentalists had already assumed leadership of the Convention.

The future of fundamentalism can be viewed with nothing but uncertainty. As the leaders in the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention are growing older, it is yet unclear who will rise to assume the mantle of leadership. Not only is future leadership a question, but so is fundamentalism's endurance. Fundamentalism is a reactionary movement; it acts to effect change. Historically, it was not a

mainstream movement; rather, it was a corrective movement. Apart from the current controversy, it has never sustained a lasting position of leadership, and it is unclear then whether fundamentalism can maintain its domineering hold on the Southern Baptist Convention.

Regardless of the uncertainties surrounding the future of fundamentalism, one thing, however, is certain; so long as society and the world changes, fundamentalism will continue to be a reactive force.



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# LINKING DYSFUNCTIONAL ATTITUDES TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND MARITAL STATUS

HOPE WALTERS, CAROLINE DICKSON, J. CHERA SPICER

## I. Introduction

Gardner-Webb University's Greater Opportunities for Adult Learning (GOAL) Program offers adults with careers and families, who can not feasibly live on campus, an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in a number of major subject areas. Eligible students must already have obtained an Associate of Arts (A. A.) degree or an Associate of Applied Science (A. A. S.) degree. GOAL students tend to be older than traditional students. For example, 57% of GOAL students during the spring 1997 semester were over thirty years old, and 25% of them were over forty. Most GOAL students have established themselves in stable life situations and, therefore, choose not to trade stability for an undergraduate degree. The Gardner-Webb GOAL Program allows those students to take night classes at various sites convenient to their home locations without the major upheaval in their lifestyles that a residing on campus or a long commute to the main campus might cause.

Because GOAL students exceed traditional day students in age and maturity level, experiences, and stability in life circumstances, they should have fewer dysfunctional attitudes (e.g. pessimism, helplessness). The authors of the following study tested this hypothesis by administering questionnaires to both night students and day students at Gardner-Webb.

Cognitive psychologists generally believe that dysfunctional attitudes lead to depression. According to Beck, Rush, Shaw, and Emory (1979), a depressed person misrepresents perceptions in a negative way to create an unlikely reality. Beck, Steer, and Brown (1993) explain the following sequence of events: A depressed person begins to think negatively; the person experiences a "negative cognitive shift," (a system of perceiving the world negatively); and finally, dysfunctional

attitudes created in the "negative cognitive shift" cause the person to be more likely to experience a mental disorder during a stressful period (11).

Several research studies support the ideas of Beck and his other colleagues in cognitive psychology. For example, a study of one hundred seventy-one college psychology students examined depression and attitudes using the Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (DAS), the Beck Depression Inventory, and the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depressed Mood Scale. Results demonstrated a significant link between depression and dysfunctional attitudes (Wong and Whitaker 1993). Nacoste and Wise (1991) studied fifty-eight singles in early adulthood using the Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale. Although gender did not affect the DAS scores, unhealthy scores on the Beck Depression Inventory, which measures depression, correlated with unhealthy scores on the DAS. Finally, Nelson's study of one hundred thirty-three subjects in psychiatric hospital wards discovered unhealthier DAS scores for depressed subjects than for nondepressed subjects (Nelson 1986).

One may infer from this plethora of research that individuals with more dysfunctional attitudes are more prone to depression. The more mature GOAL student should have fewer dysfunctional attitudes and, therefore, less depression than the younger day program student.

Beginning in the fall of 1995 and continuing to the present, the authors have collected data from Gardner-Webb students and have analyzed it statistically to test the following hypotheses: First, a correlation greater than zero will occur between age and DAS scores. Second, on average, GOAL students will have fewer dysfunctional attitudes than day students. Third, on average, married subjects will display fewer dysfunctional attitudes in comparison to single, divorced, and widowed subjects. Staff at Gardner-Webb and other universities can use the following information to serve the students in both programs more effectively.

## II. Method

### *Participants*

One hundred nine day students and eighty-four night students at Gardner-Webb University participated in the study. The total sample ( $N = 193$ ) consisted of a 62 (32.1%) to 131 (67.9%) male-female ratio in marital categories of one hundred twenty-six singles (65.3%), fifty married students (25.9%), fourteen divorced students (7.3%), and three widowed students (1.6%). The respective mean ages for Day versus Goal students was 20.81 and 33.70, and the average age

for the entire sample was 26.31 years. Day students all attend Gardner-Webb at its main campus; most live on campus and are not married. GOAL students attend classes at a variety of sites across North Carolina and they must have junior or senior rank.

Some of the students who participated in the survey received extra credit from their professors, depending on which classes they were attending when they participated. All subjects signed informed consent forms, and research administrators informed them of the right to withdraw and expressed the guarantee of minimal harm.

## Materials

The Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (DAS), a 1980 questionnaire developed by Arlene Weissman (see Corcoran & Fischer 1987), was used to rate unhealthy cognition among the study's participants. The scale consists of forty questions in response to which subjects supplied numerical answers between one and seven on a Likert scale. A rating of one indicates "totally agree," and a rating of seven indicates "totally disagree." The DAS has a high validity, and its test-retest reliability ranges from .80 to .84 (Corcoran & Fischer 1987).

The DAS stems from Aaron Beck's theory of cognitive psychology. It signifies depression-related maladaptive attitudes, which can be placed into seven categories of "approval, love, achievement, perfectionism, entitlement, omnipotence, and autonomy" (Corcoran and Fischer 1987, 143). It was normalized using a mixture of male and female mostly white undergraduate students. DAS scores range from forty to two hundred eighty; high scores indicated healthy attitudes.

## Procedure

Participants filled out and returned the written questionnaires while they were in classes. The tests were not timed, and the students finished at different rates. Each student took three tests including the DAS, but the test packets were collated in several ways so that an order effect would not confound this study. Instructions for taking each test, including an explanation of the Likert scale to be used, were located at the beginning of each respective test. In using a Likert scale, the subject chose from a specified scale the integer that identified the degree to which a description fits him or her. The students were given opportunities to ask questions to clarify information given to them.

Each student's DAS was scored by totalling the Likert scale responses after reverse scoring nine of the forty items. The DAS includes reverse scored items so that a participant will not guess exactly what the questionnaire is about and then give the same response to each item; in other words, reverse scoring adds to validity by causing subjects to think carefully about their answers.

Using the program in which the student was enrolled (GOAL or Day) as the independent variable and DAS scores as the dependent variable, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the program (GOAL or Day) significantly affects dysfunctional attitudes. In addition, another one-way ANOVA was conducted using the DAS scores to determine whether marital status affects dysfunctional attitudes.

### **III. Results**

In order to determine whether age was related to DAS scores, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was performed. Results showed a significant correlation ( $r = .27$ ;  $p = .0002$ ). The correlation reveals that, as age increases, DAS scores tends to increase. Conversely, as age decreases, DAS scores tend to fall. Therefore, it appears that as one gets older one tends to have fewer dysfunctional attitudes. It should be pointed out that the current correlation coefficient only accounts for seven percent of the variance of DAS scores.

Within a possible DAS score range of forty to two hundred eighty, day students ( $n = 109$ ) averaged a score of 200.53; the mean score of night students ( $n = 83$ ) was 214.08. (See Figure 1.) Since high DAS scores indicate healthy attitudes, GOAL students demonstrated better health. The one-way ANOVA confirmed that this difference is significant at the 0.01 level,  $F(1,192) = 11.44$ ,  $p < .0009$ . (See Table 1.) In other words, the probability of the F score's being due to random error is only nine chances in ten thousand.

The marital status scale consisted of four levels--single, married, divorced, and widowed. Single students ( $n = 125$ ) had a mean DAS score of 201.24; married students ( $n = 50$ ) produced a mean DAS score of 212.70; the mean DAS score for divorced subjects ( $n = 14$ ) was 225.29; and widows ( $n = 3$ ) averaged 227.33 on the DAS. (See Figure 2.) Widowed subjects demonstrated the healthiest attitudes, followed by divorced, married, and single subjects. A one-way ANOVA revealed that the results were significant at the 0.01 level,  $F(3,188) = 5.17$ ,  $p < .0019$ . (See Table 2.) The probability that the results are insignificant is nineteen chances in ten thousand. Since the condition of marriage contained four levels in this study, a post-hoc Tukey test was conducted to determine where the difference lies. The

Tukey test showed that the significant F-value resulted from a difference between single and divorced subjects (difference = 24.05; critical value = 3.67;  $df = 188$ ;  $p = .05$ ). Just as in the above correlation, the amount of variance explained by the relationship between marital status and DAS scores was about eight percent.

The authors conducted several ANOVAs that yielded nonsignificant results. For example, a two-way ANOVA using the mean DAS score as the dependent variable and both program and marital status as the independent variable showed an insignificant difference. Other one-way ANOVAs were performed with several different variables from the test packet's demographic sheet as independent variables, but their results were insignificant. For example, gender had no effect on dysfunctional attitudes of this study's subjects. The gender similarity discovered by the authors of this study parallels the findings of Nacoste and Wise (1991).

## IV. Discussion

From the above results, the authors conclude that all three hypotheses were confirmed. The results of this study suggest that both program and marital status significantly affect dysfunctional attitudes. These results confirm the hypotheses that students in the night program have significantly fewer dysfunctional attitudes than day students. Results also show that divorced students have healthier attitudes than single students.

Since GOAL students tend to be older, they have more life experiences and maturity from which to draw. Day students tend to be recent high school graduates and have fewer and less varied life experiences. Learning through experience to draw on the helping resources uniquely available to each person facilitates the formation of healthy attitudes, which in turn aid the individual when new life circumstances arise. In light of this idea from cognitive psychology, the healthier attitudes of GOAL students compared to day students in general depend largely on the greater age and maturity of the GOAL students.

Regardless of the reason GOAL students in this study displayed healthier attitudes, their fewer dysfunctional attitudes make them less prone to depression than day students. Members of the university community should seriously consider the resulting implications. For example, professors and staff should watch more carefully for signs of depression in day students. In addition, compounding factors such as adjusting to taking more difficult classes, moving out of the home, and learning to live with a roommate may increase a day student's risk for depression. If age explains why night students have healthier attitudes, would freshmen display more dysfunctional attitudes than seniors? This question seems relevant, especially



considering that the stressful adjustments listed above affect mostly freshmen. The correlation between age and DAS was small but significant. Correlational trends assume a linear relationship between variables. It may be that the relationship between age and DAS scores is curvilinear with middle age subjects displaying healthier attitudes. Future research could examine this question.

In addition to explaining why GOAL students have healthier attitudes, age may account for the healthier attitudes of divorced students, too. It follows that divorced students, who are old enough to have been married in the past, have fewer dysfunctional attitudes than married students, some of whom may be relatively young, and that the differences are significant. Another reason for the lack of significance between single subjects versus married and widowed subjects may reflect on the small sample size for each level of marital status (e.g., three widows participated).

The preceding study contains several weaknesses. First, since only a portion of the students received extra credit for participating, one could argue that there was an inconsistency in the level of motivation across subjects. Those receiving extra credit would take the testing more seriously and answer the questions in a different manner. Second, the authors deviated from the prescribed scoring procedures for the DAS. This deviation could alter the interpretation of the test results. Third, the sample sizes for each level of marital status are unbalanced, creating large variances in DAS scores. The large variances could artificially inflate the F ratio.

Replication of this study will be necessary to determine whether or not the present findings are reliable. Variations on this study could have GOAL and day students appraise their ability to solve personal problems.

Figure 1

### Mean DAS Scores By Program

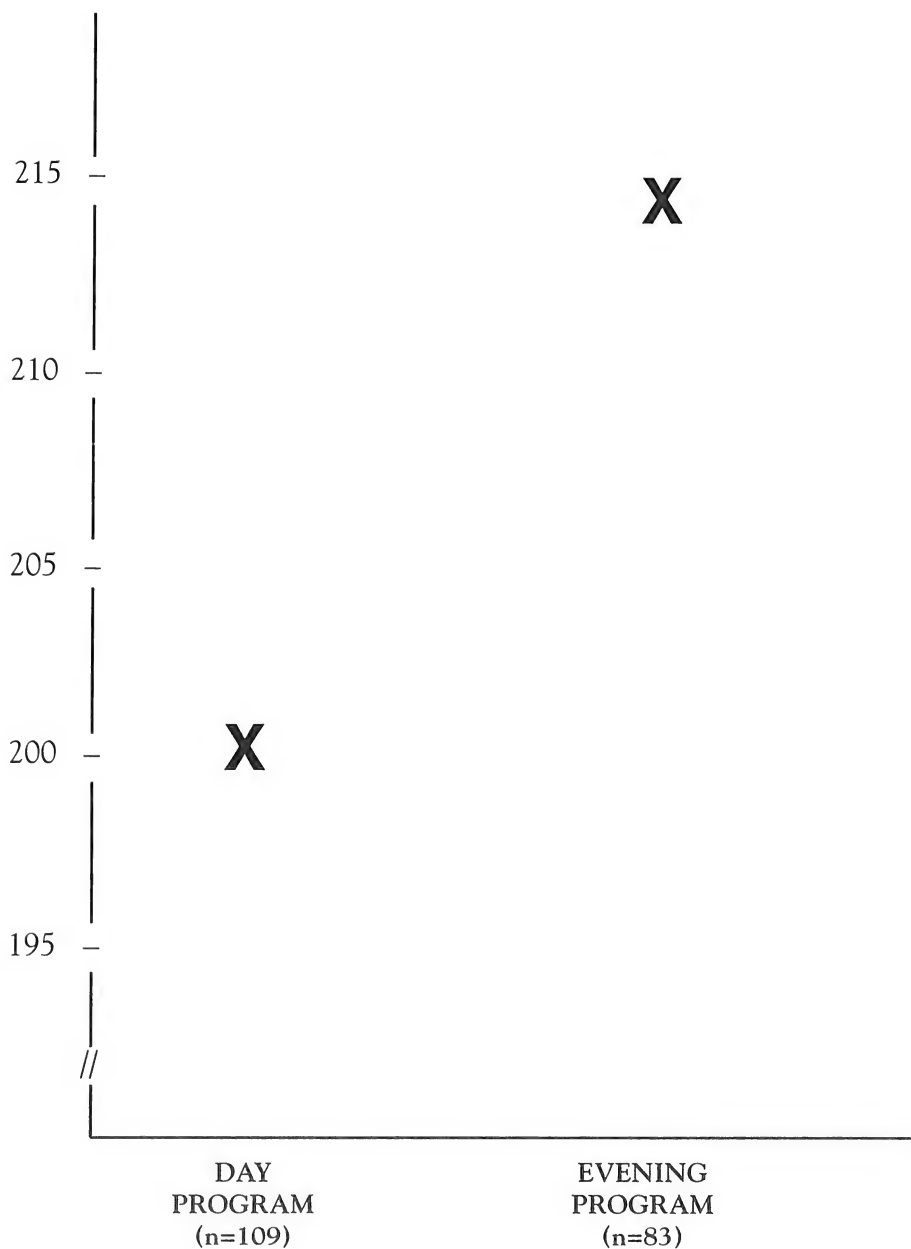


Figure 2

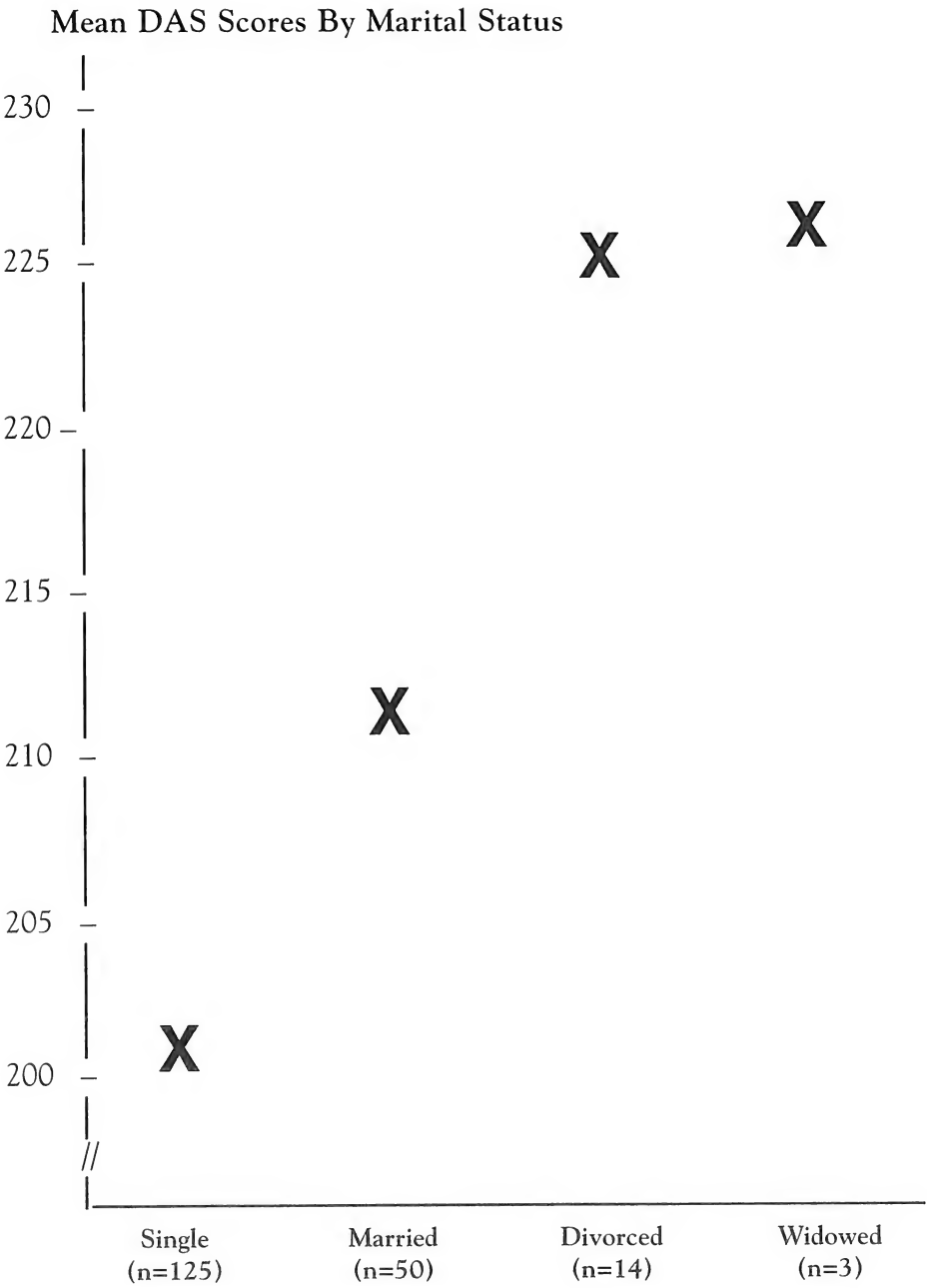


Table 1

One-Way ANOVA of Total DAS Scores By Program

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	Pr > F
Program	1	8665.87687	8665.87687	11.44	0.0009
Error	192	143863.60230	757.17685		

Table 2

One-Way ANOVA of Total DAS Scores By Material Status

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	Pr > F
Marital Status	3	11620.6554	3873.5518	5.17	0.0019
Error	188	140908.8238	749.5150		

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# FEMALE CHARACTERS TRANSCEND MASCULINE BOUNDARIES IN THE NOVELS OF ELLEN GLASGOW AND WILLA CATHER

NICOLE HARTIS

## I. Female Authorship

In her book, *Writing a Woman's Life*, Carolyn Heilbrun mentions four ways in which a woman writes about her life. A woman may either write an autobiography, she "may write her own life in advance of living it," or a biographer may write it. The fourth is through her fiction; however, this method is not discussed in Heilbrun's book.<sup>1</sup> It is this method that I will be addressing in this paper.

Heilbrun writes of the male and female power struggle. She says that because men have always had power it is more difficult for women to acquire it. Before women can acquire power they must "perceive the great difference between the lives possible to men and to women, the violence necessary to men to maintain their position of authority," and they are often criticized harshly throughout this struggle. In other words, they need to realize exactly what they are up against before they take action. It is these women who have bravely stepped out of the confines of a masculine world and taken over their own lives who define power according to Heilbrun. As long as women remained within the boundaries set for them and they placed men "at the center of their lives," men thought they were in control. If a woman does place a man at the center of her life, then her wants and needs will naturally be secondary. Therefore, in order for a woman to be recognized she must commit an act that is socially unacceptable and will draw attention to her. This might include some kind of sexual sin or it could be cross-dressing, such as Willa Cather practiced. It might also be a career in writing. Through this method women gained the power to publish their beliefs and distribute them to

<sup>1</sup> Heilbrun, *Writing A Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), p.11; hereafter cited within the text as Heilbrun.

more people. If one of the requirements of a lady was "to be seen and not heard," an effective way to be heard would be to publish her beliefs (Heilbrun 16-21, 49).

Female characters did what women decided needed to be done; they needed to claim their place among the educated, the independent, and the literary. They performed acts and deeds that only men had been allowed to do and they succeeded, much to the dismay of some male authors. Women were not only able to create the female from a different perspective, but they could also recreate man (Heilbrun 55). Dorothy Sayers created Harriet Vane, who was "autonomous, intellectual, ultimately, loveable." Her male characters were created to compliment and conform to the female instead of the other way around (Heilbrun 55, 56). The characters these women writers often created were related to the author and the author's life, thus their books had a teaching quality in them. Even though the characters borrow from the lives of the authors, they come alive to the reader when he or she compares the characters life with his or her life. The character is then real, possessing memories and real life experiences.<sup>2</sup> Reader and character become connected through a "common experience" and a "common humanity" (Spack 11). Women now had the power to become characters and incorporate anything they didn't believe in or the privilege to vilify the people who had wronged them. It was almost like recreating the world in which the female author played the part of God.

In the novels of Ellen Glasgow and Willa Cather, the female characters are not the delicate "flowers" men have been writing about but women who can take care of themselves and their families without the aid of a man. These strong women succeed where men fail; they are able to turn barren land into productive farm land. Often, others rely on the woman, and she is the only one able to choose the direction of her life. In this paper, I will argue that Ellen Glasgow and Willa Cather use their characters to challenge the limitations society places on women. In the fiction of Glasgow and Cather, worlds are created that teach women how they should and should not live their lives. Some common expectations that confine women are the beliefs that women should not work in the home, they should be totally dependent, and that they should place men at the center of their lives. But authors such as Ellen Glasgow and Willa Cather have created female characters who transcend these boundaries and go through a process of growth. This growth process forces each character to face reality and discover their desires, not those of a man. The result of this growth process is total independence. In

<sup>2</sup> Spacks, *Imaging a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1976, p. 11; hereafter cited as Spacks).

other words the female character is able to depend on herself for everything instead of a man. In some cases, the men must depend on the woman, which leads to a role reversal among the characters. Glasgow's novels *Virginia* and *Barren Ground* both show the progression of this process, but it is from her life that Glasgow draws out this process. *Virginia* was the first of the two novels to be written, 1913, and it lays out the results of the wrong choices. If the female character makes the wrong choices, she becomes dependent on the man and remains within the domestic sphere. However, *Barren Ground*, which was written in 1925, built off the wrong choices of the character of the previous novel and shows the progression of a successful woman who is able to discover her independence.

## II. Introduction to Ellen Glasgow

Ellen Glasgow had to overcome the distress of death and illness including her own deafness in order to become a successful writer. Even at a young age, Glasgow knew what she wanted to do and in order for her to become successful she overcame her feelings of dependence when she became deaf.<sup>3</sup> Thus her characters must also overcome their dependence and learn to be independent. Her novels reflect her life and she gives a positive role model for women readers.<sup>4</sup>

Her novels can be divided into three groups according to the year they were written. Within certain years, Glasgow wrote on certain topics relative to the period. Her novels mostly consist of the "social history of Virginia from the decade before the confederacy."<sup>5</sup> *Virginia* analyzes the "whole tradition of the Southern lady" and the deterioration of the old South.<sup>6</sup> *Barren Ground* deals with the past meeting the present and the "reformation of the class structure in Virginia."<sup>7</sup> *Barren Ground* is also divided into three sections; each section deals with an aspect of the land while at the same time showing the progression of strength gained by the main protagonist, Dorinda Oakley. Ellen Glasgow covers each of the limitations and sometimes overlaps these traditions within each of the sections in *Barren Ground*.

<sup>3</sup> Thiebaux, *Ellen Glasgow* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 13, 26; hereafter cited in text as Thiebaux.

<sup>4</sup> Glasgow, *The Woman Within: An Autobiography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1954), p. 270; hereafter cited in text as *Woman Within*.

<sup>5</sup> Holman, *A Certain Slant of Light* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1995), p. 86; hereafter cited as Holman.

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow, *Virginia* (New York: Penguin, 1989), p. 129; hereafter cited in text.

<sup>7</sup> Glasgow, *Barren Ground* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1985), pp. 93, 96; hereafter cited in text.



*Barren Ground* is set in the wide open fields as opposed to the town life of Virginia. As a young child, Glasgow spent some of her time at Jerdone Castle, which was surrounded by fields of tobacco, but most of the land was covered in "broomsedge, and scrub-pine, and life-everlasting" (Glasgow, *Barren Ground* 26). It was here that Glasgow said, "On the farm, I was free, I was alive within, I even knew happiness" (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 51). When Glasgow was a child, this country home represented a freedom that could only be found in the untamed open fields. The city represented a more fixed society where rules and etiquette can stunt the growth of the young and impressionable. But when a consciousness is released into the surrounding fields, there is not a certain code that must be followed. It is here that whatever the heart desires can be openly sought and acted upon. By remembering this freedom, Glasgow could portray a girl's fight to find this kind of freedom. This is exactly what Dorinda must do in order to be released from her past and the stifling social codes, such as marriage and family, that are trying to turn her into a stereotypical housewife. Not only did Glasgow incorporate her feelings towards the land but she also included her feelings toward men. Her feelings resulted in the dominance of the woman. In *Barren Ground*, she refers to the physical and mental experiences she felt at Jerdone Castle. It is in this novel that Glasgow incorporates most of the major events of her life (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 270). Not only did others depend on Dorinda Oakley but she had her own personal problems which she had to deal with before she could live her own life. Once Dorinda realizes she can survive on her own, she can begin to live her own life. Glasgow's life was not the only influence on her writing; she also used her relationships with her family.

### III. Ellen Glasgow's Male Characters

Ellen Glasgow based the survival of her male characters on Darwin's theory of natural selection (Thiebaut 14). Each selection has its unique consequences. In her novels, the women must discover their independence or give up that independence for a man. The women who choose independence are often disappointed after a relationship and ruined for a future love. However, they are not completely free from that love until they have seen the suffering or death of the one that brought so much pain to them (Thiebaut 22). Since her male characters are not prepared to struggle against the land or the female characters, it is the women who eventually succeed.

The men after whom Glasgow modeled her male characters included her father and brother, who both appear in *Virginia*, and at least one man with whom

she had a relationship. Glasgow's father, whom she portrays as a tyrannical character, was actually the head of an iron and armaments factory, and had several affairs with a slave. In *Virginia*, he becomes a rich villain who tries to control everyone. This image of her father made him appear in her novels as being unfeeling and having an iron heart. Glasgow often referred to her father as the "iron father" or having an "iron will," or a "vein of iron" (which later became the title of one of her novels).

Her brother Frank also became the model for a character. At one time, Frank had been Ellen Glasgow's idol but after being enrolled in Virginia Military Institute he changes. Frank was no longer the good friend Glasgow grew up with; instead he became the devoted son (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 66). This change told Glasgow that the female and male roles could be reversed. Frank might have given up his independence for his mother's happiness. This is also true for the male character created to imitate Frank. Thus neither her father nor her brother are prepared to exist without women.

The development of independence is often the result of a loss of love. Glasgow built upon her own feelings of betrayal after a traumatic relationship with Gerald B. This relationship ended when Glasgow learned he was still married (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 156-57). She decided then that she "was finished, with my first love, with my girlhood" (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 280). Her feelings were so strong that when the female protagonist is betrayed in *Barren Ground* she also comes to a conclusion similar to Glasgow.

Darwin's theory allows only the species that can adapt to survive. Therefore, the men in Glasgow's novels will all have their faults which will inhibit their survival and will eventually lead to their demise. The character modeled after her father is too controlling while the character modeled after her brother is too mentally weak to survive on his own. Even the men who enter the lives of the female characters cannot be successful. They either do not know what they want or do not have the courage to stand up to their trials. Thus the male characters cannot survive successfully without a woman to depend on them. Without a female dependent, the male characters lose the focus of their existence and fall prey to Darwin.

## IV. Men at the Center of a Woman's Life

### A. *Barren Ground*

Dorinda Oakley, the main protagonist of *Barren Ground*, places a man at the center of her world and is eventually left alone. She becomes infatuated with a

young doctor known as Jason Greylock, who seems to promise her a good life. This arrangement seems to offer Dorinda security and hope for the future. Dorinda wants the security and the life that Jason seems to offer; however, she develops an obsession towards him. Not only does she spend money that she had saved for the family but she also goes out of her way to meet him for rides home. By watching her mother, Dorinda develops expectations about her future, such as how she should act and what she should want, and is willing to marry as her mother before her. But Jason marries someone else, leaving Dorinda disappointed and disillusioned. This disappointment allows her to leave her family and go to New York by herself. While in New York, she loses her baby, gets a job, and discovers that she does not need a man in her life in order to survive: "Yes, she could take care of herself. Poverty might prove to be a match for her strength, but as far as men were concerned, she decided that she had taken their measure and was no longer afraid of them" (Glasgow, *Barren* 204, 205). Jason had made Dorinda believe that all men would treat her the same way. This experience makes her realize that she does not need a man in order to be happy. Actually she has no other choices left. She had placed Jason at the center of her life, but it only led to disappointment. While in New York, she tells every man who seems interested in her that she has "finished with all that sort of thing" (Glasgow, *Barren* 237). Only by giving up on men and devoting herself to working the land is Dorinda able to put the past behind her and succeed.

When Dorinda gives herself to the land, she is embracing her future, and it is the land that allows her to become free. To a child, a wide open area is only a place where the child can be free to run and play and not have to worry the future. To Dorinda, the wide open fields represent a way to escape her past. She does not see this as labor; rather she sees this as way to assert her abilities and independence. The fact that she succeeds at this endeavor without a man only proves the abilities of women when they are not tied to the home and family. Dorinda did not work in the house nor did she have children; thus, she is like the child in an open field. She can forget her worries from the past and focus on what she needs to do. After her parents die, and then once she has seen Jason die, she has physically removed herself from the past and male dominance. Then she can totally devote herself to her vision and her land. When she does marry, Dorinda makes it very clear that she is the boss. Dorinda has already been released from the social barriers that destroyed her mother. Therefore, without a man Dorinda is forced to depend on herself and her work, creating a new identity for herself and those who would come after her. By the time Dorinda makes her father's farm successful and she is ready

to pass it on, she has discovered that she does not need a man in order to succeed. Through this success, Dorinda has reached her independence and the self-redemption which finally allows her to let go of the past.

## B. *Virginia*

Like *Barren Ground*, *Virginia* portrays the life of a woman who places a man at the center of her world. Because she decides to depend on her husband, Virginia discovers that she has lost her youth, her beauty, and her family: "She had lived for others so long that she had at last lost the power of living for herself" (Glasgow, *Virginia* 329). Although Virginia is very protective and nurturing, as Glasgow was, it is through her ability to nurture that she realizes that "[t]he thing she loved best, she had learned, was neither husband nor child, but the one that needed her" (Glasgow, *Virginia* 210).

Basically, Glasgow's novel *Virginia* can be summed up as establishing "the ways of the old south," the manners, dress, and attitudes that "evoke a romantic era of grace and splendor" (Holman 89). This novel follows the exploits of a young, southern girl who decides she doesn't want to turn out like her mother and realizes by the end of the novel that she is her mother. It also compares the weak woman to the strong woman and analyzes how their lives are different because of the choices they make.

Virginia, the main protagonist of *Virginia*, devotes herself to a man early in her life. This man seems to promise Virginia a prosperous future. With this hope, Virginia becomes obsessed with the comfort of her husband and later devotes herself to her children. By doing this, she loses her identity to become a wife and mother. But her behavior only leads to disappointment when Virginia learns that she has driven her husband to another woman. Having lost her man, Virginia is without resources: "The fighting courage, the violence of revolt, had no part in her soul, which had been taught to suffer and to renounce with dignity, not with heroics" (Glasgow, *Virginia* 369, 370).

In *Virginia*, Glasgow creates female characters that either conform to society or try to overcome these boundaries. Susan Treadwell tries to overcome the boundaries that will destroy the characters who conform to them. Susan is also the character who is Glasgow's alter ego. Susan experiences many of the traumatic events that Glasgow experienced. But through the trials and tribulations that Susan endures, including her father's refusal to allow her to attend college, Susan is one of the strongest female characters in the book. Her father is domineering and has an affair with one of his slaves, which results in the mental breakdown of his wife and leaves her an invalid until she dies. Glasgow's father was the model for

this character and the wife was Glasgow's mother who suffered some of the same afflictions as Susan's mother (Glasgow, *Woman Within* 198). Glasgow portrays her father as a character through Cyrus Treadwell, Susan's father. Cyrus Treadwell was so cold-hearted that when his illegitimate son gets in trouble with some white men and he refuses to help.

Virginia's son Harry is Glasgow's brother Frank. Harry is also sent away to school and begins to write to his mother weekly. After the separation of his parents, he promises he will return to her (Glasgow, *Virginia* 392). Not only does Virginia finally have something to look forward to, but Harry returns to the comfort of home. Once her husband is gone, Virginia needs a man to be the center of her life, and since Harry needs his mother he is the likely subject. This also gives her an excuse not to try to change the direction of her life.

Virginia does realize it may be her fault her husband wants to spend time with another woman: "'I am letting my youth go,' she said, with a passionate determination to catch her girlhood and hold it fast before it eluded her forever" (Glasgow, *Virginia* 238). Virginia realizes that she might have attained self-redemption so that she could have become independent. At one time, she desires a life that is unlike her mother's but when she decides to marry she voluntarily places a man at the center of her life and follows in her mother's footsteps. By living her life this way, Virginia does not have to worry about how she will survive. When Virginia faces this alone again, Glasgow allows her another reprieve with the return of her son. Through Virginia's attitude, it is clear that Harry will give his life to his mother and remain with her.

Virginia is raised within the confines of a town rather than in the freedom of the country. She is allowed to go to town on her own but she is never truly free. This lack of freedom keeps her from exploring her true desires. She claims she wants to be different from her mother and yet she does not know how to change. Without some source of escape and by having a dependent mother as a role model, Virginia's only choice is to find a man and marry. The choices Virginia makes leave her unable to become independent. The relationships among the older generation adequately portrayed what Virginia has to look forward if she decides to depend on a man. Virginia's parents and Susan's parents are the perfect examples of women who devote themselves to men. While Virginia's mother could not live by herself after her husband dies, Susan's mother is incapable of standing up to her husband even after he has an affair with a slave. Both of these marriages end tragically because the women were not capable of surviving on their own.

This theme also continues in other areas of the female characters' lives because if a woman places a man at the center of her life she not only gives up her identity and independence but there is also a chance she will assume the responsibilities of the domestic sphere.

## IV. Restricted to the Domestic Sphere

### A. *Barren Ground*

Arriving at independence allows the female characters to pursue activities or goals that contribute to their self-definition and keeps them out of the domestic sphere. At the beginning of *Barren Ground*, it appears that Dorinda will eventually fall into this role. However, the disappointment she faces through her relationship with Jason allows her to redirect her desires and stay out of the stereotypical role of a wife. Once she returns home from New York, Dorinda no longer needs to depend on a man. She not only comes to the last stage of her growth process but also regains her identity and becomes self-sufficient.

Dorinda not only represents the change in the role of women but she also represents the rise of the poor farming class into the middle class, incorporating new agricultural methods in order to survive (Holman 94). The aristocracy is unable to use any new methods and eventually is destroyed, but Dorinda is able to lift the poor, lower class out of its position and effect the rise of the upper middle class through her ingenuity and perseverance. Before she can successfully take over father's farm, however, she must experience the heartache of love and loss. This experience not only makes her stronger but it gives her a vision that tells her how to make her life more bearable. Working within the home and taking care of a family would not have given Dorinda the satisfaction or the ability to take over after her father dies. By making her father's land productive, she is able to reverse the decline of the social structure and make the land productive (Holman 95-96).

### B. *Virginia*

Virginia's process of growth is stunted because of her lack of identity. Virginia bases her identity on the life of her mother and the ideas and beliefs of her teacher at the "Dinwiddie Academy for Young Ladies." The school is run by a very Southern old lady who believes that "education was founded upon the simple theory that the less a girl knew about life, the better prepared she would be to contend with it" (Glasgow, *Virginia* 16). This lack of identity leads to her dependency on a man whom she eventually marries. However, during her youth Virginia often told her best friend she was not going to grow up like her mother,

who is a complete housewife and mother. Unfortunately, that is all Virginia's mother can train her to be. As Virginia grows older and marries, she turns into a wife and then a mother devoting herself to her children. Virginia allows herself to conform to the ideas of the past for her future. She must also face disappointment. It is here that Virginia must choose between herself and her family. Instead of choosing her independence, Virginia decides she still wants to take care of her family and her home. But her children embrace the future and begin their own lives. Her husband becomes rich and Virginia no longer needs to take care of the house. Virginia discovers there is nothing left for her to do. Virginia not only conforms to the idea that women must remain within the domestic sphere but she also believes that an education was of no use to her. The value of independence and self-sufficiency is lost upon Virginia.

## VI. Willa Cather

Since men dominated the literary world, women who ventured into it had to overcome resentment and hostility. Some women chose to ignore the hostility while others fought for their place among the literary elite. Some used pseudonyms such as "George Sand" and "George Eliot" while women like Willa Cather tried to become "men." Some female authors display their unhappiness over the position of women through their female characters, and this is often shown when the characters express their feelings of discontent. The idea of being a man trapped in a woman's body is not new; Jo, in Lousia May Alcott's *Little Women*, was upset because she had been born a girl.<sup>7</sup> But it was Alcott who created a character with these feelings.

Willa Cather was born into a family in which her mother and her maternal grandmother were the dominating figures in her life and the family's. When Cather was ten, her family moved Red Cloud, Nebraska, where she spent the next six years of her life. Cather saw the town as a "bitter, dead little western town."<sup>8</sup>

Cather's mother, although domineering, was sick and pregnant much of the time; in contrast, her father was a quiet, dependent figure (Acocella 59, 60). In *My Antonia*, Antonia's parents are modeled after Cather's. Cather was also friends with several adults when she was younger, such as a German piano teacher who was also the town drunk, two doctors whom she often helped, and a clerk with whom she

<sup>7</sup> Acocella, "Cather And The Academy," *The New Yorker* (November 1995): 56-71; hereafter cited as Acocella.

<sup>8</sup> Mainiero, *American Women Writers, A Critical Reference Guide from Colonial Times to the Past* (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 315; hereafter cited as Mainiero.

studied Greek and Latin and discussed evolution, religion, and good and evil. Thea Kronberg, from *The Song of the Lark*, relies on her adult friends to prepare her for the future and finds in them a friendship that gives her the strength to pursue her dreams.

Cather created strong female characters because she wanted to succeed in a male society. She once remarked, "The fact that I was a girl never damaged my ambitions to be a pope or an emperor," even though she really wanted to be a doctor. But as she grew older, she watched men do what she wanted to do (Acocella 60). Cather lived during a very difficult time for women so in order for her to compete she became a man. Actually she tried to conform to their ideals in order to succeed at what she wanted. Unfortunately, she was criticized for trying to fit in. As soon as Cather looked back on her life in Nebraska, the life that she knew best, and her memories from her exile from Virginia, she was able to write.

Between the years of 1912 and 1922, Willa Cather wrote five novels based on her childhood memories of Nebraska. I will discuss the first three of these five novels in this section. *O Pioneers!* was published in 1913, *The Song of the Lark* in 1915, and *My Antonia* in 1918 (Mainiero 315). These first three novels are known as the "prairie trilogy" (Acocella 58). This trilogy, set on the open prairie, allows the female characters to grow freely and explore their independence.

Cather confronts some of the same social barriers that Glasgow confronted in her novels. It is evident that the female characters in the novels struggle against the forces that tie them to the land and to the responsibilities they have to the land or to their families.<sup>9</sup> In Cather's novels, the female characters go through the same growth process as the characters in Glasgow's novels. In addition to this growth, they must choose between their families and their goals.

## VII. Men at the Center of a Woman's Life

### A. *My Antonia*

In *My Antonia*, Mrs. Shabata and her daughter Antonia discover the disadvantage of placing a man at the center of their lives. Mrs. Shabata expresses her hope in her son's success by making the family leave their homeland. As the oldest boy, he should be able to work beside his father and become one of the bread winners for the family. Her hope turns into an obsession when she decides the family should move to America so her son has more chances for success. Mr. Shabata gives into his wife because of his responsibility to his family. The family

<sup>9</sup> Winters, *Willa Cather: Landscape and Exile* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Press Incorporated, 1993), p. 99.



then faces disappointment when Mr. Shabata is unable to conform to the new methods of survival and he commits suicide.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Shabata proves he cannot survive in this world because he is ill-prepared to learn new ways to support his family; furthermore, he fears he will never see his home land again so he is ultimately destroyed. But Antonia watches and learns from her father's changes so that when he commits suicide she gains the physical abilities to work as a man in America. However, before this realization can occur, Antonia must face the world through the eyes of a woman and devote herself to a man, then eventually overcome the impulsion to dependence. In contrast, Mrs. Shabata is unable to reach the last stage of the growth process because she continues to focus her life on her son. Antonia is the only one who has a chance at redemption and finding her independence.

In order to find her true identity, Antonia moves from her family's farm to town when the Burden family, their closest neighbors and friends, moves. While living in town, she works for several different families and she gains real life experiences that prepare her for a life that she will not have to live alone but one that will let her choose how to live and with whom. In town, Antonia goes to dances, gains a small group of friends, and becomes carefree. She begins to live her life in a way that she believes is what she wants. However, her lack of interest in work forces her to change jobs several times until she is almost raped by an employer. Then she meets a man who promises to marry her and give her a good life. This man seems to offer Antonia hope, and Antonia seems to manifest obsessive behavior when she agrees to go off and live with him until he is ready to marry her. It appears that Antonia will follow the same route as her mother and that her father's death taught her nothing. The man leaves Antonia pregnant, but Antonia's disappointment at the situation allows her to gain the mental strength to reclaim her identity and independence. Even though she is pregnant she returns home to work the land until her baby is born (Cather, *My Antonia* 203).

Antonia's redemption occurs after she devotes herself to the land and becomes self-sufficient. Once her land becomes productive, she not only redeems herself but also her father, and it is through Antonia's and the land's productivity that she becomes successful. When she finally does decide to marry, it is for companionship and children. Her marriage is successful because she is not obligated to her husband in any way.

<sup>10</sup> Cather, *My Antonia* (Boston: Houghton, 1954), p. 151; hereafter cited in text

## B. *O Pioneers!*

Antonia is at least given choices and is allowed to experiment with several options before settling down. Alexandra Bergson in *O Pioneers!* is not given a choice. In *O Pioneers!* Alexandra Bergson, the main protagonist, finds herself running her father's farm after he dies. Alexandra not only focuses on the land but she devotes herself to the memory of her father and what he wanted her to do. Her hope lies in her abilities to make her father's land productive, and she must give up all other hopes for herself. Her father's dying wish is that her brothers should obey their sister, which causes animosity early in the novel.<sup>11</sup> Alexandra becomes obsessed with the land and believes she should buy the unproductive land of their fleeing neighbors in order to be successful and prove she has this ability. Her instinct is correct, and she is able to make the barren land worthwhile. The land is divided only when her brothers decide to marry while Alexandra is forced to depend on herself and remains alone.

Alexandra faces with disappointment when she realizes that she spent most of her life living for her father instead of making time for her happiness. Her family believes she is too old and it is too late for her to start any new plans, especially those that include a man. It is through Alexandra's ability to put her own needs and desires aside that she is able to successfully carry on for her father. Alexandra's redemption occurs when she ignores the beliefs of her family and decides to follow her own desires.

## C. *The Song of the Lark*

Unlike Alexandra, Thea Kronberg is encouraged to follow her desires as long as she conforms to the church's ideas for the Preacher's daughter. In *The Song of the Lark*, Thea exudes a passion for her work. Thea devotes herself to many people and to many things. As a young child, she is spoiled by Doctor Archie, taught by Wunsch, and loved by Ray. These three men shaped Thea's life because they encouraged and nurtured her as if she were not connected to the Preacher. Thea not only respects them but she also wants to give them something in return. When Ray's death provides her the money to study in Chicago, Thea gives up everything to move out into the world. She slowly gains her independence from her family by distancing her room from them and taking piano pupils of her own. This helps Thea enter Chicago by herself. Her piano teacher discovers her singing talent and pushes her to become a singer. Her voice takes her to the stage, and she becomes

<sup>11</sup> Cather, *O Pioneers!* (New York: Signet-Penguin, 1989), p. 20; hereafter cited in text.

an opera singer. She begins to become obsessed with her new career and with becoming better than the rich women who ignore the technical points of music. Thea has larger aspirations than those around her and she continues to work. She reaches disappointment when she realizes that all of her work is only producing fatigue and illness. The public continues to want the unprofessional. Only through a renewing process in Arizona is she able to focus on her abilities. This process of focusing leads to her redemption and her awareness of self. Thea hangs on to her independence and eventually her identity in order to become successful. Once she becomes successful on the stage she is able to return the support of the men of Moonstone. Unlike either Antonia or Alexandra, Thea is encouraged to loosen all ties to the land and move to the city where her aspirations will belong and not alienate her from people who do not share her enthusiasm. These female characters each find a way to reach their ultimate goals. These goals often cross the set boundaries into spaces in which only men had previously operated successfully. Once each woman quit being dependent on men she could follow any course before her. This dependency allows her to work the land and leave the domestic sphere.

## **VIII. A Woman Must Remain in the Domestic Sphere**

### **A. My Antonia**

Female characters often leave home to become independent or they are never described in that atmosphere. Antonia and Alexandra, although they are tied to the land and are never far from their homes, believe that their lives are fulfilled only through work. Thea decides not to work the land or remain within the domestic sphere. She works on a higher plain and, therefore, neglects both the land and the domestic sphere. However, Antonia begins her life in America under the influence of both and is able to use the experience to decide what she wants. She uses all of her jobs to create the person she believes will be able to survive on the American plains.

While Antonia is still young she is sent out to work for other people--rich people who live in town. But this life only makes her long for something more. She also tries rebelling against the work of the stereotypical housewife. She spends her time with other girls like herself and enjoys the town dances. Antonia has to try several directions before she is able to settle on what suits her. Antonia experiences each of the stages of growth but she also learns that she has to overcome the female model she has in her mother. Mrs. Shabata shows Antonia that a woman is supposed to devote herself to her sons, but when Antonia tries to start her own family she is left alone. Through the experience, Antonia realizes

that marriage is not meant for her as a way to create a diversion in her life. When she returns home, she devotes herself to working the land. She will work outdoors just as her father did but she will take the strength she has gained from leaving home and she will make the land successful. When she decides she wants to marry, she finds a suitable partner who will provide her with companionship. The partner must encourage Antonia's growth in order for her to be content. The life she chooses can involve anything she desires and this happens to be a successful farm, a large family, and a friend for a husband.

### **B. *O Pioneers!***

Alexandra, much like Antonia, is forced out of her role as a stereotypical woman when both of her parents die and leave her to be the operator of the farm and the sole provider for the youngest son. Her father saw in her a strength that told him she was the only one that could be trusted with the management of the farm, and it was because of this that the responsibility fell to her: "Before Alexandra was twelve years old she had begun to be a help to him, and as she grew older he had come to depend more and more upon her resourcefulness and good judgment" (Cather, *O Pioneers!* 17, 18). By forcing Alexandra to become a father and a mother, Cather is allowing Alexandra to compare the two ways of life. As the head of the farm, she takes on the responsibilities of a man and by raising her younger brother she acts as a mother. Once the farm becomes successful and her brother is sent to college, Alexandra can begin to think about her life. By now she has past her childbearing years, but this is not a concern because she has lived through her younger brother. Through him she has accomplished everything she was unable to do in her youth. She might have been able to continue living this way if he had not died but this disappointment leaves her alone. In order to fill this space, Alexandra decides she really wants to rekindle an old relationship (Cather, *O Pioneers!* 230).

### **C. *The Song of the Lark***

Unlike Antonia and Alexandra, Thea is able to live out her desires. Thea does not even imagine herself working in a house, and Cather never portrays her as a housewife. Thea leaves her home with no regrets and is able to devote her entire self to her music. She places her family, her friends, even her own life behind her as she works toward her goals. She finally discovers that she no longer belongs to the world her family lives in. She finds within herself a desire that is much larger than the people of Moonstone could ever know. Thea is introduced to

independence and self-reliance while she is still young. This knowledge, combined with her desire to get out of Moonstone, allows her to compete for difficult roles.

Similarly to Antonia, Thea grows up in a house where the mother's place is in the home. Thea's mother is either having another child or darning socks but even with this kind of model Thea chose to do more than her mother. When she was little, Thea was always going off on her own. Sometimes she would pull her little brother Thor in his wagon but she never stays still for long. This restlessness contributes to her desire to leave Moonstone to seek something more. When Thea achieves all that she can, then she will be able to think about others. Before she can reach this plateau, however, she must rebel against her home and her family. Thea is in a sense rebelling against her home when she leaves the second time with no regrets and is unable to get along with her siblings while she is at home. She rebels against her parents later when she does not return home for their funerals. She does eventually try to make this up by supporting her aunt, who is still in Moonstone. By the end of the novel, it is clear that Thea has attained some fulfillment in her career because she finally is able to take the time to marry. Thea's career continues to be so important, in fact, that she is unable to fill the role of a domestic.

## **IX. Conclusions**

Each of the women in the novels of Glasgow and Cather go through a growth process in which they must encounter obstacles that will either give them strength or will leave them alone. Each woman must decide for herself, and this ability to decide is what the growth process provides. Glasgow and Cather were actually integrating their desires for the role of women when they created each of these characters, and the women characters in these novels overcome the social boundaries that their authors experienced. Women succeed where men fail and they even go on to more success than any of the men, even though the men around them believe they should remain within the domestic sphere and should always depend on them. Glasgow created Dorinda and Virginia to show how women should and should not live and also the results of the choices these women make. Cather created Antonia, Alexandra, and Thea to promote independence and strength through trial and error. Through their trials, they are able to gain the knowledge they need in order to assume social roles previously reserved for men.

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# THE EXPLORATION OF FEMININE IMAGES OF GOD

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There are some issues which are far too important to discuss lightly. Christians need to have much more respect for the God they serve than to discuss God without careful consideration of each word that is uttered. Because human language is limited, it can only point in the direction of God. Because of this fact, it is imperative that language is used accurately. To do justice to the fullness of God, Christians must explore a full array of metaphors for God. This must include an engaging look at the work of feminist theologians who call attention to the fact that God is spoken of, for the most part, in masculine terms.

Language will forever hamper the discussion of God. It is apparent that the finite language of humans will never be able to describe the infinite God whom Christians serve. But Christians cannot afford to be sloppy in their use of language. Language does much more than describe what is seen. Language conveys inner feelings, underlying presuppositions, and ultimate truth. Christians can no longer hide behind two thousand year old language to talk about God without discovering what those words mean in the here and now. Rather, they must be willing to conform their language about God to meet the demands, questions, and cries of a society that does not understand or affirm the beliefs of Christianity, and Christians must do so without undermining Biblical truth.

As part of the Judeo-Christian heritage, Christians affirm the fact that God is Spirit. But the language traditionally employed to speak of God uses terms such as "Father," "King," "Lord," and "Master," all of which have decidedly masculine connotations. By talking about God in only masculine terms, Christians forget the God of Scriptures. Christians forget the mothering God who meets all of their needs and who knows everything about them and loves them anyway. Elizabeth Johnson writes, "The mystery of God is properly understood as neither male nor female but transcends both in an unimaginable way."<sup>1</sup> If one agrees with Johnson and affirms with Scripture that "God is Spirit" (John 4:24 New International

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), p. 55; hereafter cited within the text as Johnson.



Version), then the language used to describe God can no longer be confined to masculine terminology.<sup>2</sup> As Rosemary Radford Ruether very effectively points out, "the male patriarchal image proves too limited to represent the variety of relationships to Israel that Hebrew thought wished to express."<sup>3</sup> That is why the writers of our Old Testament use such images as are found in Isaiah 42:14: "For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, as a woman in childbirth, I cry out , I gasp and pant."

The Bible readily affirms that both women and men are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Since the image of God includes both male and female, male images of God are not enough to point us in the right direction of the nature of God. Johnson makes the same statement another way: "[B]ut insofar as God creates both male and female in the divine image and is the source and perfection of both, either can equally well be used as metaphor to point to the divine mystery" (Johnson 55).

It is a widely recognized psychological phenomenon that men and women think and understand differently. Women, on average, are more verbally efficient than men. Men, on average, are usually better in solving spatial problems.<sup>4</sup> Since women and men think in different manners, it stands to reason that they often have to work hard at relating to one another. If a woman cannot always relate well to a man, how can she relate to God, a being that is wholly other than humanity, especially when the only terms that she has to use for God are essentially male? Thence arises the awareness of the need for feminine images of God. But the need for feminine images of God is not as much to please the women as it is necessary for humanity to engage in language about God that more fully encompasses the total person of God. Therefore, this paper will examine the work of various theologians who have attempted to initiate language about God that engages feminine aspects of the image of God. The intention of this paper is to prove that to encompass accurately all of the attributes of God, one must make use of feminine images of God in addition to the more traditional masculine images. The possibility of using gender-neutral language to point in the direction of God will also be explored.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural passages are taken from the New International Version.

<sup>3</sup> Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston:Beacon, 1983), p.56; cited as Ruether.

<sup>4</sup> Nevid and Rathus, *Adjustment and Growth: The Challenges of Life*, Sixth ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), pp. 318-320.

The Bible does present us with some obviously feminine images of God. The most often used is the image of Mother. I have already shared one Scripture of God as mother in Isaiah 42. Isaiah has many such images. Isaiah 49:15 says, "[C]an a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" A mother, unless under the most extreme of conditions, will not forget her child. God reminds us that if a mother would not forget her child, God will most certainly never forget us because of God's mother-like love. Isaiah 66:13 provides another example: "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem." In the book of Hosea, God is compared with a mother bear who protects her young (13:8). Deuteronomy 32:18 speaks of the God who gave us birth. These are only a few of the more obvious instances that affirm that God is Mother as well as Father. Though the Bible never says directly, "God the mother," that is no reason to rule out automatically the concept of God the Mother. The concept of Trinity is nowhere in the Bible, but the implications are there. How can one logically and honestly affirm the one and deny the other?

Many feminist theologians have employed the concept of God the Mother as a useful starting point for the discussion of female images of God. God's love is not just like that of a father. God knows us before we are born. God nurtures us in the womb, just as a mother does. Even the most sensitive of husbands and fathers cannot truly experience the bonding of that event. God's knowing and loving of creation is analogous to that most intimate bonding of mother and child. Sallie McFague identifies the work of the Mother-God as "creating."<sup>5</sup> Though on the human side of reproduction, it does take both male and female to produce a viable embryo, it is the mother's body which changes its processes and conforms to the needs of the growing baby. McFague makes the analogy that as creation we are in the "womb" of God (McFague 110). Consider this for a moment. God, though completely transcendent, is also completely immanent. In the womb, the mother "surrounds" the infant, but is also ever-present and ever knowing of the baby's movements and presence. But there comes a time in the life of an embryo when the only thing a mother has left to do is to separate herself from the embryo, so she gives birth to her child. However, she never abandons her child.

It is in the same manner that God creates and takes care of all of creation. When it is in the best interest of creation, God separates Godself from creation. Yet God never quits nurturing and sustaining creation. To see the Biblical evidence of this, one needs only to look at the first few chapters of Genesis. After the

<sup>5</sup> McFague, *Models of God for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 109; cited as McFague.

creation, God is portrayed as walking through the garden. When humanity sinned and creation fell along with humanity, God is never seen as walking on earth again. God separated Godself from a sinful world, but God continued to take care of creation – sustaining, redeeming, and, one day, glorifying creation.

Another feminine image of God that exists throughout the Bible is the image of Sophia. Those who have studied the Greek language recognize Sophia as the Greek word for wisdom. In the Biblical witness, one finds Wisdom in the first chapter of Proverbs. She speaks to us beginning in verse 22, calling for us to renounce our simplistic ways and turn to her for guidance (Proverbs 1:20-33). Ruether, taking this text and others into consideration, says that Wisdom is "used as a secondary persona of God, mediating the work and will of God in creation" (Ruether 57). Though in her explanation, Ruether applies her observation to a passage from the Wisdom of Solomon, we can see clearly from texts in Proverbs that she has made a valid argument. In Proverbs 8:24-31, Wisdom claims to be created long before the creation that we know and experience. Wisdom says that, as the very formation of the earth was occurring, "I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day rejoicing in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind" (Proverbs 8:30-31). We do not include this person in our Trinity, therefore this cannot be a true person of God, right? Wrong. I am not arguing that we add a fourth figure to the divine Trinity. In no way would I want to alter the concept of the Trinity from Father, Son, and Spirit. But if we are going to think seriously about God, then we must at least entertain the notion that what we mean by those words may not be all that there is to knowing and understanding the nature of God.

We have looked at the first figure in the Trinity and have seen how the ideas of mother and Wisdom enhance the view of God as creator. Let us now move to a discussion of the second of the Trinity. When one reads the prologue in the Gospel of John, it is apparent that Jesus is the "Word" which was in the beginning with God, the word which God spoke to create all of creation. Does this not sound extremely akin to that which was accredited to Wisdom in Proverbs? Could Jesus and Wisdom be one and the same? Johnson seems to think so:

The community of disciples is charged with keeping alive throughout the ages the good news let loose in the struggling world through the history and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth. An excellent way of doing so is provided by the wisdom tradition, which since the first century has allowed all the power of the

figure of Sophia to focus and to filter the significance and identity of the Messiah. Jesus is Sophia incarnate, the wisdom of God.

(Johnson 156)

I will readily grant that there are problems with Johnson's logic. Though looking at Jesus through the lens of the Wisdom literature will provide us insight into his character, one cannot say that Jesus is Sophia incarnate. The incarnation is fully divine, fully human. If in that fully divine we find full and complete wisdom, then that can be considered truth. But to call divine and wisdom synonyms is incorrect. However, in affirming an aspect of the divine character as complete Wisdom, we see a feminine aspect of Jesus that we did not know was present.

Johnson also looks at Wisdom through the lens of the Holy Spirit. Johnson defines Sophia as "analogous with the Holy Spirit insofar as she fills the world" (94). So as we have seen, there is a Wisdom influence on every member of our Trinity – on the Father in creating, through the Son as the "Word," and in the immanence of the Spirit.

In studying the third member of the Trinity, we encounter a very interesting issue. Many have proposed as a solution to the gender gap in the discussion of God that the Holy Spirit is reserved as the female member of the Trinity. Various information has led to this conclusion. Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, for example, points out that the Hebrew word for Spirit, transliterated "ruah," is feminine in gender.<sup>6</sup> In Greek, this word takes on a neuter form and in Latin a completely masculine form. Moltmann-Wendell notes that "despite this Western patriarchalization the Spirit was thought to be feminine" and reminds us of the Urschalling depiction of the Trinity with its third person being female (Moltmann-Wendel 99). The symbol of the dove, so frequently associated with the Holy Spirit, is typically regarded as a feminine image. In his homilies, Simeon of Mesopotamia uses the term "our heavenly mother" when referring to the Spirit. Images of the Mother Spirit even found their way into pietism (Moltmann-Wendel 99). The Holy Spirit as female, therefore is not a new thought; rather, it is an old and overruled one. If we employ the image of Mother in reference to the Holy Spirit, then we have both forms of the parental figure in our Trinity without sacrificing one over the other. Yet this is still not an accurate portrayal of God. God is not a family. The Holy Spirit, nurturing though she is, is not simply mother, and God the

<sup>6</sup> Moltmann-Wendel, *A Land Flowing With Milk and Honey: Perspectives on Feminist Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), p. 99; cited as Moltmann-Wendel. See also Johnson 50.

father is not simply father. So once again we are faced with our original problem in the search for language that accurately portrays the character of God – the insufficiency of human language.

Others have attempted different methods of speaking of God in non-masculine terminology. Ruether, throughout her book *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, consistently refers to God as God/ess. This reminds us that since both males and females are created in God's image, the divine image has masculine as well as feminine traits. Ruether makes the valid point that in making God totally masculine, we are in fact creating an idol of God in man's image. This is an idolatry which must be stopped (Ruether 66-67). To remind her readers not to engage in such activity, Ruether uses the term God/ess. After establishing the validity of this term, Ruether revolves her discussion around a systematic theology of God/ess. In the following passage, Ruether describes God/ess:

If God/ess is not creator and validator of the existing hierarchical social order, but rather the one who liberates us from it, who opens up a new community of equals, then language about God/ess drawn from kingship and hierarchical power must lose its privileged place. Images of God/ess must be drawn from feminine roles and experience. Images of God/ess must be drawn from the activities of peasants and working people, people at the bottom of society. Most of all, images of God/ess must be transformative, pointing us back to our authentic potential and forward to new redeemed possibilities. God/ess language cannot validate roles of men or women in stereotypical ways that justify male dominance and female subordination. Adding an image of God/ess as loving nurturing mother, mediating the power of the strong sovereign father is insufficient.

(Ruether 69)

Ruether forces her readers to consider the problem with traditional language about God. This language arose in a time when the chain of command was God, King (or ruler), men, then women, slaves, and children. This model cannot exist in modern society and should not exist in the discussion of God. Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, men and women are made whole again. Ruether thus encourages us to remove from our language the models that detract from a correct understanding of God.

Johnson takes a more radical approach by renaming God, "She Who Is." Johnson begins her introduction to this as a name for God with the discussion of the name for the Divine given to Moses at the burning bush, typically translated "I AM" or "I CAUSE TO BE" (Johnson 241). She then moves on to a discussion of Aquinas' interpretation of the divine name as "HE WHO IS" (Johnson 242). It is at this point that she defines her name for God as "SHE WHO IS." The obvious problem with Johnson's solution to the problem of masculine connotations in the divine name is that her solution just moves us to the other extreme of the same problem.

I lean much more toward the first solution than the second. Ruether offers us a viable solution to the problem of masculine language for God/ess. My disagreement with Ruether is that she wants to do away with any image of God that has a masculine connotation. Though these images need to be supplemented with feminine images, one cannot be faithful to the Biblical revelation of who God is without images such as Father and King. Though these images do indeed stem from a patriarchal society, they are basic to our understanding of God.

We can no more accept or understand a female God than we can a male God. To go to either of these extremes only proves that Feuerbach was correct when he accused Christians of making God in humanity's best self-image. A Christian cannot and will not accept Feuerbach's thought. Therefore, Christians must create alternative ways of talking about God. Ruether moves closer, but would rather do away with gender specific language altogether. This solution, if put into practice, would undo centuries of theological reflection. Therefore, there must be some form of middle ground from which one can begin to increase the accuracy and effectiveness of the Christian's language about God. It is not appropriate to remove parental language from the discussion of God. It is not appropriate to remove language of hierarchical structure from the discussion of God, though one must be careful that one does not allow the infamous structure to overpower and undo the more contemporary feminine imagery about God. But there are also other images which encompass both female and male characteristics without their being obtrusively one or the other.

An image of God that is relevant to both sexes without specifying one or the other is the "friend" image. Everyone knows to some degree what a friend is. When working with youth, this model is particularly helpful because teenagers' lives revolve around their friendships. To say that God is our best friend means that God is "in" on all of our thoughts, needs and desires. God supports and encourages, and lets us know when we are wrong. Most importantly, "what distinguishes friendship from other relationships is that it alone exists outside the bonds of duty, function,

or office" (McFague 159).<sup>7</sup> Johnson remarks that "genuine friends dwell within each other," in their hearts, minds, and lives (235). God is not necessarily dutybound to humanity. There is something about the character of God that causes God to choose to create and sustain God's creation. God also dwells within us through the Holy Spirit. However, as McFague reminds us, analogies can only point in the direction of God. This analogy has two distinct problems. First of all, not everyone defines "friend" in the same manner. Secondly, one chooses one's friends (McFague 160). God does not choose just some of us to be God's friends. For example, God would not choose a woman and not her husband, but a friend might. So although the friend model has some distinct advantages, it also has some problems.

Another image that we use often and that is very helpful in finding middle ground is the image of God as love as stated in 1 John 4:16. God's divine unconditional love affects every aspect of God's character. We understand nothing about God without first understanding that elementary truth. From understanding God as love, humanity gains insight into all the "why" questions we could ever ask: "Why is there something rather than nothing?" "Why does God forgive me when I sin?" "Why did Jesus suffer the things he suffered for my sake when I do not deserve it?" Even issues such as the emergence of sin are answerable when one can say, "God loves us enough to let us grow up and choose our own way; we just do not always get it right." There are so many things one could affirm about God as love that one could write many volumes on that one topic. But this is one we explore time and again; it is not necessary to elaborate further on this image for our discussion.

There is, however, a spin on this image of God as love that McFague examines. She brings forth the concept of God as lover. This image is not absent from the Bible. The Song of Songs is a poem explaining the joys of human love. It seems rather odd in the canon. In reading this poem, one sees how much the two lovers value each other. Even in their descriptions of one another, they align the other with the most valuable things that they know of – jewels, myrrh and frankincense, to name but a few. The comparison of God to a lover may be useful, but care must be taken in the precise location of value: "The crux of being in love is not lust, sex, or desire; the crux is value" (McFague 127-28). Though desire and sex may be elements of human love, they should come only after the value has been established in a relationship. Another Biblical example of God as lover comes through in Hosea. As Hosea is the lover of Gomer, so God is the lover of Israel. The Bible also uses the imagery of the church as the bride of Christ (McFague

<sup>7</sup> McFague also notes that other thinkers – Kant, Hegel, Aristotle and Bonhoeffer – have written similarly on the image of God as friend.

127). To explain this love that God has for creation, McFague uses the Greek term transliterated "eros" (McFague 127-28). McFague writes, "The assumption that eros is the desire for union with, or possession of, the valuable suggests, however, that it lacks what it would have. It assumes a situation of separation, a situation of alienation, in contrast to a situation of original unity" (McFague 130). If we take the biblical witness seriously, then we must admit that McFague has made an extremely valuable observation. When humanity became fallen because of humanity's choice to sin, humanity brought all of creation with it. This creates the state of disunity that McFague mentions. The Christ event brings about the avenue for the reunification of creation with God that will not be fulfilled until Jesus Christ returns. If we accept McFague's definition of "eros," we must affirm her assertion that God is lover. God values and loves creation enough to sustain and redeem it. God loves creation with a passion, the same passion which a husband is supposed to have for his wife, so much so that Christ came to earth to die so that all of creation might be redeemed (Ephesians 5:25).

Johnson engages us to explore yet another model, God as sufferer. She employs the image as relative mainly to women, but we might explore its broader implications. The suffering God sees our injustices and suffers empathetically with us. Johnson illustrates her point with an example from Judges: "[F]or the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them" (Judges 2:18; cited in Johnson 256). The Exodus event is another example of God empathizing with and reacting to the sufferings of God's people. Through suffering, God grieves with us: "God takes up the cry of Rachel weeping for her children" (Jeremiah 31:15-20). In Isaiah 16:9, God grieves at the outset of war. God grieves even over the destruction of people who are not God's chosen, non-Israelites in Jeremiah 48:31, 36 (passages cited in Johnson 260). The best example of God suffering is Jesus himself. Jesus, fully human, suffered the same fears, temptations, and grief as humans do each day. The Holy Spirit suffers as well. The Holy Spirit is the one who walks with us each day, experiencing along with us the sufferings and pain of this life. God does indeed suffer.

We can also find comfort in the fact that God is a liberating God. God did not leave the Israelites in Egypt with the consolation that "I am thinking about you." Rather, God liberated them from bondage. Feminist theologians look to God to liberate them from the sexism so prevalent in the world. This task begins with the changing of language. If one affirms with Christ that "there is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, New Revised Standard Version),



then one acknowledges the fact that Christ, in reconciling humanity to God, has already liberated humanity, male and female. Ruether explains that in the pages of the Gospels, especially in Luke, Jesus, through his parables, tries to show women and men as equals (Ruether 67-68). For example, the parables of the yeast and mustard seed both make the same point, even though one uses a woman as the main character and the other, a man (Matthew 13:31-33). The same is true in the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin (Luke 15:1-10). Luke also tells of the women who follow Jesus around, taking care of his needs (8:2-3), and the women who watched as he died (23:48). God has already done what women are now seeking to do themselves. The problem is that neither women nor men fully understand and accept the liberation that is there for all.

Our world is not made up solely of men or women. The humanity that God created cannot be properly understood outside of Genesis 1:27: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them" (NRSV). Not only must the Christian contend that both male and female are entwined in the make-up of the character of God, but the Christian also must affirm that, because both men and women are made in the image of God, there must be some terms that have no gender connotations that Christians can employ to speak about God. That is the heart of what I would call the Genesis 1:27 model of imagery about God. The seemingly masculine images point in God's direction. Female models, most particularly Mother and Sophia, point us in the direction of God. But then there are those symbols that have no gender-specific connotation that also point us in the direction of the person we know to be God. Only when these models are combined do we receive our closest picture of God. Mother cannot stand by herself, but Mother, Father, Liberator, Lover, and fellow Sufferer show much more accurately what Christians want to say about God.

Coming into this discussion, I was a bit hesitant. Who am I to challenge the way that we have spoken about God for hundreds of years? Who am I to think that I know any better than the great cloud of witnesses how to express the character of God? Then I happened across a passage in Thomas Oden's *The Living God* that in closing is appropriate for us to remember: "[T]he idea of an evolution of Christian language is hardly inimical to Christian orthodoxy, but precisely in line with the intention of orthodoxy which prays that God's spirit will spawn ever-new communities in each historical context, language, and symbol system, each faithful to the earliest Christian teaching."<sup>8</sup> I hope that in the writing of this paper I have lived up to this responsibility.

<sup>8</sup> Oden, *The Living God* (San Francisco: Harper, 1987), p. 322

As for the women whose opinions were expressed in this paper, though I did not always agree with them, I must commend them. The problem with much of today's society is that few people wish to stand up for the causes that they consider just. These women choose to take a stand on a timely and controversial topic of discussion. They exhibit the power and inner fortitude that all Christians need to withstand the pressures of our modern world. In particular, Christian women need the power that Caroline G. Heilbrun defines in *Writing a Woman's Life*: "Power is the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter."<sup>9</sup> We must make others aware of the liberation we find in our Savior Christ Jesus so that humanity, using the fullness of our language, may go out "making disciples of all nations" so that all may know the truth of our God (Matthew 28:19).

<sup>9</sup> Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine, 1988), p. 18.

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# THE ROLE OF TELEVISION IN POLITICAL ELECTIONS

KAREN BROWER

It is reasonably safe to say that television plays an influential role in the lives of most, if not all, Americans. It's even safe to say that television affects and sometimes changes the opinions of many individuals in society. But can it be said that television plays a major role in determining society's opinions about political candidates during elections, particularly in presidential elections? In *Television and American Culture*, Lowe says that, without television, "most Americans would never get the chance to see presidential candidates speak."<sup>1</sup>

Whereas in the past the Greeks gathered at the agora, or marketplace, to discuss public affairs, today people sit down in front of the television set. Television, Sander Vanocur says, has become the modern agora.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, television is obviously crucial to many people as a source of political information, but is television simply a provider of facts and useful information which aid in an individual's decision-making process, or is it rather, as Sig Mickelson wonders, a "handy, ready-made tool for the political charlatan"?<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that television has changed the way that an election works because of its failure to be a neutral news source?

Television has been a powerful medium since its beginnings in the 1940s. But even before the years of television, experts realized the impact the media could have on its subjects and recognized the role it should take. Robert Hilliard's *The Federal Communications Commission: A Primer* describes the legal aspect of the media's main governing body and includes provisions for problems that might arise in the media's relationship with politics.<sup>4</sup> In 1934, the FCC passed the

<sup>1</sup> Lowe, Carl, ed., *Television and American Culture* (New York: The W.H. Wilson Company, 1981), p. 50; cited hereafter in text as Lowe.

<sup>2</sup> Vanocur, "Television and the Presidency," Lecture on videotape (Nashville: Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, 1994): Program 3, 1:27:00; cited as Vanocur.

<sup>3</sup> Mickelson, *The Electric Mirror: Politics in an Age of Television* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1972), p. 26; cited as Mickelson.

<sup>4</sup> Hilliard, *The Federal Communications Commission: A Primer* (Boston: Focal Press, 1991); cited as Hilliard.

Communications Act, which regulated the legal aspects of the media's role in elections. Section 315 of the Act is referred to as the "equal time" rule. Essentially, this rule states that any station which permits a candidate to use its facilities (whether the candidate is paying or not) must give equal access to other candidates for that office (Hilliard 30). Such regulations as this were developed to ensure the neutrality of the media during elections. The media must not show favoritism to any one cause or candidate; rather, its role should be simply to provide useful and relevant information to the American public.

To be successful as a neutral provider of information, television must consistently do several things – provide an unbiased view of candidates, instill a sense of trust in its viewers, and encourage further understanding and knowledge of candidates and issues. However, television has failed to fulfill each of these obligations.

First of all, television viewers are not exactly presented with an unbiased view of a candidate. In *The Electric Mirror: Politics in an Age of Television*, Mickelson says that television is a tool which can be just as successful at creating false images as it can be at presenting the real candidates (25-26). Television viewers are "presented with a package" of picture and sound (Lowe 50). A "package" refers to the one- or two-minute stories that are put together by a reporter or producer for a television news show. Lowe explains that when a candidate is shown in this package the power to influence the public lies with the technicians who construct the programs (50). In other words, by choosing specific clips or interview pieces over others, the "packagers" can alter the public's view of a particular candidate and violate the media's neutrality.

But packaging doesn't occur only in the newsroom. Candidates' own staffs often contribute to the distortion caused by packaging. For one thing, political packaging is evident in candidates' staffing. A presidential candidate's staff now commonly includes press agents, a make-up and wardrobe staff, lighting experts; the list of experts in techniques of presentation goes on. The role of these staff members is to make the candidate look his or her best for television viewers. Campaign managers recognize the presence of television in political elections, and use this fact to their advantage by changing their techniques and staffing the campaign to meet the requirements of television (Mickelson 28).

Even greater evidence of this reliance on packaging is candidates' excessive budgets. Mickelson describes what these rising budgets indicate: "The ballooning increase in cost, and the enormous rise in the percentage of budgets going to television sufficiently suggests the degree of preoccupation with television as the

predominant medium for political campaigning" (45). But, in their preoccupation with television, packagers seem to have lost sight of the neutrality principle.

One of the greatest examples of how television may have actually altered the public's perceptions of candidates is the historic presidential election of 1960. The Kennedy/Nixon match-up was probably the most colorful election in history. Kennedy's and Nixon's appearances in the "Great Debates" have been "more talked about, written about, discussed, researched, analyzed, and generally worked over than any political innovation of the television era," Mickelson says (193). In 1952, Michigan Senator Blair Moody first suggested the idea of a live debate between two key presidential candidates. After eight years, this idea developed into the historical "Great Debates" of 1960 (195). The debates turned out to be a tremendous success, from a media perspective. Mickelson says that the first debate in the series was "the most publicized single event in the entire campaign and later proved to be one of the highest rated television shows ever produced" (206).

CBS, however, was put on the defensive when the Nixon staff complained that they had been "misinformed on light values and the gray scale of the set and that there were problems with the lighting" (Mickelson 206). Newspapers even implied that CBS had sabotaged Nixon. The problem that sparked the CBS controversy was that Nixon (who had just been released from the hospital where he had been treated for an infection) appeared "pale and gray," while Kennedy (who had just returned from a vacation in Cape Cod and Florida) had a deep, healthy tan (Mickelson 206). Nixon's staff blamed this on CBS officials, but his own staff may have been the cause. Officials later noted that Nixon's staff used an inferior type of makeup, which only added to the contrast between his complexion and Kennedy's. Mickelson adds: "[T]he excessive light which upset the carefully achieved balance in the studio derived from the flood lights which had been placed in front of the vice-president by his own television advisors" (207-8). If a candidate's staff could become that enraged about a misunderstanding of light values and grey-tone scales, it becomes clear that the media sometimes provides an inaccurate view of candidates. Why else would Nixon's advisors have been so upset?

Furthermore, researchers compared television viewers' and radio listeners' perceptions of the debates to see what could be stated about the differences. Television viewers generally gave the edge to Kennedy, while radio listeners thought that Nixon was the clear victor (Mickelson 207). Mickelson describes the behavioral scientists' findings: "The Kennedy 'victory,' if such really it was, probably stemmed much more from the response to the images of the two

candidates than to the contents of the programs or the debating skills exhibited" (208). Television viewers probably, and perhaps subconsciously, noted the healthy appearance of Kennedy in contrast with the pallid complexion of Nixon. This visual observation could have prompted television viewers to see Kennedy as the leader. On the other hand, radio listeners responded only to the text of the speech, and were not distracted by the visual images of the two candidates. Of course, the television audience was much larger than the radio audience; thus, most of the public perceived that Kennedy was "winning" (Mickelson 208).

Researchers of the Kennedy/Nixon debates have also shown that there is a great difference between seeing "pictures" of a speech or debate on television and actually experiencing the event in person. Ward Just, contributing writer of *Television and the American Culture*, compares the two: "What I heard [in person] bore scant relation to what I saw in my living room . . . . The core and rhythm of the speech were missing, and I wonder why this has to be . . . ." The reason "this has to be" is that television presents a package of the event – a package that slants viewers' perceptions.

What would have happened if the 1960 election had taken place in the "radio era"? In that era, "in the beginning and in the end, there was the word. And Americans listened to the word" (Vanocur, Program 1, 00:1:45). Is it possible that the television viewers missed the "word" while they perceived the image? Did television interrupt the political process and interfere with the public's perceptions of the candidates in this race? Did television fail as an unbiased provider of information?

Besides providing a neutral presentation of candidates, television must also instill a sense of trust in its viewers. According to Gene Jankowski and David Fuchs, there is a delicate "credibility triangle" of the trust among the American public, the news, and Washington; public trust "is at the base of the triangle, and government and news are the sides."<sup>6</sup> Trust, in this sense of the word, is defined as the public's reliance on networks for the satisfaction of their information needs and the performance of their desired services (Jankowski and Fuchs 100). Government and news cannot function without the trust of the public, and this trust becomes apparent to the public in the course of observing how the press and the government relate with each other. As the interests of and the information

<sup>5</sup> Just, "Newspaper Days: Politics – We Are the Hostages," *Television and American Culture* (New York: The W.H. Wilson Company, 1981), p. 54

<sup>6</sup> Jankowski and Fuchs, *Television: Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 99; cited as Jankowski and Fuchs.

provided by the government and the news media (the sides of the triangle) approach one another, the public trust diminishes [see Diagram A]; and when government and the news equate with each other, when their interests and information are identical, there is no public trust [see Diagram B].

Diagram A

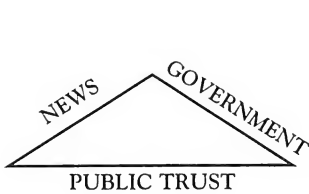


Diagram B



Jankowski and Fuchs explain that each angle in the triangle feels a great pressure: "Democracy can exist only within the triangle, that is, when the public perceives a space between the government and the news sources" (100). In other words, there must be an established public trust in government and news for television to serve the public properly in a democracy, and that trust requires, in part, the severability of the government and the media from each other.

Does this established public trust exist? Not exactly. As pointed out earlier, government officials have been known to manipulate appearances. Candidates have staff members to make them look as good as possible for the American public. Government greatly contributes to creating false images of candidates, and experts have become increasingly concerned that this fact will lead to an eroding trust in television. If a viewer is exposed to footage of a political candidate, then over time "he or she will develop an 'optically induced stereotype' of the figure."<sup>7</sup> If television is increasingly seen as a deceptive force, creating such "optically induced stereotypes" without regard for accuracy or complexity, then public trust can only diminish.

The final requirement needed for television to remain an unbiased source of information is that it must inform the public about government actions. Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure say that this is television's accepted role in American democracy.<sup>8</sup> If television were successful as an educational tool, then

<sup>7</sup> "Images," in *Vote American* [database on-line] (Virtual Entertainment, 1996, accessed 2 February 1997); available from <http://www.frc.org/ads/vf/images.html>; Internet.

<sup>8</sup> Patterson and McClure, *The Unseeing Eye: The Myth of Television Power in National Elections* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), p. 47; cited as Patterson and McClure.



regular news viewers should show increased understanding and knowledge of political elections. Patterson and McClure find that this is not happening:

A systematic study of network news effects reveals viewers learn little relevant knowledge from watching television news. Quite bluntly, ABC, CBS, and NBC are failing to live up to the media's traditional responsibility to keep the public politically informed.

(Patterson and McClure 48-49)

Television's reliance on visual pictures is one main reason why it fails to provide knowledge. Patterson and McClure argue that "[t]he networks' insistence on a videocentric portrayal of the campaign undermines their informational impact on viewers" (55). They go on to say, "Few campaign issues can be told well with pictures" (55). Networks shirk their duty to the American public as promoters of knowledge by presenting "a distorted picture of a presidential campaign" (Patterson and McClure 21). The evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC often pay little attention to major election issues, and rarely discuss the candidates' qualifications for the office. Instead, they devote their time to trivia: "Hecklers, crowds, motorcades, balloons, rallies, and gossip – these are the regular subjects of network campaign stories" (22).

While discussing candidates and conventions, television producers might show clips of the candidates engaged in playing golf, shaking hands with associates, riding in parades, or other similar activities. Although these video clips do show the candidates, they are completely irrelevant to the candidates' positions on significant political issues such as abortion or gun control: Video footage of a presidential candidate playing golf doesn't provide a viewer with knowledge about his or her stand on issues.

Whatever the consequences, however, there is no denying that television plays a major role in presidential elections. Ultimately, television has changed and will continue to change the way modern politics works. It has been a "mixed blessing" to our political society; it has brought the public closer to government and has afforded the public the means of greater and more intense scrutiny of politicians and the political process, but it has also distorted the view that it offers the public (Mickelson 25). Television has projected what would otherwise be distant political events into the living room, but it has succeeded in projecting only part of the picture (25). Perhaps the most positive thing to say about television's role in elections would be that it has exposed more people at "greater length and at closer range" to political issues and candidates (Mickelson 26).

Despite the benefits that it provides, television must begin to provide a neutral depiction of candidates, instill a sense of trust in its viewers, and provide understanding of and knowledge about candidates and issues. Once this is done, television has the potential to be an extremely useful tool for both the candidate and the voter.

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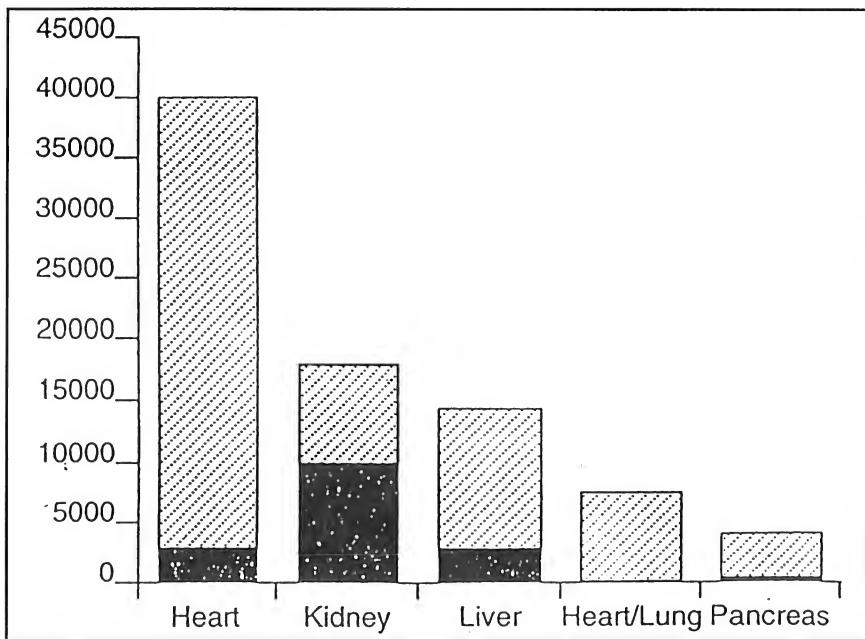
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# XENOTRANSPLANTATION

MARLENE WHEELER

## I. Introduction

Each year, thousands of people die while waiting for desperately needed organ transplants. Organ transplants are performed only when donor organs become available – usually harvested from a cadaver. The success of allotransplantation (organs transplanted from human to human) has led to a significant increase in the demand for donor organs – an increase that is too large to supply.



*Fig. 1 - The need for donor organs in 1990. Dark bars are those transplants that were carried out while the striped bars are those transplants that would be carried out if organs were available for all recipients. Adapted from Platt 1993, 182.*

According to figures released in 1990 (Figure 1), only 2,000 people out of 40,000, (about 5%) who need a heart transplant will receive one (Platt 1993, 182). Due to the decrease in available donor organs, xenotransplantation, or the use of

animal organs as alternative sources for clinical transplantation is currently under investigation.

Xenotransplantation had its beginnings during the early 1900s. Those attempted xenografts failed due to rejection (Platt 1993, 182). The best organs suited for human use might be those organs from lower primates, like chimpanzees and baboons. Lower primates are the most closely related animal species to humans (Stevens and Platt 1992, 414). In fact, a kidney transplant performed in 1963 from a chimpanzee to a human lasted nine months (Platt 1993, 182). The use of primate organs, especially baboons, has presented the scientific community with several problems. Primates carry a number of viral diseases that can be lethal to humans when transmitted (Bach, et. al 1992, 163), and the number of appropriately-sized primates is limited (Stevens and Platt 1992, 414) due to the difficulty in breeding while in captivity (Platt 1993, 182). Therefore, the use of primate organs in xenotransplantation research has ceased and the possible use of pig organs is currently under investigation.

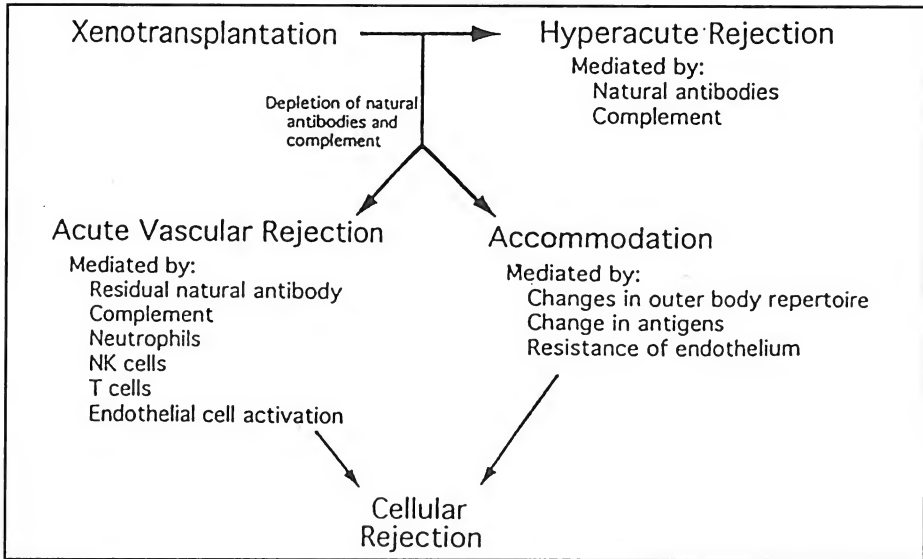
Pigs make ideal donors because in size their organs are similar to human organs, they have large litters while in captivity, and they can be genetically engineered. Genetic engineering of pigs involves making copies of desired genes and inserting them into the nuclei of fertilized eggs. Then the fertilized eggs with the genes are implanted into a host mother pig (Zimmer 1997, C6). But the most important feature of pigs is that the infectious agents they carry can be excluded as potential "death sentences" to humans (Platt 1992, 8). The use of pig organs is also more ethical considering that more than 95 million pigs a year are used for consumption purposes (Daniels – personal communication).

## **II. The Hurdles to Xenotransplantation**

Once an allotransplant is performed, the organ can be accepted by the recipient's body and be able to perform any of the necessary biological functions or it can be rejected, the host's body does not accept the donor organ.. The same is true for a xenograft, an organ from a different species. But when a xenograft is transplanted, the rejection is more rapid and more violent (Platt 1993, 183).

Figure 2 describes the outcomes of a xenograft. There are two kinds of rejection that can occur to a xenograft. One rejection is known as hyperacute xenograft rejection. Hyperacute xenograft rejection is the most rapid and severe form of rejection that occurs within minutes to hours. It is characterized by the presence of interstitial edema or the swelling of the spaces between the cells of

tissues, hemorrhaging (profuse bleeding) and the formation of blood clots within the graft.



**Figure 2 - Possible clinical outcomes of Xenotransplantation.** Natural antibody and/or complement depletion allow acute vascular rejection. Adapted from Platt 1993, 183.

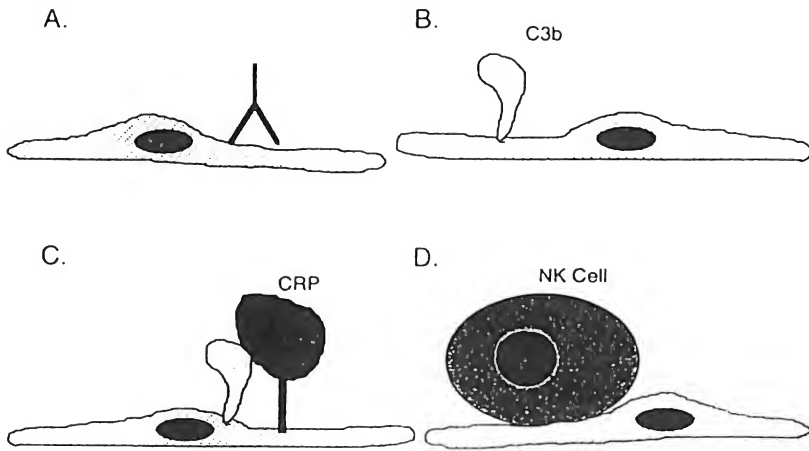
The second type of rejection that occurs to a xenograft is acute xenograft rejection. Acute xenograft rejection is not as severe as hyperacute rejection and occurs within a couple of hours to a couple of days. There is more clotting with the presence of leukocytes and neutrophils (types of cells that are part of the body's immune system) in the tissue (Platt 1993, 183).

### III. Events That Lead to the Rejection of a Xenograft

There are several reasons why a xenotransplant recipient rejects a graft. Figure 3 gives a summary of such reasons.

All mammals, including humans, are born with natural antibodies that circulate within the body by way of the bloodstream (Fig. 3A). Natural antibodies are produced by B-cells, one category of cells involved in immune responses. Natural antibodies belong to a group of glycoproteins (large proteins with sugars attached) called globulins. Since they participate in immune responses, they are given the name immunoglobulins (Igs). There are five different classes of natural antibodies that are known to exist in the human body: IgG, IgM, IgD, IgE and IgA.

Each antibody has a specific function to perform. For the purpose of discussion, only IgG, and IgM will be discussed. IgG is the most abundant of all the antibodies. It is commonly found in the blood, lymph and the intestines. IgM is found in the blood and lymph also, except it is the first to respond once an invader has entered the body (Tortora and Grabowski 1993, 704). In general, natural antibodies help contribute to the defense of the body. They help protect the body from invading microbes and clean up the blood circulation by disposing of any nonfunctional or "dead" cells (Platt 1992, 9).



**Fig. 3 - Possible immune recognition of xenografts.** A. Natural antibodies bind to donor endothelial cells. B. Complement is activated directly without the binding of natural antibodies. C. Complement regulatory proteins (CRP) present on donor endothelial cells that are not able to protect cells from complement injury. D. Natural killer (NK) cells of recipient recognize and attack donor endothelial cells. Adapted from Platt 1993, 184.

In some instances, hyperacute rejection can be initiated by the direct activation of complement by the graft without the binding of natural antibodies (Fig. 3B). This mechanism is not seen in situations where pig organs are transplanted into baboons (Platt 1993, 184).

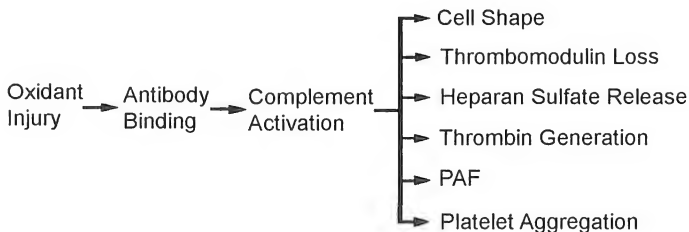
Another method in which hyperacute rejection is initiated is by the presence of complement regulatory proteins (CRP) (Fig. 3C). Complement regulatory proteins are expressed on the membranes of cells. Some are responsible for inhibiting complement activation at various points. CD59 is an example of a complement regulatory protein. CD59 prevents the membrane attack complex from forming. Together, CRPs help protect host cells from injury caused by complement activation (Platt 1993, 185).

Also involved in the immune response are various types of cells called lymphocytes, also produced by the body. B-cells, the parent cells of natural antibodies are classified as lymphocytes. Another group of lymphocytes are Natural Killer (NK) cells. NK cells attack and kill just about any type of invading microbe (Tortora and Grabowski 1993, 694). Some investigators have suggested that NK cells participate in the hyperacute rejection of a xenograft (Fig. 3D), although some research has suggested that NK cells participate in acute xenograft rejection (Platt 1993, 185). This issue is still under investigation (Stevens and Platt 1992, 418).

#### IV. The Process of Hyperacute Xenograft Rejection

The signs characteristic of hyperacute and acute xenograft rejection, (hemorrhage, edema, and clotting), suggest that the rejection of a xenograft involves the dysfunction of the small blood vessels on the xenograft (Platt 1993, 185). There are several sequences that lead to the rejection of a xenograft. Figure 4 shows a proposed model of the events that lead to the rejection of a xenograft.

#### Pathogenesis of Xenograft Rejection



*Figure 4 - Events that could lead to hyperacute xenograft rejection. Each of the events contributes to alterations in endothelial cells which lead to injury of the tissue. Adapted from Platt 1993, 185.*

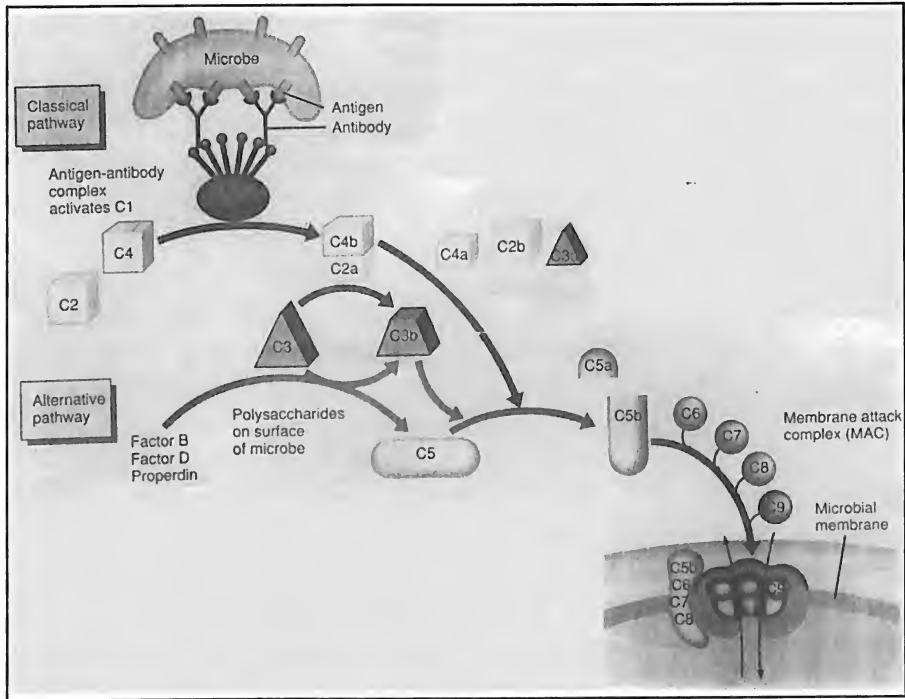


The first step in the rejection of a xenograft has been suggested to be the result of oxidant injury to graft tissue (Platt 1993, 185). Oxidants are substances that are very toxic to tissues if they are not properly reacted with other substances in the body. The next event in xenograft rejection is the binding of recipient antibodies to the blood vessels of the graft (Platt 1993, 185). Blood vessels, especially those of the heart are lined with cells called endothelium. Under normal conditions, endothelial cells are well protected by two membrane components, thrombomodulin and heparan sulfate proteoglycan (Stevens and Platt 1992, 415). Thrombomodulin and heparan sulfate proteoglycan are two types of anticoagulants (substances that prevent clotting). The binding of natural antibodies is the third step of the rejection process, and that is the activation of complement (Figure 5) (Platt 1993, 185). During rejection, complement is deposited into the graft, causing a decrease in the levels present in serum (Platt 1992, 11).

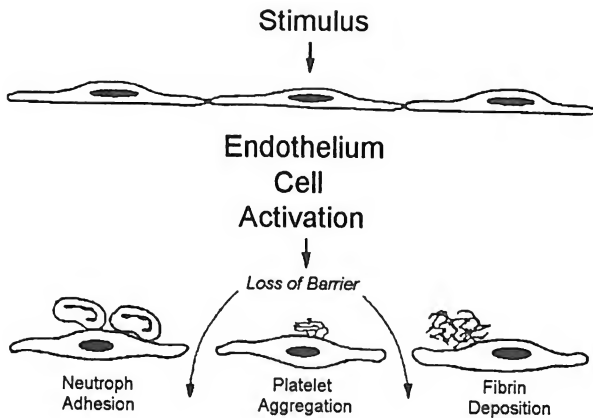
When a xenograft is placed into a recipient's body, that recipient's natural antibodies will bind to the antigens present on the xenograft and in turn the classical complement pathway is activated. The classical complement pathway is a series of proteins that exist in the body. Complement proteins also help contribute to the defense of a body. Once activated, complement protein C1 will activate complement protein C4 and C2. Each complement protein is part of a "cascade" that activates yet another complement protein until the membrane attack complex (MAC) is formed. The membrane attack complex is a group of complement proteins that punch holes in the cell membranes of the intruders. The hole in the membrane causes the cell to rupture, which is a process known as cytolysis (Tortora and Grabowski 1993, 693). Figure 5 illustrates the complement system that includes both the classical and alternative (not discussed) complement pathways.

The activation of complement leads to the fourth step in hyperacute rejection . . . a change in the endothelial cells in the graft (Platt 1993, 185). The binding of natural antibodies to endothelial cells causes the cells to become "activated." Once endothelial cells become activated, they tend to lose their shape and their thrombomodulin/heparan sulfate proteoglycan protective barrier. Heparan sulfate proteoglycan is primarily a large sugar that protects endothelial cells by preventing blood cells and plasma proteins from passing through blood vessel walls (Platt 1992, 13). Activated endothelial cells also amplify the effects of platelet-activating factor (PAF), which causes platelets to cluster together and stick to the cells (Figure 6), which leads to the formation of blood clots in the xenograft.

Nitric oxide is also generated as a result of endothelial cell activation. Nitric oxide is a vasodilator, it causes the diameter of blood vessels to increase (Stevens and Platt 1992, 415). Once all these events occur, the tissue becomes damaged, and thus rejected by the body.



*Fig. 5 - Illustration of the two complement pathways. The classical complement pathway is initiated by the activation of C1 by the binding of natural antibodies. Adapted from Tortora and Grabowski 1993, 694.*



*Fig. 6 - Activated endothelium by a stimulus such as antibody or complement causes the loss of a protective barrier resulting in platelet and fibrin clotting. Adapted from Stevens and Platt 1992, 415.*

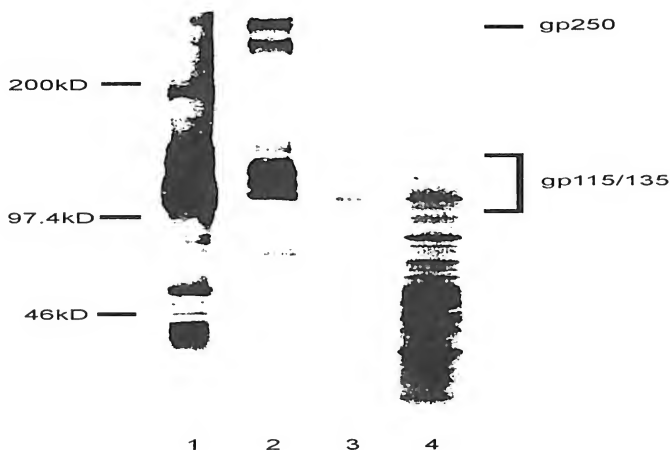
## V. Points of Interest in Xenotransplantation Research

Xenotransplantation researchers investigate many areas of significance. One such area is the importance of natural antibodies and their relation to initiating hyperacute rejection. Some experimental evidence used to support the hypothesis that natural antibodies initiate hyperacute rejection is based on observations that (1) anti-donor antibodies are already present in recipients. Once the donor graft is transplanted into a recipient, (2) anti-donor antibodies are quickly deposited into the donor graft and depleting those antibodies allows the graft to survive for a longer period of time. Then (3) once antibodies return to circulation they will cause the rejection of a xenograft (Platt 1993, 186).

Contrary to the belief that the binding of IgG initiates complement activation some investigators at Duke University Medical Center have concluded by experimental analysis that it is the binding of IgM and not IgG that causes the activation of complement (Platt 1993, 186). Dr. Jeffrey Platt and Zoie Holzkecht of Duke University Medical Center conducted experiments to test the hypothesis. Platt and Holzkecht had previously determined that pig platelets contain the

same or very similar antigens<sup>1</sup> to those that are expressed on pig endothelial cells. Platelets were used in the study because they are easy to obtain and are less expensive when compared to the cost of culturing endothelial cells (Platt and Holzkecht 1994, 327).

In the study, the authors demonstrated the comparison of antibody binding to platelets with antibody binding to endothelial cells by way of a Western blot<sup>2</sup>(Figure 7). Platt and Holzkecht concluded that the predominant antibody seen on a pig organ when transplanted into a primate is IgM (330).



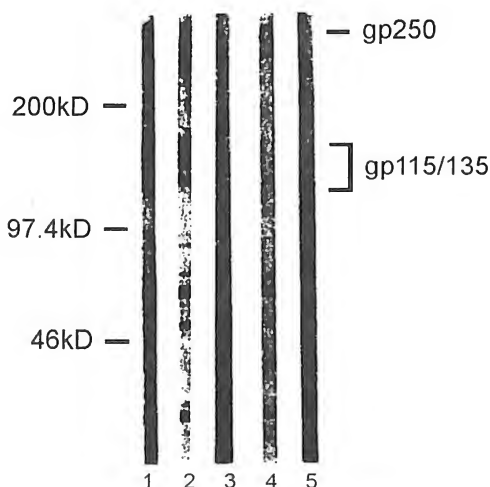
**Fig. 7 - Western Blot of human natural antibodies binding to glycoprotein antigens expressed on both porcine (pig) endothelial cells and porcine platelets. The dark bands signify the presence of antibody binding. Lane 1, pig endothelial cell extract stained with IgM; lanes 2 and 3, pig platelet extracts stained with IgM and IgG respectively; lane 4, pig platelet extract stained with Coomassie Blue a molecular weight standard. Adapted from Platt and Holzkecht 1994, 330.**

<sup>1</sup> All cells have antigens that are expressed on their membranes. These antigens help the host body recognize which cells belong to the body and which cells are foreign. This level of recognition is known as the major histocompatibility complex or MHC.

<sup>2</sup> A Western Blot is the result of several experimental methods used to determine the identity of a protein. First, proteins are separated by a procedure known as gel electrophoresis. The molecular mass of a protein is expressed in units called Daltons. During electrophoresis, proteins migrate to certain positions on the gel. Lighter proteins tend to migrate to positions lower than heavier proteins, which tend to migrate to higher positions on gels. Once the proteins have stopped migrating, the gel is transferred to a special kind of paper which is "stained" with various substances, depending on the preference of the investigator.

Once the researchers demonstrated that the same antigens are expressed on both pig platelets and endothelial cells, they proceeded to explain the results of another Western Blot analysis of the activation of complement by human natural antibodies.

Figure 8 shows the results of various experiments. When stained for IgM, gp115/135<sup>3</sup> is recognized by C3bi (lane 1). C3bi is a complement protein that is capable of binding to proteins. Complement is activated once an antibody binds to it (lane 2). Heat-inactivated serum destroys complement and keeps it from working properly (lane 3). CR1 is a protein that inhibits complement binding (lane 4). Lane 5 demonstrates that if only complement is present then there will be no binding of the antibody and complement is not activated (Platt and Holzknacht 1994, 331).

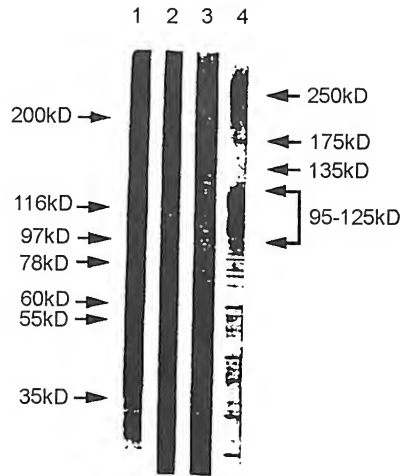


**Fig. 8 - Western blot of porcine platelet extracts stained with human serum and IgM or anti-complement proteins. Dark bands indicate binding. Lane 1, stained with IgM; lane 2, stained with C3bi; lane 3, heat-inactivated serum stained with C3bi; lane 4, stained for CR1; lane 5, serum depleted of IgM and stained for C3bi. Adapted from Platt and Holzknacht 1994, 331.**

<sup>3</sup> gp 115/135 is the abbreviated name given to a glycoprotein with a molecular weigh of 115-135 Kilodaltons (kDa). Kilodaltons are 1/12th the mass of a carbon atom.

Another topic that is being researched is determining the targets of natural antibodies on endothelial cells. Drs. Platt and Holzknacht conducted another research study in order to identify those targets that are present on endothelial cells. The study was published in a 1995 issue of *The Journal of Immunology*. The authors mentioned that a previous study had identified the antigens expressed on pig organs are glycoproteins. In the study, pig endothelial cells were exposed to xenoreactive natural antibodies, those antibodies that recognize foreign tissue found in human serum. It was discovered that human xenoreactive natural antibodies bind mainly to endothelial cell glycoproteins in the xenograft which eventually leads to the rejection of the xenograft. The purpose of the 1995 study was show that the binding of those antibodies initiate the activation of the complement system, which leads to hyperacute rejection (Platt and Holzknacht 1995, 4566).

Figure 9 shows the results of pig endothelial cell membranes preparations that were stained with natural antibodies IgG and IgM. Previously identified antigens known as gp115/135 had migrated to positions at approximately 100-135 kDa on polyacrylamide gels (PA). The glycoproteins were recognized by both IgG and IgM (Lanes 1 & 2). A pig kidney was perfused with human sera, meaning that human sera was made to circulate through the kidney. Perfusion of sera through an organ tends to deplete a large amount of antibodies present in the sera. The perfused sera was then stained for IgG and IgM. Glycoproteins with apparent molecular masses of 95-250 kDa (kilodaltons, a unit of mass used in chemistry) were not detected suggesting that the antibodies that recognize the proteins had been absorbed (Lane 3). These results indicated that xenoreactive natural antibodies bind to both cultured endothelial cells and pig organs during perfusion; suggesting that the antigens expressed on endothelial cells could be the same or similar to antigens expressed on porcine organs (Platt and Holzknacht 1995, 4568).



*Fig. 9 - Western blot of endothelial cell membrane components stained with antibodies. Dark bands signify those areas where binding occurred. Lane 1, cultured stained for IgG; lane 2, stained for IgM; lane 3, sera perfused through a pig kidney and stained for IgM. Adapted from Platt and Holzknecht 1995, 4568.*

## VI. Injury to Xenografts by Complement

It has been mentioned that the binding of natural antibodies activates complement which leads to the rejection of a xenograft. Three observations were made to explain why complement is so important in xenograft rejection. The first observation is that the levels of complement in serum decrease significantly when perfused through a xenograft. Secondly, complement is found to be deposited rapidly in rejecting xenografts. Thirdly, if complement is depleted before a transplant, the xenograft has a longer period of survival (Platt 1993, 187).

The importance of complement has been known for over 25 years (Bach, et al 1992, 169). However, the question about which complement pathway becomes activated (classical or alternative) brought about a controversy several years ago. Some investigators concluded that the activation of the alternative pathway depends upon the species that is being studied (Bach, et al 1992, 169) although it could be activated along with the classical pathway when IgM antibodies bind to the endothelium of a xenograft (Bach, et al 1992, 169).

Complement activation leads to the formation of the membrane attack complex (MAC), which is responsible for punching holes in the cell membranes of the intruder. In addition to being cytolytic, MAC tends to allow large amounts of calcium inside the cells, which physiologically is very dangerous to cells, (Platt 1993, 187) and it can cause the formation of vesicles, or little fluid-filled sacs, inside the endothelial cells (Stevens and Platt 1992, 418).

## **VII. Clinical Approaches to Xenotransplantation**

A challenge that researchers face in the field of xenotransplantation is developing a method to protect the xenograft from injury while still allowing for host defenses (Platt 1993, 188). An accepted strategy for the prolongation of a graft is the depletion of natural antibodies (Bach, et al 1992, 168). Depletion of natural antibodies lies upon B cells, another set of defense cells.

Some immunosuppressive drugs effectively maintain low antibody levels after their removal, but a major concern with the use of immunosuppressants is the possibility that the needed dosage levels might be toxic (Platt 1993, 188).

There are some alternative ways to deplete natural antibodies that are currently being investigated. One such alternative is the preparation of agents that allow antibodies to be absorbed or to block the specific actions of such antibodies (Bach, et al 1992, 168).

Another method currently being employed is the genetic breeding of pigs that exhibit or do not exhibit antigens on the surface of cell membranes. Graft survival can also be prolonged by the administration of cobra venom factor (CVF). Cobra venom factor inhibits complement (Bach, et al 1992, 169). It activates the alternative pathway leading to the depletion of the complement system, and in turn hyperacute rejection is avoided. However, a problem with the use of cobra venom factor is that it leaves a recipient susceptible to bacterial infections (Platt 1993, 188).

Genetic engineering can also be used in the aspect of complement regulatory proteins (CRP) on the surface of pig cells. Complement regulatory proteins are expressed on all cells that have a nucleus and erythrocytes, or red blood cells, which do not contain a nucleus. It was mentioned that DAF (decay accelerating factor) and CD59 are types of CRPs that help protect host cells from the injury caused by complement. It is hoped that through the process of genetic engineering, pigs will express these specific CRPs on the surface of their endothelial cells in order to prevent hyperacute rejection. This topic is currently under investigation.



## VIII. Discussion

There is a severe shortage of donor organs available for allotransplantation. Due to organ shortage, researchers in the field of xenotransplantation are currently investigating the future use of animal organs in clinical transplantation, especially pig organs. It is more logical to use pig organs rather than primate organs because pig organs are available in large numbers and are similar in size when compared to human organs. Also pigs are not known to carry any diseases that can be lethal to humans if transmitted. However, the use of animal organs for transplants often results in rapid and violent rejections caused by a multiple of factors. The success of xenotransplantation lies in the hope that pigs can be genetically engineered and their organs be made to express or not to express certain antigens or proteins that can prevent the tragedy of graft rejection.

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