

Carson- Newman Studies



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Editor's Introduction

Sometimes those of us who live and breathe the atmosphere of higher education lose sight of what a privilege it is to do so. Editing *Carson-Newman Studies* reminds me every year of just what a special community Carson-Newman College is. In a wider world where “conversation” often looks more like a series of ruthless gut-punches, the academic conversation among Christian professors and their students here is a small but precious reminder of how human beings really ought to engage each other—using our minds to the fullest for respectful dialogue that contributes to a better life.

In the pages that follow you will read a small sample of that rich conversation as it took place on our campus and beyond this past year. Whether through social innovation, reflection on ethical principles, or work toward an improved standard of care for grief-stricken suicide providers, contributors to *C-N Studies* clearly have their eyes and gifted minds set on ministering to a hurting world. Whether through an analysis of narrative technique, explorations of the new atheism, or reflection on gendered human nature, our contributors seek better to understand how the deepest places in the human spirit yearn for realization. And the profound need for and value of collaborative effort is highlighted as contributors describe community efforts both within and beyond the walls of academia.

The academic conversation is indeed rich. And it is consequential, as you will see in the pages below. We invite you to participate in that conversation by offering your feedback to this edition of *Carson-Newman Studies*. Send your comments or suggestions, on matters large or small, to baustin@cn.edu. Thank you for your support of this annual window into the scholarly dialogue at Carson-Newman College.

D. Brian Austin, Editor

You Can't Fish without a River:
A College Helps the Poor Help Themselves through Social
Entrepreneurship

Guy Larry Osborne
[Based on Distinguished Faculty Award Address, 2010]

Just as entrepreneurs change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society [by] improving systems, inventing new approaches, and creating solutions to change society for the better. While a business entrepreneur might create entirely new industries, a social entrepreneur comes up with new solutions to social problems.

- Ashoka, Innovators for the Public

Despite generally improving social and health conditions in many parts of the world, global poverty remains a serious challenge in many areas. The World Bank reports that 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day, and 80% of humanity resides in countries in which the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" is actually widening. More than 20,000 children die each day of poverty-related causes.¹

While charity has its place in meeting such human needs, as the Chinese proverb says, "give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." But as James Shields, who directs the Bonner Center for Community Learning at Guilford College, has pointed out, it does little good to teach the poor to fish if they can't afford the equipment or if they don't have access to the river.

This is where social entrepreneurship (SE) comes in. According to the Ashoka Foundation, one of the major voices for SE today, "social entrepreneurs find what is not working and solve the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution, and persuading entire societies to take new leaps."² SE is a way of unleashing human creativity, wisdom, spirit, and work ethos for the common good, a way of helping that goes beyond charity to justice.

[Editor's note: this article first appeared in *Tennessee's Business*, published by the Business and Economic Research Center of Middle Tennessee State University and is reprinted here with their permission.]

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In his 2006 address to the National Prayer Breakfast, Bono put it this way:

*Preventing the poorest of the poor from selling their products while we sing the virtues of the free market, that's not charity: That's a justice issue. Holding children to ransom for the debts of their grandparents, that's not charity: That's a justice issue. Withholding life-saving medicines out of deference to the Office of Patents, well that's not charity. To me, that's a justice issue.*³

Social entrepreneurs may work in the business, nonprofit, or governmental sectors. They may start their own enterprises or reform the workings of existing systems or organizations. What they have in common, however, is a profound commitment to and understanding of social change.

Thus, social entrepreneurs help the poor not only by teaching them to help themselves but also by changing the conditions and systems that maintain the discrepancies in wealth and opportunity that stand in the way of the poor achieving a better life. Ingredients of SE may include improved access to education, health care, agriculture and communication technologies, organizational development and leadership expertise, and venture capital. It is an emerging field that combines knowledge and skills from many disciplines that go beyond theory to practical application. It takes advantage of the expertise of the professional expert and the organic wisdom of the community actually affected by the problem to design partnerships for social change and independence that are both effective and sustainable.

In east Tennessee where I live and work, you don't have to travel far to find opportunities for SE. In a recent review of regional facts and stats, I found that Appalachia has a higher percentage of economically distressed counties, poor health rankings, poverty levels, and educational failure rates than other parts of the state and nation.⁴ Carson-Newman College is applying principles of SE through its Bonner Center for Service Learning & Civic Engagement and a new undergraduate curriculum in Social Entrepreneurship & Nonprofit Studies to find effective ways of serving the region as well as educating students for a life of servant leadership.

An example of SE at Carson-Newman is our BOOST program (Bonner Out of School Time). We describe BOOST as providing “homework help and academic enrichment programs, operated through a partnership with Carson-Newman College's Bonner Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement and the Jefferson City

Housing Authority (JCHA). The mission of the BOOST Programs is to combat educational injustice by providing engaging, scholastic programming for the students of Jefferson County in order to increase academic performance, enhance character development, and promote college access. BOOST programs are offered free of charge and are for students in age from kindergarten through sixth grade.”

What makes BOOST a good example of SE is that it was developed by Carson-Newman students, faculty mentors, and an AmeriCorps staff volunteer assigned to the college in collaboration with the leader of the previous after-school program, who also happened to be a resident in one of the housing complexes and the caretaker of one of the children in the program. Rather than simply providing student volunteers or interns for an existing community program, the college made its students and staff available as social entrepreneurs who helped design the new program including finding sources of funding needed to make it work. By increasing the chances for academic success and building the aspirations of the children, the conditions contributing to the persistent pattern of educational underachievement and failure among children of families in the housing complexes are being challenged.

Carson-Newman introduced SE into the academic curriculum in 2008. Undergraduate students may now earn a major or minor in SE and typically combine it with another major or minor in an area of study such as business, sociology, religion, or psychology. Two new courses had to be developed (Social Entrepreneurship Seminar and Social Entrepreneurship Practicum), but most of the SE curriculum is being drawn from existing course offerings in business, economics, sociology, psychology, and political science. All SE students also take a course in ethics to reinforce the servant leadership mission of the college, which we see as an essential aspect of this newly emerging field.

Indications are that SE as an area of undergraduate study and career preparation is an idea whose time is rapidly coming. The Ashoka Foundation sponsored its first national conference in SE education at the Duke University Fuqua School of Business in February 2011. More than 300 educators, practitioners, students, and funders gathered to share ideas and experiences and plan for the future. Ashoka is now in the process of building a consortium of partner campuses committed to excellence in social entrepreneurship education.⁵ Regionally, Berea College is leading the way, having established its Entrepreneurship for the Public Good program in 2007 and hosting the sixth annual Appalachian IDEAS Network social venture competition

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for undergraduates in 2011.⁶ At Carson-Newman, we hope to do our part by preparing students for a rewarding life of work and service that helps people help themselves in a way that spreads access to rivers of self-sufficiency, community empowerment, and long-term social change.

"We all want to change the world," sang the Beatles. SE is the new tune that just might make it happen.

Notes

¹ Shah, A. (2010). Poverty Facts and Stats. *Global Issues*.

² "What Is a Social Entrepreneur?" *Ashoka: Innovators for the Public*.

³ Bono (2006). "Keynote address at the 54th National Prayer Breakfast." *American Rhetoric*.

⁴ Osborne, G.L. (August 2010). "You Can't Fish without a River: Helping Others Help Themselves through Social Entrepreneurship," Tennessee Valley Institute for Nonprofit Excellence, University of Tennessee - Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN.

⁵ AshokaU

⁶ Appalachian IDEAS Network

Postscript: A Personal History of Community-Engaged Pedagogy at Carson-Newman College

I derived the previous brief essay as the "take away" message from my Distinguished Faculty Address I delivered back in August, 2010, on "Teaching for Good in Appalachia: The Case for Community-Engagement as Pedagogy at Carson-Newman College." Social entrepreneurship represents a great challenge and opportunity for the disciplines of higher education to ground our learning and teaching in the communities in which we live and work, and to make a discernible, positive impact on our region with its many economic, environmental, and social problems. In this postscript, I want to thank some of the colleagues and friends who taught and inspired me to embrace this pedagogy. It is my hope that other colleagues, students, administrators, and trustees will consider community-engaged learning as central to their own work within the mission and potentials of our college.

First, I want to say a special thank you to M.B. "Bill" Fletcher who was chair of psychology in 1979 and hired a 30 year-old young professor with hair and a lot of nervous energy. Bill gave me roots and

wings and I couldn't have asked for a better mentor and cheerleader along the way.

When I arrived at Carson-Newman over 30 years ago, I encountered colleagues already well seasoned in drawing from our region's rich opportunities for real-world learning. Joe Chapman had retired by then but still frequented the halls of Dougherty Science Building. I heard stories of Joe's legendary approach to teaching biology by taking students on canoe trips down the Holston River and exploring Indian Cave in Grainger County. Over the years, I retraced Joe's canoe route down the Holston many times with the annual Fall Colors River Float I coordinated for about 10 years and on class fieldtrips with my eco-psychology students. In the early 1990s several of us organized a well-attended regional symposium on the Holston River in collaboration with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Jan Addington (later Addington-Strong) taught Appalachian Studies to her sociology students by loading them into vans each Mayterm to explore the remote coal camps and strip mines of our region and to meet some of the diverse, stereotype-defying folks who populate our hills and hollers. Bernard Bull provided his teacher education students with accommodations in a small locally owned motel in Cosby as a base camp to introduce them to some of the rural schools of Cocke County, where, if you got much off the beaten path, you just might run into a distiller of moonshine or an 80 year-old midwife still delivering babies. I had the privilege of tagging along with Bernard one Mayterm to Grassy Forks School, a K-8 facility with a teaching staff of four plus the principal who also taught in the combined, lively classes, in which older kids would help teach the younger ones and an unmistakable sense of joy permeated the air.

In the English Department, Dr. R.R. Turner taught Appalachian Folklore from data he collected by analyzing sermons and speaking styles of preachers who warned of Hell's fire and saved souls over low-power AM radio stations located in the rural counties of our valley. Jan, Bernard, and Dr. Turner, among others, inspired me to make it an essential point to include to this day field trips and community-based research in my peace and ecological psychology courses.

In the 1980s I got to know Danny Marion, who still composes his evocative poems and essays in pencil from his writing table overlooking the Holston River, thinking of childhood places around Rogersville or fishing trips along small streams in the Smoky Mountains. Danny introduced me to what the world calls "regional writers" but whose insights into the human story and condition are as

profound as anyone from more recognized centers of great learning. A few of the must-read authors I encountered thanks to Danny—James Still, Wendell Berry, Flannery O’Connor, Wilma Dykeman, and Denise Giardina. But I’d recommend new faculty start with one of Danny’s own volumes of poetry. My personal favorites—*Out in the Country*, *Back Home*, and *Ebbing & Flowing Springs: New and Selected Poems and Prose, 1976-2001*.¹ “Why hell, son, you can’t miss it.”

The 1980s introduced me to other colleagues on campus who taught and inspired me. Sharon Teets brought the Foxfire paradigm to campus and to public schools of our region, and continues to serve as resident guru when it comes to community-engaged learning. Mike Carter, now President of Campbellsville University in Kentucky, took me to my first conference of the Appalachian Studies Association² and got me writing on Appalachian topics from my psychologist’s perspective. Danny, Mike, Sharon, and I did much of the early work that established the Appalachian Center at Carson-Newman.

These wonderful colleagues taught me the wisdom of integrating community and regional issues into most all my courses rather than limiting my elaborations to general academic or theoretical examples. When I teach about community-based research methods, for example, I like to tell the story of the citizens near Erwin, Tennessee, who organized to fight a local toxic landfill by learning to access and analyze public health databases. When I teach about institutional racism and white privilege, I share my experience as a member of Citizens for Justice Equality & Fairness organized out of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Dandridge, when I worked alongside my African American friends in our county—Calvin Ballinger, Judy Haney, Peggy Dockery, and others—to prod the local school system to put into place more inclusive hiring practices to increase the chances of attracting qualified teachers who are persons of color. When it comes time to explain how cognitive dissonance works, I find it helpful to reflect with students on how little awareness exists about nuclear bombs being made in nearby Oak Ridge, and how selective we are in terms of the things that most readily come to mind. We know celebrities and car brands, for example, but are clueless when it comes to naming the trees on our own campus.

The background in community-based teaching I had gained thus far prepared me in 2007 to assume leadership of the C-N Bonner Scholars program, which at the time was in danger of de-funding by the

¹ Jack Pine Press, 1976; Celtic Cat Publishing, 2002.

² <http://www.appalachianstudies.org/>

Bonner Foundation located in Princeton, NJ. Interim President Joe Bill Sloan appointed me as Bonner director and agreed to appoint Beth Vanlandingham, associate professor of history, as co-director the following fall. Beth and I took successive steps to strengthen the program and expand its scope, brought on Matt Bryant Cheney as Bonner Coordinator, and established the campus-wide Bonner Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement with its own campus building. In the spring of 2010 the Bonner Foundation reversed its position and promised an endowment of \$2.5M in an announcement made at his invited address at chapel by Rev. Wayne Meisel, President of the Foundation.

Many other faculty have made critical contributions to our culture of community-engaged learning. Colleagues whose work I know and from whom I have learned much include Ernest Lee, Sandra Ballard, Ray Dalton, Greg Hoover, Mary Ball, Susan Karr, Ken Morton, Sandra Long, Julie Rabun, Bob Trentham, and Maria Clark, among others. As but one example, Beth Vanlandingham is serving on the board of the African American Heritage Alliance, involving students in collecting oral histories of the Nelson-Merry School, and initiating other scholarship on slave narratives that will provide a cutting edge set of learning opportunities for students in history as well as other majors. Beth's work—as well as recent faculty additions such as Nicole Saylor who directs service learning and civic engagement initiatives of the Bonner Center, Spencer Jones who is leading an effort to revitalize the local Old City with his business students, and Andrea Menz whose linguistics students are studying regional dialects—give me great hope for the future.

Another source of optimism for me is the recent go-ahead from our Provost Kina Mallard to develop a Masters program based in the School of Social Sciences that incorporates the theme of social justice and involves faculty from disciplines as diverse as business and economics, education, religion, ethics, political science, history, psychology, and sociology. Laura Wadlington, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, and I are serving as facilitators for discussions and proposal writing currently underway that we hope will bear fruit in the near future.

In addition to academic mentors, I have enjoyed the benefits of meeting community colleagues and mentors from whom I have taken great inspiration. I got to know and learn from the “radicals and prophets” of the Highlander Center,³ perhaps the best kept secret of

³ <http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

Jefferson County, whom I sought out after reading Anthony Dunbar's book, *Against the Grain: Southern Radicals and Prophets*⁴ given to me by a Doug Berryhill, a friend I first met through my church. This book was a great awakening for me as a Southern boy who didn't know his own "people's history." I had the great privilege of meeting Highlander founder Myles Horton before he died, and Frank Adams, John Gaventa, Guy and Candie Carawan, Helen Lewis, Jim Sessions, Suzanne Pharr, and others—world renowned activists, scholars, and artists who have plied their trade on behalf of the struggle for justice and freedom within a 20 minute drive from campus. And through Highlander I had the privilege of meeting and learning from Paulo Freire and Rosa Parks, friends and patrons of Highlander, before they died. I have taken perhaps a hundred or more students to learn from Highlander over the last thirty years.

A bit more distant but readily accessible have been the faithful remnant of the Glenmary Order⁵ of Catholic Sisters I met living their lives in small mountain towns in Campbell, Claiborne, and Lee Counties, who embody the social gospel of being Christ to the poor in those remote communities—Anne Hablas, Beth Davies, and Marie Cirillo, among others. With such remarkable folk a number of us community-engaged educators from regional colleges (Susan Ambler, Kathie Shiba, Steve Fisher, George Loveland, and others) formed Just Connections after a conference on "service learning for social justice" at Carson-Newman funded in part by the Appalachian College Association in 1995. Just Connections continues to be a resource available to faculty interested in partnering with grassroots organizations to provide students with ways of applying their academic skills and knowledge to real-world problems in order both to learn in more profound ways and to positively impact the lives of real people.⁶

These days I find myself still very much engaged in community work as a corollary to my academic work. One of my joys is performing original and traditional Americana songs with an acoustic trio, The Emancipators,⁷ that provides music for area peace events and fund-raisers and occasionally on campus. I recently completed six years on the board of the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center⁸ in Grainger County, helped organize the Knoxville Interfaith Committee

⁴ University of Virginia Press, 1981.

⁵ <http://www.glenmary.org/>

⁶ <http://www.justconnections.info/>

⁷ <http://www.facebook.com/theemancipators>

⁸ <http://www.narrowridge.org/>

on Conscience and War⁹ with fellow Quakers from West Knoxville Friends Meeting, and participated in the efforts for nuclear disarmament by the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance.¹⁰ Bill Nickle, Ralph Hutchison, Mitzi Wood-von Mizener, Sister Mary Dennis Lentsch, Marcus Keyes and Glenda Struss-Keyes, and twenty-something Kate Caldwell, among many others, are community colleagues and mentors who continue to teach and move me by their lives and actions for social justice and peace, providing lessons I can share with students and opportunities for real-world learning, research, and service.

Thanks to all of you, especially my Social Science, Appalachian Studies, and Bonner colleagues, and to fellow travelers across the disciplines—to all who ply your trade as a teacher and person of privilege and influence in a myriad of ways that link commitment to community and justice, love of neighbor, and concern for God's good Creation, with your daily work and hopes for our students. Thank you all.

⁹ <http://kiccwar.org/>

¹⁰ <http://orepa.org/>

A Multi-Discipline Approach to Selecting a New Learning Management System

Jason Caudill, Valerie Stephens, Hester Beecher, Cassandra Catlett

Abstract

The selection of a learning management system (LMS) increasingly impacts all audiences across a college or university campus, whether teaching online or blended formats. Because of this, there is increasing importance for an LMS to be accepted by a multitude of departments and also students. Different disciplines and delivery formats require different functionalities from an LMS; therefore in making a choice for a new system interdisciplinary participation is key. This paper will explore the selection process executed by Carson-Newman College in choosing a new LMS for the fall of 2011.

Introduction

Educational institutions of all kinds that choose to implement technology in their classrooms understand that technology is not a one-time cost. Rather, there are incremental costs to upgrade and change technology in addition to the accompanying costs to train and refresh faculty and staff. In the area of LMS use these incremental changes are often triggered by a change in system version and the looming removal of corporate support for the retiring version.

This is the case that Carson-Newman College faced in the fall of 2010, with its current commercial LMS changing versions in the next academic year, followed by a cessation of support for the current version by 2013. This version change will mean not only updates, but an entirely different user interface and operating environment. Faced with such substantial changes Carson-Newman has the opportunity to explore alternative LMS solutions and perform an in-depth analysis of what an LMS really is and what it needs to do.

The process that Carson-Newman followed encompassed several steps and may serve as a model for institutions needing to make this decision in the future. Committee selection, needs assessment, candidate identification, information gathering, and testing were all conducted - progressing from very broad considerations to very narrow - and ultimately the selection of a final LMS solution. This funnel design, illustrated in Figure 1, provided a successful final solution.

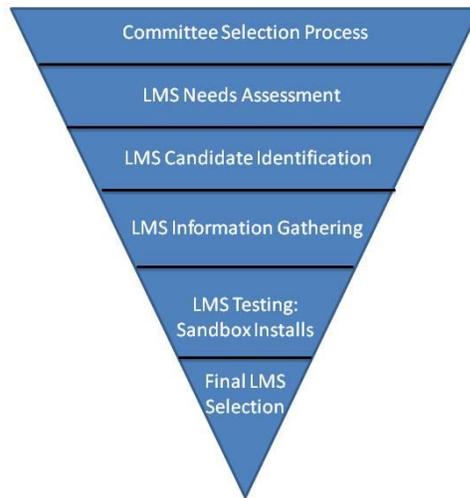


Figure 1: The LMS selection funnel

Initial Process

The Carson-Newman LMS selection project began with the important recognition that to be successful there would need to be buy-in from multiple groups on campus. The information technology staff needed an LMS that they could successfully administer and that would satisfactorily integrate with existing campus systems for enrollment, registration, grading, fee payment, and user authentication. Faculty needed an LMS that they could understand and work with, as well as one that was flexible enough to meet the needs of a diverse group of uses, ranging from multimedia provision for on-ground art classes to content management for fully online computer information systems

classes. Students needed a system that they could easily use and understand, and one that supported the changing nature of learning technology. Finally, although certainly not least important, the college administration needed a system that not only worked well, but had an affordable cost of acquisition and maintenance.

The decision for who was to lead this effort was an easy one as the campus has a full-time Director of Instructional Technology, Valerie Stephens. From that starting point Ms. Stephens began to assemble her team. The committee selection very deliberately approached the need to have inter-disciplinary and inter-departmental representation on what would come to be titled the LMS Task Force. The selection process was facilitated by both the small size of Carson-Newman as an institution and also by Ms. Stephens' close work with the academic departments on campus; however the guiding principles of this selection will apply to institutions of any size.

Selecting representation for academic departments is a complex task. Because of the technical nature of the decision, faculty members serving on the task force needed to have a good foundation of technical skills and experience in using at least one, if not multiple, LMSs in the past. Beyond these basic technical skills faculty members also needed to be capable of effective communication with their departmental colleagues, deans, and chairs within their disciplines. Such skill sets are not always complementary; therefore careful attention must be given to which faculty members will serve as departmental representatives and, in turn, as task force representatives to their departments.

Further complicating the picture is the issue of on-ground versus online classes. Faculty members on the task force had to be capable of addressing issues of multiple delivery formats on behalf of their departments. Because Ms. Stephens worked closely with all academic departments on campus she was able to quickly form a list of who would be the ideal candidates for the task force and invite them to contribute. At larger institutions, or even at small ones lacking someone in Ms. Stephens' position, this task can be challenging but remains critical to the success of the project.

Other representatives were also included in the task force. Two members of the campus information technology staff, including the IT director, were on the task force to provide detailed and much-needed

information about what systems and other factors would or would not work in given circumstances. The task force also selected two students, one graduate and one undergraduate, to provide input about the systems. Again, this emphasizes the focus on approaching the opportunity of choosing a new LMS from all sides: administrators, faculty, and users.

With the task force assembled the next step in the process was to define what Carson-Newman really needed from an LMS. On the surface such a question may seem unusual, but the first question in any project should really be to determine what the goals are. To determine the goals of an LMS the task force needed more than the opinions of the task force; they needed discussions with the faculty.

This is the first point in the process that the true value of significant faculty involvement was really seen. Many educational institutions, and organizations of any type, have certain social conventions that can limit conversation. One that can be divisive is the separation between faculty and administration. It was helpful to have faculty members as a key part of the decision-making process.

To gather information and feedback from faculty across campus the faculty members involved in the task force served as ambassadors to their departments, putting a public faculty face on the project. This involvement was critical to soliciting input on the needs assessment portion of the project. With numerous announcements and requests for information coming from different sources it is difficult to capture the attention of a campus audience. This task is made much easier when colleagues are asking for and promoting the need for the information.

Using the identified needs as a guide the task force moved to consolidate the desires of the faculty and the technical input of the IT administrators. The resulting picture was composed of two distinct needs sets: administration needs and instructional needs. With information about needs in hand the necessary and desired components of the new LMS were crafted into a single request for information (RFI). This document formed the foundation for the next stage of evaluation.

Information Gathering

The RFI process was quite enlightening. Five companies were invited and then completed the survey. There was some temporary delay, of

only 24 hours, because the Monday deadline originally established happened to be Columbus Day in the United States, for which many businesses were closed, and Thanksgiving Day in Canada, for which the one Canadian-based company on the list was closed. Outside of this minor inconvenience there were no major issues, although some lessons were learned in how to better craft a survey to companies.

The RFI itself was a very useful, comprehensive document that gathered all the identified critical information about potential LMS solutions from a variety of viewpoints. The RFI consisted of a total of 128 feature questions with response options of Yes, No, or Comparable, and the ability for respondents to add notes explaining certain answers at the end of the document. The 128 questions were divided into categories with 43 questions about administration, 30 about design, 50 about functionality, and 5 about reporting. There were also 24 open-ended questions covering a variety of issues requiring more detailed responses. These questions are provided in Appendix A.

The open-ended questions are likely to be useful for most institutions. The 128 feature questions cover some information applicable to all institutions but likely contain some that would only apply to a small sub-set. Because the feature questions were based on the needs assessment performed earlier in the selection process the features in which the users are interested will differ among institutions. The important point of this section of the RFI for others is that it is possible to be very detailed in the questioning of LMS providers and the providers will take the time to address all of the questions.

Document packages returned from the five companies ranged in size from nineteen pages to seventy-three. Obviously the content of the packages varied significantly, some of which was useful and some of which had limited use to the task force. Beneficial information from some of the providers contributed to the design of follow-up questions for live discussions with vendors and surveys of other institutions using the programs.

The next steps included live discussions with representatives from the different providers and also surveys of staff members, faculty members, and students at institutions using different selections from the list of potential providers. This process of RFI, live meetings, surveys, and task force member feedback contributed to a true 360 degree evaluation of the product where everyone involved in the use of an LMS had the

opportunity to provide input to the selection process. While all of the information was valuable the demonstration sessions with providers were particularly noteworthy.

Four of the five potential LMS providers took part in live demonstrations of their systems via teleconference to the LMS task force. One potential provider was eliminated prior to the live demonstration phase due to a lack of information in its response to the RFI. Three of the four were extremely poor experiences. The discussion of these experiences is not meant to criticize the providers, rather it is included so that others who enter into the LMS selection process may be forewarned as to their possible experiences.

The three providers who performed poorly in the teleconferences had strikingly similar problems. First, and most disturbingly, all three had difficulty with their own teleconferencing software and seemed to lack an appropriate level of knowledge to operate the systems. This is not the first impression that a task force wants of a company whose proposed purpose is to deliver a highly complex and mission-critical software service to an institution. More serious was the conduct of the company representatives during the meeting.

For all three of the negatively received presentations the tone of the meeting was very much one of pushing the product to capture a sale rather than working with the task force members to aid them in understanding the features and capabilities of the system. Too often questions from task force members were either ignored completely or, more often, answered in such a political manner that at no point did the answer address the original question. The nature of the interaction between task force members and company representatives frequently required members of the task force to be very insistent in their pursuit of answers.

The worst incident with the live events occurred when two representatives of the same firm participating from different physical locations had a miscommunication about the time of the session. The session started late because of technical issues and because the representatives were not clear on the schedule it was forced to end early in favor of being on time to meet with another client. What made the event truly memorable was an argument between the two representatives, which aired live over speakerphone to the entire task force.

These incidents were possibly aberrations, but the fact that they occurred three times from three different companies may indicate that this is the normal mode of business in the LMS industry. If that is the case then potential LMS customers should be prepared for the challenging communications and environment they are likely to face. While the one company that did an exceptionally good job with its presentation ultimately had the best product, it was truly the product, rather than the presentation, that made the decision. Because so many of the presentation sessions were conducted so poorly they ultimately were not a big factor in the decision process.

Making the Selection

Following full review of the returned RFIs, the meetings, and the survey results the task force narrowed the field from five competitors to two. The decision regarding which two finalists would be selected was a relatively easy one, based on differences in performance, cost, and overall quality.

Both of the top two candidates provided the task force with sample accounts to use to experience the system in a live environment. In the world of information technology these sample sites are commonly referred to as sandboxes; they are fully functional but not intended for deployment or use in an operational environment. For the LMS selection process these sandboxes gave task force members the opportunity to experiment with tools and features of the LMS candidates and get a first-hand feel for how things would work.

With all of the other information in hand the leading candidate was clear before the sandbox experiments began but no written information can substitute for hands-on experience. In Carson-Newman's case, the sandbox exercise confirmed that the original leading choice should be the final choice, but sandbox exercises are still highly encouraged. Many times a system that looks appealing on paper and during demonstrations quickly loses its shine when it is actually used. Because of this, sandbox trials should be included in the selection process for an LMS.

Implementation

At the time of this writing the implementation phase of this project is still in the planning stage. The current concept is to do a phased

integration, with experts from each department starting to use the system in the fall semester of 2011, followed by early adopters in the spring of 2012, with a mandatory move and termination of the old system's contract by fall of 2012. Each of these events will be preceded by multiple training opportunities delivered both online and on-ground.

This phased implementation carries the unfortunate cost of maintaining two systems for one fiscal year but the alternative - a full, simultaneous changeover for the entire institution - carries substantial costs as well. With the phased implementation Carson-Newman has the opportunity to create and execute a train-the-trainer model where experts in each academic department will be the first ones to use the system and will gain experience before their colleagues make the move. This will better localize support and training and smooth the transition for all parties.

Conclusion

Perhaps the key to success of the selection process executed at Carson-Newman is the inclusion of multiple stakeholders at every step. The process determining the college's needs from an LMS began with bringing in representatives from every part of the campus and utilizing their ties with their colleagues to generate information. The process will eventually end with those same front-line representatives serving as the on-hand experts to help those same colleagues transition to the new system.

For a tool as comprehensive and integrated into a campus as an LMS, this type of close working relationship among every group impacted by the decision is critical. Faculty buy-in and student acceptance are major factors in the success or failure of an LMS. The best way to engender such positive responses is to include those parties from the beginning of the process. Every institution is capable of executing this type of search and selection process with the proper planning.

Appendix A
Open-ended RFI Questions

1. What server technologies/platforms does the software run?
2. What end-user mobile technologies/platforms does the system interface?
3. Which other LMS systems will this system allow import of materials?
4. What types of usage reports does the system provide system administrators?
5. What types of course activity reports does the system provide system administrators?
6. What types of classroom management, activity and analysis reports does the system provide instructors?
7. Are the reporting tools exportable into a common format (CSV, Excel, etc.)
8. What authentication models (LDAP, Kerberos, etc.) are natively supported?
9. Does the system support multiple types of authentication?
10. What does the system offer in ways to provide students' information in accordance with U.S. FERPA, including grades as well as directory information requested to be private by the user?
11. What is the average time needed for downtime for the purpose of applying patches, hot-fixes or service release versions?
12. Does the program meet U.S. A.D.A. requirements (section 508)?
13. Can information within instructors and students interface be accessed via text only for use with screen readers or Braille display without loss of functionality?
14. Can instructors and students navigate using keyboard only without loss of functionality?
15. Please describe how content might be selectively released.
16. What and who sets limitations of file uploads?
17. What types of questions are used in assessments and how are they graded?
18. Does the system provide other security tools to help minimize potential for cheating besides randomization and time-tests?
19. Does the system provide fraudulent user prevention such as biometric recognition tools for exam security?

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20. What measures within the assessment tool are available to assist the student with time keeping when taking an assessment (such as pop-up notification of time remaining)?
21. What measures within the assessment tool are available to prevent loss of data in the event of system crash or time-out when student is taking the assessment?
22. Is your pricing structure all-inclusive or “module” based?
23. Is training included with the purchase?
24. Please provide your pricing structure.

Radio Diegesis in the Restoration of the Catholic Faith: *Le Dieu vivant - radio rapportage de la Passion en 4 journées*

Richard L. Gray

In Interwar France (1919-1938), radio exhibited a unifying power. Radio brought French families together, it drew families into a new world and it instructed them on how to better their own world. Religious-minded dramatists, such as Cita Malard and her daughter Suzanne, turned radio into the playwright's mouthpiece. The Malards quickly discovered that they could use the radio to advocate a renewal of the Catholic faith within a France that was still licking its wounds from the scourges of World War I. The existence of a mother-daughter radio drama writing team certainly represented an anomaly in French radio writing of the Interwar period.¹ The Malards were socially-minded dramatists, fashioned from the same mold as Bertolt Brecht who maintained that all drama must be didactic (and propagandistic) and not primarily for entertainment purposes (Brecht 68, 76, 80, 105). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Cita and Suzanne Malard promoted radio drama as the "people's genre," a genre that should treat subject matter important within society. In this essay, I will examine the use of variant narrative diegesis in Cita and Suzanne Malard's radio drama entitled *Le Dieu vivant - radio rapportage de la Passion en 4 journées* with a parallel goal of illustrating how these two radio dramatists used the power of the radio to restore the Catholic faith in France during the Interwar period.

French radio grew throughout the 1930s – as did radio drama – with the number of daily listeners increasing from two million at the beginning of the decade to approximately twenty million by 1940 (Méadel 193). The first broadcasting stations came into being through the initiative of radio receiver manufacturers. Stations required listeners to sell the radio that they manufactured, and to create a listener base

¹ Among the important female radio dramatists writing in French include Andrée Symboliste, French ex-patriot and author of *France-Brésil*. Rio de Janeiro: H. Velho, 1945, broadcast once per week on Radio Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (February 1, 1943-April 20, 1945), and the Québécoise, Marie-Claire Blais, author of numerous radio dramas included in the collection *Textes radiophoniques*. Montréal: Boréal, 1999. The work of female radio dramatists remains of unmeasured importance.

each station had to develop programming that appealed to listeners. Radio stations increased the number of daily programming hours throughout the 1930s. In 1933, public station Radio-Rennes increased its programming to seventy-five hours per week (Brochand 327). Radio-Cité, a private station that began in 1935 with forty-two hours of programming per week, offered one hundred twenty-six hours of programming in 1936 (Méadel 238). In 1937, rural areas in France such as the Massif Central and mountainous regions such as the Alps had less than one radio per twenty people. In contrast, urban centers such as Paris and Lyon had approximately one radio per family.²

In the Interwar period, the state of affairs in France made drama a societal necessity both for the purpose of education as well as for entertainment.³ Theater remained primarily a pastime of the upper crust and it continued to exhibit a social and political propensity. Radio leveled the playing field; it made theater available to anyone with access to a radio. The range of dramas broadcast via radio, including national and international theater, offered a wealth of possibilities for the radio drama producer and for the listener. Individual and serial dramas enjoyed extreme popularity, which included social action drama, a popular form of didactic radio verse drama that focused on current social issues. When state-controlled and commercial stations in France began to broadcast drama, they shared the same concerns. Broadcasters feared that dramas that had once interested a minority might be unsuccessful when transmitted to the entire nation. Inoffensive drama was essential to privately-sponsored programming. Writers created dramatized forms of both classical and popular novels and socially-minded dramatists such as Bertolt Brecht asserted that drama must be didactic and not exclusively entertainment. Brecht influenced radio theory and many French radio dramatists and he attached a tremendous importance to the power of radio in society. In

² André-Jean Tudesq and Élisabeth Cazenave explain this process in “Radiodiffusion et politique: les élections radiophoniques de 1937 en France,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* (Oct.-Dec. 1976), 530.

³ All types of entertainment, including sports, movies, and drama, increased in popularity following World War I, as Charles Rearick notes in *The French in Love and War* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997): “Through the press, movie newsreels, and radio broadcasts, these and other sporting attractions became an inescapable part of the life of the times” (143-144).

1928, he wrote his first radio drama entitled *Der Lindburghflug*. Written in a style of theater that informed the public, *Der Lindburghflug* was a didactic radio drama directed toward boys and girls. Brecht saw in radio the possibility to inform the people of political problems and also to suggest possible solutions. He wanted to transform radio from a commercial product to a form of communication that improves society.⁴ Brecht suggested that “. . . the radio - a technical invention that still must create for itself a mass need rather than subordinating itself to an antiquated, exhausted need - is a grand, productive opportunity for our plays” (Silberman 33). Although he wrote about German theater, his vision extended throughout Western Europe. He maintained that “our plays are meant for many people, but not for that small elite of snobs who have already ‘seen everything’ and who claim on every street corner that *they* are the ones intended . . . this elite clearly *no longer* represents the nation . . .” (Silberman 33). Brecht felt that if the stage theater were serving its intended purpose, radio drama would have no reason to exist: “If the theatre were doing its duty, then you would find only one person ready to sacrifice at least half of the pleasure of a play, which consists of seeing and the feeling of immediacy, in order to get the other half, listening, in a really cultivated way” (Silberman 34). It was in radio that

⁴ The importance of radio in the life of Bertolt Brecht is conveyed in his eloquent poem “Radio” (1936).

You little box, held to me when escaping
So that your valves should not break,
Carried from house to ship from ship to train,
So that my enemies might go on talking to me.
Near my bed, to my pain
The last thing at night, the first thing in the morning,
Of their victories and of my cares,
Promise me not to go silent all of a sudden.

Translation from Marshall McLuhan’s *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 298.

Brecht saw a theater renaissance. Through radio, theater (drama) had both the ability to reconnect with the people and to focus on issues that were pertinent within society. Theater was no longer the puppet of an elite minority. Radio had the capacity to acknowledge that drama was a cultural construct, evolving with the times.

The radio dramas created by Cita and Suzanne Malard represented the type of radio drama to which Brecht had referred. Their work focused on social issues and was inherently a cultural construct and the product of contemporary mores. Radio drama, for its part, was not presented as simple entertainment, but rather as an artistic form that had the ability and responsibility both to inform and to transform the public. Radio drama, as produced by Radio-Paris, Paris P.T.T., Radiodiffusion française, etc., was a French cultural object, and since, according to Wendy Griswold such “objects are made by human beings” (14), we must understand radio drama by examining its creation. Radio drama became a means to express French popular culture.

The desire to bring religious drama to the radio was, in fact, part of a vogue that had begun with the dawn of French radio in 1922.⁵ Georges Angeloz’s pastoral piece entitled *Paris-Bethléem, Noël, radieux* established a foundation for religious-centered radio drama. Broadcast on Radiola on December 24, 1922, with musical arrangement by Victor Charpentier, Angeloz’s work is generally acknowledged to be the first French play written exclusively for radio.⁶ Throughout the 1930s, religiously-based radio dramas continued to appear in response to the secularization of French society, which included André Deleuze’s *La Femme qui épousa le diable* (Strasbourg,

⁵ On January 2, 1921, the vesper service from Calvary Episcopal Church was broadcast on the premier American radio station, KDKA Pittsburgh. “The radio industry early recognized that in addition to these regular Sunday and week-day religious services, the great festivals of the Christian year, such as Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Easter morning, witnessed a great outpouring of religious expression from all over the civilized world.” Spencer Miller, “Radio and Religion,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 177 (1935): 138.

⁶ There is but one extant copy of Angeloz’s work, which is held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Unfortunately, it has been lost as a result of rebinding.

March 12, 1937), Theo Fleishmann's *Le Peuple aux yeux clairs* (Radio-Paris, April 26, 1938), and Hugues Nonn's *Rencontres Immortelles: Adam et Eve*, a radio dramatic series broadcast from 1935-1940 over several French radio stations.⁷ Because of the secularization that had resulted from France's failures in World War I, Catholicism had transformed itself from the cornerstone of French society to merely a cultural component of French identity. Eugen Weber notes that ". . . better than nine in ten French babies were baptized Catholics, but only one third of adults observed their religious duties once a year, at Easter . . ." (Weber 186).⁸ Writers were working against the notion of Catholicism as religion versus Catholicism as culture. The Malards responded by using the radio, which "enjoys a unique power to marshal the spiritual and ethical forces of the nation," to restore the Catholic faith (Angell 357).

By 1931, Cita and Suzanne Malard had already composed a collection of poems entitled *Radiophonies* (Éditions de la Revue des Poètes) designed to honor the radio, and throughout the 1930s, the two playwrights developed radio drama with a particularly religious objective. With this in mind, by 1932, the Malards had already begun to work on what would become a series of religious-oriented radio dramas: *Central-Éternité* (Radio-Paris, December 9, 1932); *L'Impénétrable, comédie en un acte* (Poste-Parisien, June 4, 1934); *Les Survivants* (Radio-Paris, February 14, 1937); *Le Dieu vivant: radio-rapportage de la Passion en 4 journées* (Paris-P.T.T., March 21, 25, 26 and 28, 1937); *La Nativité, évocation radiophonique* (Paris P.T.T., December 25, 1938); *Évocation monégasque, pièce radiophonique* (Radiodiffusion nationale française, February 27, 1942). *Le Dieu vivant: radio rapportage de la Passion en 4 journées* was the only such

⁷ For more on secularization in France, see John Hellman's "Vichy Background: Political Alternatives for French Catholics in the Nineteen-Thirties," *The Journal of Modern History* 49.1, On Demand Supplement. (Mar. 1977), D1111-D1144.

⁸ Weber noted further evidence of the secularization of French society: "In the department of the Seine [Paris] in 1937, 23,223 civil marriages far outnumbered 18,124 religious ones. Baptism shrank more slowly: 94 percent in 1930, 80 percent in 1970. Religious burials receded a bit faster: 70 percent in 1930, 63 percent in 1935. On the whole, though, rituals and their performers waned more or less in step" (186).

radio drama to focus exclusively on the Easter season.⁹ In the Interwar period, the Easter season was the most important season of the Catholic liturgical year and religious radio programming became an important means to impact the soul of the nation. Cita's and Suzanne Malard's *Le Dieu vivant: radio rapportage de la Passion en 4 journées* was a simple play that related the Passion of the Christ in episodic fashion over the course of four evenings.

Entertaining, didactic, and propagandistic, *Le Dieu vivant* embraced a return to a French society with a religious cornerstone as well as a theatrical tradition that had existed since the middle ages. In *The Medieval French Drama*, Grace Frank underscores the fact that French drama has always been indebted to religious liturgy, ". . . for drama, with its distinguishing characteristics of dialogue, impersonation, action and scenic effects, was also latent in that nucleus of all medieval life. . . . Each of these elements actually made important contributions to the medieval stage, but it is primarily to one of them, the liturgy of the Mass, that we owe the beginnings of the formal drama of the Middle Ages" (Frank 18). Such a notion gave religious radio drama its "raison d'être." By beginning the drama on Palm Sunday, and with the remaining three broadcasts occurring on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, these "shows" captured the spirit of the Easter season, which motivated so many Catholics to attend mass and created an intersection between the seasonal Catholic zeal and the increasingly-popular technology of radio.¹⁰

For the March 21, 1937 transmission, the Malards developed an extensive cast of characters, including Jesus and several other well-known "characters" from the Easter story, including Matthew and Martha. Georges Colin, one of the most prominent radio directors of the 1920s and 1930s, directed the drama and read the role of the reporter, who would eventually become the main character of the radio

⁹ The Malards also co-authored a religious text entitled *Les Femmes dans l'Église à la lumière de Vatican II* (Paris: Mame, 1968). Suzanne Malard authored her own religious works as well, including *Prisons du ciel* (Paris: Plon 1957), *Un million de religieuses* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), and *De Vincent de Paul à Jean de la Croix: Mère Marie des Anges, fondatrice du Carmel de Bagnères, 1790-1863* (Monaco: Imprimatur, s.n., 1965).

¹⁰ The Malards also created a children's version of *Le Dieu vivant* entitled *Le Dieu vivant chez les jeunes: drame en quatre journées* (Paris: Union des œuvres catholiques de France, 1947).

dramatic performance.¹¹ Suzanne Malard presented *Le Dieu vivant* in front of the microphone of Paris-P.T.T.:

Mes chers auditeurs!
Au moment de vous inviter à faire avec nous un grand voyage, dans le temps et dans l'espace, laissez-moi vous préciser dans quel sens nous faisons appel à votre collaboration à tous.
Qu'allons-nous faire?
Avec un respect absolu de toutes les opinions et de toutes les croyances, essayer de vous suggérer, dans son actualité, le drame qui est à la base de notre civilisation, et de vous rendre présent, dans la permanence de son rayonnement, l'auteur de la plus sublime parole qui ait jamais été dite à l'humanité:
Aimez-vous les uns les autres!
Au bout de la quatrième journée seulement, nous saurons qui est Jésus de Nazareth. Alors, ne nous quittez pas avant l'itinéraire....

My dear listeners!
At the time of inviting you to go on a great voyage with us, in space and time, allow me to specify in what sense we are calling for everyone's cooperation.
What are we going to do?
With complete respect for all opinions and beliefs, to try to suggest to you, in its actuality, the drama that is at the foundation of our civilization, and that to make you present, in the permanence of its radiance, the author of the most sublime word that has ever been spoken to humanity:

¹¹ Georges Colin, the well-known radio drama producer, also produced *Marémoto*, the controversial radio drama of 1924. Colin starred in such radio drama performances as *Absurdité, comédie radiophonique* (Radiodiffusion française, Radio-Paris, October 28, 1936), *Paul et Virginie: adaptation radiophonique [en 8 tableaux] du roman de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre* (Radiodiffusion française, Radio-Paris, January 1, 1935), and *La première seconde, fantaisie radiophonique* (Radiodiffusion française, Paris-P.T.T., March 16, 1939).

Love one another!
 At the end of the fourth day only, you *will know who
 Jesus of Nazareth is.*
 So, do not leave before it is time...(29-30).¹²

As Suzanne Malard finished her address to the audience, the noise of a street in Paris faded in, present-day, the horns of automobiles sounded, the din of a Parisian crowd roared and voices singing in the street reached a crescendo. A reporter moved against this soundscape.¹³ Wandering through the streets of Paris, the reporter asked everyone that he met the following question: “Qui est Jésus de Nazareth?/Who is Jesus of Nazareth?” (34). An actor replied: “Qui est Jésus de Nazareth? C’est le plus beau de tous les rôles!/Who is Jesus of Nazareth? It’s the most beautiful of all roles!” (34). A worker responded: “Jésus...eh bien! Je vais te le dire, moi, ce que c’est: un bobard, ni plus ni moins, un bobard/ Jesus...well! I am going to tell you what he is: a tall tale, no more, no less, a tall tale” (34). The reporter continued to walk around the streets of Paris, asking this same question. A myriad of replies greeted him. The sounds of the city cut

¹² All English translations of *Le Dieu vivant* are mine.

¹³ Soundscape refers to the audio/aural structure created by the radio dramatist in an effort to add richness to his radio dramatic composition. The radio dramatist employs established radio production techniques and terminology in manipulating sound and music. The smooth movement from one sound to the next is called the *segue*. This technique is particularly useful between musical elements during which one musical component fades out while the other fades in. In a radio dramatic performance, it is more appropriately referred to as a *cross-fade*. The *cross-fade* is the dissolving of one sound into another. When two or more sounds combine and are broadcast at the same time, this is called *blending*. This may involve dialogue and music, dialogue and sound effects, sound effects and music, or a combination of all three. *Cutting* or *switching* is the abrupt ending of one sound and the immediate appearance of another. The last radio production technique that is important in radio dramatic creation is the *fade in* and *fade out*. A relatively simple operation of increasing or decreasing the volume, this technique is frequently employed to fade the music under dialogue, as well as to begin or to end the program. By applying these techniques to manipulate the soundscape, the radio drama producer gives texture to the radio drama. Robert Hilliard, *Writing for Television and Radio* (New York: Hastings House, 1967), 11.

in; horns from automobiles, the clamor of pedestrians talking.

The second day of the broadcast of *Le Dieu vivant* occurred on March 25, 1937, Holy Thursday. From the second day, the reporter became increasingly more essential to the drama, both in terms of narratology as well as in his development as a dramatic character. Once again, the reporter found himself in the middle of the action of the drama, as he witnessed the plot by the Pharisees to capture Jesus. The second “episode” clearly served to emphasize the importance of the narrator in the recounting of the Passion story. Day three of the broadcast occurred on Good Friday, March 26, 1937. Like the two preceding episodes, Susanne Malard first thanked her audience and previewed the third installment about to unfold. Once again, she underscored the importance of a restoration of the Catholic faith as she introduced the reporter, who had traveled to bring the events of the last days of Jesus Christ to Interwar France. Through the reporter’s experiences (narrator), the Malards visualized these events for the listener, offering a vivid eyewitness account of Jesus’ final days.

Paris P.T.T. broadcast the final episode on Easter Sunday, March 28, 1937. As in the three preceding installments, Suzanne Malard presented the drama, assuring her audience that it would be worthwhile to listen attentively. As promised, the reporter was there when they found Jesus’ tomb empty. He was there when Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene. He was there on the road to Emmaus, when Jesus spoke to a stranger concerning the answer to the question: “Who is Jesus of Nazareth?” Radio and religion merged as the audience heard everything that transpired from the time that Jesus was first persecuted, until his crucifixion and resurrection. The audience participated in the drama as well and was implicated in Jesus’ crucifixion, seeing everything in the mind’s eye, the images made visible through the reporter’s intervention. By the final episode of *Le Dieu vivant*, the drama had become a ceremony itself: it was a mass, which began with the Invocation, continued with the scripture readings and the sharing of the Eucharist, and ended with a Benediction.¹⁴

¹⁴ The passion play is one of the oldest dramatic genres of French literature. Among the most important were Arnoul Gréban’s *Le Mystère de la passion* (1450), and Eustache Mercadé’s *Le Mystère de la passion d’Arras* (circa 1440) and *La Passion du Palatinus* (Rome, Bibliothèque du Vatican, Palatinus Latinus 1969, ff. 221-234; edition Frank, CFMA, Paris, 1922). For more on French passion plays, see Émile Roy’s *Le Mystère de la passion en France du XIVe au XVIe*

Cita and Suzanne Malard incited the zeal within the listening public through the power of narration; a first-person narration seldom used in French radio drama of the Interwar period. The reporter, or narrator, had rapidly become *the* central character in the drama and contributed information that he had obtained through his own unique experience. The Malards discovered that the drama had much greater impact if the audience shared the experience of the action, rather than simply hearing a second-hand account of it. The choice to create a homodiegetic narrator suggested a desire to make the narrator an active participant in the story (Chandler 74). Employing a narrator that served as our eyes and who directed our attention was inherently problematic. In a sense, the narrator presented a myopic view of the events unfolding. The audience “saw” one perspective of what occurred in the drama and lacked a certain amount of freedom to interpret on its own. However, in *Le Dieu vivant*, the narrator also served to pose the same questions about the conviction and crucifixion of Jesus as the audience might also have posed during an era when religious ignorance was becoming increasingly more common in contemporary France.

The narrator was responsible for developing what Alan Peacock calls the “space of narration.” According to Peacock, “the space of narration is the location of a semiotics of narration – the signs that indicate that a story is taking place (announcements, tone of voice, graphical style), the kind of story it is (genre), how it relates to the broader social world (parable, allegory, moral, simulation, exaggeration, etc.)”¹⁵ Narrative exists as a shared space, or *diegesis*, which is separate from but part of the social world. The Story Teller and the Listener meet in the “story world” (the diegetic level), inside the space of narration. The “story world” contains the sequence of events. The Story Teller and the Listener also meet at the extradiegetic level, which is the “social world.” Similarly, in his chapter entitled “Discours du récit: essai de méthode,” Gérard Genette outlined several narrative moods/voices that facilitate an understanding of Cita and Suzanne Malards’ narrative approach. His four general categorizations are as follows: distance (diégèse/diagesis, mimésis/rhesis), perspective (focalisation/focalization –

siècle: étude sur les sources et le classement des mystères de la passion. Paris: Champion, 1905.

¹⁵ For more on the semiotics of narration, see Keir Elam’s *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Routledge, 2002.

interne/internal, externe/external), narrative levels (intradiegetique/intradiegetic, extradiegetique/extradiegetic), and persons (homodiegetique/homodiegetic, heterodiegetique/heterodiegetic) (Genette 65-282). The Malards employed a narrative mood in which the narrator speaks (diegesis), which operates in contrast to the narrative mood in which the fictional character speaks (rhesis). The listening audience embraces this narrative mode because they find a character-narrator who, in a sense, represents the audience within the text itself.¹⁶

The narrator may stand outside the action without being completely external from it (heterodiegetic narrator). The narrator's role transforms as soon as he begins to judge the characters of the drama or if he expresses his opinion of the events. Heterodiegetic narrators indicate the presence of the writer as a moderator of the action, actively interfering with the audience's interpretation of the drama. In the case of Cita and Suzanne Malard, the choice of narrative voice suggests a desire to mediate the action. This form of narration deeply affects the drama, particularly if the narration challenges how the audience interprets the drama. If the heterodiegetic narrator does not represent the writer himself, it may become necessary to make the narrator a full part of the action of the drama; a homodiegetic narrator.¹⁷ The reporter or commentator remains a form of first-person

¹⁶ Narrators in radio drama function as either external from the action (extradiegetic) or involved in the action (intradiegetic). The extradiegetic narrator often becomes a structural necessity, in particular, if the dramatist must describe information that cannot be described, or at least cannot be described efficiently, through action and sound alone. The radio dramatist commonly employs extradiegetic narration as follows:

- to describe events that have happened or are happening outside the action of the drama, which affect the action of the drama;
- to create the scene in visual terms that cannot reasonably be explained through sound;
- to portray important visual characteristics or behaviors of the characters,
- to describe a flashback;
- to show that a substantial amount of time has passed;
- to alter the pace of the drama.

¹⁷ Like heterodiegetic narrators, homodiegetic narrators, such as the one employed in *Le Dieu vivant*, can perform any or all of the same functions as extradiegetic narrators. However, their relationship to the

narration seldom employed within French radio drama. Since radio is a “blind” medium, the narrator functions as the audience’s eyes; he describes the scene, conveys the action, and provides exposition. Used to bridge the gap between what the audience “sees” and what it does not hear, it is an effective means to save time and alleviates confusion that can cause listeners to abandon the radio drama entirely.¹⁸

Narration in the form of a reporter or chronicler is not a new concept in the French literary tradition, or in any Western literature, for

action is much more explicit. It is as if the audience hears the drama inside the head of the character narrating. The homodiegetic narrator may perform the following functions:

- criticize other characters,
- suspend the action, in order to describe his own emotions,
- leap forward or back in time,
- leave out information that he does not want the listener to hear,
- transform the words and actions of other characters,
- manipulate the action of the drama.

Homodiegetic narrators influence the audience’s perception in ways not easily achieved without narration or with the help of exclusively external narration. For example:

- The character of the narrator may be explored in much greater depth because the listeners see into the world of his mind;
- The emotional impact of the drama may be increased by making the audience feel the character’s emotions;

The potential for conflict is increased by the homodiegetic narrator’s ability to expose conflicts to the listener that may not be made apparent through speech or sound.

¹⁸ Tony Palermo, radio dramatist and composer who has written, adapted and scored numerous radio plays for the Museum of Television and Radio’s Los Angeles Re-Creating Radio Workshops, argues that radio dramatists frequently overuse the narrator, which interferes with the audience’s appreciation of the drama. Palermo writes that “radio dramatists are like the great and powerful Wizard of Oz working his fire spouting magic show. If you want your audience to ‘pay no attention to the man behind the curtain,’ it’s best to keep the narrator out of the way... *Unless you make him a character.*” “Narration in Radio Drama,” *RuyaSonic.com*. By becoming a character in the drama, the narrator of *Le Dieu vivant* (the reporter) enhanced the development of the story, making it much more intriguing than a heterodiegetic narrator would have made the radio drama.

it has been employed since the Medieval period. Geoffroi de Villehardouin, participant of the 4th Crusade, and Jean de Joinville, participant of the 7th Crusade, created chronicles in prose outlining events of the Crusades to which they bore witness. Villehardouin's *La Conquête de Constantinople* (1203-1207) and Joinville's *Vie de Saint Louis* (1309) related eyewitness accounts of battles and depicted life in the East. Like the medieval chronicler, the reporter functions not only as an eyewitness to events, but also as an intermediary between the characters in the drama and the audience, and finally, as a character within the actual drama. In *Le Dieu vivant*, the reporter transitions from an observer to the main character, who ultimately guides the development of the drama, relates the principle themes to the audience, and creates the action of the story as he recounts it. The audience, for its part, transitions from passive spectator to active spectator in the drama.

At the beginning of *Le Dieu vivant*, the reporter represented the contemporary non-believer, navigating the streets of Paris searching for the answer to the age-old question of who Jesus Christ is. He had to sort through the various explanations that he heard. He struggled to determine for himself and for the audience what Jesus represented in the life of French citizens of the 1930s. His struggle was complicated by the tension created by the sounds of the city; cars sounding their horns and the talking of passersby, which grew in intensity throughout the drama. Transported to Jerusalem, the reporter became the eyes and ears of his audience. He showed empathy for Jesus in the same way that the audience would presumably feel empathy. He did not lurk in the shadows, spying on what transpired, but actively participated in the events and interacted with Jesus' disciples, creating a means by which the audience could compensate for the absence of the visual component. The reporter painted the scenery and described the soundscape. He created the illusion that the events that he recounted were unfolding in "real time" as the audience listened to the drama.

The Malards' use of the reporter as narrator in *Le Dieu vivant* recalled the narrator of Biblical narrative. Much Biblical narrative was presented through a trustworthy, omniscient narrator – Genette refers to the omniscient narrator as *focalization zéro* – who created a world filled with characters, described their words and deeds, showed their hidden feelings, and yet separated himself from this world. The characters lived, breathed, and interacted with each other largely without the knowledge of the existence of the narrator. At the same time, through the mediation of the narrator, the words and feelings of these characters were addressed to the audience. This homodiegetic narrator walked the

line between storyteller and participant in the action of the drama. If he failed to remain an observer, he would influence the events and transform their natural course. In a sense, the homodiegetic narrator is a cultural anthropologist who navigates the slippery slope of his field: he must observe a culture in order to understand it, but his observations must not be intrusive to the extent that they influence or contaminate the culture. In *Le Dieu vivant*, the Malards presented a narrator that was both active and passive. Due to the absence of an omniscient narrator, the homodiegetic narrator was obliged to take control of recounting the story. His “free rein” to quote the direct speech of the important participants of the Passion story and to focus on the most essential events (as he saw them) in order to achieve the primary goal of convincing the audience of the importance of Jesus Christ demonstrated a certain level of autonomy. His speech remained a commentary on the words of others as he transformed the characters into a reality for the audience.

On the level of discourse, we understand the homodiegetic narrator to be a component of the narrative (Culler 197-200). If the homodiegetic narrator recounts a story or directly quotes the speech of other characters, he simply fulfills his role as narrator. The liberty that he may exhibit as a privileged speaker within the world of the drama is offset by the fact that he is also a character created in someone else’s discourse. In this case, he represents the discourse of Cita and Suzanne Malard. The character that functions as narrator always exhibits a conflict between autonomy and dependence. The more authority an author gives to a homodiegetic narrator, the more self-effacing the homodiegetic narrator becomes, and the more we see the ultimate control of the author emphasized. The more a character holds the role of the narrator, the more he must take on a certain level of passivity, or anonymity, in the interest of objectively telling the story. Since the story told is not primarily the character’s story, the narrator’s story is ultimately an expression of his dependence upon the author both for his knowledge and his point of view.

Why did the Malards use a homodiegetic narrator with a mixture of liberty and dependence? Why not employ a narrator who was in control of the events of the story or one who remained on the sidelines to comment on the events as they unfolded? The answer to this question might be found in the relationships that exist between both author and homodiegetic narrator and between homodiegetic narrator and audience. Though more powerful and omniscient than the homodiegetic narrator, the author fashions the latter to also function as a character in the story. This narrator existed out of literary necessity, for our authors could not reasonably enter the story of the Passion of

the Christ themselves. To do so, they would have lost all credibility with their audience. We must remember that the Malards had to create a realistic narrative atmosphere. Setting the scene in Modern Paris was an environment to which the audience could easily relate.

Although there is no way in which we might gauge the numbers of people who listened to *Le Dieu vivant*, we can conclude that by harnessing the power of the radio, Cita and Suzanne Malard succeeded in making a courageous attempt to reach the hearts of French Catholics during an era of ever-increasing secularization. Though seldom employed in radio dramatic composition, their narratological technique of using a homodiegetic narrator created an intermediary between the drama and the audience and facilitated the establishment of their narrative credibility. The Malards' homodiegetic reporter drew the audience into his point of view and inspired his listeners to believe in the truth of the Passion story. Over the course of four evenings, radio and religion had intersected. The strength of the two had combined. As a result of the Malards radio dramatic broadcasts, the Catholic Mass had had the potential of entering every radio-equipped home in France and had possibly reached thousands of souls. Through radio, religion had taken an important step toward being more than a simple culture component in the lives of French citizens.

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The Lived Experience of Mothers Bereaved by the Suicide Death of a Child: A Dissertation

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INTRODUCTION

Arnold Toynbee (1968), Professor Emeritus at the University of London and historian, wrote; “There are two parties to the suffering that death inflicts; and, in the apportionment of this suffering, the survivor bears the brunt” (p. 271). This is most poignant when death is a result of suicide. I did not arrive at this conclusion standing on the periphery observing the grief of others touched by suicide. The devastation of suicide and its aftermath came to me in 1985 after the suicide death of my uncle and again in 1999 when a close friend took her life. I was now a suicide survivor. Cain (1972) coined the term *suicide survivor* to refer to those left to grieve following the suicide death of a loved one.

Suicide deaths are most often sudden and unexpected. Grief is intensified by feelings of powerlessness, guilt, disbelief, and anger. When an individual dies through the deliberate and willful act of another it is called murder. When the victim and the perpetrator are one in the same it is referred to as suicide; this fact is the most troubling. Both praised and abhorred across time, culture, and civilizations, Colt (1991) referred to suicide as an enigma. An extensive review of the literature reflected this description. Using the analogy of looking through a kaleidoscope, each person viewing the gems as they grab the light provides a unique perspective and interpretation of the many configurations. Similarly, suicide holds many interpretations and consequences for those left behind depending on individual and group perceptions and dynamics.

The topic of suicide survivorship was selected after many hours of examining the research, self-reflection, and prayer. No doubt, the very mention of suicide and suicide survivorship to those interested in my research brought a variety of reactions. Interestingly, *most* were touched by suicide in some manner but *many* never had the opportunity to talk about the experience.

My research question emerged after the identification of gaps in the literature related to mothers as suicide survivors. The mother-child bond is unique and few studies focused specifically on the experience of mothers following a child's suicide. My research question

was; *What is the Lived Experience of Mothers Bereaved by the Suicide Death of a Child?*

Data collection occurred between June 2010 and October 2010. Prior to and during data collection many family, friends, and colleagues made the prediction that I would be unable to find and recruit enough participants to complete my research. They concluded mothers did not want to talk about their experience. However, my instincts told me mothers *wanted* the opportunity to tell their story. Within a safe environment, they *needed* to tell their story. Nine mothers chose to share their grief experience. To be entrusted with their stories was an honor and a privilege. Included is the abstract of my dissertation along with Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings. The complete research manuscript including references may be accessed through the East Tennessee State University dissertation and thesis database at <http://sherrod.etsu.edu/>. As a result of my gained knowledge and expertise in this area, plans for a suicide survivor support group are being developed.

ABSTRACT

Suicide has existed throughout recorded history. It is a phenomenon that has been both culturally and morally defined across time and civilizations. It is estimated that over 34,000 Americans deliberately take their own lives annually. Moreover, according to some experts, between 6 and 28 individuals are directly affected by each completed suicide. These individuals are referred to as suicide survivors. The consequences for suicide survivors are multidimensional in part because relationships to the deceased play a vital role in bereavement. Previous research studies in the areas of suicidology and bereavement have failed to explore the experience of mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore phenomenologically the lived experience of mothers following the suicide death of a child. One-on-one, semistructured interviews were conducted with 9 mothers. The time since the suicide ranged from 1 year and 3 months to 21 years and 6 months. Data analysis was driven by Max van Manen's descriptive-investigative process. This process involved guided reflections using van Manen's 4 existentials: spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality. The interviews began with a general statement; "Tell me about your child." General questions related to the existentials were asked during the interviews to clarify the participants' stories. Data were managed using NVivo 9.0 qualitative data management software. Three essential themes were inductively derived from the data: 1)

Know My Child: Not the Act, 2) Frozen Past: Altered Future, 3) Ocean of Grief. The 3 essential themes provide a deeper understanding of the role of stigmatization in the grief process of mothers following the loss of a child to suicide. In addition, these themes contribute to an appreciation of the role of past memories and future orientation as mothers are enmeshed in the grief process and its unpredictable path. Data from this study clarify the unique circumstances and needs of mothers as they attempt to navigate life after losing a child to suicide. The findings from this study suggest areas for future research and will assist healthcare professionals including nurses, school counselors, and mental health professionals as they approach mothers who are suicide survivors.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to acknowledge, understand, and communicate the lived experience of mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child. Nine women participated in semistructured face-to-face interviews during which they were provided opportunities to share their personal journeys of loss and grief. This chapter summarizes the essentials and structural themes for this investigation and provides implications for nursing practice, research, and education.

Summary of Findings

Know My Child: Not the Act

Mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child experienced a sense of discomfort with others. This discomfort resulted in avoidance or a focus on the suicide act by others as expressed in the structural theme, Sounds of Silence. In addition, during their interaction with others, the participants felt their children and themselves were labeled as a result of the suicide act.

Hoff (2001) highlights social support as an essential component to the grieving process. The literature points to evidence that isolation, stigmatization, and self-stigmatization contribute to a complicated grief response (Calhoun & Allen, 1991; Cvinar, 2005; Dunn & Morrish-Vidner, 1987-1988; Feigelman et al., 2009; Jordan, 2001; Laasko&Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002; McIntosh, 2003). Following the loss of a child, mothers experiencing the most difficulty were those perceived negatively by others (Laasko&Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002).

Participants needed an open system of support and the opportunity to grieve without the added burden of labels and stigmatization.

Sounds of Silence. A structural theme of the essential theme, Know My Child: Not the Act, was expressed through Sounds of Silence. Participants experienced others as avoiding the subject of their children or focused on the details of the suicide. As a result, participants perceived others' responses as inadequate and contrary to what was needed. This finding is consistent with Begley and Quayles (2007) who found that adult suicide survivors felt let down by those around them. For the participants this response came from not only those outside the family circle but also those close to participants. Even years after their children's deaths, their children's memories were felt to be taboo. On the other hand, those who may have provided support *initially* failed to maintain a connection with the mothers which was the expectation. If their children were mentioned by others, participants felt it was within the context of the suicide act without regard for the mothers. It was perceived as more of a curiosity about the suicide rather than an encounter of genuine concern for mother or child.

This type of perceived response from others made it particularly traumatic for mothers as they struggled to cope with the loss of their children as well as their loss of identity as a mother to their child. Mitchell et al. (2004) identified that a close relationship with the deceased predisposes the suicide survivor to symptoms of complicated grief. Similarly, Dyregov et al. (2003) suggested the best predictor of complicated grief was being the mother of the deceased. Ellenbogen and Gatton (2001) through quantitative inquiry failed to support the belief that suicide survivors suffer more than other survivors. This is contrary to the view by the participants in this study as they felt that suicide resulted in an extra burden of pain and suffering.

According to van Manen (1990) meaning and purpose emerge in everyday life through our interactions with others. When others fail to acknowledge an event of such catastrophic proportions, the suicide survivor may experience a sense of disapproval that results in the internal process of shame. Sequin et al. (1995) found that shame was central to suicide bereavement. Even though the motive for the silence can only be speculated, the mere perception of negative attitudes by others has the potential to increase complicated grief (Laasko&Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002).

Along with the feelings of isolation, mothers often do not have the opportunity to talk about their losses. Frequently, events preceding the suicide create an environment of stress. Feelings of isolation are only magnified when mothers lacked the opportunity to "tell their

story.” According to Richard Dew, former president of the Knoxville Tennessee Chapter of Compassionate Friends International, telling the story of loss, when, where, and with whom they choose is the single more important part of grieving the loss of a child (Personal communication, January, 2011). Telling the story of the suicide death in their own way and time allows suicide survivors to reconstruct a reality necessary to move forward (van Manen, 1990). Without others being willing to listen and respond to the current needs of the mother, the grieving process is hindered or halted.

A Life: Not A Label. The participants did not idealize their children but spoke of them within the context of a life lived, not the single suicide act. Participants experienced the label of suicide overshadowing the lives of their children. This label created feelings of emotional distress and stigmatization. Participants felt the suicide label was attached to them, as well as their deceased children even before the children ended their lives. As a matter of fact, participants felt the stigma associated with suicidal behaviors prior to their children’s suicide completion when they tried to seek help for their children and were disregarded by health care and mental health professionals caring for their children. As a result participants withdrew from interaction with others after the suicide to avoid the scrutiny.

The literature supports stigmatization as a delineating factor in suicide bereavement when compared to other forms of death (Begley & Quayle, 2007; Cerel et al., 2008; Cvinar, 2005; Dunn & Morrish-Vidners, 1987-88; Dyregrov, 2002; Dyregrov et al., 2003; Ellenbogen & Gratton, 2001; Fielden, 2003; Jordan, 2001; Laakso & Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002; Lindquist et al., 2008; Seguin et al., 1995; Van Dongen, 1993). Similarly, Jordan (2001) and Sveen and Walby (2008) all identified the general theme of stigmatization suggesting that a deeper understanding lies within the investigation of the phenomenon from the qualitative paradigm. In this study, the focus on the act in combination with its association with substance abuse, mental illness, and sin only served to further perpetuate and reinforce the label. Worden (1991) suggested that stigma generates an intense experience of shame among suicide survivors. As a result suicide survivors are denied the full benefit of the social support they most desperately need during all periods of the grief process.

Role identity is a critical component of the mother-child relationship (Bretherton, 1992; Goffman, 1959; Goffman, 1963). Through behaviors, language, and actions, others expressed societal disapproval of suicide without taking into account the life of the child

and the needs of the participants. As a result mothers experienced role uncertainty creating confusion about how they should behave and interact with others. This ambivalence and role uncertainty lead to physical and social avoidance of others at a time when social support was a major component of recovery. As participants struggled with their change in role after the suicide death of their children, others were defining for them the role they should play in the event.

In contrast participants acknowledged the experience of kind remarks during the time of bereavement. They admitted that any acknowledgement of the death brought back painful memories; however, the words and actions were welcomed. They felt a sense from others that the lives of their children mattered and others missed them too. In addition, the lives of these children were reflections of them and when pleasant remarks were made about their children the remarks also reflected on the mothers.

For mothers personal and social identity is part of motherhood (Bretherton, 1992). The connection transcends physical life and is branded into the soul, heart, and mind of the maternal suicide survivor. How the child is perceived by others impacts how the mother sees herself and her role in the life of her child as well as in the wake of this loss.

Frozen Past: Altered Future

The second essential theme was Frozen Past: Altered Future. According to van Manen (1990) being in the world is experienced through the concept of lived time or temporality. The past, present, and future encompass how the worldview of the phenomenon is experienced, as well as the meaning attached. Participants engaged in thoughts, behaviors, and activities to find meaning and make sense of the suicide as well as the future. Two structural themes were expressed: Holding On and Letting Go. Participants were engaged in this conflict of how best to reconstruct the past while looking to the future.

Holding On and Letting Go. In the lives of the participants there was clear demarcation between the past and moving toward an uncertain future. At times participants were unable to see a future. On the day of the suicide life as they had known it ceased to exist. The past was frozen or suspended in time: the future dangled in front of them in a state of perpetual change. Mothers continually recognized a past full of memories and an uncertain future. Ongoing decisions were made to hold on to some memories while letting go of others; at the same time participants were living day-to-day but also looking to the future. This rendition is consistent with van Manen (1990) referring to

the reconstruction of the past to fit into the future. Holding on and letting go took place mentally, physically, and spiritually in a perpetual manner.

According to Begley and Quayle (2007) and Biebel and Foster (2005) parental guilt is extremely difficult to manage after the suicide death of a child. In an effort to temper the feelings of guilt suicide survivors reflected on past experiences, often envisioning a different outcome had they taken action to prevent the suicide. Lindquist et al. (2008) found “why” to be a salient theme among 10 family members. Participants in this study were attempting to reconstruct reality to better cope with life without their child. When this reconstruction occurs, internal feelings of guilt emerge from suicide survivors’ own interpretation of the past and their inability to change it. Participants in this study felt guilt was especially felt by mothers, as they are most often the parent charged with ensuring their children’s safety. The literature fails to accurately describe this in detail as it relates to the mother’s lived experience.

The dichotomy of holding on and letting go represented the trajectory of the grieving process within the context of losing their children. Participants were in a perpetual state of reconstruction depending on the length of time since their losses and the grief work they had engaged in since the suicide. Wolfelt (2009) affirmed the belief that grief work must be client-led as opposed to professional-led. This is true regardless of the time since the death of a child. This approach values presence, listening, walking alongside the mourner, and respecting the individuality of grief. For participants in this study it was essential that caregivers and professionals recognize the struggles of holding on and letting go from a holistic paradigm: physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and spiritually. Previous literature failed to support the differences in an individual’s grief experience overtime within specific context such as suicide combined with the mother role.

Ocean of Grief

The third essential theme was expressed as Ocean of Grief. The literature supports the overflowing of emotions as a common thread among suicide survivors (Begley & Quayles, 2007; Biebel & Foster, 2005; Bolton, 1998; Chilstrom, 1993; Diedrich & Warelow, 2002; Dunn & Morrish-Vidners, 1987-1988; Fielden, 2003; Fine, 1997; Hsu, 2002; Lindqvist et al., 2008; Myers & Fine, 2006; Robinson, 2001; Simon, 2003). Following the suicide death of their children, participants found themselves facing loss of control. Just as the waves

of the ocean tosses about a sea-worthy vessel, they were tossed about without control or direction. The suicide left the participants completely helpless. Mothers considered themselves protectors and caregivers of their children. Ocean of Grief was expressed by three structural themes: Predicting the Storm, Waves of Pain, and Taming the Tide.

Predicting the Storm. Participants had either suffered through previous suicide attempts with their children or in retrospect felt like things were just not quite right. As protector and caregiver, they tried to recognize issues but were unsuccessful. Participants felt dismissed by health care and mental health professionals when they tried to advocate or provide a voice for their children during times of crisis. They struggled to make others understand that what they knew about their children was critical to their safety.

Most participants experienced suicide attempts by their children prior to the suicide completion. After the suicide participants acknowledged this same feeling of not being able to fix or correct the situation. This theme of anticipatory grief is documented in the literature. Feigelman et al. (2008-2009) suggest that repeated suicide attempts prior to the actual suicide were associated with “greater grief difficulties” (p. 251). For the participants, the personal experience of pain resulting from their children’s suicide began well before the actual death. Previous periods of struggle and crisis with their children made the grief process more difficult.

For mothers protection of their children was of the utmost importance. Suffering with these children prior to the suicide meant previous stressors were often associated with suicide and warrants further examination.

Waves of Pain. The pain of losing a child to suicide was cyclic and lingering for participants. The pain was expressed in physical, emotional, and cognitive terms. Just as the waves in an ocean, the experience was unpredictable. Waves of pain emerged unexpectedly and with such force that it caused them to lose their emotional footing. Participants expressed their emotional pain as indescribable; there were no words to adequately express their emotions following the loss. Fielden (2003) found a feeling of not making it through was linked with intense emotions. As a result participants found themselves handling pain one day at a time.

Participants also acknowledged their own pain by empathizing with the pain of their children. They speculated that maybe the pain they were feeling after their loss might be similar to what their children felt when they made the decision to end their own lives. This is consistent with van Manen’s (1990) concept of mother and child

experiencing life as one flesh. The mother-child bond was so deep that mothers longed to feel and understand the pain that precipitated the suicide.

Taming the Tide. Participants engaged in activities, thoughts, and behaviors they felt helped them tame the storm of emotions and pain resulting from the suicide. These activities, thoughts, and behaviors caused the tide to subside and calmed the waves of pain. They used avoidance to deal with daily mental and physical reminders. They voluntarily suppressed memories and physically removed items in the environment to get through the day. Participants deliberately engaged in activities as distractions from daily thoughts of their children. For the participants, taming the tide was a form of survival. For some this was day-to-day and for others it was minute-to-minute.

Participants actively sought the opportunity to make a genuine connection with others to find someone who could understand their grief and pain. Biebel and Foster (2005) found that finding the proper social support, especially immediately after the suicide death helps in the grieving process. They saw social support as beneficial when others placed no demands or timetable on their grief. This finding is consistent with Wolfelt (2009) and his resistance to placing grief and its trajectory on phases and stages.

In their own time and own way participants voluntarily reached out to others in an altruistic fashion. They acknowledged that being of service and helping others provided meaning and purpose. These encounters were both planned and unexpected. However, with the participants in this study, reaching out was suppressed when others showed signs of stigmatization toward them or their deceased children. Consequently, Dyregov et al. (2003) found the best predictor of impaired psychosocial health was isolation. For survival the potential to isolate was common, therefore, stalling the healing process.

Study Implications

This qualitative research study was undertaken to better understand the experiences of mothers bereaved by the suicide death of their children. Findings from this study provide a foundation for understanding the unique circumstances and needs of mothers as they navigate through their lifeworlds after losing children to suicide. It is a road only traveled by a few. It is a journey they did not ask to take. Because of the mode of death and the unique relationship between mothers and children, there are implications for nursing practice, education, and research.

Nursing Practice

The destruction of suicide reaches far beyond just the suicide victim. Findings from previous research, as well as from this investigation, suggest that those exposed to suicide are more likely to contemplate or use suicide as a coping method. Suicide requires those left in the wake of the destruction to cope with past events and move forward into the future. Therefore, suicide prevention is the first step in stopping this cycle of events.

Nurses must master interviewing techniques and therapeutic communication so they can intervene in a behavioral crisis that has the potential to end in suicide. Results from this study indicated that mothers tried to intervene to prevent the self-destructive behaviors of their children by interacting with healthcare providers but felt dismissed with nowhere to turn for help. The health care and mental health professionals they came in contact with disregarded the mothers' assessments of the situations because their children were not minors. It is the responsibility and professional obligation of those working with families in crisis to evaluate data from all sources. Nurses are in key positions to foster therapeutic relationships with suicide attempters and those closest to them. Those individuals with an investment in the welfare of the suicide attempter must feel their concerns are heard and addressed to the extent the law allows.

Nurses must be willing to examine their own personal belief system about suicide, substance abuse, addiction, and mental illness if they are to become a catalyst for change. The belief system of the professional caregiver plays a pivotal role in whether critical data are exposed and addressed potentially saving a life. Words and attitudes are powerful forces when dealing with assessment and psychosocial issues. Establishing trust is the first step in understanding the worldview of others as they often refrain from sharing critical information unless they are convinced the provider possesses genuine concern and caring. Understanding professional obligations as an advocate for treatment is a critical part of addressing the problem of suicide.

Lastly, nurses must advocate for the treatment and well-being of suicide survivors. They must be willing to confront the fear, ignorance, and stigma plaguing those left to pick up the pieces of their lives. The media and the wide use of communication technology can either help or hinder this initiative. Research suggested suicide survivors adapt and cope better with the loss when social support is available, consistent, and sufficient. Social support must begin with nurses modeling to the community and other professionals those behaviors and attitudes that support effective grieving. Mothers, in

particular, need this social support because the biological connection between the child and the mother combined with society's expectation of the mothering role as caregiver leaves mothers in a dangerous position experiencing the effects of unresolved complicated grief processes.

Nursing Education

Entry level nurses and primary care providers have a responsibility to understand and use appropriate techniques to prevent the cycle of suicide and minister to those affected by its aftermath. Schneidman (2001) referred to treating the aftermath of suicide as "postvention." For this type of education to come to fruition, nurse educators must integrate the concepts of suicide and grief into the curriculum. Again, the issues must be introduced in combination with an exercise of self-evaluation about personal suicide beliefs and the reasons individuals elect to end their lives, as well as theories of grief and mourning.

Nurses have long advocated for holistic client care. This holistic approach encompasses all aspects of a client's existence. Nurses must learn about both the internal and external forces surrounding the issues of suicide, the victim, and survivors. Although international and national statistics present a picture of the impact of suicide, the nurse must be aware that the true impact to survivors is seen in the minute details, perceptions, and social connections in each suicide survivor's story. This means that nurses must be trained to listen and respond to suicide survivors within the context of their own unique experience without penalty of judgment or ridicule. Nurse educators must encourage students to address the issues affecting suicide survivors with the understanding that although mourning is a social phenomenon, the work of grief is individual. Nurses must begin to "feel comfortable with being uncomfortable." Providing care for suicide survivors does not mean knowing all the answers and developing a trajectory for their grief, but merely being a *consistent, stable* guide through a process that is different for each individual traveling the path.

Nursing Research

Since 1972 when Albert Cain, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, first coined the term, "suicide survivor," referring to those left behind by suicide, suicide research has taken on a more global perspective. Once thought of as a victimless crime, suicide has emerged as an event that has psychological and

emotional effects on others long after the death. Previous nursing literature has focused on parental grief of suicide survivorship within the context of other forms of violent deaths (Davies, 2001; Diedrich&Warelow, 2002; Krysinska, 2003; Murphy et al, 2003a; Murphy et al., 2003b; Murphy et al., 2002; Murphy, Johnson, Wu, Fan, &Lohan, 2003; Murphy, Tapper, Johnson, &Lohan, 2003). In addition, previous studies have failed to delineate the unique experience of mothers (Van Dongen, 1993). Much of the research literature on suicide and suicide survivorship has treated the phenomena as a category of complicated grief. However, little research has explored the suicide survivor's experience in terms of specific emotional connections or social roles associated with the deceased. This study has added to nursing science and the body of knowledge in the areas of suicide, suicide survivorship, and grief by examining the experience of mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child. The essential theme of Know My Child: Not the Act provides new insight into how mothers perceive the actions, behaviors, and words of others after the suicide death of their children. The second essential theme, Frozen Past: Altered Future, has raised the awareness that mothers are in constant struggle to reconstruct the past to fit into a future without their children. Ocean of Grief, reflected as the third essential theme, has added a more in-depth understanding of the trajectory of grief, as well as the destruction caused by it. For most of the participants, dealing with their children prior to the suicide was an added burden during a time of grief after the death. Their loss of control and feelings of powerlessness were confirmed as they suffered the loss of their children. As a result, they were tossed about, left to cope and adapt to the realities of the situation.

Further qualitative and quantitative research is needed to examine experiences of specific populations bereaved by suicide such as fathers and siblings. Although grief is individually felt and perceived, it is experienced collectively within familial and social circles. As a matter of fact, one participant felt the effects of suicide on a sibling had been under recognized and understudied. More research on the attitudes of health professionals dealing with suicide and its aftermath warrants more exploration. In addition, community attitudes and behaviors toward suicide and suicide survivors require further investigation; intervention research may be warranted with this group.

Most participants sought out the services of support groups, but not all found them a positive part of their experience. More research needs to be conducted within community support areas to explore the efficiency and benefits of services provided by the community. Given that social support plays a crucial role in successful

grieving, clergy, morticians, and the media need to be examined for attitudes and behaviors that either facilitate or hinder suicide survivors' grieving process.

Transferability

Although the lived experience of these nine mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child was unique, the question is whether the findings are likely to have meaning for those with similar loss. Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to this as transferability or fittingness. These findings are more subject to be transferable when there exists strong similarities in time (since death and time in history) and culture. In addition given the nine participants were from the same geographical region, this may limit the transferability of the findings. Although the number of participants was small, the homogeneous nature of the group suggests that a larger number of suicide survivors with a different relationship to the deceased may experience the phenomenon differently. However, this judgment may best be made by the suicide survivors themselves.

Strengths

The strengths of this study are found in the use of qualitative inquiry to explore the experience of a group that has not been recognized as unique in relation to suicide survivorship. The specificity of researching mothers as suicide survivors affords the opportunity for a resurrection of dialogue about suicide, suicide survivorship, and the influence of the relationship to the suicide victim on the grieving process.

In addition, this study provided data regarding the true suffering which suicide inflicts on suicide survivors through a one-to-one interaction with the participant. It painted a picture of an experience through the eyes of the one suffering and that few wish to explore for the purpose of taking the results to the community level. As a result of this study, suicide survivors of diverse backgrounds have approached the investigator regarding the need for local services to assist this population. Therefore, plans to begin a suicide survivor support group have received administrative support from a local health care facility.

Lastly, this study provided a voice for those who have either been unable, previously unwilling, or both a chance to tell their stories. The telling in and of itself has therapeutic value, as well as the knowledge that the information will be used to help others.

Conclusion

Suicide is a phenomenon existing since the dawn of early recorded history. The moral and cultural significances have been debated across time and culture. The continuum is wide and the consequences deep as researchers attempt to unravel the individual and social implications of suicide. One fact remains: suicide brings about change for those left behind to deal with the aftermath.

Previous researchers have attempted to delineate suicide grief as a form of complicated grief. Consequently, studies have focused on complicated grief, a subject deserving of special consideration in the area of bereavement. Suicide may fall within this area. The study of relationships combined with mode of death, creates a new perspective on how others grieve and interact with the world. This study provides insight into a specific group and mode of death rarely detailed in the literature.

This study of nine mothers bereaved by the suicide death of a child produced three essential themes: Know my Child: Not the Act, Frozen Past: Altered Future, and Ocean of Grief. Subtle variances within this experience will illuminate and inform future research so nurses can better understand and provide care for this population.

"That quarter of the mind": The Psychodynamics of the Female Will in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

Gerald C. Wood

[Author's Note: The ideas for this essay were developed in a series of classes I taught over the last 20 years at Carson-Newman (often with friend and colleague Andy Hazucha) in the novels of Jane Austen and the films based on her work. The students' passion for Austen and those courses inspired this essay. My last contribution to 40 years of employment by C-N, it is dedicated to them, with love and eternal gratitude. gcw]

The period of English social and literary history we have come to call Romantic included a radical reorientation of the place of the individual in his or her society. William Blake, for example, believed that private consciousness, expressed in a poet's imagination, redeemed a public world otherwise condemned to vicious forms of poverty and prostitution. Another—William Wordsworth—protested against the obscenities of corporate life by personalizing nature and making a religion of solitude and vision. Later, John Keats declared that the coldness inherent in social rituals could only be warmed by the love of particular persons. Such unprecedented respect for the sanctity of individual lives eventually inspired reforms on behalf of groups as disparate as the frame-breakers, Irish, children, Catholics--and women.

Progressive women joined the universal struggle for human rights when they critiqued history, especially the feudal ideal, which promised equality but actually reduced women to vessels of male physical and mental assertions. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the writer with the pen name Sophia, for example, in *Woman Not Inferior to Man* had asserted women "are endow'd, by nature, with geniuses at least as capable of filling" "*public employments*" as men. Possessing "hearts[. ...]as susceptible of *virtue* as[. . .]heads[. . .]of the *sciences*," women are equal to every public task, including "giving laws," "administring [sic] justice," "or teaching rhetoric, medicine, philosophy, and divinity, in quality of university professors." With the single exception of church leadership, which the writer craftily suggested is Providence's way of leading men to reconsider their evil ways, Sophia asserted women capable of maintaining any public position denied them by men (60, 36).

While sharing Sophia's confidence in women's unrecognized potentials in society, turn-of-the-century female writers focused less on

the emerging radical individualism than the tensions between the domestic virtues of women and the social responsibilities of men. In her preface to her "Metrical Legends," Joanna Baillie says her poetry could have described heroines in "high situations of trust, as sovereigns, regents, and temporary governors of towns, castles, or provinces, and even at the head of armies" where they would "have behaved with a wisdom and courage." But a "wise and benevolent Providence" has determined a woman's "great and courageous exertion" is realized "when something most dear to her is in immediate danger" while a "man seldom becomes a careful and gentle nurse." Even allowing for special situations and social change, Baillie explains, women need to pursue their divinely ordained "domestic duties" so the sexes will "be meet and rational companions to one another" (709).

Similarly, rather than demand new roles for women in the public world, Mary Shelley criticized men of intelligence (like her father and husband) who failed to find loving ways to serve their families. In *Frankenstein*, Victor exhibits a tragic lack of "the active spirit of tenderness" which had inspired his parents to a "deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life" (40). Unable to replicate his parents' domestic virtues, even when encouraged by Elizabeth's "living spirit of love to soften and attract" (43), Frankenstein produces the monstrous results of male disregard for domestic obligations. As the creature says, "If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crime" (126). Too long from home, Victor becomes, he admits, "blind to a thousand minute circumstances, which call forth a woman's sedulous attention" (131).

Much like *Frankenstein*, Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* dramatizes the failure of men to assume loving, responsible connections within the private sphere. In the first two volumes of that novel, Dorriforth follows eros and his conscience into a just and proper marriage to Miss Milner, a union which produces the child Matilda. But in chapter one of the third volume, the protagonist backslides into the hard and distant nature that haunts assertive men: "Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compassionate, the feeling, the just Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injustice" (194-95). In the final volumes, having failed to understand and forgive his wife, Elmwood also rejects his daughter, denying his duties to his family, until Sandford reminds him, "To condescend, my lord, is *not* to be familiar" (317). Inspired by such admonishment, the Lord makes a last-minute reversal, following the norm of his counselor (and the author) that he prove himself a father

(324). His return to a good home is the subject of Inchbald's tale, not a more effective place for women in the world of work.

Even Mary Wollstonecraft in her early writing explained that the weaknesses of women stem not from lost opportunities in society but from stereotyped roles in the family. In *Vindication of the Rights of Women* she explains that "girls, from various causes, are more kept down by their parents, in every sense of the word, than boys. The duty expected from them is, like all the duties arbitrarily imposed on women, more from a sense of propriety, more out of respect for decorum, than reason; and thus taught slavishly to submit to their parents, they are prepared for the slavery of marriage" (232). For the young Wollstonecraft, as for other progressives, gender inequities begin at home; given the liberty to move beyond the simple pieties imposed by oppressive parents, girls would revolutionize the English character by becoming stimulating companions for men.

While a less public figure, Jane Austen contributed a distinctive voice to the dialogue about the role of the personal will in national affairs. Like Joanna Baillie, Austen accepted orthodox religion's role for women within the traditional family. In fact, Austen's conservatism was less conflicted because the novelist and her publishers circumvented the prejudice that kept Baillie on the margin of male theatrical circles. Though Austen believed women able and competent in world affairs, she also imagined her sex as content with the protection offered by the manors and country houses. Not seeing equality of opportunity as essential for female happiness, she exhibited little of Shelley's sense of betrayal or Wollstonecraft's anger.

And yet in *Persuasion's* heroine, Anne Elliot, Austen more than any previous writer—male or female—explored the emotional drama of a woman in transition from the "the elegant stupidity of private parties" (180) to the dark, risky public world of men. Such liberation began with Anne's rejection of her father's interest in things feudal, especially his obsession with lineage and titles. Free of the need to feel herself a Cinderella, an emotion which limits Elizabeth Bennett and Elinor Dashwood, the protagonist of *Persuasion* is more autonomous, and thus more courageous, than previous Austen women. She inhabits the emotional ground between the cloying selflessness of Fanny Price and the narcissism that dogs Emma Wodehouse. Best of all, Ms. Elliot's love for Captain Wentworth awakens her desire without deluding herself about her choices.

But Anne can also be nostalgic, especially for the romance of the vertical world she is leaving. Such feelings keep her from challenging the inequality of women on the high seas, a failure which

undercuts the otherwise uplifting ending: "His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish [her] tenderness less; the dread of a future war all that could dim her sunshine. She gloried in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance" (252). Courageous in the face of uncertainty, Anne nevertheless stays home, where victory and tragedy are beyond her control (Gard 204-07). She remains a mere observer of adventures available to her husband. Her province remains domestic, his worldly.¹

Such hesitation is especially evident in Anne's responses to Lady Russell. Given a second chance to choose Wentworth, the young woman finds the strength to move beyond the safe world of advantage championed by her deceased mother and very-much-alive guardian. But as soon as she steps beyond the influence of her mentor, Anne hesitates. Unable to explain the new realities to Lady Russell, she repeatedly avoids honest conflict. Holding out for fantasy rather than truthful action, Anne hopes that Lady Russell, who frustrated her ward's will, may yet become the fast and substantial friend of her husband-to-be (249). She hesitates because of her need for approval from a woman, a mother figure, who represents the values Anne would disregard.

Anne's near paralysis at the end of *Persuasion* has nothing to do with the reactions of her father (even when he is incited by her sister Elizabeth) or any man, for that matter. She loses her flexibility only when she considers the "disappointment and pain" she would cause Lady Russell when her mentor was "no longer deceived": "her greatest want of composure would be in that quarter of the mind which could not be opened to Lady Russell, in that flow of anxieties and fears which must be all to herself" (211-212). Anne fears she and Russell will experience difference as severing, a form of deadly isolation. While she has the strength to incur the unhappiness of her blood relatives, she will feel left "all to herself," unable to share her deepest anxieties if she disappoints Lady Russell, and the mother her mentor represents.²

But recent studies in feminist developmental psychology suggest that Anne's dilemma might not be simple indecisiveness. According to theorists like Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan, the nearly exclusive role of women in the caretaking of children in Western cultures has encouraged two distinct patterns of self-awareness and

learning between the sexes. As young boys begin to recognize the sexual difference between themselves and their mothers, they feel a loss which, while it often stimulates a chronic fear of betrayal, encourages the pursuit of autonomy, identified with lack of dependency on females and the feminine. Girls, on the other hand, search for identity through an identification with caretakers. They feel secure and worthwhile by seeing themselves through the loving eyes of their mothers (Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*; "Feminism, Femininity, and Freud"; *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*; and *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities* and Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* and "Exit-Voice Dilemmas").

The implications for growth and learning can be substantial. Males tend to experience identity as the reward for separation; boundaries between the self and other are prerequisite for a sense of ego stability. The symbolic fusion with the mother in females, on the other hand, encourages more ego flexibility. Boys follow a developmental path toward self-reliance and radical individualism; girls value intimacy and group decisions. Males put the highest value on justice; females prefer compassion (Belenky et al; Flax; Jordan; Josselson; Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self" and *Toward a New Psychology of Women*; Stiver).

Thus Anne in *Persuasion* insists, even after her declaration of love to Wentworth, that being persuaded by Lady Russell was no failure:

To me, she was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those areas in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered [. . .] in my conscience. (246)

Not a figure of either Jane Austen's confusion or the cultural relativism of her times, as some recent critics have argued (Butler 281; Hopkins 157; Poovey 224-40; Tanner 248-49; Weissman 91), Anne simply recognizes, and validates, women's more flexible ego boundaries. Women need to decide--and change--without experiencing feelings of disconnection from other women, according to *Persuasion*.³

Thus, neither silliness nor weakness drives Anne's consideration of Lady Russell's reaction to the reversed decision. As she insists that her mentor accept the new realities--"There was nothing less for Lady Russell to do than to admit that she had been pretty completely wrong, and to take up a new set of opinions and of hopes"--Anne also needs to remain empathetic toward the Lady. As the narrator explains, during the transition "Anne knew that Lady Russell must be suffering some pain in understanding and relinquishing Mr. Elliot, and be making some struggles to become truly acquainted with, and do justice to Captain Wentworth." Respecting that her mentor "loved Anne better than she loved her own abilities," Anne encourages Lady Russell to reproduce her mothering by "attaching herself as a mother to the man [Wentworth] who was securing the happiness of her other child" (249).

Needed change for women in *Persuasion* has little to do with relationships with men, as long as those females choose their romantic attachments well. Austen's last complete novel has almost no interest in men's opinions or potential control over women; even Wentworth exists primarily as the object of Anne's desire. Instead, the heroine's identity in *Persuasion* is determined by how well she negotiates the influences of other women in her life, beginning with her dead mother and the mother's surrogate, Lady Russell. Just as these women have the potential to stifle Anne's love for Wentworth and the new opportunities he offers, other women, often marginal ones, serve as catalysts for both personal and social improvement. They offer her alternate points of view, deviant realities, and new kinds of courageous action.

As Anne accepts a ride to Uppercross in the Crofts' gig, she is intrigued that Wentworth's reasonable distance from her is repeatedly undermined by his instinctive responses of concern and care. Then the narrator complicates the protagonist's romantic reveries by describing Mrs. Croft, an androgynous woman inspired by both past and future roles for women. Like a traditional female, the Admiral's wife empathizes with her passenger, insisting first that "sure you are tired" and then imposing (with her husband's help) a "kind urgency" that rescues Ms. Elliot from fatigue. But Mrs. Croft is not a usual woman. Sensing Anne's attention to the emotions of others, the wife warns Admiral Croft that his descriptions of their hurried courtship might cause the younger woman to "never be persuaded that we could be happy together." For Anne's ears Mrs. Croft reminds her husband that "I had known you by character[. . .]long before" (91).

Not just another woman sensitive to domestic dramas, Mrs. Croft also models an alternative marriage in which women are equal companions with their husbands. In an age when the paradigm was

shifting, as W. H. Auden noted in *The Enchafed Flood*, from the false security of land to the vital adventure of the sea (12-13), Mrs. Croft assures Mrs. Musgrove that "the happiest part" of life for an Admiral's wife is "spent on board a ship." Fear and "imaginary complaints" only plagued her when Mrs. Croft was separated from her husband and "the North Seas," where their mutual exploration flourished (70). In a most telling moment, Mrs. Croft corrects her husband's careless driving, teaching the leadership of the new woman; Anne imagined "their style of driving[. . .]no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs" (91-92).

Inspired by Mrs. Croft's happiness in the public world of men, Anne strolls Milson-street with Admiral Croft. Feeling equal to the men she meets, Ms. Eliot practices being a man's friend and companion, not just his appendage. Intuitively, Croft assumes the role of mentor, teaching his young charge the male world of competition, judgment, and intrigue:

here comes a friend, Captain Brigden; I shall only say, 'How d'ye do,' as we pass, however. I shall not stop. 'How d'ye do.' Bridgen stares to see anybody with me but my wife[. . .]. If you look across the street, you will see Admiral Brand coming down and his brother. Shabby fellows, both of them! [. . .] There comes old Sir Archibald Drew and his grandson. Look, he sees us; he kisses his hand to you; he takes you for my wife.

As Anne's renewed desire for Wentworth stimulates her curiosity about the post-Napoleon world of military men, the walk with Croft demonstrates how to flourish in that darker, more risky male world (Auerbach 119-24).

A less obvious, but more substantial, influence on Anne's growth is Mrs. Smith. Like Lady Russell and other traditional women in *Persuasion*, Anne's friend has a "submissive spirit; she is more empathetic than confrontational. But Mrs. Smith's resilience, not her sweetness, contributes to Anne's education. Having lost her husband and money, and living without children, relatives or good health, Mrs. Smith develops what the narrator defines as an "elasticity of mind," the "power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself" (154). Because she is able to be comforted without becoming self-absorbed, Smith initiates Anne into life's dark realities; there is, she says, "'so little real friendship in the

world!'--and unfortunately (speaking low and tremulously) there are so many who forget to think seriously till it is almost too late" (156).

Refusing to become bitter over such realities, Mrs. Smith uses humor to introduce her friend to the impediments facing women who pursue change. Many women, Smith observes, lack initiative: "we women never mean to have any body. It is a thing of course among us, that every man is refused--till he offer" (195-96). Not passive herself, the friend is careful to keep Elliot's letter to Charles Smith, a letter which demonstrates the cousin's intent to gain Kellynch or destroy it. Most unlike Lady Russell, Mrs. Smith allows Anne full freedom to choose or not choose William Elliot and then, once Anne has decided against him, speaks boldly and directly:

Mr. Elliot is a man without heart or conscience; a designing, wary, cold-blooded being, who thinks only of himself; who, for his own interest or ease, would be guilty of any cruelty, or any treachery [. . .] He is black at heart, hollow and black! (199).

Such honesty, while empowering, is limited to the domestic arena, the usual place of women's influence. Smith is more effective when she enlists the support of other marginalized women in monitoring Anne's complications. By establishing their own covert network, these women reveal truths unknown to the players in the Wentworth/Elliot drama: "Mrs. Smith[. . .]had already heard, through the short cut of a laundress and a waiter, rather more of the general success and produce of the evening than Anne could relate" (193). In league with her nurse, Smith establishes a confederacy of women dedicated to alternative sources of truth and action for women otherwise disadvantaged in the public world.

In order to assure the effectiveness of such a group, Mrs. Smith insists that Anne recognize the abilities of Nurse Rooke. The nurse, the friend emphasizes, "thoroughly understands when to speak. She is a shrewd, intelligent, sensible woman. Hers is a line for seeing human nature; she has a fund of good sense and observation which, as a companion, make her infinitely superior to thousands of those who having only received 'the best education in the world', know nothing worth attending to" (155). Nurse Rooke serves as informant within the invisible network described by Smith:

Colonel Wallis has a very pretty silly wife, to whom he tells things which he had better not, and he repeats it all to her. She, in the overflowing spirits of her recovery, repeats it all to

her nurse; and the nurse knowing my acquaintance with you, very naturally brings it all to me. (205)

Freed from both the narrow assumptions of the patriarchy and the disabling fusions of the matriarchy, these women match affection with subversion.

In the early novels of Jane Austen, her heroines learn and change intrapsychically. In a stable and static world, they only need to temper some of their prejudices, admitting their indiscretions or childish fears. In intimate moments they revise past mistakes in order to discover an internal harmony which they easily share with their loved ones. They either admit, for example, the need for more sense or sensibility (*Sense and Sensibility*), or they exchange destructive appearances for healthier realities (*Pride and Prejudice*). If there is injustice in their world, as in *Mansfield Park*, the women wait for others, usually men, to see the truth and revise society. Such character issues become complicated when the aristocratic order begins its decline in *Emma*. But even Emma Woodhouse finds contentment only by bending her otherwise disruptive will to the responsibilities introduced by her patient male mentor.

Such comforting direction is absent from *Persuasion* in part because Wentworth is not aristocratic. He is a naval officer, a member of an emergent class enjoying the rewards of victories in the Napoleonic Wars. Worse yet, Anne has lost the mother who would have introduced her to the traditional expectations of females in the domestic scene. While potentially as willful as Emma, the heroine of *Persuasion* is inhibited by grief for the deceased Mrs. Elliot and a wish to replace her with a surrogate. Nostalgic for a female caretaker, Anne has a desperate need for the direction and order offered by a superior who acts as a motherly counselor. The locus of persuasion has shifted to a more public world than usual for women, but in Austen's final completed novel no one, male or female, can rescue Anne from conflict and freedom. Her choice of Captain Wentworth and the risks associated with his profession is the mark of her success, according to Austen.⁴

Stimulated by her profound need for Frederick Wentworth, Anne Elliot learns to integrate her "inner freedom" into a "selfless

intentionality" (Astell 3, 13). Such female will requires that she maintain ties to other women as she accepts the Captain; a woman changes without severing nurturant connections. And so as she commits to a new life, Anne seeks persuasion in other quarters, from women of a different class, ones with substantially different motives from those of her blessed mother and her mentor. That is why she simultaneously validates and separates from Lady Russell's influence. It may not be a radically individualistic way of learning; it may be clumsy, indirect, and time-consuming. But it is how in 1815, and to a certain extent in any age, women discover power by wrestling with the fear and anxiety in "that quarter of the mind."⁵

Notes

¹ In the film version of *Persuasion* (dir. Roger Michell and starring Amanda Root and Ciaran Hinds, BBC Films, 1995) this issue is resolved by concluding with Anne and Wentworth both on the ship. Such an ending suggests she changed his mind about the value of women on naval vessels and, by implication, the role of women in the public world.

² As the narrator explains, Lady Russell "had almost a mother's love, and mother's rights" (27). A surrogate mother, Russell encourages a repetition of the biological mother in Anne; she says "You are your mother's self in countenance and disposition" and asks her to reclaim Kellynch and thus become her mother "in situation, and name, and home, presiding and blessing in the same spot" (160).

³ After overhearing Wentworth's praise of constancy in the metaphor of the hazel-nut, spoken to Louisa Musgrove, Anne answers him in her imagination with a defense of women's more flexible ego boundaries: "She thought it could scarcely escape him to feel, that a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favour of happiness, as a very resolute character" (88).

⁴ The Victorian Period made such dilemmas somewhat less dramatic when it eventually made room for more diverse expressions of the female will. In the second half of the nineteenth century English society began admitting the symbolic violence of the patriarchy, so clearly outlined in novels like *Mansfield Park*. Subsequent evolution began to allow, and finally to justify, women's search for freedom in the public world, which

remained the exclusive province of males even in Austen's final, most mature, novels.

⁵ Liberation from the sins of the mother is the focus of Mary Wollstonecraft's incomplete and final work, *Maria; or the Wrongs of Woman*. Marginalized because of her illegitimate child by her master, Jemima recognizes this alienation as a potential source of freedom: "Having lost the privileged respect of my sex, my presence, instead of restraining, perhaps gave the reins to their tongues; still I had the advantage of hearing discussions, from which, in the common course of life, women are excluded" (45). The inheritor of such burdens, Maria writes her story to break the cycle of daughters feeling the "wretchedness" (11) and "grief" (14) of their mothers. She hopes her words "might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid" (15). And, like the better female counselors in *Persuasion*, she is careful to encourage her daughter to move beyond indoctrination and towards autonomous choice: "From my narrative, my dear girl, you may gather the instruction, the counsel, which is meant rather to exercise than influence your mind" (58). See Jane Spencer's discussion of *Maria* and similar "novels in which the heroine's moral progress is measured, not by how well she follows her mother's good advice, but how well she succeeds in avoiding her mother's errors" (204-10).

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“Of Course, You Mean ‘Swimming’”:
Why Science Cannot Determine Values or Explain
Experience

D. Brian Austin

The Discovery Channel’s 2010 series *Through the Wormhole*, starring Morgan Freeman, introduces the “Is There a Creator?” episode with Mr. Freeman reflecting on an ant farm that he was given as a gift when he was a child. He examines the ants behind the glass, working away at their complex series of tunnels and wonders what the ants might possibly make of the face outside the glass. None of us knows what it’s like to be an ant, but we can be pretty confident that the ants do not have much of a clue about the nature of the being that created the little world they live in and set up the boundaries of their existence. Could it be that we are in a similar situation, when we try to reflect on the existence and nature of whatever or whoever has established our world? And how much would a most thorough examination of our ant-world finally tell us about the kind of being or beings, or non-being or non-beings, that account for why there is a universe for us to live in? Not much, this essay will argue. Some, but not much.

Modern natural science has provided us with the tools to solve innumerable human questions and problems. It has revealed our history back billions of years and it has provided technology to save lives and to destroy lives beyond what anyone could have imagined a mere hundred years ago. It has plumbed the depths of the very small and looked to the edges of the observable universe. It has answered questions about the nature of matter and the building blocks of life itself. But there remain important questions that it is not equipped to answer, and pointing out this fact is among the most important responses that Christians, indeed religious believers from any number of faith traditions, can bring to the “new atheists.” There are key human questions about which the natural scientist *qua* scientist must remain agnostic. There are, in fact, a multitude of such questions, but this essay will focus on two categories of them: questions of *value* and questions of human *experience*.

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Since one of the characteristics of the “new” atheism is a rather strident insistence that natural sciences have answered (or might someday answer) the human questions that religious belief claims to answer, showing the limits of science in these arenas is most valuable for the religious believer. And to argue for the existence of these limits is not to commit a “god-of-the-gaps” fallacy (basing religious conviction on mysteries that science hasn’t solved yet, but might). My argument is not that religious belief is rational because science leaves explanatory gaps that only God can fill (an ill-advised strategy employed by many proponents of Intelligent Design, for example); but that our deepest human longings, quests, and questions are not of the *type* that the natural sciences can fulfill. If the answers to these questions and longings suggested by religious belief are like answers to a crossword puzzle, then science is like a calculator. It offers answers to different kinds of questions.

This difference in *kind* of question as it relates to the new atheism can be well illustrated by examining a couple of arguments from two of the most widely read and influential of the new atheists, Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins. The majority of what follows will address Sam Harris’s argument that science can determine human values as presented in his monograph *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*.¹ Then attention will turn to Dawkins’s reductionistic analysis of human experience as expressed in passages from *The God Delusion*² and *Unweaving the Rainbow: Science, Delusion, and the Appetite for Wonder*.³

After a brief introduction to the philosophical issues involved, this essay will address the specifics of these key arguments. In many ways these two issues, the nature of values and of experience, are emblematic of other issues in the recent debates between atheism and religious belief. In these questions and others, the science-inspired atheists claim that science has answered questions which I argue are not properly within the domain of the sciences. In making these claims, the new atheists are elevating the unarguably powerful *tools* of the sciences into an *ontology*, or theory of ultimate reality. This essay seeks to expose the fallaciousness of this promotion in the two key areas addressed by Harris and Dawkins.

¹ (NY: Free Press, 2010).

² (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

³ (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

Facts and Values: The “Is” and the “Ought”

Eighteenth century philosopher and historian David Hume is usually cited as one who forever divorced fact and value. In his attempt to give morality an objective, scientific foundation, Sam Harris disagrees with Hume’s splitting asunder of the “ought” from the “is”.⁴ Hume’s argument as it appears in *A Treatise of Human Nature*:

But can there be any difficulty in proving that vice and virtue are not matters of fact, whose existence we can infer by reason? Take any action allowed to be vicious; wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call *vice*. In whichever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions, and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but it is the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it.⁵

Hume’s example can be updated readily in a society that is regularly exposed to television crime dramas. Imagine a police report that describes in meticulous detail every fact discovered at the scene of a particularly heinous murder. The report conveys information about the manner of death, positions of objects in the room, including the disfigured corpse, timelines, even forensic information about blood and other body fluids. Hume’s point, one accepted by most philosophers since his time, is that *nowhere* on this list of facts will one find the *awfulness* of the crime. And this is the case even if everyone who finds out about the crime agrees that it is awful. The moral blameworthiness of those who have committed the crime is nowhere among the *facts* that can be recorded about the crime. The moral outrage, the repulsion towards one who would commit such an act, the conclusion that something immoral has happened here—these all come from somewhere other than the objectively available facts of the case.

⁴ Harris, 10.

⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 520.

Whether or not Hume is correct in finally locating our moral judgments in the sentiment of the observer, he has nearly unanimously been affirmed by subsequent thinkers that these moral judgments are not to be found in any objective reporting of facts.

Harris quotes, disapprovingly, physicist Sean Carroll's positive assessment of Hume's is/ought distinction: "Attempts to derive ought from is are like attempts to reach an odd number by adding together even numbers. If someone claims they've done it, you don't have to check their math; you know they've made a mistake."⁶ Such a derivation is exactly what Harris attempts, but it is important to "check his math."

In my view, Harris does not ever quite address Hume's question head-on, but rather seeks to evade the question by invoking the "well-being" of conscious creatures as the only possible meaning of the word "good" (used in the sense of morally good). His key move in addressing the fact/value split is stated this way: "Meaning, values, morality, and the good life must relate to facts about the well-being of conscious creatures—and, in our case, must lawfully depend upon events in the world and upon states of the human brain."⁷ And he laments the status quo that affirms, he says, "that science has nothing to say about what constitutes a good life."⁸

There are actually two logical moves at work here. One says that "well-being is all that can constitute goodness" and "science has much to say about how to achieve well-being." Though these claims are controversial, even if granted they do nothing to bridge the fact/value divide. In the first claim, the meaning of "well-being" is crucial, and Harris fails to provide a sufficiently robust definition to underwrite his project. The second claim, if we have reached a working agreement on the meaning of well-being, becomes less problematic. In fact, if we are in agreement about the meaning of "well-being," then the second claim seems unarguably true. But that is because it is quite vague. Harris vacillates in his argument between claims like "science can determine human values" and "science has much to say about the achievement of human well-being." These claims are importantly different, and to characterize his opponents as denying the second claim is to commit a straw man fallacy. One might very plausibly argue that science cannot *determine* human values, while strongly affirming that science can *help us* to understand better what

⁶ Harris, 203

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*

makes a good life, once we settle on at least some part of what “good life” means. But what we mean by “good” must come from somewhere besides science. So what is “well-being”? Harris’s project turns on this question.

Harris claims that “the concept of ‘well-being’ captures all that we can intelligently value. And ‘morality’—whatever people’s associations with this term happen to be—*really* relates to the intentions and behaviors that affect the well-being of conscious creatures.”⁹ Thus Harris concludes that many different religious and philosophical ethical systems, despite their claims to the contrary, really do come down to the attempt to bring about the well-being of conscious creatures. Again, even granting him this conclusion, we must immediately ask what is meant by “well-being,” and whether science can provide that meaning.

I happen to agree with Harris that history’s best religious and philosophical ethics are aiming at maximizing “well-being” of conscious creatures (at least humans, maybe more). But what is “well-being”? Harris admits the difficulty of pinning down this term by pointing out its similarities with ideas of “health”: “It seems to me [. . .] that the concept of well-being is like the concept of physical health: it resists precise definition, and yet it is indispensable. In fact, the meanings of both terms seem likely to remain perpetually open to revision as we make progress in science.”¹⁰ True enough, but progress toward what end? How does one define or recognize “progress”? This is the kind of question that science itself cannot answer, especially when one recognizes the deep kinship between the “scientific” notion of health and the “religious” notion of salvation.

In most major religions, the terms “salvation” and “health” are closely related. For religious believers of various stripes, progress toward enhanced human well-being is the very *raison d’être* of the religion. What is salvation except fully optimized “health” or “well-being”? And if we are to make progress toward better understanding and achieving this worthy goal, then mustn’t someone, somewhere, posit a standard by which progress may be measured? Among other things, this is what religion proposes to do. Every major religion has an idea of salvation as the final goal of human well-being. Obviously the substance of this state differs from religion to religion, but they all see optimal well-being as their goal (or at least such could be argued). So Harris’s glossing over the defining of “well-being” as a minor issue

⁹ Ibid., 32-3. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

belies the centrality of this issue in the fact/value relationship. Is “well-being” a state of communion with God, the extinction of the flame of desire in *Nibbana*, the final realization that *Atman=Brahman*, the alignment with what is most real in human consciousness with what is most real in the universe, or the achievement of some measure of happiness for one’s self and one’s community? These are all options suggested by different worldviews, and the answers given in each case may *guide* the sciences as they illuminate the world and the brain, but in no case can the sciences that describe the world *determine* which of these (or some other) shall be the real meaning of “health,” “well-being,” or “salvation.” And it is precisely our answers to *these* kinds of questions that determine our values.

Oddly enough, Harris realizes the very point made above when he reflects on the justification for doing science itself. “Science is defined with reference to the goal of understanding the processes at work in the universe. Can we justify this goal scientifically? Of course not.”¹¹ Harris is a man of deeply held values, among which are rational inquiry and an honest search for truths about nature and human beings. But he sees clearly that science, *qua* (purely as) science, cannot justify scientific inquiry, that rational inquiry and its quest for truth cannot tell us *why* we should seek truth. “Science cannot tell us why, *scientifically*, we should value health.”¹² He is exactly right, and this is why his project fails.

Science can describe the neurological state of a person who self-reports his or her well-being. It cannot tell us that well-being is the highest good or define the nature of that well-being. By saying that science cannot tell us why we should value health, Harris illustrates very well the divide between facts and values. Beliefs about facts and beliefs about values may involve very similar brain circuitry, but philosophically they remain quite distinct.

So what reasons *do* we give to justify our quest for truth and our method of honest and rigorous inquiry? This is a question that interests philosophers and religious believers. Not that religion and/or philosophy can lay claim to the definitive answer to the question, but the question goes to religion’s conceptual side—the side that postulates an ultimate source of value around which one may organize one’s journey through life. Does truth really matter to you? Then doesn’t it make sense to live in a world where truth *really* matters, even if our claims to understanding the truth are always tentative and grasping, like

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 37

¹² *Ibid.*

the ants' in the ant farm, perhaps? Religious belief serves to posit a world in which our searching for truth and well-being makes sense, because it describes a world in which truth and well-being (salvation) are *real* (even if mysterious and forever beyond our complete understanding). To Isaac Newton, for example, the quest to uncover the hidden springs and principles of nature made sense because he believed that the rationality of the world reflected the rationality of its Creator. His overall worldview, including the *value* he placed on mathematically investigating nature, was undergirded by his belief in a cosmic geometrical genius behind it all.

Religious convictions provide provisional answers to “big-picture” questions and provide a framework for our valuations of ideals, including scientific truth and moral goodness. Unfortunately, like the other new atheists, Harris rarely considers this type of humble, provisional, open religious belief. Instead he focuses his attacks on those forms of religious belief and practice that are fundamentalist, dogmatic, triumphalist, and violent. He accuses religious morals of being absolutist and legalistic, as sanctioning morality by appeal to divine legislation alone. Of course there are religious beliefs like this and not a few believers who hold them. But there are also many quiet and humble believers who live (like Socrates, for example) by faith in a goodness whose complete description lies beyond our linguistic capacities, but that/who calls for our allegiance.

Explanation and Experience

Individual human experience is another area where the natural sciences have comparatively little to say. All the neuroscience in the world will never convey what it is like to see the face of loved one, to be in the presence of immediate injustice, or to be affected by the arcing hues of the rainbow. The philosophical movement that eventually came to be known as existentialism arose, in part, as a reaction against the increasingly popular notion that *everything* in the universe could (at least potentially) be explained by reductionistic, mechanistic laws. Nineteenth century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard is usually called the first “existentialist,” even though the term did not exist during his time. He is so named partly because he was among the first influential modern thinkers to focus much of his energy toward showing that the explanations, predictions, and proofs of the scientific method were all but powerless to address the most

pressing concerns of the *existing individual*.¹³ Central to his argument is the idea that a *person* is a fundamentally different kind of being than is any *object* that might normally fall under rational (and thus scientific) scrutiny. The essence of rationality, logic, and by extension the sciences, is to identify and to elucidate pattern: to find exactly those characteristics of objects and events that are *shared* with other objects and events.

But each *actually existing individual*, and each of her/his experiences, memories, motivations, moments of decision, etc., is importantly *sui generis* (of its own kind, without another like it). Admittedly there are plenty of characteristics that humans share, and human collective behavior can be predicted statistically with sometimes uncanny accuracy, but insofar as we are picking out commonalities, we are ignoring the individuality of each person; and it is exactly out of that individuality (always in community, of course) that our very identities take shape and our lives are constructed. Put another way, my *experience*, even of the simplest kind, like my experience of the oil lamp burning on my desk, has only happened once, has never happened to anyone else, and will never happen again, either to me or to anyone else. My consciousness of the gentle source of light and heat *means something* to me that can never be replicated or described accurately by the methods of natural science. A neuroscientist might describe in incredible detail my brain states as I ponder the lamp, its shape, its designs, the uncle who gave it to me twenty years ago. But the electrochemical processes that may be necessary to support such an experience *are not the experience itself*. I am not experiencing a brain state. I experience a lamp, and the countless associations that instantaneously cascade to form my interpretation of that experience.

In fact, *every* actual event and object in the world is partly categorizable (i.e. potentially scientifically understandable) and partly not. Not only is every human being and every human experience importantly different from every other one, every place on earth is different from every other place on Earth; every spot in the universe is importantly different from every other one. The only things that are *identical* to any other things are abstractions, like money or numbers or geometrical shapes or Plato's forms. Of course it is very helpful to us to find those characteristics that are (roughly) shared by similar objects and events. Progress in finding these shared characteristics has allowed

¹³ For example see *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 199ff.

great advances in everything from space travel to medicine. But to think that the intellectual and technological tools that have created these advances can tell *the whole story* about any particular actual object, and especially about human personal experience, is to require of those tools something that they were never equipped to deliver. To grant reductionistic explanations priority over all other modes of thought is to elevate a tool to the level of an ontology (theory of ultimate being). This is something like the carpenter who relies exclusively on his hammer for all tasks. He may really love his hammer, but it is not helpful at all in squaring a corner or raising a wall. Not every task of carpentry is like a nail that needs to be driven. Explaining some aspect of complex phenomena by reference to their component parts is a tool that has built many amazing cultural edifices and solved many a difficult human problem. But there are other kinds of questions that need other kinds of tools. The burden of proof lies with the one who claims that scientific reductionism is more than one kind of tool that answers one set of questions.

Every event or object in the world is partly categorizable and partly not, but some are more categorizable than others. For many reasons, human experience profoundly resists categorization. Apparently the widely-read atheist Richard Dawkins disagrees. For he argues that our experiences are not really what we think they are, that many of our judgments about our experiences are mistaken because we fail to realize that these experiences are always examples of physical stuff obeying physical laws. Though he mentions these convictions in his recent book *The God Delusion*, they are more explicitly stated in his 1998 book, *Unweaving the Rainbow*. In *The God Delusion* he states his agreement with Julian Baggini that “there is only one kind of stuff in the universe, and it is physical,”¹⁴ and that everything in the universe, including human experiences and judgments about objects of experience can always be, at least in theory, explained by natural science because “everything ultimately obeys the laws of physics.”¹⁵

For Dawkins, even if we expose the “real” nature of experience and its objects, the sense of wonder we feel will not be diminished. “As ever when we unweave a rainbow, it will not become less wonderful.”¹⁶ And this is exactly because the *experience* of the rainbow, as much as the *experience* of unweaving it, is precisely not

¹⁴ Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

explicable, even in theory, by the laws of physics, because important parts of that experience remain *sui generis*.

In *Unweaving the Rainbow* Dawkins notes:

[. . .] the colours that we finally think we see are labels used for convenience by the brain. I used to be disappointed when I saw ‘false colour’ images, say, satellite photographs of earth, or computer-constructed images of deep space. The caption tells us that the colours are arbitrary codes, say, for different types of vegetation, in a satellite picture of Africa. I used to think that false colour images were a kind of cheat. I wanted to know what the scene ‘really’ looked like. I now realize that everything I think I see, even the colours of my own garden through the window, are ‘false’ in the same sense: arbitrary conventions used, in this case by my brain, as convenient labels for wavelengths of light.¹⁷

A simple question suggests itself in response to this account of the experience of color: how is the experience we name “purple” any more or less “false” than the experience we name “electromagnetic radiation at approximately 4000 angstroms wavelength”? In each case we are using a linguistic “label” of a certain kind to report an experience that is not itself the same as the label. And the report of the experience will differ depending on the purpose for which it is offered (poetry vs. lab report, for example), but in either case we employ a label to convey some portion of an experience to another human being (or to ourselves in a subsequent moment). To say that someone is not “really” seeing purple is no more justifiable than saying someone is not “really” seeing radiation at 4000 angstroms. We see what we see and label it for the purposes of classification and communication. As a human being I label the experienced object “purple.” Philosophers for centuries have known that the label is not the experience itself, and that we often label things incorrectly (based on some standard of “truth”—a debate we can’t enter into here), but to tell me that my experience is not really my experience is very much akin to trying to convince me that I am not in pain when I think I am. Neither Richard Dawkins nor anyone else can ever assume a perspective from which he can tell me that I “only think” I see a color. My experience of purple is not rendered fallacious just because someone else, labeling objects for different purposes, says that purple is a name for a certain wavelength of light. To do so seems to me to be like correcting someone for calling

¹⁷ Dawkins, *Rainbow*, 57.

something “purpurado” rather than “purple.” Different labels are used for similar experiences for different purposes in different communities.

The argument that our experiences are mistaken because they are “really” brain events is an acid that dissolves all knowledge claims, including those made about brain events. To Dawkins’s way of thinking, the rainbow is not “really” immobile as it seems, but our senses and brain patterns, conditioned by evolution to react in certain ways, make it seem so. Thus Dawkins speaks of the “illusion of the rainbow.”¹⁸ Presumably, once we reach a full understanding of all the evolutionary-physical (if we ever do) operations of “brains-perceiving-rainbows” we will have the correct picture. But that explanation will also be (according to this line of thinking), no less than my experience of the unmoving rainbow, the result of evolutionary-physical laws. So should not our “corrected” understanding of “brains-perceiving-rainbows” be just as suspect as the original experience of the immobile spectral sky-bow? And this brings us back to the crucially important distinction between explanation and experience.

The rainbow, whether seen as God’s forsaking of violent treatment of humans (as in Genesis 6), or as refracted light through trillions of droplets of water vapor, or as a pretty adornment of a pre- or post- storm horizon, is an object of experience. Every human being who sees a rainbow has an experience that is hers or his alone. It will be interpreted according to that person’s individual filters, born of her unique genetic inheritance and lived history. A psychologist may try to explain why that rainbow means what it does to her. A neuroscientist might try to explain the operations of the brain as the rainbow is experienced or remembered. But those explanations are *not* the experience itself. As the existentialists have argued, the experience of the rainbow is that of a unique individual, part of our universe that is importantly uncategorizable.

Put very simply, the person who experiences an object like a rainbow is not herself an object in this encounter. As one who experiences, she is *subject*, not *object*. She is a *person*, a center of experiences unique in the world. Scottish countercultural and philosophically-minded psychiatrist R. D. Laing has expressed this feature of being human very effectively. Laing points out in many of his books the fallacy of considering a *subject* solely as an *object*. The natural sciences, Laing points out, deal with objective truth—truth that is the same (at least in theory) from any possible perspective. Behavior, the personal response to experience that becomes public, can

¹⁸ Ibid., 47.

be objectively described. But public behavior is not the same as personal experience. Laing asserts that “Natural science knows nothing of the relation between behavior and experience. The nature of this relation is mysterious . . .”¹⁹ Echoing Kierkegaard and Martin Buber, Laing contends that the world of experience, the arena of meaning for individual human beings, can never be seen through the lens of objectivity. Experience and what it means to each of us always hides at least part of itself from the documentary efforts of objectivity.

Efforts to delve into subjectivity with the tools of objectivity will always come up short. Neurologists and endocrinologists can provide some fascinating information about a person in love. But they cannot, as scientists, reduce the experience to the neurology and endocrinology. My experience of being in love is *not*, emphatically *not*, an experience of elevated hormone and serotonin levels. When I’m in love, I experience the other person and her perceived wonder; I know nothing of testosterone or neurochemicals. Those are surely present in elevated levels during my experience, and are very probably thus in *every* experience that someone labels “being in love,” but the *experience* of being in love is not the same as the biochemistry.

Laing was not only influenced by the work of Kierkegaard, but also by the work of Scottish philosopher John MacMurray, who argued in the early 20th century what this paper seeks to argue today: that natural sciences are not equipped to explain *experience*. Dawkins’s arguments that what we make of rainbows are mistakes wrought by evolution’s preference for certain brain-habits, if they are true, cannot be true. MacMurray, in *The Boundaries of Science*, says:

From the scientific point of view, all beliefs, including scientific beliefs, occur to people. The processes which cause them to occur are unintentional, and therefore, the beliefs are not the realization of a human intention to achieve knowledge. If the belief that all beliefs are brought about in this way is true, then, since it is a belief, it cannot be true. For to say that a belief is the product of the operation of objective forces which necessitate its occurrence under certain conditions, is clearly incompatible with holding that it is believed because it is true.²⁰

To say that all beliefs are brain states (which, incidentally, Sam Harris also affirms) and that brain states are the results of the laws of physics

¹⁹ R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1967), 19.

²⁰ (London: Faber and Faber, 1939), 129.

(even when writ large in evolutionary history), strips all possible meaning from the word “true” when applied to these beliefs. If the “delusions” of religion are explained away as delusions by recourse to their evolutionary (either biological or social) history and their dependence on (or identity with) brain states, then so are the “delusions” of science.

Conclusion

“True” is a value judgment, much in that way that “morally good” is a value judgment. And these judgments have their fount in humans’ *experience* as subjects, not objects. A brain state cannot be “true” or “false”; it is a brain-state. *Beliefs* are designated as true or false, even if we do not know now which is which, or if we never will. But the meaning of true/false or moral/immoral can never be determined by the sciences. Those valuations come from somewhere else. So we will always need religion and philosophy to conjecture and to argue about which of the various “big-picture” scenarios best explains the human condition in the universe we try to navigate together.

Many have accused the new atheists of succumbing to their own brand of fundamentalism. I think this is only partly a fair assessment. If fundamentalism is primarily characterized by a rigid dogmatic commitment to received doctrine, then Dawkins and Harris are not fundamentalists. Both are clearly committed to a search for truth, even if that means the overturning of the received wisdom. But I do think that the new truths to which they are open lie in a very narrow range. Dawkins and Harris both argue very effectively against a God whose chief description is super-intelligent designer. If there is such a being, they concur, then science should lead us to discover Him/Her. Science has not led us there, so there is likely not such a being. As a Christian believer, I agree with this conclusion. If God’s primary attribute we should find is “engineer,” then I, with Dawkins and Harris, don’t see the evidence to support such an inference.

But this is where the charge of fundamentalism against Dawkins and Harris does gain some traction. For them, it seems that all questions and answers must conform to those recognizable by the leading scientific journals of our day. The possibility that there may be questions of an entirely different sort, whose answers may be best expressed in poetry, parable, or myth, seems absent from their radars. This is a kind of fundamentalism: one that may not claim to have all of the answers, but *does* claim to have discovered the kinds of questions for which there may be answers. Their refusal to engage other possible

kinds of questions recalls an ancient Buddhist story about the turtle and the fish.

In lamenting the human tendency to become trapped in words and existing categories, the Buddhist parable tells of a fish and a turtle who were fast friends. The turtle undertakes a journey to a different place. He is gone for several months. Upon his return, his friend the fish inquires: "Where have you been all this time, my friend?" The turtle responds, "I have been walking on the dry earth above." The fish, momentarily puzzled but then regaining mental clarity, replies, "Of course, you mean 'swimming.'"

The fish did not have the conceptual equipment to process the idea of "walking," so he denied that there was such a place, where one could walk. Thus can the mechanical and reductionistic metaphors of the natural sciences, indispensable tools that they are, trap us into denying the existence of realities and potential experiences, beyond mechanism and reductionism, which may in fact house the best clues of all about human *experience, well-being, and salvation*. When we look through the glass of our ant-farm and try to discern by whom, for what, we were made, we must ask questions of a different sort than "where do we start the next tunnel?"

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Appalachian Studies and Grassroots Collaborations

Sandra L. Ballard

[Editor's Note: On April 12, 2011, Sandra Ballard received Carson-Newman College's 2011 Award for Educational Service to Appalachia. She is the 22nd recipient of this award given annually since 1989 to recognize teachers, activists, and writers for their service to the Appalachian region. Previous award winners have included Eliot Wigginton, Loyal Jones, Jim Wayne Miller, James Still, Robert J. Higgs, Wilma Dykeman, Helen Lewis, Alice Brown, George Ella Lyon, Bill Landry, Guy & Candie Carawan, Marilou Awiakta, John Rice Irwin, Mike Mullins, Lee Smith, Steve Fisher, Jeff Daniel Marion, Grace Toney Edwards, Bill Nickle, Linda Parris-Bailey, and Wayne Meisel. The text below is adapted from her acceptance address.]

Thank you to Ernest Lee, the Appalachian Center, and the Bonner Center for Service Learning & Civic Engagement for this recognition. I was at Carson-Newman when we created this award, so I'm tremendously honored and humbled to find myself on the list of recipients. I've long admired the commitment of this college to the Appalachian region, and I appreciate the faculty and administrators who share a love of this region and work together here to help students and others move closer to understanding this complex place called Appalachia. Scholars and teachers who study this region have described it in lots of ways. John C. Campbell famously said that Appalachia is a region about which "more things are known that are not true than of any part of our country" (xxi). Loyal Jones has said that "never have so many missionaries been sent to save so many Christians" as has happened in Appalachia (4). James Still has described the Appalachian region as "that somewhat mythical region with no recognized boundaries ... [that] has shaped the lives and endeavors of men and women from pioneer days to the present" (683). Some say that the Appalachian region is portrayed as "Other" in relation to the rest of the United States. Lee Smith has said that "Appalachia is to the South what the South is to the rest of the country." In fact, mountain people are identified as "Other" all over the world. In Iran and Iraq, it's the mountain Kurds. In China, it's the peasants of Guizhou Province (Williamson 20). Jerry Williamson, in his book *Hillbillyland* on "what the movies did to the mountains and what the mountains did to the movies" has pointed out that "everybody needs a hillbilly."

Depending on where you look, Appalachia is a region full of paradoxes: we have great wealth alongside great poverty, a place of refuge and great beauty not too far from exploited natural resources—it's also where communities have traditions of working together to challenge exploitation. Complexities like these are a good starting place for talking about Appalachian Studies and why this field of study appeals to me.

First, it's an untraditional discipline—Appalachian Studies is relatively new and interdisciplinary. If you've seen the film *Winter's Bone*, you've probably drawn your own comparisons between its setting in the Ozarks and the Southern Appalachian mountains. One of the most insightful articles I've read about that film appeared in *Southern Spaces*, where writers use the term “shatter zone” to describe Appalachia. “Shatter zone” originated as a geological term to refer to a belt of rock with random cracks and mineral deposits. The meaning of the term then shifted to refer to political geography—after World War II, “shatter zone” came to mean a borderland, especially where people migrated for refuge, to escape economic pressures and close oversight by the government. In 2009, scholar James C. Scott published a book on the political history of mountain communities in Upland Southeast Asia—a book titled *The Art of Not Being Governed*, and in it, he describes “shatter zones” as places of “resistance,” where people “seek refuge in out-of-the-way places” (Moon & Talley 2). Places he named as examples of “shatter zones” are the southwest province of China, certain African highlands, the Balkans, and places in the Americas, including the Great Dismal Swamp and Appalachia (2). Thinking of Appalachia as a “borderland” with features in common with other mountain places in the world seems useful. So does thinking of Appalachia in global contexts—it's the future of Appalachian Studies. An anthropologist at Appalachian State University, Patricia Beaver, is working on a book that discusses what she calls “the politics of elevation,” which includes everything from protecting water quality and river headwaters to helping homeowners in gated second-home communities understand the collaborative necessities of volunteer fire departments in the North Carolina Mountains.

The annual Appalachian Studies Conference, in its 34th year in 2011, is one of the best examples of how interdisciplinary this field of study is. When we met at Eastern Kentucky University, nearly 800 people from across the country gathered to discuss the mountains. In addition to the teachers and students, scholars and publishers, Appalachian Studies conferences also include activists and journalists; musicians, artists, and filmmakers; and even gardeners who sponsor seed swaps to keep heirloom seeds alive. That combination makes for a

lively crowd and “radical pedagogy”—there’s a lot to learn from each other. A gathering where people come together from so many places and disciplines invites cross-pollination of ideas and excitement about potential, productive collaborations. Interdisciplinary activist groups like Just Connections, founded by faculty members at Carson-Newman and other private Appalachian colleges find each other in Appalachian Studies gatherings.

A second reason I find Appalachian Studies appealing is that it invites collaboration. Nobody really practices Appalachian Studies alone. That’s one of its great features and strengths. And collaborations like those that attracted me to Appalachian Studies are forged in places like Carson-Newman College. In fact, here is where I enjoyed an early taste of what I call “symbiotic pedagogy.” The term comes from a writing conference I attended years ago, where writing teachers used the term to name basically what they were learning from each other by leaving their office doors open. “Symbiotic,” of course, means interdependent, mutually reliant, mutually beneficial. Certain plants and animals have “symbiotic” relationships. “Symbiotic pedagogy” happens when teachers trust each other enough to trade assignments and share their successes and failures with each other. I’m oversimplifying, but I like that term—and I have to admit that talking with colleagues is still one of my favorite ways to get ideas to try on my own.

This idea easily extends to Appalachian Studies and what I think of as “grassroots collaborations.” Many collaborative efforts have their foundation in shared experiences that have to do with place: living here, trying to understand this place, appreciate it, participate in its culture. However we frame our own identity, odds are that *place* is somehow involved. For centuries, people have bonded over experiences that have attracted us to the mountains and, more recently, made us want to study this place.

Because Appalachian Studies has been around only since the 1970s, it still has a “grassroots movement” appeal. One of the first “grassroots” collaborative ventures I was part of was the Writing Across the Curriculum project at Carson-Newman College. When I say “grassroots,” I’m talking about collaborations that are not driven by top-down directives. When I was a new teacher in the English Department at Carson-Newman, Ellen Millsaps invited me to attend a Writing Across the Curriculum program on a Saturday morning. The idea was that teachers across campus would come together to learn about helping their students to do the writing they needed to do in college, not just in English classes. My idealistic side thought, “What a

great idea.” But my practical side doubted that busy teachers with families would show up on a Saturday morning to talk about teaching writing when their main occupation was teaching nursing or history or some other discipline. Because I like Ellen, and even if I expected that she was going to be disappointed by poor attendance, I was going to do what I could to support her by showing up. (As one of my favorite undergraduate teachers used to say, “most of life is just showing up.”)

To my surprise, a number of faculty members showed up on that Saturday morning. In addition to my English Department colleagues, there were teachers from history and foreign languages, political science and biology, philosophy and religion, psychology, nursing, business, education, and other departments. It was a diverse group. One of the speakers was a historian who talked about how he used ungraded writing in his history classes to get class discussions going. That history professor was Richard Straw who taught at Radford and has since edited an excellent book of essays on Appalachia titled *High Mountains Rising*. I guess it was a coincidence that he was involved in Appalachian Studies.

In any case, I was invited but under no pressure to show up on that Saturday. I *felt* invited. And the day brought its own rewards. I had a good experience voluntarily attending a worthwhile program, and each time there were other programs, they were well attended, too. Faculty learned enough from each other to feel that we’d begun a conversation we wanted to continue. At one point, Ellen guided us to work on a book together—*Writing at Carson-Newman*—with sample papers and advice on writing for different disciplines. The experience taught us a great deal, including the respect and trust that made other collaborations possible.

Participating in Appalachian Studies has been like that for me—I’ve felt *invited* to participate, and I’ve particularly enjoyed learning about this region from writers and scholars who have engaged in the serious study of these mountains. I became involved in other projects, like *Backtalk from Appalachia*, the *Handbook to Appalachia*, and the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, all of which have been collaborative efforts.

So Appalachian Studies is interdisciplinary and collaborative—and a third reason I’ve enjoyed this discipline is that it regularly puts me in the presence of good storytellers. Narratives are a key feature of Appalachian literature. We make stories out of everything.

One of those storytellers was the folklorist and linguist Cratis Williams, who is sometimes called the “father of Appalachian Studies.” He completed his dissertation, *The Southern Mountaineer in Fact &*

Fiction, at NYU in 1961—and it is surely one of the longest dissertations in U.S. history: more than 1600 pages on the works and writers who paid attention to Appalachia from colonial days to the middle of the 20th century. Cratis Williams collected songs and ballads and was a pioneer in recording features of Appalachian speech. I loved to hear him talk about the creative names for things—referring to a large biscuit as a “cathead,” for instance, because that’s how big it is. I loved to hear Cratis tell about a man named Clem Boggs who was called to preach. Mr. Boggs was unable to read, but he had members of his family read the Bible to him. Once, while preaching, he wanted to tell the story of Jonah. But he hadn’t heard it correctly when it had been read to him. So, “he told his congregation the story of how Jonah, seeking to avoid his duty, had been swallowed by a great *QUAIL* that the Lord had prepared.” At the close of his sermon, to drive home his point, he paused and then thundered out, “Think of it, brethern, as little a thing as a patteridge a-swallowing a full-growed man! But this here old Bible says it, and I believe it! Ever word, from kiver to kiver!” (Williams, *Tales* 39-40).

You can think of these features of language in this region as peculiarities—or as features that illustrate a sense of place, which is, of course, how I choose to think of them. And this sense of place, expressed by paying attention to other things, is connected to the environmental consciousness that has emerged in this region, and I think it has led to Appalachian writers gaining a reputation outside this region as well as within it. Writers who know the past history and culture of a place are responsible to some extent for helping others see it differently and expressing concern for the future of a place. In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner described the “frontier” as occurring where culture and nature meet, and I think that continues to be true. As scholars Jack Higgs and Jim Wayne Miller say in *Appalachia Inside Out*, “the quality of the frontier as we move into the future will be determined not only by how much we learn about our cultural heritage and the natural world, but also by how much we care about the balance between them” (682).

This caring and this balance are forged in Appalachian literature. The literature of this place carries a strong “sense of place,” a love of place that is articulated in all kinds of ways by writers like Jeff Daniel Marion, who will be recognized this week by the Conference on Southern Literature with the James Still Award for Writing about the Appalachian South, a well-deserved honor and recognition.

A couple of weeks ago, I was involved in a discussion about what should happen to the farm of Kentucky writer Harriette Arnow,

who wrote *The Dollmaker* and a number of powerful novels about mountain people in the early to mid-20th century. One of the people who was involved in the discussion was Herb Smith, a filmmaker from Appalshop who made a documentary film about this writer. I asked him about how he'd first met her, and he told me a remarkable story about how the media center where he'd worked since the 1970s, when he was a teenager, Appalshop, had some grant money for inviting a writer to visit the community and he and his "hippie friends" had invited Harriette Arnow. To their surprise, she made the trip from Ann Arbor, where she lived, and to their further surprise, when she addressed her audience of teachers and bankers and lawyers in the county seat town of Whitesburg, where they had gathered at the Presbyterian church—she saw, without anyone explaining to her, that not everyone appreciated "those young people" at Appalshop who were documenting on film a culture that was rapidly changing. She stood before that crowd and encouraged them to support the young people as they tried to make films about the region because they were doing important work—and, as Herb told this story, he had to stop a minute. He had tears in his eyes. "It made a big impression," he said. Forty years later, he still remembered how he felt when the acclaimed writer supported him and his Appalshop friends, even though many in the community didn't. He said that getting behind a camera helped him to see what was all around him. He said, "you might say I was like a fish who suddenly discovered water." A little encouragement opened his eyes even wider. Many of us are sustained by encouraging words from people who appreciate what we're trying to do.

That was my experience at Carson-Newman. I appreciated the support I received when I wanted to study women writing in Appalachia. One of the great pleasures of the project was corresponding with writers who identified themselves with the Appalachian region. Irene McKinney, the Poet Laureate of West Virginia, for instance, said, "I'm a hillbilly, a woman, and a poet, and I understood early on that nobody was going to listen to anything I had to say anyway, so I might as well just say what I want to" (Ballard & Hudson 1).

Writer George Ella Lyon said that she's sometimes angered by the way that the "imaginative creations" of Appalachian writers are "read as sociology." She said in an interview that she thought if Kafka had come from Hazard, Kentucky, people would have read the *Metamorphosis* and said, "We always knew those people were bugs" (Lyon, "Interview"). She also said, "Where you're from is not who you are, but it's an important ingredient... you must trust your first voice—

the one tuned by the people and place that made you—before you can speak your deepest truths” (Lyon, “Voiceplace” 169).

One of the “truths” (and good stories) that Wilma Dykeman told me was that when she would take trips to New York, she’d meet people who would say to her, “I can’t believe you still live down there!” to which she would respond, “I can’t believe you still live up here!” She used to say about Appalachian literature that it contains experiences “as unique as churning butter and as universal as getting born” (Ballard & Hudson 2). I am persuaded that literature in general, and Appalachian literature in particular, can play a role in helping people in this region to develop pride in this place and in their own identities. I find myself agreeing with Steve Fisher who wrote recently in *Appalachian Journal* that “people have to develop pride in who they are before they can begin to fully accept the dignity and equality of others” (60).

Poet Jim Wayne Miller wrote about this idea, too. Some lines from his poem “Myles Horton Tells the Brier Story” illustrate the point. (When Miller moved away from home, he learned that north of the Ohio River, natives of the Southern Appalachians are known as “briers.”) The poem is about a young woman from the mountains who learns about her own home region from Myles Horton, an extraordinary grassroots teacher, activist and former director of the Highlander Center. The woman is close to tears when she blurts out,

“That was wonderful—wonderful, what you told.
Some of those people you told about, they’re
my people. I’ve been ashamed all my life.
But that was wonderful, all those things you told.
Why didn’t they teach that when I was in school?
I’ll never be ashamed again as long as I live,
Why didn’t they teach that when I was in school?”

Why don’t they teach it now? the Brier thought.
He thought of a teacher he talked to yesterday,
a boy born and brought up in the mountains,
who taught a curriculum of contempt for his place
and people, his only thought to hoist his students up onto
the rocky ledge of his arrogance.
The Brier pictured young corn pulled
up by the roots, wilting in the balk,
children sold out of the mountains like Christmas trees.

He looked out...and understood:
 nothing would ever change—until we changed.
 Looking out over the ridges, the Brier ...
 ... vowed to dig and dry the crooked roots
 of memory...

Appalachian Studies is a discipline that invites us to think of what we ought to notice about where we live. Place matters. While I taught at Carson-Newman, Ernest Lee put together an informal packet of poems, fiction, and essays by Appalachian authors, which we used in teaching first-year writing classes. I noticed that our students responded to these pieces—this packet introduced students to the place where they had chosen to come to college. Some had lived their whole lives in Appalachia or in East Tennessee, but they were surprised to see the place appear in literature, though it wasn't difficult for them to recognize the literary merit and the emotional truth in poems by Jeff Daniel Marion or Linda Marion, or in fiction or poems by Fred Chappell or Wendell Berry or Susan Underwood or Mary Hodges. Whether students grew up here or landed here, they need to know that writers *can* come from the place where they live. It's not *all* they need to know, of course, but it's an important part of it. Our students were surprised to have college teachers who appreciated the poetry and humor and value of voices with Appalachian accents. Focusing on the region in the classroom gave students a different appreciation for local history and Appalachian life. It made a bigger difference to some than to others, but the idea of inviting students to study Appalachian literature as part of a college curriculum, inviting colleagues to try out this packet of materials in their own classrooms, is another example of symbiotic pedagogy and grassroots collaboration. Eventually, the packet became the anthology *Discovering Place*, and it went through at least five editions, and eventually another title, *Being of this Place*. To my mind, it was a great grassroots effort and a productive collaboration. Nobody mandated that we introduce into Carson-Newman classrooms the idea that writers came from this place. But I felt invited to participate, and it felt like a successful experiment. It was a good way to acknowledge that place matters and to show the significance and relevance of the word "Appalachian" that appears on the Carson-Newman College seal.

As much as I enjoy the interdisciplinary, collaborative, story-telling nature of Appalachian Studies, a fourth (and final) reason Appalachian Studies appeals to me is that I also recognize that the door is wide open for further research. The way the region has traditionally been defined—as a region of white people—is a dangerous myth that

ignores the diversity of this place and shows the need for additional research. I've enjoyed getting to know a former student of Gurney Norman's at the University of Kentucky. Frank X. Walker is the only one I know personally who has added a word to the language. Because of his book of poetry titled *Affrilachia*, the *Oxford American Dictionary* contains the word "Affrilachian," which combines "African" and "Appalachian" and recognizes the experience of people of color in the Southern Mountains and the diversity of people in the region. And research is ongoing to explore vast topics relevant to race and region. *Appalachian Journal* has published an article by Jamie Butcher on the Allen School in Asheville, a private high school for African American girls, a school that the singer Nina Simone attended. At this year's Appalachian Studies meeting, Beth Vanlandingham and Larry Osborne gave presentations on collaborative projects to document African American history and culture in East Tennessee. We have a long way to go in Appalachian Studies to document the histories of all of our communities.

As rich and varied as Appalachian folk culture is, in the 21st century Appalachian residents consume the same fast food and cable television shows as the rest of the country. Mountain people go to college and travel to our nation's capital to protest unsustainable practices like mountaintop removal mining. And when we leave home, what do we take with us? What perspectives and insights and practices do we contribute to the places where we go? For one thing, habits of storytelling, our sense of ourselves, our understanding of place that connects to who we are. The poet Jim Wayne Miller, in his poem, "The Brier Sermon," reminds us that "every day you're leaving / a place you won't be coming back to ever. / What are you going to leave behind? / What are you taking with you?" He says,

But you don't have to live in the past.
You can't, even if you try.
You don't have to talk old-fashioned,
dress old-fashioned.
You don't have to live the way your foreparents lived.
But if you don't know about them
if you don't love them
if you don't respect them
you're not going anywhere.
You don't have to think ridge-to-ridge,
the way they did.
You can think ocean-to-ocean.

You say, I'm not going to live in the past.
And all the time, the past is living in you...

Activist Mother Jones used to say that her goal in life was “to comfort the afflicted” and “to afflict the comfortable”—we could do worse than to adopt similar goals. To me, Appalachian Studies is a land of invitations and opportunities that accepts the fact that “place matters.” It matters to me—and you honor me by saying tonight that I matter to you. Thank you for inviting me to be here—I’m truly grateful.

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Remembering what Matters: Ethics and Exodus 1 in the 21st Century¹

[T.B. Maston Lecture]

Brian Harris

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver the T. B. Maston lecture tonight. At the outset I need to make it clear that I am not speaking as a T. B. Maston expert. Though Maston's influence as an ethicist was wide, and his many books and articles reached a diverse audience, his greatest impact has been amongst Southern Baptists. This is hardly surprising, given that in his 40 year plus tenure at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary he was the ethics professor for literally thousands of Southern Baptist pastors in training. Many went on to hold positions of significant influence amongst Southern Baptists—indeed, at one time four of the six presidents of Southern Baptist Seminaries were his former students.²

I have been active as a Baptist pastor in South Africa, New Zealand and now in Australia—where I serve as the principal of Vose Seminary (our denominational theological college) and Senior Pastor of Carey Community Baptist Church—so I have been influenced by the Southern Hemisphere rather than by Southern Baptists! For all that, many of Tom Maston's books are in the Vose library, where they are consulted by our staff and students.

From the perspective of an external observer, two aspects of Maston's work are particularly impressive. The first and most notable is that at a profoundly racist period in time, he found the courage to call for racial justice and reconciliation.³ In doing so he reminded the Christian community that it is called to transform its cultural setting, not to reflect it. No ethicist worthy the name avoids the pressing social issues of their age, and Maston was no exception to this. At a troubling time in history, he provided sound

¹ This is the text of the T.B.Maston lecture delivered by Dr Brian Harris, principal of Vose Seminary, Perth, Australia, at Carson-Newman College, Tennessee on 4 April, 2011. You can contact the author at brian.harris@vose.wa.edu.au

² William Pinson, Russell Dilday, Milton Ferguson, and Randall Lolley.

³ Maston wrote three books on the subject: *Of One* (1946), *The Bible and Race* (1959), and *Segregation and Desegregation* (1959).

biblical and ethical counsel in his texts *Of One* (1946), *The Bible and Race* (1959), and *Segregation and Desegregation* (1959).

A second aspect which I admire is that he was able to combine a progressive social ethic with traditional evangelical orthodoxy. Sadly, many view the two as being incompatible, and consequently arrive at an ethic that is neither biblical nor progressive.⁴

Maston always began his ethical reflection with consideration of the biblical text's teaching on the issue at hand. Tonight I'd like to start in a compatible, but slightly different way. Rather than apply the Bible's teaching to a topic, I'd like us to focus on a particular biblical narrative, that found in Exodus 1, and to explore the many ways in which it may apply to us around three and a half thousand years later. If nothing else, the study establishes that perfect ethical solutions often prove elusive, and that those who proclaim certainty as to the path to follow are probably living in a world somewhat different to the real one. For all that, it concludes that if we remember what really matters—and in this study it is the saving of life—we are likely to spot the smile of God, even if our handling of some of the lesser issues doesn't meet the standards of theoretical ethical ideals.

I'm conscious that I speak at a time when many Christians have lost confidence that Christianity has made a positive contribution to the history of this planet. So many of our well intentioned programs have had unfortunate unintended consequences, that we run the risk of being frightened into paralysis. While writers such as Alvin Schmidt speak glowingly of the constructive difference that Christianity has made,⁵ books such as Christopher Hitchens's *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* are finding a dramatically larger readership.⁶ Whether it be the Crusades, the linkage between the modern missionary movement and colonial expansion or the question of if religion is indeed the opiate of the masses, the press is consistently discouraging. Even our brighter moments are subject to critique. We recently celebrated the bicentennial of the abolition of slavery as a result of the effort and energy of William Wilberforce.

⁴ While this false divide is certainly true in the current climate of many Southern Baptist churches, the tendency to separate these spheres predates contemporary Southern Baptist conflicts. See for example, David O. Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism Versus Social Concern* (London: Scripture Union, 1972).

⁵ Alvin J. Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

⁶ Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007).

Wilberforce's evangelical convictions are beyond dispute, and should indeed cheer and inspire all evangelicals. However, we cannot avoid the historical record which points out all too clearly that amongst Wilberforce's strongest critics were other Bible believing Christians. To imagine that Christians were uniformly opposed to slavery is ridiculously naïve—a point that hardly needs to be made in this Southern context. In short, in spite of our best effort to be a force for good, our ethical legacy is muddled. Some good has undoubtedly been achieved, but then so has much that has been damaging.

In my own country of Australia, the modest remnant of Kevin Rudd's brief period as Prime Minister of Australia is likely to be his 2008 national apology to the Stolen Generations of Australia—those Australian children of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander descent who were forcibly removed from their homes and communities in a program commenced in 1869 and which lasted for a century. Ostensibly the program was to protect abused, neglected and abandoned children, but in practice it resulted in unimaginable heartbreak. The decision as to what constituted neglect was made with the most myopic cultural bias and a great wrong was sanctioned by the law of the land. The apology was very long overdue, and it would be hard to find any serious commentator who would speak in support of this devastating program. However, it would be true to say that many who cared for the children removed by this program did so with the best of intentions—indeed, many were motivated to participate by their Christian convictions. I have personally spoken to some Baptist missionaries⁷ who fostered many such children, and who feel bewildered that the good they intended to do is now remembered with such derision. Truly, the ethical quest is complex and often has unintended consequences. It's why I find tonight's study of Exodus 1 so intriguing. It is a passage that records ethical decisions that are fraught with danger, and yet have a largely positive outcome.

In selecting a particular narrative on which to focus, I am flagging a conviction—that ethical reflection is best undertaken against a backdrop of real life. This is not to suggest that there are not principles to guide us. Let me very quickly and superficially recap some basic ethical theory to ensure we are all on the same page. While each ethicist might express it slightly differently, typically they try to establish four principles.

Formal principles. The formal axiom of ethical investigation is usually that we should seek the good. The formal principle gives no

⁷ Names intentionally withheld.

content to ‘the good’ nor how we will find it. It is simply the broad and formal statement of intent.

The substantive principle. Here we try to answer the question: What is the good? It could be the Aristotelian quest for happiness, or the Augustinian ideal of the love of God as the highest good, or the simple conviction, as per deontological ethicists, that we should always do our duty—however defined.

Normative principles state what we should normally and typically do to realize the substantive principle (for example, most ethicists would suggest that we should normally tell the truth). While the concept of normative principles is not inherently controversial, division arises when we try to move normative principles to the next level—that of prescriptive principles.

Prescriptive principles state what must always be done. Of necessity, there should be few such principles, lest one too frequently encounter conflicting moral obligations, as one does in the Exodus 1 passage about the Hebrew midwives whose obligation to tell the truth conflicted with their obligation to save lives. In the light of this, some ethicists (and Joseph Fletcher is a name that readily springs to mind) suggests that there is only one enduring absolute that can be prescribed, and that is that in each and every situation one must do the most loving thing.⁸

Some ethicists have abandoned the quest for fixed principles to guide actions, and suggest that we focus simply on virtues which we should cultivate. In virtue ethics the focus is neither on rules nor consequences of behavior, but on the character of the moral agent. While virtuous people might embark upon misguided activities, acting in accord with virtue will usually result in virtuous outcomes.

Beyond these broad ethical frameworks, ethicists know that they invariably need to dig a little beneath the surface, lest they fail to distinguish between *prima facie* (on first appearance) duties and actual duties. Much of ethics involves grappling with what is the actual duty. To determine this, what better way than to study actual life situations? Case studies are the bread and butter of ethics, and in choosing this ancient narrative of the Hebrew midwives’ encounter with the Egyptian Pharaoh, I am expressing

⁸ See both Fletcher’s work and the debate on his views between Fletcher and Montgomery. Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966); Joseph Fletcher and John Warwick Montgomery, *Situation Ethics* (Canadian Institute of LTPP, 1999).

my conviction that Anton Boisen, founder of the clinical pastoral education movement, was correct when he urged that theological students study not only books, but also what he called “the living human documents.”⁹ Boisen’s plea flowed from his own experience of mental illness, and his dismay at that time to discover the enormous gulf between theory and practice. His experience is salutary. We should remember that the Bible is not a theoretical text, but a transforming collection of one narrative after another recalling significant “God turned up” events. Most of the narratives (because they are narratives) are somewhat untidy, and fall short of what one might hypothesize would exist in an ideal world—but then such a world has not existed since Eden. These accounts continue to inform us because they are the stuff of life.

Let’s then quickly recap the events described in Exodus 1. A Pharaoh who knew not Joseph has come to power in Egypt. Instead of seeing in the Israelites allies and friends, he views them through the lens of threat and danger, and reduces them to slavery and forced labor. In spite of their dire circumstances, the Hebrews continue to multiply, which simply fuels Pharaoh’s paranoia of them. He decides that the best course of action is to kill all male Hebrew babies at birth, and instructs the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah to be the agents of execution. Aghast at this immoral instruction, they fail to implement it, and in due time are called to account for the continuing existence of male Hebrew babies. They fabricate an outrageous lie, suggesting that Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women, and that they give birth so quickly that the services of a midwife are not required. In what makes a fascinating study of the foolishness that flows from prejudice, Pharaoh is taken in by their deception. We are told that God is pleased with the actions of the midwives and rewards them with children of their own—a lofty reward at any time in history, but especially in the ancient world. Indeed, the reward is greater than this, for by inserting their names into the passage—Shiphrah and Puah lest you forget them—the author is ensuring that their names will be remembered forever. He does not extend the same courtesy to Pharaoh who remains simply as “Pharaoh who?” Clearly someone of his ilk does not have a name that is worthy to be remembered.

While the passage is undoubtedly complimentary towards the midwives, there are three fairly obvious criticisms that any responsible ethicist must offer.

⁹ Anton T. Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1936), 10.

First, the midwives were liars. Remember what they said. Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women—their babies are born so easily and swiftly. Was this incredible “porky” that they told the Pharaoh simply a “little white lie” to get them out of a tricky situation—something that in the larger picture was of very little consequence? One of the fathers of ethics, Immanuel Kant, would disagree. Kant is remembered for his concept of the categorical imperative. Kant argued that the moral rightness of an act lies in our willingness to universalize the rule of action which generated it. Because people are not stepping stones towards another goal, we have to view each step in our moral journey as an end in itself. For example, if we deceive someone on a journey to “a noble end” (as the midwives did), we forget that each step of the journey is an end in itself. What if everyone deceived everyone else while trying to accomplish some “noble end”? If we don’t like the picture of the world which would result from universalizing the steps we have taken, the principle we are operating from is likely to be flawed.

The late Baptist theologian Stanley Grenz summarizes the one imperative underlying Kant’s deontological theory as: “Always do the act that is motivated by the sincere belief that what you are doing is the right thing to do, right not merely for you but for anybody seeking to act properly in any similar situation.”¹⁰ Put slightly differently, if one is to break a moral imperative, one has to ask what the consequences would be if everyone else acted in the same way.

We could of course argue that the midwives deceit should not be considered a lie because they were in the middle of a war—a fight for the survival of the Hebrews. Just as we don’t accuse a soccer player who acts as though he is about to swerve to the right, but at the last moment veers left, of being morally suspect, but to the contrary, commend him for his skill, so too the rules of the never-pleasing game of war are different from the rules of everyday life. One can never be candid with the enemy.

While not without merit—and probably part of the midwives own rationale for their behavior, there is a significant flaw in this justification. Surely one of the requirements of a just war (presupposing any such category can ever really exist) is that it is openly declared. Pharaoh is clearly unaware that he faces an enemy in the midwives, and while we need feel no obligation to give him excessive sympathy, there is a niggling sense that this is a betrayal by some he had identified as friends and allies.

So does lying matter? Truth to tell, we already live in a world where we are uncertain as to the veracity of most statements we hear. While I’m not sure of American views on the topic, the

¹⁰ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 31.

average Australian considers the term “a truthful politician” to be an oxymoron, while body language experts train us to look out for deceit by checking to see if a speaker looks away from us, or covers his or her lips or brushes his or her nose.¹¹ It feels a little sad to live in a world where such skills are necessary. Is this the legacy of too quickly approving of the kind of deceit that the midwives engaged in?

The second, in my view, is even more serious, for not only were the Hebrew midwives liars, they reinforced the stereotype of the Hebrews as “other.” Given the expressive and dramatic nature of Hebrew culture, we can safely assume that they would have told their tale of Hebrew women with great gusto. Pharaoh probably delighted in every moment of it—and is likely to have chortled in delight as he heard how quickly Hebrew women gave birth—so unlike Egyptian women who were delicate and refined and needed the assistance of a midwife . . . Those at the forefront of social change know how hazardous such stereotyping can be. Before the ‘other’ can be accepted, they must be seen not as “other,” but as “one of us.” Indeed, the “othering of the enemy” allows the perpetrators of violence to justify their actions. Pharaoh, if he had access to 21st century terminology, could have said to himself “I knew it. They are a genetic aberration. They don’t even bear children in the same way as Egyptians. Clearly they are not really people, and therefore their lives are of no value.” That this “othering” should occur so early in Israel’s history is perhaps a sobering prelude to the more recent “othering” at the hands of Hitler’s henchmen. Lest one think that “othering” is of little consequence, reflect for a while on the outcome of the Nazi holocaust and the reasons which were used to justify it. We might quickly gloss over the tale that these midwives told, but it had the potential to be extraordinarily damaging. That they communicated this stereotype to a Pharaoh who devised policy on the basis of his prejudices was potentially reckless.

Third, they were only partially successful stereotyping liars. While in the short term their ingenious fabrication spared their lives, and the lives of some Israelite boys, in the bigger picture, it was a failed strategy. As the midwives didn’t kill the Hebrew boys at birth, Pharaoh organized for them to be drowned instead—and for that, no midwives were required. This was not the end of persecution for the Hebrews; it was simply the turning of the page as a new era, possibly worse than the previous one, emerged.

¹¹ This according to an interview with body language specialist, David Alssema. Gregg Callaghan, "10 Questions—Body Language Expert David Alssema," *The Australian*, 2 April 2011.

True, there was a brief respite and some lives were saved, but it was a false dawn. The night was to get considerably darker.

For all this, we miss the point of the passage if we fail to observe Yahweh's clear satisfaction with the actions of Shiphrah and Puah. Their names are remembered and they are rewarded with children of their own. There was no greater reward in the ancient world. So what are we to make of the ethical dilemmas inherent in Exodus 1?

First we should note the obvious. Life is messy, but God is kind in the midst of it. Of course it is not enough to simply note this, we need to practice it in the grace we show towards those who have found themselves in difficult situations and have made "best we could think of at the time" decisions. Indeed, we need to be willing not just to show such grace towards others, but sometimes towards our own selves, if we have been in situations which have been far more complex than we were able to manage.

Second, the ethical quest is often about finding the optimal path in real life circumstances. Ethics works its way out in the real world—not the classroom. This is not to devalue the classroom, but to acknowledge that it is a different arena to the one in which our ethical or virtuous living, finds its outlet. If what is worked out in the classroom finds no place in daily life, the work of the classroom is not complete.

Third, don't miss the hopefulness of this text. In terms of Jewish literature, Exodus 1 is a passage of great humor. The midwives pull a fast one over Pharaoh. Though Pharaoh seems all powerful, this shows him to be a bumbling buffoon, fooled by his own prejudice. If the Pharaoh can be tricked, there is hope. While they waited for the turning of the tide, they found some moments to chuckle amongst themselves. Sometimes laughter is all that oppressed communities can hope for. Sometimes it is the only reason they survive. The laughter would have had to last them a long time. It would be more than eighty years before Moses would lead them to freedom. Neither Shiphrah, nor Puah, nor any of their contemporaries would have been alive when that day finally dawned. A brief moment of laughter was all that they had. They needed to savor it deeply. It was a sign of hope to help keep them going. So too, let's not knock those who are unable to help communities find long term solutions to their problems, but who find ways to soften the problems with which those communities will continue to live for all too many years.

Fourth, for all the mistakes the midwives make—lying, stereotyping their own people and doing so for minimal success—they show that they remember what matters most: the saving of life. Put bluntly, in the ethical sphere they realized that saving life trumps truth telling. Given that they couldn't think of a way to do both, they showed a nuanced and valid set of priorities.

In more despairing moments, given the awful plight that was that of the Hebrews at this time, they might have wondered if these lives were worth sparing. I'm reminded of the haunting lines from the William Blake poem *Auguries of Innocence*: "Every morn and every night, some are born to sweet delight. Some are born to sweet delight. Some are born to endless night."¹² The Hebrew babies saved by these women would have spent their entire lives as slaves. Exodus 1 makes it abundantly clear that they were slaves treated with great cruelty. These were people born to endless night. Would it perhaps have been more humane to let them die at birth?

This is the T.B. Maston lecture, so it is as well at this point to remember something of T.B. Maston's personal story. As a result of an accident at birth, his first born son Thomas McDonald was unable to use his arms or legs and was unable to speak—though he had a very expressive face. Tom was born in 1925 and died in 1987—not long before T.B. Maston himself died. He and his wife Essie Mae cared for Thomas McDonald for all his 60 plus years—always treating him as fully human, and not willing to have him institutionalized even when they were older and care was not easy. For T. B. Maston life was not only worth living if the circumstances were favorable. True humanity grows when the needs of the vulnerable are close to our own experience.

The reality was that the midwives had no way of knowing how long their current nightmare would continue. They lived in the hopefulness that God would ultimately act and create a better future for them and for their children. For that better future to dawn, they knew that each generation needed to survive. Though not in their lifetimes, in the end, the day of liberation arrived, and a generation of Hebrews had managed to survive to seize it. Shiphrah and Puah can rightly claim some of the credit for the long term survival of the Hebrew people.

Fifth, don't overlook the fact that the two heroes in this passage are women. In an age in which we debate—often uncharitably—about the role of men and women, this passage reminds us that the call to genuine heroism is gender neutral. In this passage, it is two daring women who find the courage to do the right thing. Later it is an anxious, but no less courageous, male, Moses, who more directly challenges the next Pharaoh. The things that matter most, like being made in the image of God,¹³ and doing the right thing, have got nothing to do with gender. It is always tragic if we forget this.

While the risk of choosing a path of action is that there will be unintended and sometimes undesirable consequences, the

¹² In public domain.

¹³ Genesis 1:27.

greater risk is to do nothing—or simply to conform to the demands of the age. Whatever mistakes Shiphrah and Puah make, they are women of great courage and they stand out as hopeful signs of resistance to evil.

Ingeborg Bachmann has written a haunting poem which is quoted approvingly by Jürgen Moltmann in his discussion on the importance of hope.

The uniform of the day is patience
And its only decoration the pale star
of hope over its heart. . . .
It is awarded
for desertion,
for bravery in face of the friend,
for betraying all unworthy secrets
and the disregard of every command.¹⁴

These women found the courage to remain brave, in the face of the friend, to betray unworthy secrets and to disregard every command. Was it tidy—of course not. Did they do the right thing—of course they did!

In thinking through the implications of what I am saying, you might ask if I am being too wishy washy. If we can never be sure that we are doing the right thing, why even bother to think about what constitutes the virtuous life? And isn't what I'm saying a little dangerous? Won't we let ourselves off the ethical hook too easily? After all, we can argue that the Crusaders operated from the best of intentions—and no doubt many of them did. Indeed, good intentions can sometimes be so seriously misguided that they, frankly, are not enough. This is one of the key reasons why we need ethics—to transcend our well intentioned but often misguided whims. Ethics should give us something a little more concrete, a little more sure.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer opens his *Ethics* with the memorable statement, "The knowledge of good and evil seems to be the aim of all ethical reflection. The first task of Christian ethics is to invalidate this knowledge."¹⁵ Bonhoeffer goes on to remind us that the heart of original sin is the desire to know the difference between good and evil. Why is such a noble goal the beginning of sin? Simply because if we truly knew the difference between good and evil, we could act independently from God, with no need to

¹⁴ Quoted in Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, trans., M. Douglas Meeks (London: SCM, 1975), 189-190.

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans., Neville Horton Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 17.

listen to Him for the wisdom He alone brings. Such also was the sin of the tower of Babel. This misguided building project (which, given the limited engineering skills available at the time, was unlikely to have resulted in a tower of more than around 6 stories) was surely innocuous. True, it shows a misguided sense of where heaven is (up there—but where is up there if you live down under in Australia, as I do?)—and it is not as though the tower would ever penetrate the dimensional barrier between this planet and the realm of God, but though it was never going to succeed, why was it seen as evil? The probable answer is that it was the attempt to reach heaven unaided thereby excluding God from the process and making God redundant.

Bonhoeffer's warning of the risk of excluding God from the ethical process should be heeded. While the desire to know the right ethical response in each situation is understandable, ultimately the Bible and history points to the futility of our efforts to package and label and draw tidy conclusions. Tentativeness and humility should, therefore, be key characteristics of the ethical quest. Tentativeness implies the willingness to examine and critique one's own assumptions and practices. It suggests hesitancy about drawing lines too firmly or inflexibly. It leads to a willingness to continue exploring and questioning. It allows the questions "why?" and "why not?"

The muddled ethical outcomes from 2000 years of church endeavor, should, rather than paralyze us into inactivity, lead to our embarking upon the ethical quest with a sense of absolute dependence upon God. Only God actually knows the outcome of our actions.

Indeed, this God knew that Hebrew boys not slaughtered at birth would be drowned—and so organized that one who was meant to be drowned, was rescued by Pharaoh's own daughter. This unlikely survivor would eventually lead God's people to freedom, and the land of promise. God writes straight with crooked lines, and we as aspiring ethicists can only commit our muddled efforts to Him. In His own way, and in His own time, he will announce that we have done what we could. Hopefully we will always remember what matters most—and perhaps, like Shiprah and Puah, our names will also be remembered.

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