Editors' Notes and Introductions to *Landscapes of Diversity in North America* and *Affect, Immersion, and Games*

Issue Editor's Note

The current issue of *HJEAS* offers an exceptionally wide range of illuminating and in-depth articles in the fields of American, Irish, British, and Canadian Studies, as well as in the newly emerging Game Studies. The great variety of topics include an Irish Ambassador's remarks on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*; some of the most recent research on the histories of marginalized groups in the US and Canada; critical multifaceted explorations of games as a new kind of cultural production; the artistic rendition of religious fanaticism in John Everett Millais's "Huguenot" pictures; and an investigation into the Disney animated cartoon series *TaleSpin* (1990), which provides a satirical representation of the "us" versus "them" attitude of the US toward the Soviet Union in the Cold War period. These visual and cinematic works of art, however, both present hope for reconciliation between the clashing sides. The issue concludes with four reviews of contemporary research including what may well be the most significant work on Utopia for our time.

The four scholarly essays opening this issue constitute the first thematic block, *Landscapes of Diversity in North America*—guest edited by Saara Kekki and Balázs Venkovits. The articles deal with the effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous populations in Canada and the USA, and the infamous lynching of African American Emmett Till in the Mississippi Delta in the 1950s. This selection of in-depth analyses adds valuable new insights into the unreasonable prejudice and hostile feelings towards Native Americans and African Americans that present-day America has to wrestle with.

The multiple and disastrous consequences of colonialism, the immense damages that ethnic cleansing, assimilationist practices caused to Indigenous people and racial-ethnic minorities are discussed in this recently conducted research. These issues as well as other past sins and shameful events in American history are addressed, among other themes, in Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Sam Shepard's drama *Kicking a Dead Horse* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 2007), which serves as a marvelous testimony to the power of art and the dramatist's acumen. Like a Whitmanesque "seer," Shepard (1943–2017) fulfills his role warning his nation of wrongdoings.

In *Kicking a Dead Horse* Shepard departs from his usual dramatic idiom that integrates different styles (for instance grotesque, satire, absurd, and realism) with haunting surreal images—frequently difficult to decipher—rendered in a poetic language informed by American popular culture. Instead, in this mono-drama he introduces straightforward images and uses direct, transparent language in order to reiterate clearly what failed in America. Wandering in a desert, the solo character, Hobart Struther—"the typical Shepardian alter-ego . . . engaged in conversation with himself" (Varró 47)—bursts out in an embittered monologue that provides a kind of inventory of immoral deeds and offences committed in the past:

> I do not understand why I'm having so much trouble taming the Wild. I've done this already. Haven't I already been through all of this? We closed the Frontier in 1890 something, didn't we? Didn't we already accomplish that? The . . . Iron Horse- Coast to Coast. Blasted all the buffalo out of here. An ocean of bones from Sea to Shining Sea. Trails of Tears. Chased the Heathen Redman down to Florida. Paid the Niggers off in mules and rich black dirt. Whupped the Chinee and strung them up with their own damn pony-tails. Decapitated the Mexicans. Erected steel walls to keep the riff-raff out. Sucked these hills barren of gold. Ripped the top soil as far as the eye can see. Drained the aquifers. Damned up all the rivers and flooded the valleys for Recreational purposes! Ran off the small farmers. Destroyed Education. Turned our children into criminals. *Demolished Art! Invaded Sovereign Nations! What more can we possibly do?* (Shepard 61–62)

Shepard is not didactic, however. The shift to evading or lessening ambiguity and enigmatic allusions in his dramatic technique indicates that in 2007 he must communicate his concerns—"uniquely interwoven with his native country, the geography, the people of his land" (Varró 48)—to his audiences plainly and precisely. The reference to *Kicking a Dead Horse* inserted here is the issue editor's tribute to Shepard as a uniquely American dramatist on the occasion of his 80th birthday on November 25, 2023, on the one hand. On the other hand, his drama exemplifies that the insights and visions of an artist, which often precede scientific or scholarly research, are of utmost importance. As Alexandr Solzhenitsyn argues: "Those works of art which have scooped up the truth and presented it to us as a living force—they take hold of us, compel us, and nobody ever, not even in ages to come, will appear to refute them."

Norbert Krek and Zsófia O. Réti, the guest editors of the second thematic section, *Affect, Immersion, and Games*, argue about the legitimacy of

Game Studies as an academic discipline. Indeed, the extremely large number of people who engage in video games as well as the enormous profit that gaming industry obtains warrant the scholarly study of video games from a multiplicity of aspects. The four articles in the block offer different approaches to a variety of video games within the framework of affect theory.

The last two essays both address the disastrous consequences of prejudice targeted against groups of people. Eva Péteri's "John Everett Millais's Huguenot Pictures" thematizes religious bigotry, while Ádám László Kiss's "The Stalinist Soviet Union in an American Animated Cartoon: Thembria and the Thembrian in *TaleSpin*" discusses Americans' enmity toward the Soviet Union in the Post World War II era. Péteri chooses Pre-Raphaelite artist John Everett Millais's two works: *A Huguenot, on St Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* (1851–52) and *Mercy: St Bartholomew's Day, 1572* (1882) that capture dramatic moments on the day of the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day (24 August 1572). Religious intolerance here ends in bloodshed. Through a thorough analysis of the artistic qualities of the paintings as well as the socio-cultural and religious contexts embedded in the two works of art, Péteri offers reasons for the huge differences in their reception in nineteenth century England.

The Disney animated cartoon television series *TaleSpin* (1990) Ádám László Kiss analyzes, unveils practices and conditions in Stalin's Soviet Union via ample satirical and humorous images verging on the absurd about the state of Thembria and its inhabitants, the Thembrians. Building on the "us" versus "them" attitude in the Cold War period the creators of the series named the countries constantly competing with each other "Usland" and "Thembria." The essay explores the characteristic topoi of Stalin's Soviet Union as represented in the series and provides an overview of US–Soviet relationship as well as the general perception of the USSR in the United States in the 1980s. Fortunately, here the apparently unbridgeable opposition between the two countries finishes with peace just like the actual reconciliation between the US and the disintegrating Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s.

The review section contains four reviews that call attention to new publications on the history of utopianism from antiquity till the present day, parallels between American slavery and Russian serfdom in the post-emancipation imagination, the history and uniqueness of jazz, and. the representation of girlhood in Shakespeare's plays

Let me finish with the firm belief that art is indestructible. As Solzhenitsyn argues: "And they were mistaken, and will always be mistaken, who prophesy that art will disintegrate, that it will outlive its forms and die. It is we who shall die – art will remain. And shall we comprehend, even on the day of our destruction, all its facets and all its possibilities?"

<div align="right">Lenke Németh, Issue Editor</div>

Lenke Németh, Associate Professor of American Studies, North American Department, University of Debrecen, researches American drama.

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Introduction to the thematic block *Landscapes of Diversity in North America*

The *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* is dedicated to the publication of first-class scholarly articles authored by academics both within and beyond Hungary. It acknowledges the importance of international collaboration in scholarship, and it actively engages in international conferences to foster knowledge exchange about North America. In this issue, a distinguished section comprising four essays exemplifies the journal's commitment to all these guiding principles and objectives. These papers are the result of a collaborative effort between the University of Helsinki and the University of Debrecen. They showcase contributions from esteemed scholars from the United States and Canada, reflecting the journal's dedication to the multifaceted and comprehensive scholarly exploration of the United States and Canada.

These four articles originate from the 2022 Maple Leaf and Eagle Conference in North American Studies, organized by the North American Studies program at the University of Helsinki. Held biennially since 1986, the

conference is looking forward to its twentieth meeting in 2024. For decades, this event has thrived on being interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary and offering a broad international review of the current status of North American Studies.

The theme of the 2022 conference, "Landscapes of Democracy and Diversity in North America", sought to address not only physical, but also mental and social landscapes. It brought to light topics that not only emphasized prosperity and possibility, but silence and inequality as well. The papers at hand represent a small sample of the one hundred presentations given both online and in person in Helsinki. They reflect well on two Helsinki traditions: an emphasis on Indigenous people and other minorities and environmental humanities, but they also boast a true multidisciplinary focus, encompassing, at least, American studies, history, literary studies, cultural studies, environmental history, public history, and communication studies. The essays selected for this special *HJEAS* block explore topics at the core of American and Canadian studies today as they address issues of race, racism, Indigenous experiences, and settler colonialism both in a historical and contemporary context, adding novel scholarly insights, and showing the significance of scholarship in the discussion and interpretation of social and cultural challenges of our time.

Employing a variety of approaches, vantage points, and time frames, the first three papers delve into the past and present the experience of Indigenous populations. Their central focus lies in understanding the profound influence of settler colonialism on various facets of Indigenous life, encompassing the present-day United States and Canada. Moreover, the analyses also concentrate on the exploration of the policies and practices that have brought about the marginalization and suppression of Native American voices, thus these scholarly papers make significant and meaningful contributions to the ongoing dialogues (both within and outside academia) surrounding Indigenous issues and enriching their collective understanding.

In the first essay on the Indigenous past, "Seeking Education on Their Terms: The Atikameksheng Anishnawbek [White Fish Lake First Nations] 1880–1930," Peter V. Krats (University of Western Ontario) looks at the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek through a meticulous micro-study of the Whitefish Lake Roman Catholic Day School. The essay sheds light on the persistent endeavors of Indigenous communities to ensure Indigenous-led education, which have been met with indifference, hostility, as well as incompetence on the part of Indian Affairs. Krats's scrupulous research contributes significantly to the ongoing academic (and public) dialogue on

Residential Schools by broadening the scope of inquiry to encompass "Indian Day Schools" as well, thus expanding our understanding of Indigenous education and, by extension, the history of Indigenous populations. The essay emerges as a valuable and substantial addition to discussions surrounding the enduring consequences of settler colonialism and the impacts of both residential and day schools, which have perpetuated assimilationist policies with harmful repercussions.

In his paper "The Forest 'Appeared Alive With its Sons and Daughters': Commodification of the Indian Body in Nineteenth-Century American Literature," Jeffrey Utzinger from Concordia University Texas in Austin undertakes a profound exploration of the influence of print culture on the commodification of the Indian body. The study revolves around the phrase "of the forest" in its center, which was originally employed as a descriptive term for the landscape, but was subsequently appropriated by many white Americans to rationalize their perception of Indigenous people as a natural resource. This perception, in turn, facilitated the justification for viewing the Indian body not merely as different, but as a hindrance to be eradicated to accommodate settler colonists, often accompanied by violence and forced removal. Utzinger's research encompasses a broad array of print culture forms, including creative works, newspaper articles, mission reports, and government documents. By extensively analyzing these sources, the author traces the evolution of the phrase in American periodicals during the decades leading up to the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, shedding light on how this phrase became a prevailing justification for interactions with Native Americans.

In "Unreconciled: Indigenous Presents/Presence & Settler Memory," Daniel M. Cobb and Marissa L. Carmi (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) also discuss the intricate complexities arising from the impermanence and instability inherent in settler colonialism, by exploring race, racism, history, and popular memory from the vantage point of the Indigenous world, and specifically Native peoples colonized within the present-day United States. The authors analyze the intersections of these themes in various contexts, such as land acknowledgments, commemoration, and the interaction between popular culture and federal policy. The article highlights how elements of settler memory persist and continue to influence (and limit) public discussions concerning race, remembrance, reconciliation, and reparation. The work is a valuable asset to the ongoing scholarly discourse on the complexities of settler colonial legacies and their implications for contemporary Indigenous communities and wider society.

In his thought-provoking essay "Of Race and Rivers," Dave Tell, associated with the University of Kansas, explores the complex issues of race, racism, and racial politics with a particular focus on the African American experience in the Mississippi Delta. His research centers on the examination of a significant historical event that profoundly impacted the region—the infamous murder of Emmett Till. Tell offers a compelling perspective on the interplay between the natural, cultural, and political life of the region by closely examining the course of the Tallahatchie River, while also intriguingly revealing how elements such as water, soils, and bridges become more than mere environmental features—they take on the role of agents of memory, contributing to the shaping of collective remembrance.

The four studies presented in this collection are of significance, not merely for their contributions to a deeper understanding of the North American past, but also for their relevance to our present and future. These scholarly investigations are necessary to address contemporary issues and, as emphasized by Cobb and Carmi, they may help eliminate limitations on the way we think and speak about diversity, equity, and inclusion in North America and beyond. The papers of this section exemplify the power of international cooperation in advancing academic knowledge, and we hope that the collaborative endeavor that made this block in the journal possible can continue in the future, and may also set an inspiring example for future projects for which the *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* can provide a publication platform, amplifying the reach of conferences organized globally.

Saara Kekki and Balázs Venkovits, Guest Editors

Saara Kekki, Academy Research Fellow (Research Council of Finland) in digital humanities, University of Helsinki, is the author of *Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain: Networks, Power, and Everyday Life* (2022); currently she explores the migrations of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans after their World War II incarceration.

Balázs Venkovits, Associate Professor of American Studies, Director of the Institute of English and American Studies and of the Canadian Studies Center, University of Debrecen, author of publications on travel and immigration to the United States and Canada.

Note

Introduction to the thematic block *Affect, Immersion and Games*

With an expected $319 billion income for 2023 (Statista) and an estimated 3.2 billion people worldwide engaging in some sort of gaming activity (Newzoo), the gaming industry—on any platform—has become a dominant form of global cultural production. Parallel to that, game studies as an academic discipline with strong interdisciplinary ties to cultural, literary, film, and media studies on the one hand, and sociology and anthropology on the other, has been on the rise since the millennium, marked by the launch of the academic journal *Game Studies* in 2001. Partly in an attempt to delineate themselves from the "colonizing" (Eskelinen) attempts of such academic fields, the first representatives of the newly developing discipline were often accused of sheer formalism (Apperley and Jayemane 7; Aarseth). True, even cultural studies-inspired approaches to video games must consider the particularity of the medium, which is why game studies had to first theorize the uniqueness of games. The academic consensus is that one of the particularities of video games is due to the fact that—unlike films or literature—the medium is not by definition, and not necessarily, narrative or even representational. Jesper Juul, for instance, defines games as follows: "A game is a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned to different values, the player exerts efforts in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable" ("The Game, the Player, the World" 255). Juul's definition emphasizes the necessity of a ruleset, player input, and the interaction between the game and the player, that is, the feedback loop (Manovich 264–269), and differentiates video games from other media in that respect.

At the same time, game studies certainly needs to look at games as assemblages (see Latour) that are embedded into the cultural economy of meaning production, that are sites of battles in representational and identity politics (see Gray and Leonard; Ruberg and Shaw), and which, therefore, should be approached with the critical perspective of cultural studies (Shaw 421). As recently as 2018, Daniel Muriel and Garry Crawford in their seminal book *Video Games and Culture* had to explicitly mark the existence of "a growing and consolidating video game culture . . ., which permeates our societies and provides a significant lens through which we can analyze wider social issues in contemporary society. Video games are therefore understood as an expression of life and culture in late modernity" (2). And still, some, like Aubrey Anable, might feel that "game studies has a problem with

representation. In the focus on interactivity and code, we have lost some critical tools for analyzing how video games matter as representations and how they are bound up with contemporary subjectivities" (15).

The current interest of game studies in affect theory, pioneered, among a few others, by Anable herself, seeks to overcome the dichotomy of systems thinking and the politics of representation, as both can be framed in a broadly understood new materialist tendency in game studies, the material context of which entails the coding and procedures, but also the body of the player and the situations of play (Apperley and Jayemane 10, 16). Anable helpfully identifies affect as "aspects of emotions, feelings, and bodily engagement that circulate through people and things but are often registered only at the interface—at the moment of transmission or contact—when affect gets called up into representation" (17). In this context the game functions both as an interface where affect can be identified and as an affective medium (Anable xii) capable of constructing complex medium-specific experiences of pleasure, joy, shame, even disgust. It utilizes what is called affective difficulty—"affecting or being affected by a game" (Jagoda 201)—a quality that can be engaged with in several aspects. The proximate touch of the screen or the feeling conveyed by the vibrating controller in our hands while facing the consequences of our previously made choices creates an entirely different encounter with affect (Anable 37) compared to the social experience of camaraderie, empathy, or rivalry evoked by participating in community events, or the physical aspects of evoking emotions in video games (Isbister 7).

As different manifestations of affect in games demand different approaches, our collection showcases essays that explore a wide variety of primary sources, methods, and agenda while relying on similar theoretical foundations and unequivocally reading video games as affective assemblages. A major consideration at the heart of game studies that affect theory sheds a new light on is the problematic differentiation between the player, the avatar, and the character. Where does the player end and where does the character begin? What do we mean by a character or an avatar? Imola Bülgözdi's essay, while offering a close reading analysis of a video game as an affective system, approaches this theoretical problem through the lens of posthuman critical theory. Building on the works of Anable and David Owen, her essay focuses on the mediation of the body in *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* (Good Shepherd 2018). As the game plays with the blurring relationship between player and avatar and with their identification, it results in a unique second-person perspective. Bülgözdi's article further argues that the game promotes

the appreciation of local experiences and gives voice to marginalized groups by making the player-character explore the United States in a non-linear, unstructured way, ultimately challenging the American dream.

The topic of difficulty within game studies has long been connected to discourses of toxic player masculinity, which further deepened with the widespread appearance of casual playing (Juul, *Casual Revolution,* 2010) and the mainstreamization of gaming culture, and later with the GamerGate (O'Donnell 92). Ross Chiasson's article represents a shift from this discourse and analyzes the challenges the 2D side-scroller platformer *Celeste* poses within the context of game space, arguing that difficulty inherent in *Celeste* is embedded in the meaning-making process of the game. By drawing a parallel between the challenges of spatial navigation and the historical practice of ruin-gazing, Chiasson argues that ruins are constructed as affective spaces of self-exploration and self-healing. Hence, the paper ultimately explores the affect of ludic ruins as they are represented in the game.

Another crucial intersective topic of game studies and affect theory is the concept of genre, that is, for instance, how different generic frames or subversive acts with them enable different emotional and affective responses. Generally, game studies has a notoriously ambivalent history with the concept of genre, a relationship or more precisely an impasse, which is playfully referred to as the "Genre Trouble" (See Aarseth; Voorhees). The transmedial genre of horror most associated with evoking emotions and affect, such as dread, fear, dismay, or occasionally disgust, is a fruitful ground for affect theory as it is evidenced by Victoria Hawco's article. Hawco investigates the ludic affect of horror in three very different horror themed video games. While *Until Dawn* relies on haptic feedback in the controller, *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* capitalizes on the flow of the gameplay in addition to atmospheric elements to create a sense of dread. Finally, in *Alien: Isolation* the AI coding itself prompts the player to act in a way that enhances tension and frustration, inspiring dread and horror.

The language of a gaming medium, the unique ludic mechanics and values, and their affective potential is the last intersective topic our thematic block focuses on. Gábor Zoltán Kiss sets out to explore a scarcely researched field in game studies: the affective power of the in-game rule change as a breach of contract between the player and the game. Given by the language of board games, the affective potential of in-game rule change is fundamentally connected to the medium's social aspects. By surveying a set of examples from mostly tabletop games, the paper ultimately argues that the

frustration, uncertainty, or excitement that these changes can trigger may function as novel tools for "the affective toolbox" of video games.

The selected essays aim to provide a meaningful contribution to the Hungarian and international scholarly reception of game studies within the context of affect theory. The intersections, central questions, and problems of game studies and affect theory such as the relation of the player-avatar-character terms, the topic of difficulty in video games, genre-specific ludic affect, and the affective possibilities provided by the unique and under-researched language of board games are present in the current articles; however, the different approaches, sources, and methods implemented by the essays ensure the novelty value of the thematic block.

<div align="right">Norbert Krek and Zsófia O. Réti, Guest Editors</div>

Norbert Krek, PhD Candidate, University of Debrecen, researches genres and nostalgia in the video game industry.

Zsófia O. Réti, Assistant Professor, Department of British Studies, University of Debrecen and Associate Editor, HJEAS, currently conducts research on the limitations of agency in video games.

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James Joyce, *Ulysses*, and the Politics of Early Twentieth-Century Ireland
Remarks by Ronan Gargan, Ambassador of Ireland to Hungary

_____***HJEAS***

Introduction of Ambassador Gargan by the Chief Editor

The thematic diversity and wealth of our fall issue is further enhanced with the opportunity that we present Irish Ambassador to Hungary Ronan Gargan's lecture on James Joyce given at the University of Debrecen in 2022 on the occasion of the university's celebration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Ulysses. HJEAS* is delighted to be able to share the lecture, which will hold special interest not only for Joyceans but also for anyone curious about the role of an Irish ambassador in the twenty-first century. Ambassador Gargan typifies the Irish diplomatic corps in the experience of many of us in that he has a deep commitment to sharing and spreading Irish culture including Irish literature as seen in this highly informative lecture on Joyce in the context of early twentieth-century Ireland.

Ambassador Gargan rightly describes Joyce as "one of Ireland's most accomplished and best loved writers," which while true in the twenty-first century, was not always so. Joyce's early reception in the post-Civil War Free State of Ireland was anything but cordial. *Ulysses* alarmed those in power both in government and in the Church and both excoriated the book repeatedly, but as the shopkeeper said to the foreign visitor about Joyce's novel: "Do you know that Ireland is the only country that never banned *Ulysses*?" "No," said the surprised tourist, "I didn't." "And do you know why we never banned it?" followed up the shopkeeper, "why? because we never read it!" It took *Ulysses'* growing global audience, especially in America to awaken both the sleeping giant of Irish criticism that now dominates the academic study of *Ulysses* and the tourist-hungry Irish travel and hospitality industries that today relentlessly exploit Joyce and his works. As Ambassador Gargan emphasizes, however, Joyce today has found the readers he sought in his fellow countrymen and women as well as in the world-wide audience for his literature that in so many ways remade the short story, novel, and fantastic fiction in English.

Donald E Morse, Chief Editor

James Joyce, *Ulysses*, and the Politics of Early Twentieth-Century Ireland

Ronan Gargan, Ambassador of Ireland to Hungary

I am delighted to be back at the University of Debrecen to present a celebration of James Joyce, one of Ireland's most accomplished and best loved writers whose impact has been global.

There is no question that James Joyce and his seminal work, *Ulysses* (1922), has had a major and lasting impact on the world, not just in literary terms but also in terms of the important messages that the novel contains. Just as Joyce was writing in a time of war and turbulence in Europe over one hundred years ago, we have the outbreak of war once again on the continent of Europe. President Putin's war of aggression and the turbulence it has caused has reminded us of the basic values and principles every free country holds dear. Many of these values are espoused by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, which some see as an Irish book but is in fact a European book and a book that is as relevant today as it was when published one hundred years ago. In writing the book, Joyce was very much influenced by what was going on around him, when both Ireland and the rest of Europe were experiencing turbulent times. Therefore, today, I thought I would talk about James Joyce, *Ulysses*, and the politics of early twentieth-century Ireland, a highly contested and turbulent time in the history of Ireland.

Turn-of-the-century Ireland became James Joyce's lifelong preoccupation in that he set three major works, *Dubliners* (1914)*, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and *Ulysses* during that time. He left Ireland for Trieste in 1904 and made only a handful of return visits during the remaining thirty-seven years of his life. His decision to focus such attention on early twentieth-century Ireland suggests that he acquired a fascination with the country he left, a fascination that never left him.

"Ivy Day in the Committee Room" was Joyce's favorite story from *Dubliners*. Why was that? In my view, part of the reason was his intense interest in the political career of Charles Stewart Parnell and its protracted aftermath, which I will return to later. It would be a mistake to see Joyce as an artist airily remote from political concerns. Although Stephen Dedalus, armed with an acute sense of intellectual superiority, is based on Joyce's youthful self, the mature Joyce was not like that. In fact, he took an intense, gritty interest in the life of the country of his birth and upbringing.

While living in Trieste, he wrote a series of articles in a local newspaper which showed him to have a comprehensive knowledge of Irish affairs from a

broadly nationalistic point of view. If I had to position Joyce on the Irish political spectrum, I would put him somewhere between the Parnellite tradition and Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin, which was founded in 1905. Griffith does not appear in *Ulysses*, but he is name-checked there quite a few times. For the sake of clarity, it is important to know that Griffith's Sinn Féin had little in common with the party that was transformed into a national movement in the wake of the Easter Rising of 1916. In fact Griffith took political inspiration from Hungary. His book, *The Resurrection of Hungary*, argued that the dual monarchy system between Austrian and Hungary, could be a model for achieving Ireland's autonomy from Britain.

Joyce's understanding of the public life of Ireland comes out in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room." That knowledge probably came through his father, John Stanislaus Joyce, who was a fervent supporter of Parnell. Known as "the Chief" and as Ireland's "uncrowned King," Parnell was a political colossus. In a piece published in Trieste, Joyce, writing about Parnell, referred to the "extraordinary personality of a leader who, with no forensic gift or original political talent, forced the greatest English politician (Gladstone) to follow his orders." He added that "the influence that Parnell exercised over the Irish people defies the critic's analysis." It is hard to disagree with Joyce's assessment. Parnell attained an unrivalled political ascendancy during the 1880s as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which represented Irish interests at the Westminster parliament. Parnell's Party sought a form of self-government for Ireland known as Home Rule. In 1886, Parnell persuaded Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone, with whom he had forged a political alliance, to support Home Rule. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill split his Liberal Party and then came to grief in the House of Lords. Joyce took a cynical view of Gladstone and had an astute appraisal of Parnell. In Joyce's estimation, "Gladstonian liberalism was an inconstant algebraic symbol whose coefficient was the political pressure of the moment and whose exponent was political advantage."

Joyce's take on Parnell recognized his capacity to unify different strands of Irish life. As he put it: "Parnell, convinced that such a liberalism would only yield to force, united every element of national life behind him, and set out on a march along the borders of insurrection." There is an echo of this analysis in 'Ivy Day' with its reference to "hillsiders and fenians." In Henchy's dismissive view, "half of them are in the pay of the Castle." One "certain little nobleman with a cock-eye" is targeted as someone "that'd sell his country for fourpence and thank the Almighty Christ he had a country to sell." The Fenian tradition had its day in 1916, two years after the belated publication of *Dubliners* in which "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" was included.

Parnell's career came to a dramatic end when he was named in a divorce suit involving a nationalist MP, Captain O'Shea, and his wife, Katherine, with whom Parnell had conducted a clandestine affair. Parnell lost the support of a majority of his fellow Irish Party MPs who split into Parnellite and anti-Parnellite factions. That bitter divide within nationalist Ireland continued until 1900 when the Irish Party was re-united under the leadership of John Redmond.

Although Parnell died when Joyce was just nine years old, his name and legacy reverberates through his work—the Christmas dinner scene in *A Portrait of an Artist As a Young Man*, the multiple references to Parnell in *Ulysses*, and in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" in *Dubliners*. In this story, we encounter three strands of Irish political life: canvassers for the nationalist party candidate, "Tricky Dicky" Tierney, a publican standing for the Irish Parliamentary Party; Colgan, a working man, who may be based on 1916 leader James Connolly and whose case is argued by Joe Hynes; and the unionist tradition represented by Crofton, who, not having a candidate from his own party, is supporting Tierney so as to help defeat the more radical option, Colgan. Joyce gives us an insight into the decay of the recently-united Irish Party. Its candidate's canvassers have no great enthusiasm for Tierney. Their main concern is that they be paid for their efforts on his behalf: "I wish he'd turn up with the spondulics" and "how does he expect us to work for him if he won't stump up?" The highlight of the canvassers' day comes with a delivery of some bottles of stout courtesy of their candidate. The Party's Committee Room on Wicklow Street is depicted as a miserable place, cold and "denuded," with bare walls.

Joe Hynes, a character who will appear again in *Ulysses*, where he plays a significant role in my favorite chapter, the "Cyclops" episode, speaks with greater passion about the socialist candidate, Colgan, "a good honest bricklayer" and "a plain, honest man with no hunker-sliding" someone "who is not going to drag the honour of Dublin in the mud to please a German monarch." This brings out varying attitudes towards the British monarchy, and in particular whether the impending visit of King Edward VII ought to elicit an Address of Welcome from Dublin Corporation. That was a controversial issue also during Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland in 1900 when the Corporation, which had a nationalist majority, voted thirty to twenty-two in favor of delivering an Address to the visiting monarch. Here, responding to Mr. Lyons (who may be "bantam" Lyons who appears several times in *Ulysses*), Henchy takes a benign view of the King, describing him as "an ordinary knockabout like you and me. He's fond of his glass of grog and he's a bit of a rake perhaps."

In *Ulysses*, the drinkers in Barney Kiernan's pub indulge in a more trenchant critique of King Edward: "There's a bloody sight more pox than pax about that boyo." Here, Hynes comments that if Parnell was alive "we'd have no talk of an address of welcome." This brings the memory of Parnell into focus and the story concludes with an emotional rendition by Hynes of a poem he wrote on the Death of Parnell:

> He is dead. Our Uncrowned King is dead.
> O, Erin, mourn with grief and woe
> For he lies dead whom the fell gang
> Of modern hypocrites laid low.
>
> The day that brings us Freedom's reign.
> And on that day may Erin well
> Pledge in the cup she lifts to Joy
> One grief – the memory of Parnell.

Everyone in the committee room can rally around the memory of Parnell who had been dead eleven years in 1902 when "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" is set. Even the unionist, Crofton, respects Parnell because he was a gentleman. Henchy sums up Parnell's achievement more punchily: "He was the only man that could keep that bag of cats in order."

But what was Joyce's relationship with Ireland? As a writer, he had little time for the Yeats-inspired Irish literary revival that informed the rise of nationalism in Ireland and which provided the artistic commentary to the turbulent time that was early twentieth-century Ireland. Joyce saw the work of Irish literary revival as backward looking and insular. As he wrote in *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*: "Michael Robartes (a reference to W.B. Yeats) remembers forgotten beauty, and, when his arms wrap her round, he presses in his arms the loveliness which has long faded from the world. Not this. Not at all. I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world."

Yet despite Joyce's determination to break away from Ireland, his greatest work is firmly rooted in the country of his birth. Indeed, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*, and *Ulysses* are all set in Ireland in the years immediately prior to Joyce's departure. It seems as if Joyce, despite the thirty-seven years he spent outside of Ireland, accumulated the inspiration for his great work during the twenty-two years he spent growing up in Dublin, and especially in the four years prior to his departure.

The finest writing in *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* comes as Joyce prepares to leave Ireland. In the novel's final chapter, Joyce debates those issues of nationality, language, and religion that defined early twentieth-century Ireland. Joyce saw these elements of Irish life as "nets" designed to trap him, but he was determined not to allow himself to be trapped. As he put it: "When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets." The novel's resounding final passage includes much powerful writing: "O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

Writing about his attitude to Ireland, Joyce explained that: "My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis." His writings, however, offer a portrait of Ireland as it prepared for the great changes that took place between 1916 and 1922 and of the political tensions that swirled around early twentieth-century Dublin. *Ulysses in particular* contains a compelling portrait of early twentieth-century Ireland. Especially in the Cyclops episode, the political life of early twentieth-century Ireland comes alive through a series of vivid exchanges between the characters in Barney Kiernan's pub in the aptly named, Little Britain Street where Joyce pits Bloom, his cosmopolitan outsider, with his Hungarian-Jewish background, against the pub's other customers with their more conventional nationalist attitudes. Joyce has some fun at the expense of Arthur Griffith, claiming that Bloom had given Griffith the idea of Ireland aspiring to emulate Hungary by acquiring effective independence as part of a dual monarchy—a reference to Griffith's Book: *The Resurrection of Hungary.*

Early twentieth-century Dublin became such a productive source for Joyce's work in part because it was a society in transition. The "nets" of language, nationality, and religion, which Joyce left Ireland in order to escape, also made the Dublin of his youth a source of fascination for him. Great writing rarely emerges from settled, satisfied societies. Discontentment provides far more fertile ground for creative impulses. By the time Joyce published *Ulysses* in 1922 the land he left behind had been "changed utterly" as Yeats famously put it. The "centre of paralysis" Joyce had fled in 1904, went on to conduct a revolution that shook an Empire and led eventually to the Ireland's independence.

James Joyce was not always popular in his homeland and had an ambivalent relationship with the Ireland of his time. Unlike Yeats, who

wanted to be buried in his beloved Sligo, Joyce's remains lie permanently in Zurich. Although, by the end of his life he famously said "When I die, Dublin will be written on my heart."

Modern Ireland has come to revere Joyce. Changing Irish attitudes towards Joyce reflect changes in Irish society. We now see ourselves and our country reflected intriguingly in his work. I would trace our renewed national enthusiasm for Joyce's work back to the centenary of Joyce's birth in 1982, and to the fictional centenary of *Ulysses* in 2004, both of which were marked with great gusto. In recent decades, Bloomsday has become a popular event on Ireland's cultural calendar and internationally, including here in Hungary.

As a final thought, I always found it interesting that the last three words of *Ulysses* are not "I will. Yes" (the famous final words of Molly Bloom's soliloquy), but "Trieste-Zurich-Paris," the three cities where the novel was written between 1916 and 1921. Joyce's decision to specify where the novel was written tells me that it is a European novel with Dublin as its source of inspiration. Joyce wanted Ireland to become more European. I believe that he would be comfortable with today's Ireland which is proudly and thoroughly Irish while also embracing a European identity, most concretely demonstrated through our membership of the European Union.

Go raibh mile maith agat. [Thank you]

Ronan Gargan, Ambassador of Ireland to Hungary

Seeking Education on Their Terms: The Atikameksheng Anishnawbek [White Fish Lake First Nations] 1880–1930

Peter V. Krats

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ABSTRACT
This paper offers a historical context and analysis on an under-studied First Nations located within the Huron–Robinson Treaty area of Northeastern Ontario—Atikameksheng Anishnawbek [White Fish Lake First Nations], whose relatively small population dealt with a great many challenges as settler society arrival created pressures on livelihoods, spirituality, physical well-being, lifestyles, and much more. Detailed micro-study of the Whitefish Lake Roman Catholic Day School operations from 1880 to the 1930s reveals a continuing tale of the Band's efforts at obtaining Indigenous-led education for its children, as well as the often indifferent, sometimes hostile, and at best incompetent role played by Indian Affairs. Often a tale of struggle rather than success, it nevertheless sheds light on First Nations' determination to provide their children with effective education emerging from Indigenous traditions. (PVK)

KEYWORDS: Anishnawbek, Day schools, Indian Affairs, assimilation, Indigenous resilience, Whitefish Lake, Northeastern Ontario.

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> "We are deeply grieved . . . the Department never spent one cent for any school building on our Reserve."[1]

Important recent work on Residential Schools provides academic coverage of horrors long known by Canada's Indigenous populations (see Milloy). While understandable, focusing upon Residential Schools has had the unintended consequence of limiting coverage of "Indian Day Schools," although a recent Federal Indian Day School Federal Class Action suit has brought more attention to bear. Historical study of Day schools offers abundant insights into Indian Affairs attitudes toward Indigenous education and, more broadly, the Indigenous population. At hundreds of Day schools

across Canada, Indigenous children suffered assimilationist, physical, and otherwise damaging impacts: indeed, student numbers at Day schools in Ontario far outstripped those of Residential Schools.[2]

This paper offers historical context on a little-studied First Nations population followed by a detailed micro-study of one such Day school: the Whitefish Lake Roman Catholic Day School. Located on the Whitefish Lake Reserve in Northeastern Ontario, the school operated from 1880 to 1941, with new but hardly better schools in slightly different locations operating to the early 1960s.[3] The Reserve is in the Robinson–Huron Treaty area, and its relatively small population dealt with a great many challenges. Settler society arrival created pressures on livelihoods, spirituality, physical well-being, lifestyles, and much more. This paper examines the Band's repeated efforts at obtaining Indigenous-led education for its children, and the often indifferent, sometimes hostile, and at best incompetent role played by Indian Affairs.

The Atikameksheng Anishnawbek: background and settings

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek/Whitefish Lake First Nation dwell on lands featuring human activity for over 10,000 years. A big-game hunting (Palaeo-Indian) culture north of Lake Huron was followed by Shield Archaic culture (8,000 years ago) and, in turn, a Woodland culture 3,000 years ago; domelike stick-based dwellings, birchbark canoes, snowshoes, and toboggans all reflected mobility (Devereaux 17–20; Higgins 9–15; Krats, "Glimpses of Three Generations" 252–311; Krats, "Our Forefathers" 39–96; Lovisek). Inland from the Huron coast, peoples of "amik odoodem" (Beaver doodem/Amikwa) were centered at Ah tik kah mak a shing (Lake Panache); they hunted, fished, collecting foods, and grew crops. Ranging over some 6,000 km^2, summers featured village life; winter led to dispersal to wider hunting grounds (Bellfy 45; Bohaker, *Nindoodemag* 12, 16, 21–22; Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire* 75–84; Borrows; Sims 403).

Figure 1. Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Lands. (Dashed line suggests fishery south to Lake Huron.) Base map: Canada Land Survey Records. http://clss.nrcan.gc.ca/plan-eng.php?id=447 (accessed 2 January 2021). My approximation of territories.

Lifestyle pressures while settler society closes in

      The Band's inland territories remained obscure to European settlers until the late eighteenth century, although Jesuit missionaries and military administrators occasionally noted their presence at various ceremonies from at least 1642 (Sims 403). The fur trade also shaped the Whitefish Lake experience. To the south, LaCloche post on Lake Huron operated by 1784; a North West Company post lay to the north at Fort Timiskaming (1790). Fur

traders from Michilimackinac, Drummond Island, Newmarket, and Penetanguishene also worked in the vicinity of Whitefish Lake (Simcoe qtd. in Cruickshank vol. 2, 75; Mitchell 38, 138). This crowded field challenged the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC); the 1821 merger of HBC and Montreal traders saw HBC Governor George Simpson's "defensive" strategy provide more vigilance (Rich 432–37). A post opened at Whitefish Lake by 1821.[4] It provided access to the Spanish, Wanapitei, Vermillion, and Whitefish watersheds (Blomme 41; Mitchell 146, 159; Simpson qtd. in Williams 20). This "defensive" post "protected" fur lands to the north through over-trapping. Governor Simpson noted in 1841 that Lake Huron district was "much exhausted in fur-bearing animals."[5] Pressed, or making the best of it, the Whitefish Lake Band about 1830 moved its main village from Lake Panache north, nearer the HBC post, which remained in operation until 1896.[6] The post's closure marked a symbolic "end" to the fur trade, although trade with Sudbury fur buyers has continued to the present. Often, however, other income sources proved more lucrative (see Bice).

Assisting surveyors and geologists was an early alternative. First at work was Alexander Murray, Assistant Geologist to the Geological Survey, whose explorations of Lake Huron's north shore in 1847–1848 provided the first detailed European map of the French, Wanapitei, Whitefish, and Spanish watersheds (Province of Canada Geological Survey 1857). Murray and fellow geologists and surveyors, notably Albert P. Salter, reported "valuable timber," "extensive tracts of land fit for settlement," and a "salubrious" climate.[7] Such praise turned resource dreamers gaze toward the "untouched" lands inland from the coast. Their travels relied on First Nations guides, labor, and overall knowledge of the land. Settler society sought land control via treaty making: Alexander Vidal and T. G. Anderson were directed on 4 August 1849 to "ascertain the expectations of the Indians with a view to the final action of the Government upon the same."[8]

After a hasty study in fall 1849, Vidal and Anderson urged small tracts for the Anishinawbek, consigning Bands to "occupant" status.[9] Ignorant or indifferent of Anishinawbek unhappiness with this arrangement, the Executive Council determined that William Benjamin Robinson, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of the Canadas, and brother of Chief Justice John B. Robinson, undertook the negotiation of Reserves. The Anishnawbek sought "guarantee of continued hunting and fishing rights, and the promise that they could keep their usual planting grounds."[10] Treaty making culminated with the Robinson – Huron of 1850 (Leighton; Morrison; Surtees). Yet Indian Affairs had only a vague idea of the Whitefish Lake

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population (perhaps 120 to 150), much less of its territories or concerns.[11] Vidal and Anderson reported only that their reserve lay "between the Lake Band and the height-of-land about White Fish Lake," while the Robinson Treaty of 1850 granted Chief Shawenakishick's Whitefish Lake Band "a tract of land now occupied by them, and contained between two rivers, called Whitefish River and Wanabitaseke, seven miles inland." On 14 July 1851, an Order-in-Council called for survey of all north shore reservations, but John William Keating argued that

> Wénahbité and Whitefish Lake . . . are from six to three days travel inland with numerous Rapids and portages intersecting the difficult and barren country. There is no likelihood indeed hardly a possibility of the surrounding country ever being settled in the face of the obstacles of access and the sterility of the soil . . . in those two cases a mere indication by monuments of the extent of the tract should be considered sufficient.[12]

Keating thus denied the local Anishinawbek immediate survey. Lacking detail, the Department nevertheless claimed the "[r]eserve also contains valuable mining locations, and on the Rivers are excellent mill sites; the land in the vallies [*sic*] between the hills is reported to be rich, and well adapted for tillage."[13]

The guesswork-based optimism was portentous, for the Treaty gradually cost the Whitefish Lake Band lands and local control as settler society sought various natural resources (Newell 71–82; Telford 80–87,126–33,167–89; Wright 36–59). In 1870 the firm Staples & Schulenburgh cut over 3 million board feet of pine just south of Lake Panache, so the timber industry was on the Whitefish Lake Band's doorstep,[14] whereas railway travel was not far behind. At first change was slow as inland from Lake Huron there were no roads or other infrastructure. Then the Shield-traversing Canadian Pacific Railway's "all Canadian" route led to far greater awareness in the 1870s as the rail Syndicate's chosen routes bisected the Whitefish Lake Band's traditional territory.[15] Better access led to even more settler society attention: for their part, Indian Agents based out of Manitowaning on Manitoulin Island penetrated inland applying their own interpretation of Indian Affairs policy.[16]

The influx of timber cutters, Indian agents, and Christian missionaries saw settler society create ever more pressures. James C. Phipps, Indian Affairs agent in 1876 offered an extended and ultimately compelling discussion of the changes on the north shore:

The decline in value of furs has diminished the earnings of the hunting Indians on the North Shore . . . the loss is more imaginary than real, as . . . those who have gone to work on their farms will find themselves better provided with food for the coming winter than if they had followed their customary employment, as it frequently happens that the Indian expends his earnings, to but little useful purpose, leaving himself and family without food for winter. The hunting Indians have been partly compensated for diminished value, by an exceedingly large catch of furs. The most serious check to their prosperity . . . took place last fall, when an unusually early frost destroyed more than half of the corn crop . . . the crops [nevertheless] proving sufficient to maintain the Indians during the winter, although in many cases the seed grain had to be made use of for food. The past winter, although less severe than usual, was not a healthy season for the Indians, many deaths having taken place; much of the sickness can, however, be traced to careless habits of living, and the absence of those comforts which a higher degree of civilization will bring to them . . .. Practically the Indian is susceptible of much improvement . . . the condition of the Indians may be considered as favorable. A fair degree of progress has been made. What is now needed is, by means of *education*, to overcome the inertia of the Indian character, so that their natural indolence and apathy may be replaced by more energy and industry. The enfranchisement of the most intelligent will doubtless help in leading to this desirable result, and, by raising the status of the Indian, and stimulating his ambition, he will be induced to emulate the industrious habits of the White man. (Emphasis added)[17]

Phipps's condescending view catches the temper of the times, if unsympathetically. He reported that Christianity took firm hold, and "clean" and "comfortable" log houses replaced lodges. The times were indeed changing, but often painfully: Phipps regularly reported that the Band was "badly off." Population figures suggest that transition to the new social model was difficult. Deaths from European diseases were frequent, led by "consumption" deaths; in an odd turn of phrase, Indian Affairs in 1911 proclaimed the Band "healthy and robust" while reporting that "quite a percentage of these Indians are afflicted with tuberculosis." Even the "cure" was consequential: Julia Petahtegoose recalled that children sent to Gravenhurst for treatment "lost" their language. The sorry tale of lives altered or ended early saw Band numbers dip in the 1880s, pressuring Indian Affairs to approve regular (Band-financed) medical service. Illness and death remained frequent visitors: "many" were sick in 1889, typhoid took a toll in 1895, and a smallpox sickened at least 19 persons in 1900–1901.[18]

With disease, poverty, resource exploitation, roads and rail, and settlement all looming large, the Whitefish Lake band struggled to keep its Reserve. The lack of survey in the 1850s gave the HBC leave to retain property at Whitefish Lake post until their post closed.[19] Then the Canadian Pacific Railway began its Algoma Branch, an east-west offshoot from the main line at Sudbury. A legal battle emerged over the Reserve's extent. In 1880, Indian Agent J. C. Phipps was instructed to determine the Reserve's limits as understood by the Band. Phipps claimed having sought

> every opportunity of speaking with the Chief and the most intelligent Indians of that Band to ascertain from them the boundaries of the Reserved deemed as having been in their occupation at the date of the Robinson Treaty and now enclose a sketch showing the Reserve claimed, which will comprise parts of the following Townships as laid down in a Map issued by the Crown Land Dept. of Ontario dated August 1880, Nos. 69, 70, 75, 76, 77, 83 & 84 and will contain about fifty square miles. The Indians state that the Reserve has been occupied by them as a Hunting ground ever since the date of the Robinson Treaty and they desire to have it surveyed as they say the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway passes through it north of Whitefish Lake.

Phipps was hardly neutral: "I have pointed out to the Indians that the Reserve claimed is of great extent, and inquired whether they would not be satisfied with a smaller area but they do not wish any change in the boundaries made."[20] That said, Phipps did report the Band's insistence that Reserve ranged from Kebesahwashkong on the south to the Spanish River on the west; on the north lay Mataganing and Anenbeninckaming (Vermilion and Mud Lakes) and perhaps even Onaping Lake; eastern bounds extended past Kinowawing (Long Lake). These boundaries were far bigger than Indian Affairs intended; G. B. Abrey, Ontario Land Surveyor surveyed a Reserve suiting Departmental expectations.[21] Clashes over the Reserve's size and timber continued for years to come.

Whatever its "legal" bounds, the more-accessible Band drew increased missionary attention. A shift from traditional beliefs to Christianity was gradual. Roman Catholic efforts were, though Jesuit missions, at first visiting and "regular" at Whitefish Lake by the late 1880s. New religious "enterprise" emerged as rail access aided a renewed Methodist mission about 1888. Construction of chapels by both Churches led Indian Affairs in 1897 to praise the "lively religious interest" of the Band. The praise reflected standard assimilatory views that not surprisingly ignored significant traditional beliefs.[22]

Clearly, the onslaught of settler society led to many problems and a few opportunities for members of the Whitefish Lake Band. Like earlier dealings with fur traders, resource seekers, surveyors, and administrators, the new challenges were handled with resilience. Despite many difficulties, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek "demonstrated that in the face of formidable odds they could still maintain a milieu conducive to the development of their culture in all its social, economic and political manifestations" (Chute 411). Predictably, with Indian Agents providing self-serving reports on Band "progress," education would become an issue.

Whitefish Lake Indian Day School's history

The provision of schools for Indian Bands across Canada was a complex, often acrimonious process as assimilationist-minded Indian Affairs officials and Christian Clerics confronted Bands seeking Band-centered education. While other First Nations populations on or near the coast in the Huron-Robinson Treaty area had schools since the 1860s, the inland Atikameksheng Anishnawbek population was ignored. Finally, the Manitowaning-based Northern Superintendency reported in 1876 that Indian Affairs was paying "considerable attention" to educating the "rising generation," but

> [t]he difficulty in obtaining teachers conversant with both the English and Indian tongues, and possessed of such moral qualifications as to fit them for the positions of instructors, is great. If in some instances the qualifications of the teachers are not as good as might be desirable, it must be remembered that at first the instruction required to be imparted is but rudimentary . . .. Most of the pupils had never received any education whatever.[23]

Phipps's view, classically colonial, dismissed traditional Indigenous educational processes. Nevertheless, it seemed that Indian Affairs funded schooling at Whitefish Lake might finally commence.

Enter a Day School

But it was not Indian Affairs that initiated matters. Lack of a school was by now unacceptable to the Whitefish Lake community, which saw that future generations required new forms of education in dealing with settler society. Thus "schooling" started via the direct intervention of the Band which, no later than spring 1880, sought out a building suitable for teaching

while lobbying for school funds. Indian Agent James Phipps passed on the requests and on 31 July 1880, an Order-in-Council was passed. The $200.00 provided through the Indian Affairs Teacher Fund (retroactive to 1 April 1880) was the first ever monies directed to education at the Reserve. Future funding would be given out with exceeding reluctance. According to the Order-in-Council,

> [Given] a memorandum dated 22nd July from the Honorable the acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs reporting that a school has been brought into operation on the Whitefish Lake Indian Reserve, Lake Huron, for the benefit of the Indian children and that the average daily attendance is reported to be about 18 pupils, which is a fair proportion considering the number of children of school age in the Band . . . [t]he Minister therefore recommends that the [teacher] grant in question be made from the Indian school fund and that the salary be paid from the 1st April past, at which date the school came into operation.[24]

The school opened on 20 April, teacher James McKay in charge. According to Agent Phipps, he was "anxious . . . to commence teaching . . . in a school house built by the Indians." Later in 1880, Phipps added more detail about the school's beginnings:

> The White Fish Lake Indian school is taught by Mr. James McKay who entered upon his duties April last and taught for the June quarter but was absent for the September quarter, entering upon his duties again in October last, but as the Reserve is some distance inland and there is but little communication I have no information of the attendance, which during the June quarter averaged 17 ½. Mr. McKay is intelligent, active and energetic, but has only a very slight knowledge of the Indian language, which deficiency he is studying to remedy. I believe Mr. McKay will be a useful teacher, he speaks highly of the Indians who seem to value the benefits of education for their children more highly than any other Band in this Superintendency, and have built a school House, and seem very anxious for the continuance of the school.[25]

Notwithstanding the optimism, or "spin" by Phipps, there were troubles. McKay resigned in September 1881; Indian Affairs refused Joseph Assignack as teacher, citing concerns over his "competency," so the school closed, reopening on 1 December 1881. As Phipps noted, circumstances left much to be desired:

The school has hitherto been kept in the house of one Indian who lent it during the summer for that purpose, but as the Indian requires the house during the Winter, the school was closed during last winter and will again have to be closed this coming winter unless a school house and dwelling for the Teacher can be provided. The Indians have commenced the erection of a suitable building 19 ft x 22 ft. . . . the ground floor should be used for a school room and the upstairs for a residence for the teacher . . . the Roman Catholic mission at Wikwemikong have given the Indians the window sashes, doors, and a quantity of lumber . . .. The building could be completed in about twenty days [*sic*] work. The Indians are however very poor and I would respectfully recommend that a grant of ten dollars be made which would allow a payment of fifty cents per day to be made for 20 days work.[26]

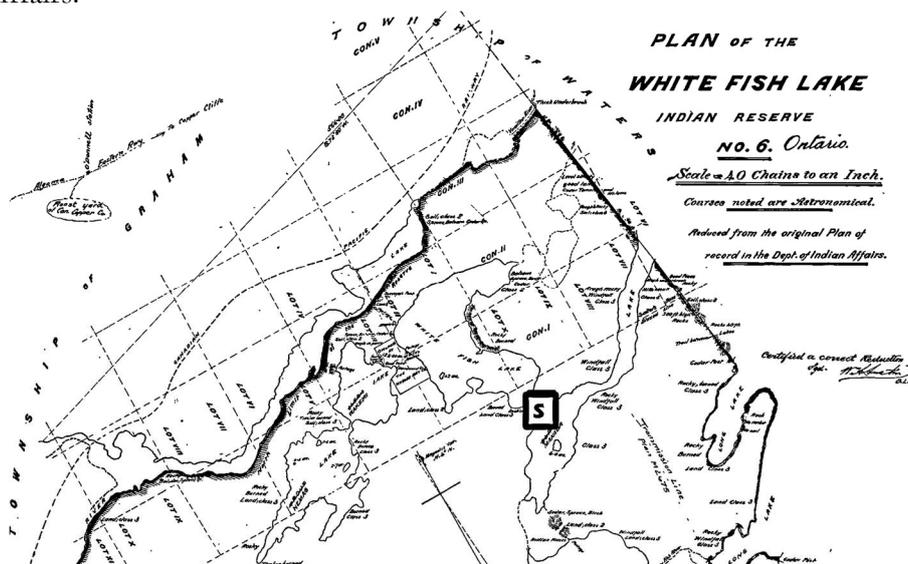This small sum was the total "construction" monies forwarded by Indian Affairs.

Figure 2. School Site; part G. B. Abrey, "Plan of the White Fish Lake Indian Reserve"; "S" added for site.

The schoolhouse was ready about October 1885, although the Teacher's quarters [upstairs] remained incomplete until mid-1888. A series of letters that year provides a detailed indication of the rather haphazard yet over-burdening control of the Indian Affairs Department. Disagreement

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over what to build and over even the smallest expenditure led to poor results. The building required near constant "minor" repairs by the Band. Inside the classroom, supplies remained scarce, as witnessed by an almost immediate series of letters about their lack beginning in 1884. Indian Affairs was remarkably miserly—in 1888, for instance, it committed $14.82 for school supplies, with firewood upping the total by $21.25.[27] Even those small sums had to be pre-approved by Indian Affairs, with duplicate forms backing up the purchases. Responses from Ottawa were quite blunt: a request for two chairs saw Hayter Reed in Ottawa sniff that the "two chairs already in that school . . . should be sufficient."[28] That micro-control of school administration persisted throughout the school's history. However rickety its start, Indian Affairs proclaimed in 1887–88 that the "school on this reserve is succeeding admirably, the attendance being large, and the progress highly satisfactory." For his part, in the 1880s, Agent Phipps praised Teacher Kate Horrigan for her work teaching English.[29]

Teaching woes

Facing minimal budgets, teachers faced many challenges, which resulted in near-constant requests for more pay. Teacher Kate Horrigan made her first request in November 1886: "the present salary paid ($200.00 per annum) is very little to live upon in an out of the way place like White Fish Lake, where everything is very dear. The only store on the Reserve being kept by the Hudsons [*sic*] Bay Company."[30] When the request was brusquely refused, Horrigan departed. That story would be repeated dozens of times. Clearly, the Band recognized that the physical circumstances, relative isolation, and low pay were daunting for any teacher, so it soon urged better pay. In 1898, a Whitefish Lake Band resolution called on the Department to raise teacher pay as "the present [pay] available is inadequate, the Reserve being remote from any point where supplies can readily be obtained and the time and expense entailed in procuring of same being too considerable to admit of any margin of saving." Perhaps this missive had some influence—Indian Agent Benjamin W. Ross "respectfully" urged more pay, with a first raise of $50 per annum established in 1900. Nevertheless, few teachers were willing to remain for more than a year or two, and quite a number left after mere months, or even days. The rapid teacher turnover saw good teachers too often interspersed with inadequate teachers. In 1897, for instance, Ross argued that School Inspection Reports revealed "either the teacher does not understand her business, or that she does not do it." Whatever the reasons, teachers came and went, with few remaining more than a year or two.[31] (See appended list of teachers.)

The Band's call for better teacher salaries marked a return to an earlier theme, namely the control of the school. In 1888 the Band appointed Miss Lizzie Julian as the new teacher; when Chief Mongowin informed the Department, Indian Affairs was blunt. Indian Agent Phipps wrote: "Dear Sir: With reference to the appointment of Teacher for the school at White Fish Lake. I am instructed to say that the appointment rests with the Department . . . you should not make any such appointment without first obtaining authority from the Department."[32]

On the other hand, Phipps regularly encouraged the Jesuit's Roman Catholic mission to locate, vet, and hire teachers for Whitefish Lake. In this case, with the Band doing the hiring, Phipps sent a March 1888 missive to the Mission. He wrote that the White Fish Lake position

> is now filled by a Miss Lizzie Julien who appears to have been appointed by the Chief and Indians. Miss Julien has forwarded her certificate (3rd class) as teacher to this office to be sent to the Department so that her engagement may be ratified. If you have any objection to Miss Julien's appointment will you kindly inform me, so that I can report it along with the certificate. I recently received a letter from the Rev. P. Nadeaux, S.J. strongly objecting to Miss Julien's appointment. I will await a communication from you before forwarding [these materials].[33]

Finding teachers proved a constant challenge as the Rev. V. Renaud S.J. wrote in 1913:

> I am trying to hire a teacher for the Indian school at Whitefish Lake but I have no hope to find one very soon. Whitefish Lake is a lonely place, cut off from all communications, a poor old school, and it is very hard for a teacher, especially a young person, to live there. I think, therefore, that the salary should be raised. Otherwise, it will be about impossible to find a teacher for that place.[34]

Two weeks later, the Department responded: "the Department does not understand your remarks with regard to the building at this place, as considerable money was spent repairing it and the Department was given to understand that it was in very fair condition." The Department did accept that a pay raise "for a qualified person" might be had—suggesting $50 more per annum.[35] In early October, the Rev. Renaud expressed his pleasure with the increased pay, which convinced Miss Catherine Rintoul to go to Whitefish Lake. But he was sharp in his remarks about the school facilities:

Those who reported that the school house there was in satisfactory condition did not look at it with very good eyes. It is an old building, which must be very cold in the winter, and very unhealthy in the spring . . .. I wonder if Miss Rintoul will be able to stand it through the whole winter— as the school stands at the foot of a hill, it was right in the water last spring, and since then, the kitchen floor looks like [drawn concave line] It is not my place to advise the Department about the matter. I beg to say, though, that a new school, built in some other place, is badly needed.[36]

In the end, Miss Rintoul rejected her contract as "she did not like the place" and the temporary hiring of Mrs. Joseph Jalbert Jr. was hurriedly arranged.[37] So much for careful hiring.

Constant disrepair: school structural & operational issues

Teacher quality or consistency was hardly the only problem facing the White Fish Lake school. Indian Affairs records repeatedly note "minor" repairs to the school and teacher's quarters. An early example coincidently speaks to Indian Affairs attitudes toward work by First Nations (1888):

Dear Miss Julien: I have communicated with the Department relative to the repairs required to the White Fish Lake School House and the Department approves of white carpenters being engaged for the purpose of making the repairs. I have by this mail written to Mr. Ross [in charge of the Whitefish Lake Hudson's Bay post] who you say kindly promised to spare one of the carpenters now in his employ for the purpose."[38]

This work resulted in a more permanent teacher's residents along with necessary repairs to the school building. Such "gains" were rare since funds were spent with the greatest reluctance and from a general state of ignorance concerning local issues: for instance, on 20 August 1889, Indian Agent Phipps wrote wondering if the school was even in operation.[39]

Such limited awareness was also reflected in the funding by Indian Affairs of a Methodist Indian School under the control of the Rev. Silas Huntington, located just north of the Whitefish Reserve. Indian Agent Phipps visited in 1889:

At my visit to the Reserve last August I found a School House had been built by a Methodist Minister at Naughton outside of the Reserve, and I was informed that   the Reservation Indians intended removing to that

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neighbourhood in order that their children might attend the school, should such be the case and the children be sufficiently numerous to justify it, it might be possible to render assistance to the Protestant school, but at present the school at White Fish Lake is ample to accommodate the children resident in the Reserve.[40]

Indian Affairs supported the "repair or rather the completion" of the school in 1895, 1896, and more; as in the case of the Roman Catholic Day School, this tight-fisted approach—with less than $25 spent in any particular year—meant that progress was negligible. The Naughton-based Methodist school, just north of the Reserve, struggled on with teachers Mr. R. Black and then John A. Windsor, sustained in part by teaching local non-Indigenous students. Despite tiny enrollment (zero on occasion), Indian Affairs funding persisted to 1906, when the school was closed.[41]

While the Methodist school tottered along, conditions at the significantly better attended but aging Reserve Day school were little better. As problems mounted, the Indian Affairs warned that "expenditure . . . [must be] properly and advantageously incurred. The Bills must be specific and in detail."[42] Endless warnings not to spend on repairs or improvements were more common. Given ill-funded buildings dating from the 1880s, it was little wonder that the school was dilapidated. In 1894, repairs were approved, so long as a "practical man in the neighbourhood . . . [would] look over the building and estimate the material & labour required after which have him send his report to me, certified by yourself as to correctness etc [*sic*] and if he will do job in a satisfactory and workmanlike manner finding all the material for the sum of $20.00, I will authorize same to be done."[42] By January 1895, Indian Affairs insisted on authorized proof of work and costs; such exacting requirements made repairs infrequent, although constantly in need so the building remained in a sorry state. In 1896, Chief Wahbenimiki wrote to seek funding for repairs, as "the roof in its present condition admits the rain."[43] In response, Indian Affairs acceded to provide a small amount of funds. While the Band made efforts to improve the school, Indian Affairs was nearly oblivious—perhaps intentionally so, as it suited their stereotype of Indigenous populations.[44] For instance, in 1908, the Indian Affairs Annual Report claimed, quite disingenuously, that Whitefish Lake "parents do not take any interest in the education of their children."[45] Evidence presented herein suggests quite the opposite: the parents cared, whereas Indian Affairs did not.

Indian Affairs failures meant it was no surprise when, in June 1911, Indian Agent Charles L. D. Sims forwarded a report from Roman Catholic Missionary the Rev. Joseph Specht, who found the school needing repairs "from top to bottom."[46] Sims pushed back: after visiting the school he wrote:

> I visited this school within the last week and found the building in not such a deplorable condition . . . the building is an old one, built of logs but it is quite habitable and I cannot see how any extensive improvements could be done to it as I consider this would only wasting money . . .. It is not the condition of the school or dwelling that makes it difficult to get a teacher for this school but its environment, as the school is situated in a very lonely place.

Sims did concede that "it would be much better to build a new school than to put out any extensive improvements on the old log building."[47] The Band saw Sims's view as an opportunity, offering in November 1911 to fund a new school building:

> Whitefish Lake Reserve
> November 15th 1911
> Meeting of the Whitefish Lake Band in Council held this day on the Reserve and called in accordance with the rules of the Band. It was proposed by Joseph Pine and seconded by Joseph Nootchtai that the Department of Indian Affairs be requested to construct a school and teacher quarters on the reserve the same to be of adequate size to accommodate the pupils of the reserve and the teacher's quarters to be of ample size for the accommodation of the teacher. The same to be paid for from the Capital funds of the Band.

Twenty-one Band members marked their "X" on the petition.[48]

That the members marked "X" spoke to the disconnect between Indian Affairs' view of the school and the practical realities. In 1910, Indian Agent Sims commended the practical education received, especially the acquisition of English:

> On first entering the service as teachers to the Indians some do not realize the difference in heredity and home environment between white and Indian children, and also the fact that most Indian children when they enter school cannot speak or understand the English language, and that they require constant drilling to gain even a rudimentary knowledge of our language. I am pleased to say that by persistent efforts on the part of the teachers, the

adoption of teaching pupils English has been secured in all the schools and the children soon acquire a working knowledge of the language, in fact it is a very rare occurrence to meet with any of the younger Indians, who cannot read, converse and understand English to a marked degree.

The letter's conclusion flies in the face of the use of "X" and the manuscript census, which reported that, in 1911, most Band members lacked fluency in English.[49] Stirred into action by combined Missionary, Indian Agent, and Band comments, Indian Affairs moved to replace the old sagging log building with rotting foundation. There were funds at hand as the Band's capital fund was over $56,000. Tenders were called in March 1912, and in July F. A. Booth of Ottawa won the contract with a bid of $4313.28. But spending money put a brake on action.[50] On 31 July, J. D. McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, wrote William McLeod, Indian Agent in Manitowaning, reporting that "Mr. Conley of this Department, who has recently returned from Whitefish Lake, reports that there is no necessity for the erection of a new school building if the present one if properly repaired." A new foundation, Conley claimed, would make the combined school and teacher's quarters "comfortable."[51] Such sanguine views rang false, but the low costs appealed to the Indian Affairs administration. Basic improvements to the foundation were made, and the old school lived on, with a near-endless series of "minor" repairs provoked by leaks in the roof, floors sagging, moist floors (sometimes literally overflowing), and more. In 1914 the Rev. Joseph Specht S.J. (Society of Jesus) visited the school and wrote Indian Affairs:

> I beg to call attention to the deplorable state of the school house of that locality. During the Easter vacation . . . the classroom floor was flooded with the melting snow water. When I arrived there, the 7th instant [April] I still saw traces of the water. The floor is swollen up and raised contrastly [sic] in consequence. There is great dampness in the room, as the water must be stagnant under the building. It ran in between the lower log and the cement built there last fall, also in front of the house. This must be most injurious to the health of both the teacher and the pupils, and I consider it my duty to inform the Department of the fact, ere more serious damage is done.[52]

Indian Affairs absolved itself of any blame. "The Department regrets this [flooding]," they wrote, "although it is a matter for which no one is responsible. No doubt the water will drain away and possibly the floor will right itself if the fire is kept on."[53] The teacher's quarters, meanwhile, were wet and cold, barely inhabitable at best.

Soon the onset of the First World War provided Indian Affairs with an overarching reason to avoid spending. The commitment to the war (and continuing reluctance to spend) left the school in shambles. But the Department refused more than small scale repairs and, ultimately, even the absence of the school did not sway the Department. On 15 May 1917, the dilapidated school "burnt to the ground." Surely a new school would result. Not so: on 31 May 1917 Indian Affairs reported it was "unable to provide funds for the erection of a new building so long as the war continues."[54]

The Band, with no school, once again moved to provide education facilities for its children. Through the Jesuit Missionary T. A. Desautels, S.J., the Band in August 1917 inquired about the Department's plans. According to Desautels, the Band "expected" a new school would be built in the summer; "so far, they had heard nothing of it." With no construction on the horizon, the Band opted to use a vacant house as a temporary school and teacher facility. The Department offered no help, but the Band pushed ahead, and by 1918 had, in concert with the Roman Catholic mission, begun work on a new combined school and chapel. On 5 August, Indian Agent Robert J. Lewis wrote Ottawa suggesting "it would be advisable to reopen the school at Whitefish Lake as there are thirty children of school age in the village." Lewis saw little choice but to support the joint chapel/school and noted that the "parents will not consent to have any of their children placed in the Industrial School at Spanish."[55] According to the Rev. E. A. Papineau, S.J.

> Last winter, during an interview with Agent R. Lewis, of Manitowaning, I asked him: "If we build a comfortable building, where school could be held, will you give us a teacher for Whitefish Lake Reserve?"—"Yes"—"was his answer." Upon this promise, we have made great sacrifices and succeeded in building a chapel that can be used, both partly for a class room and partly for the teacher's residence. I was somewhat disappointed when I saw your answer (Letter no. 151815/1 Aug 1) to [teacher] Miss Fitzpatrick's application. I hope you will change [illegible] grant a teacher for that Reserve.
> There are 34 children of school age, and they are all within ¼ mile from the school hill. The children are all bright and intelligent, and when school ran [illegible] made one of the most [illegible] of all the Reserves I know . . . [Other schools] cannot compare to the Whitefish Lake school for the number and talent of the pupils . . ..
> Moreover, the Indians, who have worked so hard this winter and this spring (cutting and sawing logs etc [*sic*] for their future school) are so anxious to have a school that they will be extremely disappointed if they are not given

a teacher. I understand that the Department will not build any school during the war. It was on account of that decision that we build the school ourselves.[56]

In February 1919, yet another petition reached Agent Lewis, seeking a new better school. Signed by 34 Band members, the missive of 2 February was heartfelt:

> Mr. R.J. Lewis
> Manitowaning Ont.
> Dear Sir:
> Since our school was burned down in May 1917, we all have been extremely anxious to have a new one. On account of the war we have patiently waited to ask your Department [for] the necessary funds to erect a suitable building for the education of our dear children.
> Now that the war is happily over, we the undersigned Members of the Whitefish Lake Band Ontario, come to you with the greatest insistence and most earnestly supplicate you to build us a school, worthy of the sublime function of preparing our children to be noble citizens of Canada. *We place education above everything else*, and we are cheerfully ready to make the sacrifices necessary for this great work.
> A good school is the best heritage we can leave our posterity. We wish the new school to be a monument by any other Reserve of our zeal for learning and of our practical love for our children. (Emphasis added)[57]

Eight days later a dozen members of the Band, apparently representing the Band in Council, sent a strongly worded, four page "grievance concerning the inefficiency of our day school":

> I: The present system in the teaching of our children is out of date . . . not at all making progress to better the English language, which is the main object to learn in establishing the School.
> II: The hours are not regular . . .
> III: No proper school textbooks are used in teaching the children; it is all about Catholic Religion.
> IV: The school teacher shall be an English person purely, Protestant not necessarily barred; they should not teach religion in the school.
> V: We Indians of this White Fish Lake Reserve exclude the Roman Catholic Priest in the appointment of school teachers
> VI: adopted by Indians in Council; moved James Nootchtai seconded Joseph Penny . . . unanimously carried.[58]

In a letter to Indian Affairs headquarters of 24 February 1919, Indian Agent R. J. Lewis in Manitowaning elaborated on the Band's views:

> It appears that they [the Band] are not satisfied with the way that their children are being taught by the teachers, who are recommended by the Roman Catholic Mission, as they claim there is too much religion taught in the school by the teacher at the present time.
>
> It is their wishes that a day school and a teacher's residence be erected, and that a teacher with qualifications to teach in the public schools of Ontario be appointed by the Department to take charge at Whitefish Lake, and the school be conducted in the same manner as Ontario public schools, and the same text books be used as in public schools.
>
> They claim that in the neighbouring white schools, which are conducted under Ontario school laws, the pupils advance much more rapidly than the Indian students on the reserves where the teachers are recommended by the Missions.
>
> All these Indians want is to have a new school erected on their reserve, a teacher with qualifications to teach in the public schools of Ontario, and the school to be conducted in the same manner as a public school.[59]

For once, the Band's grievances drew some attention; however, the tradition of "avoid spending" soon repeated itself. In early March, Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, sought permission from Minister of Indian Affairs Arthur Meighen to fund a new school and teacher's residence at Whitefish Lake. The construction, Scott estimated, would cost some $4500.00, to be funded from the Band's capital fund of $61,884.25. Meighen's memorandum of approval was dated 22 March 1919. Planning for the new facilities started just two days later while building tenders were called in advertisements of 22 April 1919. Tenders were due by 28 May 1919. All seemed in order as new facilities were finally on their way, albeit in the "plainest style possible." Duncan Campbell Scott's instructions reflected penurious and dismissive attitudes toward the Band but a new school did seem in the offing. According to Scott, "this is an isolated district [so] the building should be in the plainest style possible and should not be any more elaborate than [necessary] . . . I do not think a furnace should be installed. They have plenty of wood and there will probably be no one in neighbourhood who understands a furnace.[60]

Once raised, the Band's hopes were again dashed. In June the Department reported just one tender received, and that for $6055.00, well

above estimates. The single tender was high, claimed the memorandum, because of difficult access and constantly advancing costs." The difficulty of access was a dubious excuse—by now the Reserve, only 16 miles from Sudbury, was far less isolated than decades earlier. But a lower bid was deemed unlikely, so construction planning began. Yet more changes were forthcoming: on 29 June, Indian Agent Lewis gave his opinion of new plans:

> I am in receipt of the Official Letter . . . having under consideration the erection of a log school and teacher's residence at the Whitefish Lake Reserve, instead of the frame building on which tenders have recently been [illegible] . . . and it is proposed to see the work carried out by the band. In reply I have the honor to report that a log building would be quite suitable for the purpose, and it should be erected more economically than a frame structure . . . .. It is my opinion that the work can be carried out by the Indians, but there will have to be a whiteman [*sic*] who is a skilled workman, in charge, in order that the building may be erected in accordance with the plan, and to keep the Indians at work.[61]

The Band was taken aback by the refusal to build a proper frame school. The Band in Council addressed their complaints directly to Deputy Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott:

> White Fish Lake Reserve, July 5, 1919
> Mr. Duncan Scott
> Dear Sir:
> We learn through the Laberge Lumber Co. that the Department has suddenly refused to erect on our Reserve the school which was officially promised to us last May. We are deeply grieved at the refusal and we beg to protest with the utmost vehemence . . . .. [W]e had voluntarily cleared a nice piece of land and were waiting for the contractor to begin the work.
> This refusal is very strange indeed. . . . The Government is spending millions and millions to erect Parliament buildings and other constructions and we are refused a few thousand dollars of our own money to build a decent shelter where our children could receive comfortably a reasonable sum of instruction . . . ..
> We have never asked for any grant of any kind: road grants, farm implements etc. etc., the Department never spent one cent for any school building on our Reserve. The old school was a log building put up by the Indians. For nearly two years we had no teaching at all. Last year our children were taught in a church too large for a class room. Is not all this provoking? Last year we refused joining a General Union of all Indians of

Canada to indicate our rights and obtain justice because we trusted the Department. Now the Department deceives our hopes by not fulfilling its promise. We therefore write to you Mr. Scott and beg you to build our school this summer.
Your humble servants
For all the Band
(Nine signatures/"X")[62]

In August 1919, Chief Joseph Petahtegoose complained to Indian Affairs that "[we] are still waiting for Reply about the School . . . [have] been writing you and [you] never answer."[63] Ignored by Indian Affairs, the Band determined in 1920 to make its own school. The Department was brusquely informed: "[W]e intend to build up a new school by ourselves. We have found two good houses that we want to break out and use up for building our new school. No stranger will work in the construction of that new school, only the Indians of the Reserve."[64] Indian Affairs delayed, but on 15 September 1920 finally recommended approval, noting:

> the building . . . would require $600.00 to pay the Indians for moving it and in purchasing material required to fit it up, for a total of $1300.00. The Indians of this band have to their credit in capital account $62438.00 and $4000.00 to the credit of interest, and the entire cost could be paid from the funds at the credit of the band. I consider that this building would be suitable for school purposes . . . and would be much cheaper than erecting a new building. I would, therefore, submit for your approval that this building be purchased, that Agent Lewis be authorized to instruct the Indians to proceed.[65]

In the end, the "new" building cost $163 to relocate, $358.47 for reconstruction, and $111.84 for materials. The very next year, Indian Affairs reported "minor" repairs were required so the reuse of buildings was the latest in a long series of bad ideas. Agent R. J. Lewis reported on 4 August 1927: "on paying a visit to the Whitefish Lake Indian Reserve . . . I found the school building in bad condition on account of the foundation giving away." Back to the routine of minimal repairs, over and over and over. Report after report to the early 1940s outline various repairs and shortcomings in the school building. But Indian Affairs was content, having "saved" some $5000 by not building a new school.[66]

For the Whitefish Lake Band, the battles over buildings led to revisiting issues of control: who should choose the teacher? Chief

Petahtegoose in Council sought specific teachers and rejected others; they were upset that they "never get word" from either Indian Agent Lewis or the Department. These frustrations eventually led the Band to new approaches. First, they tried the legal process, in October 1921 hiring J. S. McKessock, Barrister, of Sudbury to present their demands for a change of teacher. McKessock's "several communications" aroused Deputy Superintendent A. F. Mackenzie, who wrote Agent Lewis seeking a "full report." As Mackenzie put it, "owing to the persistence of the Chief, the Department is anxious to have a full understanding of the trouble existing between the teacher and the Indians at the Whitefish Lake Indian Day School, in order that it can arrive at a decision as to whether it is advisable to carry out their wishes or not." Agent Lewis, for his part, recommended that no change be made as he found her teaching "satisfactory." The rejection of Band wishes pushed the Chief in Council to a new tack. On 3 March 1922, the Chief wrote Lewis indicating the backing of the Indian Council of Ontario. The Whitefish Lake Band had refused to join the General Council of Indians in 1919 but growing discontent led to this more political approach. The Band, represented by Chief Petahtegoose and Councillor Jim Nootchtai won support for a motion that the Whitefish Lake Band, not Indian Affairs, appoint "their" teacher.[67] But for naught: Indian Affairs seems not to have responded. Small changes emerged but fundamental notions of Indian Affairs Department control remained intact.

Epilogue: New Band-built school

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the Band found new work at Lake Panache cutting lumber for the Brunne Lumber Company. With most of the population relocated, a new school was built by the Band beginning in 1941. Indian Affairs insinuated itself into the process to keep costs low.

> Memorandum to File [Dept. of Education] 1948
> Whitefish Lake [Panache] (R.C.) Indian Day School
> This is a temporary structure . . . gradually being converted into a permanent one. It has now been covered with insul brick and is beginning to look attractive. The inside is covered with Ten Test and is in need of a coat of paint in order to help brighten the inside. [Indian Agent] Mr. [J. A.] Marleau is planning a small teacher's quarters and cloak-room for the back of the building. As the structure has no basement or furnace it departs greatly from our standard plans. However, it will serve the needs of these Indians.[68]

This microhistory of the constant tensions between Indian Affairs and Atikameksheng Anishnabek over school issues offers insight into the broader challenges faced by Band given the onslaught of settler society.[69] Building on millennia of collective effort, the Band's long-standing and spirited determination to educate its youth as it saw fit provides one entry into considering Atikameksheng Anishnawbek's resurgent presence.

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Notes

1 Whitefish Lake R.C. School Building Equipment & Accounts, 1919–1932, File 447-5, part 2 Manitowaning, pp 293–94 https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538 The author recognizes the risk of appropriation of voice; however, making information about the Day school more accessible is a countervailing factor. Hopefully the Band will soon publish its own histories.

2 See Federal Indian Day School Class Action website: https://indiandayschools.com/en/ For a brief look at Day Schools: "Indian Day Schools," Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, University of British Columbia, https://irshdc.ubc.ca/learn/indian-day-schools/

3 This paper, in part for reasons of privacy, ceases coverage in 1931 apart from an "epilogue" showing that a new site and building of the 1940s did not mean new Indian Affairs attitudes.

4 Hudson's Bay Company Archives [HBCA] offer detail. The post (Lat.40°22'48") lay west of Whitefish Lake alongside the creek to Clear Lake.

5 Sir George Simpson, Red River, to Hudson's Bay Committee, London, 20 June 1841. Sir George Simpson, *London Correspondence Inward from Sir George Simpson 1841–1842*, ed. Glyndmr Williams, 20.

6 W. H. Adams, "Report Sudbury Post," 1–2 Aug. 1889, HBCA B 355/e/2, fo.4.

7 Alexander Murray, "Report of Alexander Murray, Esq. Assistant Provincial Geologist, addressed to W. E. Logan, Esq., Provincial Geologist, GSC, Report of Progress 1847–48 (Montreal: Lovell & Gibson, 1849), 93–124; also see his reports from 1849 to 1856. The work of Albert P. Salter and assistants P. S. Donnelly, Arthur Jones, T. W. Herrick, James Johnston, and T. N. Molesworth are printed in various Reports of the Commissioner of Crown Lands; many also reprinted in: Province of Ontario, "Return . . . in connection with the sale of Timber Berths on Lake Huron," *Sessional Papers* (1873, no. 11): 21–43.

8 The study served an Order-in-Council of 4 Aug. 1849. J. H. Price (Montreal) to Alexander Vidal, Port Sarnia, 7 Aug. 1849, Crown Lands, "Instructions to Surveyors," Book 5, reel 125, 140–41.

9 Alexander Vidal and T. G. Anderson, "Report of Commissioners appointed to investigate the claims of Indians on the north shores of Huron and Superior," 5 Dec. 1849,

Crown Lands, "Letters Received," Roll 21, vol. 18, reel 169, 425–49, 519–20. Province of Canada, Executive Council State Books, 15 Feb. 1850, 16 Apr. 1850, PAC, RG 1, E1, vol. K, 34, 181.

10 Band request made fall 1850. R. Bruce to G. Ironside, 6 Jan. 1851, "Northern Superintendency Correspondence" National Archives of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, Record Group 10 [hereafter IA], Vol. 613, see pages 1, 372.

11 Population and data: "Voucher No. 8," Province of Canada. 'Return . . . dated the 2nd ultimo . . . in detail of the Expenditure of £5000 less £800 refunded, paid to . . .. W.B. Robinson, Esq., to be by him disbursed among the Indians . . . ," *Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Canadas* [*JLAC*], (1851), App. I.I., 4 July 1851.

12 John William Keating to Col. Robert Bruce, 6 Aug. 1852, IA, RG10 Vol.198, part 1 Reel C-11514, Letter 6, quoted in Michael Marlatt, "The Calamity of the Initial Reserve Surveys under the Robinson Treaties," Papers of the 35th Algonquian Conference. ed. H. C. Woolfort (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2004), p 300.

13 Chief Shawenakeshick likely discussed the extent of the Reserve at the Treaty talks: "Report on the Present State of the Great Manitoulin Island and . . . the Nomadic Bands or Tribes on the Northern Shore of Lake Huron." "Evidences of Captain Ironside, Rev. D. O'Meara, Rev. J. Chance, Rev. Hanipaux, and Ferard, Rev. M. Choné," Province of Canada, *JLAC* (1858), App. IX no. 21, Part II.

14 Silas Staples and A. R. Schulenburg Saw Mill and Lumbering had 46 employees: NAC, RG 31 Vol. 918, "E. Algoma," schedule 6 (Killarney). Traditional Lake Huron and Lake Panache fisheries were also exploited by the newcomers.

15 The talk of a French River canal (1830s) led only to maps and surveys. David Thompson, Montreal, 10 Sept. 1836 to Thomas McKay, PAC, Civil Secretary's Correspondence, Upper Canada Sundries, Sept. 1836, RG 5 A1 Vol.170, 92969-92971. The Great Northern Road was but a dream. Crown Lands Report, *JLAC* (1859), 12, 17; 1865, x, xvii-xviii. An 1871 CPR survey neared "White Fish Holme" Lake; as late as 1879, the main line survey split the Reserve alongside Round and Long Lakes. Canada, *Sessional Papers* (1880) 23, 23a, 123 App.18.

16 Whitefish Lake lay in Division 1 of the Northern Superintendency. In 1898, Division 1 was divided, with Whitefish Lake placed in the Manitowaning Agency. See IA, Guide to IA Field Office Organization in Ontario. Key Indian Agents at Manitowaning were William Plummer (1873); James Charles Phipps (1873–93); Benjamin Walter Ross (1893–96); Charles L. D. Sims (1899–1912); William McLeod (1913–15), and Robert J. Lewis (1915–39).

17 IA Report 1876, 18–19; 1890, 6.

18 Julia Petahtagoose, "Interview," 1984, Canadian Plains Research Centre, n.p. http://hdl.handle.net/10294/620. Indian Affairs, 1911, 17. On illness: HBCA, B134/e/3 "Post Report Montreal Department," 1890,12; "Typhoid at Spanish River," IA, vol.2811, file 164,526. Indian Affairs, 1901, xviii; F. G. Finley, "Notes on an Epidemic of Mild Smallpox," *The Montreal Medical Journal*, 30 (Apr. 1901): 17. On "prevalent" consumption: IA Report 1903, 13. Medical services provided by Dr. W. H. Howey (1880s–90s) and Dr. R. H. Arthur (1900–10); see Band medical costs within financial statements in IA Reports.

19 George McLean, Deputy Superintendent General Indian Affairs, Ottawa, to Chief Wahbemeniki, Whitefish Lake, 29 Nov. 1896. IA, RG10 Vol. 2299 File 59576.

20 Jas. C. Phipps, Manitowaning, to Superintendent General, 30 Mar. 1883, Ottawa, Vol. 10267, file 411/30-8-6.

21 "Facsimile of sketch made by Whitefish Lake Indians of their Reserve," 1880, IA, Vol. 10267, file 411/30-8-6. Phipps was ordered on 15 Sept. 1883 to arrange Abrey's survey: letter of 22 Aug., 15 Sept. 1883. ibid.

22 Fr. J. B. Proulx from Penetanguishene arrived by 1836; at least 24 more Jesuits served the mission by 1880. A few Methodist missions began in 1837, soon followed by Church of England workers. In 1871 the Census recorded 27 Catholics, 8 Protestants, and 98 "pagans"; 1891 lists 99 Roman Catholics, 23 Methodists, and no "pagans." Census of Canada, 1891, RG 31 T-6323, Algoma Enumeration District, Graham to Hallam, 5–11. See "praise" in IA Report, 1897, 19.

23 Jas. C. Phipps, Superintendent, Northern Superintendency 1st Division, Manitowaning, 25 Aug. 1876, quoted in IA Report 1876, Part I, 18.

24 IA, Vol. 2118, 22435.

25 Phipps's initial letter is nearly illegible. J. C. Phipps, Agent, Manitowaning District Office, letterbooks, 10 May 1880, IA, Vol. 10447, C-152, p 315. Phipps to IA, 19 Nov. 1880, Department of Indian Affairs: Manitoulin Island District Office, letterbooks: C-15235, p 699–700; see also: Phipps to Superintendent, IA, 5 July 1880, IA, Vol. 3698, File 16,138. p 22940.

26 Given the administration's views, was it Assignack's Indigeneity that saw him rejected? James Phipps, 13 Sept. 1881, Manitowaning, to Department of Indian Affairs: Manitoulin Island District Office, letterbook C-15235, p 227. Phipps, Manitowaning, to IA, 11 Feb. 1882; District Office letterbook C15235, Vol. 10448 p 569; on School: J.C. Phipps, 15 Nov. 1881 Vol. 532; District Office letterbook, C-15235, p 415. Monies sent in December. On completing the school: Phipps, Manitowaning, 2 Sept. 1885, IA Manitoulin Island District Office, letterbook : C-15239, Vol. 10461; Feb. 20 1888 in IA, Vol. 2315, file 62757.

27 ibid. Also: Phipps to Lizzie Julian, 10 July 1888, IA, Vol. 2315, C-15239, Vol. 10461, p 544.

28 Hayter Reed, Ottawa to B.W. Ross, IA Manitowaning, 2 Nov. 1894. IA, School Branch letterbooks C-13904, Vol. 1291, p 43.

29 IA Report, p xxvi 1887; ibid., 1888 Part I, p 130; 30 James C. Phipps to IA, 12 Nov. 1886, Manitowaning Superintendency—General Correspondence Regarding the Indian School at White Fish Lake 1885–1888," IA, Vol. 2315 File 62,757. Name sometimes spelled Hourigan.

30 ibid.

31 Band letter forwarded to the Secretary, IA by B. W. Ross 15 Dec. 1898, letterbooks C-15252, pp 724–25.

32 Chief Mongowin to Phipps, Manitowaning, 14 Nov. 1887, Vol. 2315, file 62757; J. Phipps, Manitowaning to Chief Mongowin, White Fish Lake 25 Feb. 1888, IA Manitoulin Island District Office Letter Books, C-15239, Vol. 10461, p 25.

33 Phipps, Manitowaning to illegible, 4 Mar. 1888, Manitoulin Island District Letter Books, C-15239, Vol. 10461, p 133.

34 V. Renaud, S.J., Cutler, Ont., to IA, 30 Aug. 1913. IA, School Files, Vol. 6179, File 447-1, part 1, p 1606: https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1885417 microfilm # c-7916.

35 W. Stewart, Asst. Dept. Superintendent and Secretary, Ottawa to Rev. V. Renaud, S.J., Cutler, Ont., 17 Sept. 1913, IA, School Files, Vol 6179, File 447-1, part 1, microfilm p 1607.

36 Renaud, Cutler, to Secretary, IA, Ottawa 2 Oct. 1913, IA, School Files, Vol. 6179, File 447-1, part 1 micro pp 1610–11.

37 ibid. esp. Wm. McLeod, Manitowaning, 17 Oct. 1913 to Indian Office, microfilm p 1614.

38 J. Phipps, Manitowaning, to Miss Lizzie Julian, White Fish Lake, 5 Nov. 1888, Manitoulin Island District Letter Books, C-15239, IA, Vol. 10462, p 195.

39 ibid., Vol. 10464, p 575.

40 Phipps, Manitowaning, 6 Jan. 1890, Manitoulin Island District Letter Books, C-15240, IA, Vol. 10467, pp 420–21; see also IA, Report, 1892, Part II, p 186.

41 C. L. D. Sims to J. A. Windsor, Sept. 29, Oct. 15, 1902, Manitoulin Island District Office, letter book: C-15256, Vol. 10535, pp 173, 223–24. IA, Report, 1905, Part J, p 115. Also ibid., 1896, Part G, p 540; 1897 Part G, p 562 and onward. For Methodist School: School Files Series 1879–1953, Manitowaning Agency, Whitefish Lake Protestant School, Vol. 6020, File 19-7-5 Part 1; C 8143.

42 B. W. Ross, IA, response to Chief Wahbenimiki, 6 Oct. 1896, ibid., pp 189–90.

43 B. W. Ross, Acting Superintendent Indian Affairs to T. P. Ross, Sudbury, HBC; 10 Sept. 1894; IA, Manitoulin Island District Letter Books C-15245, Vol. 10487, p 642. On the various demands: Jan. 30, 1895, ibid., Vol.10493, C 15246, p 68. Indian Affairs permitted "repair or rather the completion" of the school in 1895 and later; repairs were always inadequate., B.W. Ross to Chief Wahbanimiki [?], 2 Nov. 1895, C 15247, Vol. 10495, p 458.

44 September 1896 letter noted in IA, 27th Sept., Manitoulin Island District Office, letterbook, C-15248, Vol. 10505, p 56.

45 IA Report, 1908 p 16.

46 Sims to Specht, IA, Vol. 6183, file 447-5, part 1, pp 68, 70. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538

47 Sims to Ottawa, 24 July 1911. IA Vol. 6183, File 417-5, part 1, p 80. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538.

48 Letter translated/written by John Esquimaux "interpreter." Sims quoted in IA Report. 1910, Part I, p 294.

49 The foundation: IA Report, 1913, Part H, p 135.

50 For quote and detail on bids: IA, Vol. 6183 file 447-5 part 1 in https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538, esp. pp 110–12; 119–23; 133–37; 141–44.

51 IA, 10 Apr. 1913, Vol. 6183, File 447-5, part 1, p 156. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538. Continuing building issues compiled from frequent reports in this set of IA files.

52 The Rev. Jos. Specht, S.J., Massey Station, Ont., ibid. p 158.

53 ibid. 158.

54 ibid. 223.

55 ibid. 250.

56 IA, School Files, Vol. 6179, File 447-1, part 1; https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1885417; microfilm pp 1672–74.

56 IA, Manitowaning, School Files, Whitefish Lake Roman Catholic Day School, Vol. 6179, microfilm c-7916, pp 1697–98.

57 IA, School Files, Vol. 6179, File 447-1, part 1; https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1885417; microfilm pp 1672–74. 2 Feb. 1919, My emphasis.

58 IA, Manitowaning, School Files, Whitefish Lake Roman Catholic Day School, Vol. 6179, microfilm c-7916, pp 1697–98

59 ibid. pp 274–75.

60 IA, School Files, Vol. 6183, File 447-5 part 1, p 259 https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538

61 Letter from Lewis, ibid., see p 287 for plans for the new log school; also p 291.

62 Manitowaning, Whitefish Lake R.C. School Building Equipment & Accounts, 1919–1932, https: www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538 p 293–94; ibid. part 2, File 447-5, part 2.

63 ibid.

64 Acting Deputy Superintendent General, IA, Sept. 15, 1920. School Files, Vol. 6180, File 447-5, part 2, pp 333–34. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538.

64 IA, School Files, File 447-5 part 3; https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538; pp 322–48 Also Annual Report, 1921 part 1, p 119 and ensuing reports.

65 Acting Deputy Superintendent General, IA, Sept. 15, 1920. School Files, Vol. 6180, File 447-5, part 2, pp 333–34. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538.

66 IA, School Files, File 447-5 part 3; https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879–1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=1887538; pp 322–48. Also IA Report, 1921 part 1, p 119 and ensuing reports.

67 Teacher issue: various letters in IA, School Files, Vol. 6179, File 447-1, part 1, pp 1738–50.

68 IA, School Files, Manitowaning Agency, Lake Panache, Vol. 6020, File 19-17-1, part 1, C 8143.

69 New challenges and opportunities emerged as the Band moved in the 1950s to a new site by Simon Lake near the CPR and TransCanada Highway. On that post 1940s history: Higgins, 91-148; Band Website https://atikameshenganishnawbek.ca/

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Appendix

Teachers at Whitefish Lake (Source: Indian Affairs Reports and Papers)

1880	James McKay	1908–10	Joannah Kelly/Keely
1881	No teacher	1910–12	A.M. Sweeney
			Lucy Labranche
1882–84	Joseph Assignack	1913	Mary M. Pleau
1884–87	Kate Horrigan	1913	Catherine Rintoul
1887–88	Nelly Ostrom	1914–15	Mrs. Joseph Jalbert
1888–89	Lizzie Julian	1916–19	Tillie Fitzpatrick
1890–91	Celina Dubeau	1919	Yvonne Brillant
1891	Emma Reid	1920	Priscilla Lavallée
1892–93	Celina Lemoine	1921	Annie T. Ladouceur
1894–95	unknown	1922	Priscilla Lavallée
1896	Celina Lemoine	1922	M. A. McDermott
1897	Mary Dubeau	1923–25	Angela Toner
1898	Elizabeth Assanee	1926–27	Margaret Devine
1899	Josephine Bisaillon	1927	Agnes Manitowabi
1900	Angelique Peltier	1928–31	Stella M. King
1901–02	Harriet King	1932–34	Irene Burnett
1902–03	Angelique Peltier	1932–34	Lyla Spottswood
1904	Mrs. J. H. McKay	1934–35	Irene Donlon
1904	K. L. McGrath	1935–45	Mary Wabegijig
1904	Mary V. Solomon		Mary Kinoshameg
1905	R. A. Dunne		Dorcas Sullivan
1905	Johannah Kelly		Miss E. Kelly
1906	Mary Cephus		N. M. Kelly
1906–07	Minnie Fallu		Mrs. Adam Corbière
1908	M. Toller		Mrs. G. Pehtahtegoose

**The Forest "Appeared Alive with its Sons and Daughters":
Commodification of the Indian Body in Nineteenth-Century
American Literature**

Jeffrey Utzinger

_____**HJEAS**

ABSTRACT

The phrase "son/s of the forest," in relation to distinctive trees, was widely used in British periodicals throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When the phrase began to appear in US periodicals in the early nineteenth century, however, a shift occurred as writers started applying "of the forest" specifically to Native Americans. This essay examines how the phrase is used with increasing frequency in American literature, mission reports, and government documents during the decades leading up to the 1830 Indian Removal Act. I argue that print culture was used to reimagine Indigenous Americans as commodities, such as trees, to justify their removal from the landscape. The article is framed by an examination of how William Apess used his works, namely *A Son of the Forest*, to resist the State-sponsored violence of Jacksonian policies and Indian Removals. (JU)

KEYWORDS: Apess, commodification, forest, Indians, removal

◣✛◥

The life of William Apess, the biracial Pequot and white minister and writer, would seem to share little in common with the life of Andrew Jackson, who dedicated much of his time, as a soldier and as a politician, enacting violence against Native Americans.[1] However, both of these nineteenth-century Americans adopted an arboreal moniker as part of their public personas. Apess identified himself as "of the forest" twice in the title of his autobiography, *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apes, a Native of the Forest*, and Jackson earned the nickname, "Old Hickory," during the War of 1812 because his men viewed him as "thin but impossible to break" (Brands 186). Both men also endured particularly harsh childhoods. When Apess was four years old his father left him, his mother, and siblings in the care of an alcoholic grandmother who subjected Apess to verbal and physical abuse (*Son* 11–12). Most of Apess's childhood was spent moving between family members and the homes of people to whom he was indentured. Likewise, Jackson's father died before Jackson was born, and his mother died when he was fourteen. Both Apess and Jackson entered into military service in their early teens: Apess was sixteen when he fought in the Battle of Plattsburgh

during the War of 1812, and Jackson served in the American Revolutionary War at age thirteen. In many ways, Apess and Jackson are representative of the early, nineteenth-century American experience.

The year 1829, however, serves as a stark point of departure between how these two Americans would experience life for the remainder of the century: Apess self-published his autobiography with little notice from the general public, while Jackson was sworn in as the seventh President of the United States of America. Within a year, President Jackson signed into law The Indian Removal Act of 1830, an act, in the verbiage of the original law, intended "to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi" (*A Century* 411). This act, of course, was neither the beginning nor the end of genocidal public policies enacted against Indigenous people of North America. The justification for, and ramifications of, this act are many and have been covered in great detail by others. Scholars have also recounted how, from white settler colonists' earliest interactions with Native Americans, the colonists viewed the Indigenous body as something distinctly different from their own, something to be converted, enslaved, removed, relocated, or destroyed.

The focus of this essay is the role print culture played, especially in the decades leading up to The Indian Removal Act of 1830, in shaping nefarious policies designed to silence Native Americans' voices. Tracing how the phrase "of the forest" was repurposed from a descriptive flourish used to describe elements of a landscape into a descriptor that commodified and demeaned the Indian body, demonstrates one significant way many white Americans justified viewing Indigenous people as a natural resource that needed to be removed in order to make way for white settler colonists.

Prior to the American Revolutionary War, whites were already establishing communities along the east coast, and westward expansion accelerated with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The following year, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was commissioned in hopes of establishing new trade routes. The earliest printed accounts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition reveal how Native American bodies became conflated with natural resources, namely trees, that needed to be cleared in order for settler colonists to achieve what, by the mid-nineteenth century, would be called Manifest Destiny. The phrase "of the forest" to delineate Indigenous people appears in widely distributed accounts related to Lewis and Clark's journeys across North America. Prior to authorized accounts of the expedition, multiple "versions that cobbled together various sources" appeared on the market as early as

1809 (Coats 288). Many of these editions include an unsigned preface that reads, in part:

> The time is not far distant, in all moral probability, when the uncultivated wilds of the interior part of the continent, which is not only inhabited by the tawny *sons of the forest*, and howling beasts of prey, will be converted into the residence of the hardy votaries of agriculture, who will turn those steril [*sic*] wildernesses into rich cultivated and verdant fields.
>
> <div align="right">(qtd. in Lewis et al. vii; emphasis added)</div>

This passage not only privileges the agricultural potential of land over all other uses, but also adds a new dimension to the stated purpose of finding new trade routes. By conflating "the tawny sons of the forest" with "howling beasts of prey," the writer suggests Native Americans, along with non-domesticated animals and dense vegetation, need to be replaced by (presumably) white farmers.

In order to understand how settler colonists' perception of, and policies towards, Indigenous people of North America shifted from violence born of fear, misunderstanding, and economic expediency (slavery) to a nationwide campaign designed to remove the Indian body completely from the land, it is instructive to examine print culture in a variety of forms—creative works, newspaper articles, mission reports, and government documents. I trace how the phrase "of the forest" was originally used to describe trees, primarily, until the early 1800s when it appears in print with greater frequency in reference to American Indians in ways that relegate Indigenous bodies to commodities within the Euromerican imagination.

Bibles, dictionaries, and periodicals

The idea among Europeans that forests were wild, dangerous, and savage places can be traced back to the twelfth century. The word "savage" was first used in print to mean "that [which] is in a state of nature, wild," or "of an animal: wild, undomesticated, untamed" ("Savage"). For several hundred years, use of the word was limited to descriptions of animals and places. Then, in the sixteenth century, the word "savage" was applied to humans who reside within wild spaces. A savage human was presumably "a person living in a wild state . . . regarded as primitive and uncivilized." As meaning of the word savage evolved, so too did theories demarcating what made places and people either savage or civilized. By the eighteenth century, Enlightenment thinkers began to develop a hierarchy of the human condition

that became known as stadial (or stages) theory. Colin G. Calloway explains how this so-called progression worked: "Societies moved gradually through four basic stages: 'savage' (hunting and fishing); 'barbarian' (pastoral herding or shepherding), a first phase of 'civilized,' based on agriculture; and 'fully civilized,' based on commerce and manufacturing'" (77). This alleged "historical progress from savagery to civilization," Coll Thrush argues, is "one of the most powerful narratives in global history" (13). And yet, as Europeans encountered Indigenous people, especially in the Americas, who did not fit neatly into these categories, a new concept emerged—the noble savage, "a primitive man, conceived of or idealized as morally superior to civilized man" ("Noble Savage"). This "familiar contradiction" as Philip J. Deloria describes it, is "a term that both juxtaposes and conflates an urge to idealize and desire Indians and a need to despise and dispossess them" (4). By the eighteenth century, the ideas that the forest was uncivilized and that Native Americans were savages (at times noble, at times barbaric) were firmly ingrained in the minds and literatures of Europeans and Euromericans.

The earliest extant example of the specific phrase "of the forest" being used to denote someone or something appears in the 1609 *Douay-Rheims* translation of the *Latin Vulgate Bible* into English. In the second book of Kings is a reference to "Adeodatus the son of the Forrest [*sic*] an embroiderer of Bethlehem [who] slew Goliath the Gethite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam" (2 Kings 21.19). In the more popular *King James Version* of the Bible, published two years after the *Douay-Rheims* English edition, "Adeodatus" becomes "Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim" (2 Sam 21.19), and subsequent Bible translators follow suit. That said, the *Douay-Rheims Bible* was reprinted with updated editions numerous times after its original publication, and is still in use by many Catholics today. Circulation and usage aside, however, what is most significant to this discussion is that, in this first printed usage, the phrase "son of the forest" is used in relationship to a violent act. Adeodatus slays a giant, and thus, the idea that humans who dwell in so-called wild, wooded places are capable of great violence is reinforced and will be replicated *ad nauseam* two hundred years later when it is grafted onto the stories many whites told about Native Americans.

Besides the reference to Adeodatus in the *Douay-Rheims Bible*, however, over the next two centuries, when English speakers encounter the phrase "of the forest" in print, it is almost exclusively in reference to trees. The phrase does not become widely used until early in the eighteenth century, and does so, in large part, as the result of a passage from another religious text finding its way into a popular dictionary. In 1692, the enigmatic English

scholar and critic, Richard Bentley, delivered a sermon, "A Confutation of Atheism," in which he argues against theories which purport "a spontaneous production of mankind" (9). He posits atheists must believe the earth has grown less fertile; otherwise, if humans spontaneously sprang from the soil in the past, the same soil should, logically, still produce humans (22). Ultimately, Bentley asks, "[W]hy was there not a like decay in the production of Vegetables? We should have lost by this time the whole Species of Oaks and Cedars and the other tall and lofty *Sons of the Forest,* and have found nothing but dwarfish Shrubs and creeping Moss and despicable Mushrooms" (26; emphasis added). Bentley's work, in general, garnered a wide readership; however, that in itself does not account for why the phrase, "Sons of the Forest" appeared in print, frequently, decades after Bentley's collection of sermons were published. In 1755, Samuel Johnson, the renowned lexicographer, used Bentley's musing on vegetation as an example of how one could use the word "dwarfish" in his *Dictionary of the English Language.* Johnson's Dictionary (as it was more commonly known) was considered "the standard authority on English vocabulary" for over a hundred years, going through at least four editions in his own lifetime (Greene 195). While the carrier for "sons of the forest" was the entry "dwarfish," the phrase was replicated repeatedly as the dictionary was circulated both in Johnson's Dictionary and subsequent reference books that followed Johnson's lead in using Bentley's passage in entries for the word dwarfish.

After the phrase "sons of the forest" enters the codified English lexicon, it begins to appear frequently in British publications in the late 1700s and early 1800s. In 1798, the sixth edition of Richard Glover's epic poem, *Leonidas*, includes the lines, "There branch the trees, / Sons of the forest" to describe a sylvan landscape (92). The phrase appears in nonfiction essays dedicated to decorative gardening, such as Uvedale Price's *Essays on the Picaresque*, which includes this caution while choosing which trees to thin: "it is not sufficient to attend to the giant sons of the forest" (255). Trees enduring storms were deemed worthy of the label, as seen in a meditation found in *Hymns in Prose, for Children* that praises a "son of the forest [that] has remained the same, defying the storms of two hundred winters" (Barbauld 48), and an oft reprinted anecdote tells of a storm that "tore the huge boughs from the oak, mighty son of the forest" ("Fragment" 118). Writers of travelogues, however, used the phrase the most, pointing out "noble" and "venerable" sons of the forest west of England (Pinkerton, *A General* 198; 217; 303) and in York (Storer 81); the "lofty sons of the forest" in Italy (de Chateauvieux 99); in the "Botany of the West Indies," where a traveler

reported, "Several of those giant sons of the forest that were noticed in the botany of India grow wild in these islands" (Pinkerton, *Modern Geography* 508); and even an English traveler in New York describes a pine stump in Albany as a "son of the forest [that] mocks alike the wishes and the efforts of the farmer" (Dalton 78). As these examples illustrate, even as usage of the phrase increased in British Isles publications, "sons of the forest" is usually a reference to vegetation.

North American sons and daughters of the forest

While it is difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty, there appear to be no printed examples of the phrase "of the forest" to describe Indigenous people in American periodicals prior to the aforementioned accounts of the Lewis and Clark expedition that began to circulate around 1809. When the phrase does begin to appear with great frequency in the United States, it is almost always used to refer to Native Americans, and is frequently accompanied by a derogatory adjective. Writers also make clear, in many instances, that associating Indigenous people with the forest is not simply a result of perceived gendered activities such as hunting and warfare that take place in the wooded spaces where so many white American males encountered Indigenous males. Native American women are also often conflated with the woods as they become "daughters of the forest." Throughout the 1800s, hundreds of references to sons or daughters of the forest can be found in poems, novels, newspaper articles, mission reports, and government documents. In the remainder of this essay, I will examine representative examples that appeared prior to The Indian Removal Act of 1830, in the twenty-year span from 1809 to 1829 as a way to illustrate how the phrase was instrumental in contributing to white Americans' acceptance that Indigenous people needed to be removed from the landscape as much as a forest needed to be felled in order to make way for agricultural pursuits.

Washington Irving's *A History of New York*, first published in 1809, is the ideal piece to examine when considering ways that the term, "of the forest," changed meaning when used by North American writers. Irving's *History* was, in his own words, "a comic history of the city" (qtd. in Jones 89). While critically accepted as satire, the wit is abandoned when Irving writes about Native Americans who inhabited New York. In a long passage about Native Americans, Irving writes:

> Now and then a crew of these *half human sons of the forest* would make their
> appearance in the streets of New-Amsterdam, fantastically painted and

decorated with beads and flaunting feathers, sauntering about with an air of listless indifference—sometimes in the market-place, instructing the little Dutch boys in the use of the bow and arrow—at other times, inflamed with liquor, swaggering and whooping and yelling about the town like so many fiends, to the great dismay of all the good wives, who would hurry their children into the house, fasten the doors, and throw water upon the enemy from the garret windows. (150-51; emphasis added)

In one sentence, Irving manages to incorporate two hundred years' worth of prejudices many white Americans held against Indigenous people, namely that they are less than human, dress in an odd manner, are lazy unless trading in violence, and unruly drunkards who are a threat to (white) women and children. In short, "the enemy." Moreover, this example of Native Americans being conflated with the forest itself was crafted by one of the early nineteenth-century's most popular American writers in a text that "the public devoured" (Jones 95). Irving was writing about Indigenous people of New York's past but, in 1809, Indigenous people across North America were suffering due to policies and practices based, in part, on nefarious stereotypes.

Irving uses the phrase in his poetic efforts as well, and here pursues even darker paths, imagining the violent destruction of "son/s of the forest." In Irving's poem, "Lines Written at the Falls of the Passaick" (1814), "sons of the forest in terror" are retreating from "Pale savages" (488). The penultimate stanza of the poem encapsulates the fantasy of clearing Indigenous people from the land: "The care of the white man has lighten'd the shade, / And dispell'd the dark gloom from the thicket and glade." Another poem by Irving, "A True Story," (1818) pits two "sons of the forest" against one another in a revenge tale. A Native American, Rolder, kills the "brave chief," Malred, who killed Rolder's father in battle. Malred's followers capture Rolder and burn him at the stake, but not before murdering Rolder's "innocent Bride" in front of him (Brown 156). In similar fashion, a Native American character from James Kirk Paulding's 1823 novel, *Koningsmarke*, after having a tomahawk buried in the back of his head, flings himself into a river, honoring "the sons of the forest" code of not leaving "dead bodies in the hands of their enemies" (61). Other writers, attempting humor as Irving did, also could not resist the idea of the destruction of Indians: "Original Wit and Repartee" presents an anecdote about two brothers, "sons of the forest," who begin weeping at a fancy dinner after eating mustard for the first time. One brother pretends he is weeping because he's remembering his father who died in battle; the second brother pretends he is weeping because his sibling

did not die (254). In one short "joke," the unnamed writer portrays Native Americans as deceptive rubes who understand that their destiny is to be victims of destruction. Whether making feeble attempts at humor or casting Indigenous people into action-adventure roles, when Irving and his contemporaries write about "sons of the forest," they propagate the myth of the noble savage who is vanishing from North America.

While other usages of the phrase "of the forest" can be found in creative works during this time, one final example, Henry Whiting's poem *Ontwa, the Son of the Forest* (1822) is worth examining in some detail due to the popularity of the text. This first-person poem spans ninety pages, followed by forty pages of notes, by which the reader is informed they were "extracted from the private MSS. of Lewis Cass, Esq. Governor of the Territory of Michigan." The notes are also included to demonstrate that *Ontwa*'s author "received its impressions from realities rather than from imagination, [giving the poem] a character higher than that of a mere work of fiction" (11). The advertisement that precedes the poem itself purports the poem is a retelling of the Iroquois extermination of "a nation called the *Eries*," of which "no traces of them now remain" (iii). The text itself was reprinted and widely circulated for the remainder of the 1820s. In 1822 alone, mention of *Ontwa* appears in the *Catalogue of Books in the Washington Library* (July 20, 1822), *The North American Review* ("New Publications" 461), *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register* ("New Books" 451), and *The Christian Spectator*, ("List of New Publications"). An exhaustive fifteen-page review appeared in *The Literary and Scientific Repository, and Critical Review*, which shifts midway from a review of the poem to the writer's opinion on Native Americans in the nineteenth century—their struggles with alcoholism, their inability to assimilate into "civilization" and their futile attempts to disappear further into the "deeper forest," where eventually "the intruding strangers" will find and displace them (93).

In the text of the poem itself, Whiting does reinforce well-worn tropes about Native Americans: they have an almost supernatural connection to land; they engage in near constant warfare and revenge killings among rival tribes; and they are destined to vanish from North America, due in part to their proximity to whiteness. Part I of the poem finds the unnamed narrator on a brutal, but sublime, trip across the water where he first encounters the grief- stricken Ontwa, ". . . the Indian of the wild / Nature's forlorn and roving child" (8). Whiting's Indian is the stereotypical stoic, noble savage: "Fix'd like a statue on it seat," as though a figure "which savage chisel might have traced" (18–19). This noble posture, however, is quickly broken when

Ontwa sees the white narrator; at first Ontwa flashes a "fierce eye," but then, he takes the pose of the defeated Indian as he "sunk to earth in prostrate grief" (20). Ontwa's tale of how his people were defeated comprises the majority of the poem's ninety pages, and is bookended with laments. He begins his tale by introducing himself as the "Last of my tribe—a mighty race!," (21) who is impatient for the grave. He ends his story (and the poem itself) with:

> And here I stand—my wither'd grief,
> Hanging like dry and quivering leaf,
> That waits from heaven but faintest breath,
> To break its hold, and sink in death. (92)

Whiting employs an arboreal metaphor, comparing this one mighty Indian warrior to the last leaf on a tree that is now "wither'd," and on the verge of falling away to become compost on the forest floor. Whiting effectively delves into a pseudohistorical past of the 1650s to reinforce the myth that Indians in the nineteenth century are also vanishing without a trace.

Traveling through the North American forests

In addition to creative works circulating throughout North America, iterations of the phrase "of the forest" also begin to appear with great frequency in nonfiction pieces—travelogues, histories, and essays on general topics related to the United States—published in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Many of these texts build on the dehumanizing "of the forest" phrase by adding pejorative adjectives. References to "untutored sons of the forest" appear in texts such as the *History of the United States, from their First Settlement as English Colonies in 1607 to the Year 1808* (Ramsay 266) and Robert Sutcliff's *Travels in Some Parts of North America, in the Years 1804, 1805, & 1806* (203). Native Americans are also described as "untamed sons of the forest" (Prentiss 414), "half civilized sons of the forest" ("History of Northborough" 20), in an Andrew Jackson memoir, "ferocious sons of the forest" (Waldo 66), "tawny sons of the forest" (Wilson 222), "uncultivated sons of the forest" (Darby 62), "rude sons of the forest" ("Chronicle" 399), "poor ignorant sons of the forest" (Moore 77), "simple sons of the forest" (Johnson 513), "barbarous sons of the forest" (Doddridge 209), and "uncultured sons of the forest" ("Obituary" 47). The addition of an adjective to create an even more demeaning appellation suggests that "of the forest" was not strong enough to convey the inconvenience Indigenous people

presented to the westward expansion of white interests. Perhaps these writers of travelogues, histories, and anecdotes, published in periodicals from Boston and New York to Philadelphia and Kentucky believed "of the forest" was too pastoral. Readers needed to understand some forests had to be razed.

Of course, even pieces of nonfiction that did not add a demeaning flourish to the phrase contained enough contextual information in their discussions of Native Americans to drive home the point that the destruction and removal of Indians had always been desirable for whites in North America. In an essay titled "A Description of Nantucket" (1811), the writer contends that "unhappily for these sons of the forest," their island was small, and all that Native Americans knew, prior to the arrival of Europeans, was war with one another (Sansom 31). The essay continues with the claim that "nothing more is now remembered of the Aboriginals of Nantucket," except what early settler colonists recorded regarding King Philip's War. Looking back a hundred years at Mary Fowler's saga, another writer in the periodical, *Collections, Topographical, Historical, and Biographical,* contends that the Indians who took her captive were, in addition to being savages, also violent "sons of the forest" ("Captivity" 286). In the second volume of *Collections,* readers are informed that "sons of the forest" display "love and fidelity to their friends" as strongly as they show "treachery and cruelty to their enemies" ("Dr. John Lamson" 216). General James Wilkinson, in his memoir, recounting his battles during the American Revolutionary War, writes of the Oneida Indians: "These sons of the forest almost daily presented scalps and prisoners at head quarters, and their shocking death halloo resounded through our lines" (253). These examples reinforce hundreds of years of Euromericans' texts that depict Native Americans (even temporary allies) as a violent nuisance that required radical removals.

While many nonfiction periodicals contain the phrase "of the forest" in reference to Indigenous people, one final example is worth quoting at length as it encapsulates an imaginative conflating of Indigenous bodies with trees, and the perceived benefit of clearing the American landscape of literal and figurative wildness. An 1819 article titled, "Agricultural Societies" that appears in *Niles' Weekly Register* begins with a description of men at a cattle auction. The unnamed writer concludes his lengthy reverie by describing the men as they gathered afterwards to eat and drink:

> Men whose industry and perseverance had rescued a fair and fertile portion of the state from the condition of a dreary wilderness, where nothing was formerly heard but the howling of the wolf; where no moving creature

arrested the eye, except perchance *the bounding deer, the rude bear or ruthless savage* . . . not a few of those men before whose strokes the stoutest *sons of the forest* had fallen—men who had converted the gloomy woods into fields waving with luxuriant harvests; men who had changed the noisome swamp, emanating pestilence and death, into rich meadow clothed with thick and verdant herbage. These men were the instruments, in the hand of Providence, of effecting the new creation that has risen up to our view. (152; emphasis added)

The matter of fact grouping of the "ruthless savage" with wolves, deer, and bears in the "dreary wilderness" full of "pestilence and death" that was violently struck down and cleared (presumably with axes and firearms) to make way for a "new creation" serves as a succinct summary of the ways so many of the texts enumerated thus far viewed Euromericans' place (and duty) in North America. Couching the idea of the violent savage within the language of "sons of the forest" also suggests that white readers in the nineteenth century should view American Indians' removal in the same terms as they viewed the necessity of clearing trees to make way for farmland.

Mission fields and sons and daughters of the forest
While the phrase "of the forest" appears in periodicals with increasing frequency in the early decades of the nineteenth century, it is near ubiquitous in texts related to reports on Christian missions and other religious topics. As Julius H. Rubin explains: "No issue better captured the millennial sentimentality of American Protestantism during the first half of the nineteenth century than the cause of missions and the salvation of those perishing in heathen darkness" (2). The fervor for mission work among the "perishing heathen" is another variation of the vanishing Indian trope white writers had been developing throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And, as many producers of creative works attached pejorative adjectives to the "of the forest" phrase, numerous religious texts followed suit. Indians under the tutelage of Christian missions are described as "rude sons of the forest" ("Withington Station" 33), "degraded sons of the forest" ("Religious Intelligence" 229), "these benighted sons of the forest" ("On the Necessity" 367), "poor sons of the forest" ("The Great" 224), "untutored sons of the forest" ("Substance" 169 and "School at Mooshoolatubbee's" 87), "untaught sons of the forest" ("Mission" 115), "ignorant sons of the forest" ("Obstacles" 90), and too many "tawny" sons (and sometimes, with increasing frequency, daughters) of the forest to reference them all.

Even passages with less disparaging adjectives make clear the purported, hopeless dependence of Native Americans: they are described as "too long neglected sons of the forest" (Peck 186), who reap the "beneficial influence" of Christianity ("On the Necessity" 326), the benefits of people making clothes for them ("Journal of the Mission" 268), and the benefits of people providing education, "which [is] destined to crown their hitherto hapless offspring" ("Osages" 438), an education which "is the only hope to save the sons of the forest from oblivion" ("Extracts" 30). There is no doubt among these reports that this benevolence is God's will: "these sons and daughters of the forest, whom God, in his holy providence, hath placed under our care!" ("Communion" 111). The sentiment that the American Indian is helpless, of course, was popular among whites from the early colonial days. The official seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, commissioned in 1629 and used until the late 1600s, featured an image of a Native American saying, "come and help us" (*Public Records*). This reference is echoed over two hundred years later in documents such as a "Review of Evangelical Feeling" (published in 1821): "The tawny sons of the forest say 'Come over and help us,' and thus Bible societies are formed for the purpose of sending the scriptures into every place" (446). The "help us" phrase of the original Massachusetts Bay Colony seal is underscored by the image of a Native American with a bush covering the genitalia of an otherwise naked body. The idea that Native Americans were "of the forest" was engrained from the earliest encounters between Euromericans and Native Americans and reinforced in images and print for centuries.

One final theme runs through many of these references to the so-called children of the forest, namely that they can avoid destruction or removal if they are willing to transform themselves into something else. The hope of one writer is that regardless of what Christian religious institution Native Americans find themselves associated with, in the end, these "ferocious" people, who only thirsted for blood and worshipped the moon and stars, "are becoming the regenerated sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty" ("An Address" 222). After visiting the Oneida Indians at a Baptist mission, a visitor reported delight "to discover ardent desires in these sons of the forest, to forsake their savage customs, and to be led into the light and enjoyment of civilization" ("Hamilton" 230). Likewise, a visitor to the "School at Cornwall," expressed the hope that the experience "will form the untutored sons of the forest, or of distant islands to usefulness, and render them the benefactors of their tribe, or of their nation" (681). An agent for Indian Affairs after visiting the "Wyandott Mission," writes to a bishop about

the "sons of the forest": "When we reflect upon the state of the Wyandotts, compared with their former savage condition, we may surely exclaim, 'What hath God wrought,'" (Johnston 395). Likewise, a certain Reverend Mr. Angell opined "some of the sons and daughters of the forest have been induced to abandon their wickedness and return to the living God" ("Rev. Mr. Angell's" 207). Multiple visitors to missions and schools rejoice in the evidence they see of these transformations that manifest themselves when Native Americans are "appearing on public stage" professing their faith ("Foreign Mission School" 359) or "singing the songs of Zion" (Treat 383). Inherent in all these examples is the idea that Indigenous people, as they were encountered by settler colonists, possessed no useful purpose in life. Only through white, Christian religious training can the Indian be regenerated, civilized, and rendered as something useful. The alternative, of course, is that anything "of the forest" that cannot be transformed must be cleared for the useful and productive enterprises of white colonial settlers.

"The Great Means of Influence Over the Sons of the Forest"

While periodicals have the potential to shape readers' hearts and minds, and reports from missionary schools perpetuate stereotypes among a limited audience, the appearance of the phrase "of the forest" in government documents in the early 1800s signifies government sponsored codification of policies designed to treat the Indian body as a commodity that will either become something useful (a white, Christian farmer) or something to be forcefully removed like trees cleared from the land. Several "of the forest" references in government documents follow the path of religious documents discussed above, in that the writers adopt a paternalistic tone in expressing a desire that Native Americans will be transformed from their current state into something deemed useful in white society. For example, a Mr. Johnson from Kentucky addressed Congress in 1820, arguing against "a system of annihilation" towards Native Americans in the west, opting instead to continue pursuing "trade and intercourse" with Indians as this is "the great means of influence over the sons of the forest" ("Indian Affairs" 83). In a letter dated 15 August 1821, a George F. Clarke expresses the hope that the "poor children of nature" in Florida will benefit from the benevolence of the United States government if "they will participate in the endeavor towards civilization, already so beneficial to the more western sons of the forest" (qtd. in *American State* 415). In similar fashion, in an "Extract of a letter from the Rev. Abraham Steiner to the Secretary of War," dated February 1822, Steiner extols both the benefits of civilizing Indigenous people, and makes their so-

called natural state explicit: "There is now a fair prospect of success . . . when these sons of the forest will be useful citizens. Why let not the plan be fully tested? And why destroy the fruit of the plant before it has come to maturity, or nip it in the bud?" (qtd. in *United States Congressional* 11). In the 1827 *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Representatives*, a writer arguing in favor of removal policies hopes that such policies "should meet universal advocacy, tending as [they do] to the preservation and reform of the 'sons of the forest,' and to the growth, prosperity, and safety, of the Union" ("Exposition" 812). Throughout many government documents in the early part of the nineteenth century, the sentiment is consistent—Indigenous people are inherently dangerous, but they can be transformed into useful citizens under the careful watch and tutelage of the United States government.

Of course, the converse of hope for Native Americans' transformation is the perceived necessity of the destruction of those who cannot be changed. Other government documents are more direct in their call for the destruction of "sons of the forest." In an 1812 "Petition to Congress by the Territorial Legislature," there is a call for the "subjugation or total extermination of those faithless Sons of the forest" (271). Similar sentiment is found in an 1818 committee report on Indian affairs: "In the present state of our country, one of two things seems to be necessary, either that those sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated; humanity would rejoice at the former, but shrink with horror from the latter" ("Report" 3). In the same "Exposition" referenced above, the writer includes an ominous image: "We rejoice that we are enabled to diminish [the Creek Nation] so much: for humanity would be grieved to see *many* of the sons of the forest 'lying down at the corners of the fences manuring the ground with their bodies,' while thousands of the same race were exulting in their prosperity" (810). Unclear in this passage is what would cause Native Americans to find themselves "manuring the ground"; however, the violence and the expendability of human life this image evokes is unmistakable. This passage also reveals a horror from which all humanity should shrink: inherent in all of these examples—whether from creative works or official documents—the metaphor comparing human bodies with trees contains no positive connotations for Indigenous people. In order for a tree to become a useful commodity, it must undergo the violence of the saw, and once it is cut down, if it is not turned into a saleable commodity, it lies dead "manuring the ground." Either way, the essence of the original son (or daughter) of the forest is destroyed. And, for many nineteenth-century Native Americans, an

Indian who is transformed into a white, Christian capitalist is no longer an Indian.

William Apess and Andrew Jackson: sons of the forest

On 6 December 1830, Andrew Jackson delivered his "Second Annual Message" in which he reflects on, among other accomplishments, his policies related to Native Americans. In the process, he asks a rhetorical question that conflates Native Americans with forests:

> What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion? (1084).

For Jackson, and presumably other landed, white Christian males, the question had been settled: it was common sense to prefer urban spaces where capitalism thrived to tangled forests scattered with Indigenous people. The sentiment is even more chilling because Jackson was not a poet, a Reverend, or an Indian Agent; he was the President of the United States able to wield, with full force, the sword and saw to remove any sons and daughters of the forest from his path. The commodification of the Indian body in the white, American imagination, economic structures, and political record was set. As a result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, thousands of Indigenous people would suffer and die along what became known as the Trail of Tears.

However, Native Americans then and now, still offer resistance both in actions and in print. According to his 1829 autobiography, after William Apess leaves the armed services, he returns to Canada where, one afternoon, wandering through the forest, he describes the natural beauty of his surroundings, especially an enchanting pond, and then in rhapsodic tones writes, "I then turned my eyes to the forest and it appeared alive with its sons and daughters" (70). The phrase, as seen in many of the examples reviewed in this study could as easily be describing trees as human beings. However, the next sentence reads: "There appeared to be the utmost order and regularity in their encampment and they held all things in common" (70). Apess's brief description of an Indian camp as well run, along with emphasizing the lack of ownership of belongings, offers both an argument that Indigenous people do not need the civilizing influence of white people,

nor the destructive effects of capitalism. Since at the time he resides in Canada, one might argue that this description is in opposition to life for Native people living within the United States. However, he makes no reference to nations in the paragraph which follows; instead, he offers a blistering rebuke of the effect white people, in general, have had on Indigenous populations: "How much better would it be if the whites would act like civilized people" (70). Throughout his autobiography, Apess speaks both as one who relates deeply to the natural world, especially the forest, and as one who is able to operate within the realm of whites' so-called civilized spaces.

Apess also recounts in *A Son of the Forest* how he resisted violence intended to silence him by practicing nonviolence. While he preached one of his first sermons, an audience member threw a hat at Apess, which emboldened other people to pelt Apess with sticks. In the midst of this violence, Apess continued to preach, and "the sons of night were confused" (94). In one succinct phrase, Apess transfers the negative connotations associated with being "a son of the forest" onto his presumably white audience whose violence reveals them to be "sons of night." Apess then tells his readers: "Now I can truly say that a native of the forest cannot be found in all our country, who would not blush at the bad conduct of many who enjoy in a pre-eminent degree the light of the gospel" (94). In other words, Apess suggests that Native Americans seem to understand love better than the whites who first brought Christianity into the forest. Writing about this scene, Drew Lopenzina ties Apess's clever wordplay to the aforementioned "come and help us" motto emblazoned on the Massachusetts Bay Colony seal. He writes: "One wonders if the readers of his autobiography picked up on the sly reversal, in which it was the Native son of the forest now 'come over to help' the white settlers lift themselves out of their benighted state" (156). Much of the work Apess does in *A Son of the Forest* is indeed a sly reversal: meeting violence with nonviolence, demonstrating that the savage is civilized, and that Native Americans have something important to teach Christians about their faith.

Apess continued to resist Euromericans' stereotypical views of Native Americans beyond 1829 and the pages of *A Son of the Forest.* In 1833, he published a lengthy pamphlet, *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe,* along with *A Looking-Glass for the White Man*, which signaled Euromericans needed to rethink their false narratives of Native Americans and instead, listen to Indigenous peoples' voices. In *The Experiences*, Apess shares more details about his childhood and the people, especially women,

who shaped his life. These portraits also serve as counternarratives to negative experiences he had with white, Christian missionaries. Several years later, Apess publishes another pamphlet, *The Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts, Relative to the Marshpee Tribe* that speaks directly to his work of resistance that extends beyond writing sermons and books. In 1833, Apess assisted Mashpee Wampanoag Indians in their land usage dispute with whites in what became known as the Mashpee Revolt. Most relative to this discussion is that whites were violating a treaty in which they were forbidden to fell or remove trees from Mashpee land.

In his final, full-length publication, *A Eulogy on King Philip*, Apess reclaims an historical figure whose tale of defeat had been used by Euromericans to demonstrate both their superiority over Native Americans, and to reinforce the vanishing Indian trope. Apess had, in fact, in a second edition of *A Son of the Forest,* claimed that he was a direct descendant of King Philip. The veracity of this claim is less important than the symbolic move Apess performs: one hundred and sixty years after Philip's death, Apess reminds his audience that powerful sons of the forest have not disappeared. One stands before them, speaking and writing against white Euromerican triumphalism. Apess, the self-proclaimed "son of the forest," through his words and his actions, worked to remind white, English-speaking audiences that the "trees" not only can talk, but also have something important to say about their place in North America, both in its forests and in its cities.

The forest has long held a place of fascination and suspicion in the white imagination. From an ancient Biblical text with a woodsman slaying a giant, to British Isles publications in which writers marveled at the wonder of large trees, to more nefarious descriptions of Indigenous people residing in savage woods, the phrase "of the forest" has been disseminated throughout print culture for centuries. While this study focused primarily on how the phrase appeared with increasing frequency in American periodicals in the decades prior to the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, additional investigation of how the phrase was used in print throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century is warranted. As Euromericans continued to move westward across the United States throughout the century, felling trees and displacing Indian bodies, anything "of the forest" was often deemed expendable, a commodity to be monetized or destroyed. Continued recovery and study of Indigenous texts is also necessary in order to amplify those voices above the noise of destructive narratives.

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Notes

1 Throughout this essay, I use "Apess" rather than "Apes" (the spelling his father used), following the lead of Apess scholars such as Philip F. Gura, Drew Lopenzina, and others. Apess himself "added the 's' to his name sometime in the mid-1830s" (Gura 143).

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Unreconciled: Indigenous Presents/Presence & Settler Memory

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ABSTRACT

This essay explores race, racism, history, and popular memory from the vantage point of the Indigenous world, and, specifically, Native peoples colonized within the present-day United States. Over the course of the past decade, Indigenous movements for land and life have shed light on the incomplete nature of conquest in Native North America and the instability of settler colonialism. "Unreconciled" explores the ongoing tension between Indigenous presence and the settler colonial "logic of elimination" in the context of land acknowledgments, commemoration, popular culture, and federal policy. We show that, despite changes with regard to the ways in which non-Indigenous people in settler states collectively remember or imagine community, elements of settler memory continue to reside within and limit public conversations on race, remembrance, reconciliation, and reparation. (DMC and MLC)

KEYWORDS: Indigenous, land acknowledgments, memory, race, reconciliation, settler colonialism

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Introduction

This essay explores race, racism, history, and popular memory from the vantage point of the Indigenous world and, specifically, Native peoples colonized within the present-day United States. Over the course of the past decade, Indigenous movements for land and life have demonstrated not only the incomplete nature of conquest in Native North America, but also the impermanence and instability of settler colonialism and settler states like the United States and Canada (Wolfe; "The Red Nation").[1] Among the most transformative have been Idle No More, which emerged among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada in 2012; #NODAPL, which peaked in 2016 on Lakota treaty lands just above the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota; and LANDBACK, the manifesto for which demands "the reclamation of everything stolen from the Original Peoples," including "land, language, ceremony, food, education, housing, healthcare, governance, medicines, and kinship."[2] These movements and others like them confront specific issues and seek specific solutions. But they also raise global questions about what obligations settler states have to the Indigenous populations that have survived centuries of invasion and occupation—to the peoples who,

taking inspiration from anthropologist Patrick Wolfe's definition of settler colonialism, have refused to be "destroyed" and "replaced" or yield to the "logic of elimination" (388) (see Estes; Carey and Silverstein; Kauanui; Simpson).

In the wake of political mobilizations like these, transformations within the academe and dramatic changes in the realms of social media and popular culture, public discourse has clearly shifted—though we do not want to overstate by how much—from being defined by the so-called Indian Problem to being defined by what might be termed the Settler Problem. By this we mean that the presumed inevitability of Indigenous elimination, erasure, and disappearance that has informed so much policy, law-making, and indeed popular memory, seems finally to be giving way to analyses that demonstrate how those very policies, laws, and popular representations of Indigenous people intended to ensure Indigenous elimination, erasure, and disappearance. This, in turn, has contributed to demands not only for settler acknowledgment, but also for demonstrations of accountability. And in the light of Indigenous survival, persistence, and resurgence, questions of history and memory have been turning increasingly toward what we are calling Indigenous presents/presence and to matters of reconciliation and reparation.[3] While we explore these shifts in the contexts of land acknowledgments, commemoration, popular culture, and federal policy, ours is not a celebratory narrative. Despite changes with regard to the ways in which non-Indigenous people in settler states collectively remember or imagine community (Anderson), we show how elements of settler memory continue to reside within and limit public conversations on race, remembrance, reconciliation, and reparation (Bruyneel, *Settler Memory* 9).[4]

Land acknowledgments

Land acknowledgments have in recent years become increasingly prevalent in the United States and Canada. But what are they exactly? The U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC), a non-governmental organization with a knack for branding, defines acknowledgment as "a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase [I]ndigenous people's history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth" ("Honor Native Land"). By adding the word "land" to acknowledgment, we gain a place-based call for the remembrance of both the dispossession and enduring presents/presence of Indigenous peoples, places, and spaces (see Bruyneel, *The Third Space*).

If this is what land acknowledgments are and what they remember, one must also ask what they require. Here USDAC, utilizing the hashtag #HonorNativeLand, adds: "Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation" ("Honor Native Land").

Just as land acknowledgments have become increasingly prevalent, they have also become ever more problematic. Indeed, the preceding quote identifies areas around which this is especially true. What, for instance, do authentic relationships and informed actions look like in concrete terms? How are equitable relationships made tangible? And by what measure—and according to whose definition—is reconciliation attained? Who, in other words, decides? These are not merely troubling questions. They are interrogations into power and its limits—interrogations that drive to the very heart of whether land acknowledgments are meant to reckon with or simply reinforce settler colonialism, settler states, and settler institutions (see Tuck and Yang; M. C. Lambert, Sobo, and V. L. Lambert).

The ambiguities, complexities, and controversies surrounding questions like these can be seen in stark relief on college and university campuses. A brilliant example of investigative journalism published in *High Country News* by Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone in the spring of 2020 offers insights into why, even as it suggests the enormity of both the issue and what is at stake. This piece, accompanied by a wide-ranging companion website, shows how in the United States the Morrill, or Land-Grant College, Act of 1862 provided a mechanism for the federal government to redistribute expropriated Native lands to seed endowments for both public and private universities. Some 10.7 million acres of land worth more than 500 million in today's US dollars, were made available to fifty-two of these so-called Land-Grant Universities. Included in this figure are some 79,461 individual parcels of Native land across the trans-Mississippi West and concentrated in the Midwest, Great Lakes, and California. Noting the violence-backed and at times fraudulent means through which these lands were taken, the authors renamed the institutions that have benefited and continue to benefit from the Morrill Act of 1862 "Land-Grab Universities."[5]

The story, however, goes well beyond the Morrill Act. Indeed, in a September 2020 piece published in the online journal *Scalawag,* two doctoral candidates in the Department of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill demonstrated how their university profited from the taking of

Cherokee and Chickasaw land during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The money established professorships, renovated buildings, and made it possible for the first public university in the United States to weather the economic tumult of the early 1800s, at times providing nearly its entire operating budget. UNC, however, was not alone. The authors show that it was but one among many Southern institutions that benefited and continue to benefit similarly—and that does not account for subsurface mineral rights on Native lands, as is the case in Oklahoma. In the Northeast, still other nations, including those comprising the Haudenosaunee, endured land grabs long before the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 (see Kelley and Wright; Mt. Pleasant and Kantrowitz).

Revelations like these have forced to the surface conversations about what institutions of higher education owe to the Indigenous communities that have persisted in the wake of this theft. Some public and private universities have adopted land acknowledgments as vehicles for taking accountability—that is, as a means to an end. State universities in California, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Arizona, and Montana, for instance, have put into place either full or partial tuition waivers for Native students. Still other universities have engaged in cluster hires, or the simultaneous hiring of several scholars, in American Indian and Indigenous Studies to begin or bolster undergraduate and graduate curricula, invested in the creation of new centers to promote engaged and collaborative research with Indigenous communities, and committed funding to programming to meet the needs of Native students, faculty, and staff (see Weissman; Carrillo; Baumhardt; American Indian Tuition Waiver, Montana University System; "New Indigenous Initiatives Ushered in at Princeton"; Center for Native American and Indigenous Research, n.d.). Others, however, have taken a different and deeply troubling tack by adopting land acknowledgments as ends unto themselves—that is, as symbolic acts that allow them to elide questions of accountability (see Sobo, M. C. Lambert, and V. L. Lambert; Wood).

Two instructive examples can be found at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.[6] What is remarkable about Miami's land acknowledgment is that, rather than paving the way for the building of authentic relationships and the taking of informed actions, it flowed from them. Indeed, Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma forged a relationship in the 1970s and have been engaged in a tribally-directed "partnership in learning" since 2001. This has led to scholarships for Miami students, an innovative language revitalization project spearheaded by the Myaamia Center, a MacArthur Foundation genius grant

for its director Daryl Baldwin, and most recently a $2 million gift from the nation to the university to support ongoing and future initiatives.[7] In stark contrast, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has yet to adopt a land acknowledgment, despite being the flagship university in a state with the second largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River, including one federally-recognized and seven state-recognized tribal communities. For years, UNC repeatedly relied upon symbolic action and failed to make meaningful investments in Native faculty, students, staff, or communities (see Chavis; Killian; Schlemmer, "Time to Go"; Baiocchi; Schlemmer, "UNC's Native American Students"). Because of this, there is concern that the long-promised land acknowledgment may turn out to be little more than window dressing—a symbolic act that serves not as a means of building authentic relationships and the taking of informed actions but a reason not to do more. In such a context, acknowledging Indigenous presents/presence disavows an obligation to do anything about it and remembering becomes a form of forgetting (Bruyneel, *Settler Memory*; Anderson).[8]

Public commemoration and commemorative sites

The increasing popularity of land acknowledgments—and faith in their ability to promote reconciliation—has occurred amidst an ongoing national reckoning with public commemorations and commemorative sites. In the United States, holidays such as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving have long been pressed into the service of "America's Master Narrative," or the story of how civilization purportedly triumphed over savagery (Calloway 2–4; Dunbar-Ortiz 1–4). Especially since the Columbian Quincentenary in 1992, inroads have been made to re-remember Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples Day—and to center not the man who made a navigational error but the Indigenous peoples who have found ways to survive the cataclysmic consequences of it. Meanwhile, activism around Thanksgiving has endeavored to re-remember the early contact narrative in New England not as a moment in which Native people became willing accomplices in their own colonization, but as an opportunity for critical reflection, introspection, and mourning. This is perhaps best exemplified in activists' replacement of "Thanksgiving" with "ThanksTaking," a term meant to disabuse America of its purportedly original and enduring benevolence (Deloria).

In recent years, the monuments associated with colonizers and celebratory colonial commemorations have come under intense assault, as well. In New Mexico, for instance, Indigenous activists and their allies called

for and secured (sometimes on their own and at others through government channels) the removal of monuments dedicated to Juan de Oñate, a conquistador who inaugurated the conquest of Pueblo homelands in the late sixteenth century. Despite the ruthless violence he inflicted upon Pueblo communities—so extreme he was tried and convicted by the Spanish Crown—Oñate has long been revered as a local patriarch and is immortalized in statues across the state. In 1998, on the 400th anniversary of his arrival, activists removed the foot of one such statue in condemnation rather than commemoration of Oñate's campaign, which entailed killing hundreds of Pueblo men, women, and children, and severing the foot of many male Pueblo survivors (see Alcorn). More recently, in June 2022, advocates for the removal of an Oñate monument in Alcalde, New Mexico, targeted public memory explicitly by carrying signs that read: "This is not recognizing history. This is choosing the part of history to MONUMENT." The role of race and charge of racism, though unstated, is eminently clear. To Pueblo people, Oñate was not a hero but a harbinger of death (Balmer).

In similar fashion, some of the most influential museums have been called out for their problematic representations of Indigenous peoples and pasts. For example, in 2022 the Museum of Natural History in New York removed a statue featuring U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. This monument came under fire for its depiction of Roosevelt purportedly leading Native and African American people out of barbarism's darkness and into civilization's light—a classic example of the so-called "White Man's Burden" that played such a vital role in justifying settler colonialism and white supremacy. The Museum of Natural History has, in addition, begun to revise their salvage-anthropology-inspired exhibits, which present Indians as inseparable from other aspects of the natural world (Pogrebin).

Theodore Roosevelt casts a long shadow figuratively and literally over the intersection between Indigenous erasure, public commemoration, and commemorative sites. Indeed, he is seen as a founder of the national park system in the United States, and his is one of four presidential likenesses carved out of a place sacred to and stolen from the Lakota. In virtually every instance, as Anishinaabe writer David Treuer has shown, Native peoples were forced out of or prevented access to their homelands to establish the park system. In the process, Paha Sapa or "The Heart of Everything That Is" became the "Black Hills" and "Tunkasila Sakpe Paha" (Six Grandfathers Mountain) became "Mount Rushmore." Testifying to

its ongoing centrality to the settler imaginary, this site was specifically chosen by President Donald Trump to celebrate the Fourth of July in 2020, a moment he seized upon once more to "Make America Great Again," a settler fantasy if ever there was one (see Treuer, "Return"; Bubacz and Niland).[9]

At Mount Rushmore, Trump did not succeed in fortifying a celebratory narrative around Indigenous erasure. Instead, quite the opposite has been happening. Over the past several years momentum has been building for the return of Indigenous stewardship (and access to) national parks, Mount Rushmore among them. As Treuer notes, this would in some sense "return" 85 million acres of land to Native people (or at least a consortium of Native people), an amount approaching the acreage lost through the policy of allotment from the 1880s to the 1930s. On a similar front, in 2021 Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), the first Native person to become the Secretary of the Interior, announced the formation of the Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force to compile, evaluate, and recommend the renaming of public places that include "squaw," a derogatory term used in reference to American Indian women (see Treuer, "Return"; Constantino; Interior Department Press Release 22 Feb. 2022).

While acts of re-commemoration and of renaming commemorative sites matter, one must also consider the limits of and ongoing resistance to them—both of which speak to the persistence of settler memory. Consider, for instance, that despite proving more than forty years ago that the Black Hills were stolen, the United States refuses to return the land. Hence the need for movements like LANDBACK (see Ostler). Or consider that in February 2022, Haaland's task force identified 660 instances of the word "squaw" being used—on "federal land units" alone. That is an astounding number of overtly racist and misogynistic inscriptions of "American" places. Yet this inventory and renaming is directed at only one derogatory term and only on federal—not state or private—land (Constantino). Finally, even as activists succeeded in removing the statue of Oñate from Alcalde, his name and appearance remain ubiquitous, emblazoned across the signs and sweatshirts for local elementary and high schools. The image that comes to mind, then, is that of a flare fired into the night. While, for a moment, it may appear to illuminate the sky brilliantly, its reach is limited, and the light is quickly engulfed by the vast darkness around it. This example might be taken as a metaphor for just how expansive the settler re-inscription of Indigenous land has been and what a colossal undertaking it will be to effect change.

From popular culture to federal policy

As a final example of the commingling of race, racism, history, and popular memory in Native America, we turn briefly to the entanglement of popular culture and federal policy. We have seen that what we call things— what we name them—matters because these names serve as mnemonic devices for histories, memories, and things taken for granted as true—and that these so-called truths carry profound everyday consequences for real people. Within the realm of popular culture, this is perhaps most evident in the controversies surrounding sports team names and mascots. Derogatory descriptions and representations of Native people have long done the work of perpetuating erasure and invisibility. A cartoon by Lalo Alcaraz drawn in 2002 conveys the irony of settlers appropriating racist depictions of Indians only to argue that they are "honoring" their "noble past." Alcaraz depicts a Native man in t-shirt and long pants staring in disbelief at an obese and shirtless white fanatic decked out in faux headdress and warpaint. Across the latter's massive girth read the words "Go Savages" and "Kill Them." With a beer in one hand and team pendant in the other, the "mascot-lovin'" non-Indian explains, "But I'm HONORING you, dude!" (Alcaraz). The political scientist Kevin Bruyneel refers to the phenomenon represented in this cartoon as "necro-Indigeneity," or the act of acknowledging Native people in ways that consign Indigeneity to the past and renders Indigenous presents/presence impossible (*Settler Memory* 22).

Necro-Indigeneity can also be found in the realm of federal policy, as we can see in the context of federal off-reservation boarding schools and the overlapping movements targeting Violence Against Women and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.[10] For years in Canada, and as of May 2022 in the United States, the treatment of children at assimilationist off-reservation boarding schools has been the focal point for reckoning with the past to advance truth and reconciliation. Recent revelations involving hundreds of unmarked graves at these schools have brought the issue to the fore once again. And following a new investigative report issued by the Federal Indian Boarding Schools Initiative, it seems likely that the United States will establish something similar to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Interior Department Press Release 22 June 2021; Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, n.d.).

Recent attempts to confront Violence Against Women and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People serve as another example of necro-Indigeneity. Although Congress has taken legislative action and, in 2021, Secretary Haaland created the Missing & Murdered Unit within the Bureau

of Indian Affairs to "coordinate interagency collaboration and strengthen existing law enforcement resources," their efficacy remains to be seen. As the Muscogee Creek scholar Sara Deer has shown in *The Beginning and End of Rape* (2015), efforts to address violence against Native women can be stymied by persistent historical and structural problems. Violence Against Women and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People may be considered "contemporary" issues in the sense that they are only now garnering widespread attention. But, as Deer demonstrates, sexual violence directed toward Indigenous women is inseparable from the inherent violence of settler colonialism. It is, in other words, an inevitable and ongoing product of settler state formation. The irrational fear that settlers have of the Indigenous exercise of power—and, in this instance, tribal jurisdiction over crimes committed against Native women by non-Native men—only makes matters worse (see Interior Department Press Release 1 April 2021; Deer).

If these efforts seek to "make right past wrongs," the way in which they do so may actually perpetuate invisibility, vulnerability, and ongoing violence. This raises a vexing question: if the settler state is the product of racism and violence, can the settler state remedy them? In a review of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's efficacy, political scientist Matt James responds that it is unlikely. The level of self-examination required by a settler state to comprehend its accountability—and exact a commensurate degree of justice—poses an existential threat (31–32). Taking inspiration from the writer Audre Lorde's classic formulation, the question more accurately may not be whether the master's tools can dismantle the master's house, but whether the master is willing to reveal and name his tools at all (Lorde 19).

Here we would like to pivot back to popular culture, for it never fails to remind us of the dangerous nexus settler colonialism has created between history and memory, recognition and appropriation, erasure, and violence. The outfit donned by Victoria's Secret model Karlie Kloss in 2012 suggests the danger of settler forms of acknowledging and rendering Indigeneity visible. This particular event featured lingerie emblematic of each month of the year—and Kloss's was meant to symbolize, you guessed it, November. Adorned by a trailing headdress and with thick strands of turquoise hanging from her chest, waist, and wrist, Kloss's revealing ensemble clearly was meant to evoke "memories" of Thanksgiving and to "honor"—in a fashion that complements the mascot-loving subject of Alcaraz's cartoon—November as National Native American Heritage Month.

The absurdity of racist mascotry and hypersexualization as settler forms of honoring, in turn, reminded us of Luiseño artist Fritz Scholder's painting *Indian No. 16* (1967), an abstract piece that features a generic Indian on horseback with a question mark above his head. We read it as provoking the question: Is this what you think an Indian is? Team names, mascots, and super models playing Indian beg the same question. But in light of the history that produced the unmarked graves at off-reservation boarding schools and chronic sexual violence against Indigenous women (and that's only the beginning), Scholder's question mark might also ask: How can we expect to attain truth, much less reconciliation and reparation, in the world settler colonialism has created? (see Sims). In short, if these disturbing representations are what acknowledgment and visibility mean in settler societies, we are not sure we can. Settler colonialism seems incapable of remaking the world it created.

(Un)reconciled and (ir)reparable

To the extent that reconciliation, reparation, and remembrance purport to bring closure, they may not be "solutions" to the Settler Problem. Instead, as Bruyneel reminds us, they may serve as disavowals of accountability for the past and ongoing presents/presence of Indigenous people, peoplehood, and polities (*Settler Memory* 3). In our minds, then, it is imperative to work toward reconciling that which is recognized as irreconcilable; to work toward repairing that which is recognized as irreparable; and to work on remembering a past that is recognized as not only not over, but also inseparable from the present.

It is also vital for Indigenous experiences with settler colonialism to be central to discussions of race, racism, and popular memory, because they highlight what we consider to be the limitations of the way in which many in the United States think and speak about diversity, equity, and inclusion or DEI. An understanding of what makes Indigeneity and Indigenous experiences distinct pushes against the tendency of DEI to collapse difference into its own manifestation of sameness.[11] In seeking to ensure that all members of an organization, workplace, or university are treated equally, DEI efforts unwittingly revive the romanticized visions of a multicultural America popular in the 1990s and, even earlier, the logic underlying the federal Indian policies of assimilation and termination—visions that sought, according to Treuer, to "absorb Indians into the mainstream, whether they wanted to be absorbed or not" (*Heartbeat* 254). An enlightened version of these same assimilationist visions occurs today when sovereignty and

Indigeneity are overlooked—or outright ignored—in conferences, classrooms, the halls of Congress, and in the realm of popular culture in the name of being "inclusive" and treating "everyone equally."[12] It follows that reconciliation, reparation, and remembrance—like diversity, equity, and inclusion—in the context of Indigenous-settler relations must mean something different than they do in others. Any hope for justice must begin with an acknowledgment of this distinction and of the ongoing presents/presence of Indigenous people and polities within settler societies that now, more than ever, have been shown to be not only incomplete in their formation but unstable and, indeed, impermanent.[13]

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Notes

1 With regard to impermanence and instability, we are reminded of the anthropologist Patrick Wolfe's observation that settler colonialism is "a structure not an event" (388) and is, by extension, inherently unstable and in need of constant maintenance. Note, too, ongoing conversations in the media and among scholars regarding the question of whether the United States is a failed state and the real and imminent threats that nations dependent on the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources have brought upon themselves.

2 For more information on Idle No More, #NODAPL, and LANDBACK, see https://idlenomore.ca/; https://www.nodaplarchive.com/; and https://landback.org/.

3 The coupling of the words "presents" and "presence" in the title and throughout the essay is crucially important. The word "presents" underscores ongoing assertions of not just one Indigenous present but many and diverse Indigenous presents. This directly contradicts the settler fantasy of a homogenous "Indian" consigned irrevocably to "the past." The word "presence" similarly refuses the settler fantasy of Indigenous erasure and, by extension, the incompleteness of conquest. While we intend readers to enunciate the

phonetic sound \ ˈpre-zᵊn(t)s \ only once, the visual coupling captures both the simultaneity and distinctiveness of these words as active assertions of enduring peoplehood.

4 The definition of race and what one imagines it to be is itself of vital importance given the implications it carries for defining such critical concepts as diversity, equity, inclusion, and, indeed, justice, as we will address at the end of this essay.

5 This article and website inspired an important special edition of *Native American and Indigenous Studies* (Spring 2021) that speaks to their significance and extends their reach.

6 These two examples were chosen in part because of the authors' familiarity with the institutions. Cobb taught at Miami University from 2004 to 2010. Cobb and Carmi are both presently at UNC at Chapel Hill.

7 For more on the Myaamia Center and the Partnership in Learning, see https://miamioh.edu/myaamia-center/, accessed on 2 Sept. 2022. On Baldwin, see Daryl Baldwin, "Linguist and Cultural Preservationist," MacArthur Foundation, https://www.macfound.org/fellows/class-of-2016/daryl-baldwin#searchresults, accessed on 3 Sept. 2022.

8 Although as of this writing UNC has yet to adopt its long-promised land acknowledgment, it has begun to make meaningful investments in American Indian and Indigenous Studies and Indigenous presents/presence on campus. This includes the dedication of the Henry Owl Building, a cluster hire in Global Indigeneity and American Indian Studies during the 2022–2023 academic year, and the formation of a working group to articulate a long-term vision for Global Indigeneity and American Indian Studies at UNC.

9 For the full transcript of Trump's speech, see https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-south-dakotas-2020-mount-rushmore-fireworks-celebration-keystone-south-dakota/.

10 The latter has been shifting from Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women to Missing and Murdered Indigenous People to be more representative of the scope of the crisis. We acknowledge that here, but also keep in mind the particular severity and prevalence of the violence directed toward Indigenous women.

11 For a helpful introduction into how we do and do not talk about critical concepts like race, racialization, biopolitics, Indian, Indigeneity, and Indigenous in the United States, see *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* edited by Burgett and Hendler (2020) and its companion website at https://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/.

12 According to the logic of this period, the racial and political category "Indian" prevented Native people from becoming full participants in American society and, thereby, experiencing all its attending "benefits." To promote the federal government's vision of equal opportunity, sovereignty was steadily eroded in courts and in Congress.

13 For a thoughtful analysis of the possibilities and limitations of reconciliation through settler-state apologies, see "Settler-State Apologies to Indigenous Peoples: A Normative Framework and Comparative Assessment" by Sheryl Lightfoot (2015).

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Of Race and Rivers
Dave Tell

_____***HJEAS***

ABSTRACT
This essay tells the story of the nine-year transformation of Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, USA (2005–2014) from a memory desert to the site of the single greatest concentration of Emmett Till memorials anywhere in the world. As I do so, I stress the influence of topography and, above all, the north-to-south path of the Tallahatchie River through the heart of the county. I argue that the hills, rivers, floods, and soils of the county are the very mechanisms through which race, politics, and commemoration mingled and, by mingling, produced the commemorative landscape as we know it. The river and the soils around it were the transfer point through which questions of race came to influence commemoration and by which practices of commemoration evolved in ways that served the racial interests of the planter class. (DT)

KEYWORDS: Emmett Till, race, memory, ecology, rivers, soil

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The Mississippi Delta is what environmental historian Mikko Saikku has called an "hydraulic regime"—a bioregion in which both cultural and economic power are tied to the management of water (96). Given the centrality of water and its administration to the natural, cultural, and political life of the Delta, it should not be surprising that the racial politics of the region also bear the imprint of its rivers. Although it may seem unlikely, this essay suggests that the course of the Tallahatchie River, its penchant for flooding, and its impact on the surrounding soils have provoked and altered the memory of the region's most infamous racial tragedy, the murder of Emmett Till.

As summer dawned in 1955, Emmett Till was a 14-year old African American boy living in Chicago. In August of that year, he took a vacation to the Mississippi Delta to visit his cousins. Shortly after arriving, he whistled at a white storekeeper named Caroline Bryant and was subsequently kidnapped, tortured, shot, and thrown in the Tallahatchie River. Although his murderers were acquitted by an all-white jury, the story of the murder played an outsized—and underappreciated—role in launching the civil rights movement. David Jackson's iconic photograph of the beaten body of Emmett Till galvanized an entire generation of activists. Mississippi activist

Amzie Moore claimed that the photograph made Till's murder the "best advertised lynching I had ever heard" (qtd. in Wood 266). From John Lewis, to Martin Luther King, to the first cohort of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—the Till murder (and the photograph of the body) gave the racial agitation of the movement a new urgency.

Three weeks after the trial, activist Theodore Roosevelt Mason (T. R. M.) Howard left his home in the Delta, drove to Alabama, and told Till's story from the pulpit of Martin Luther King's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. King never forgot the story. Eight years later in Detroit, King inserted Till into the first version of his "I Have a Dream" speech. "I have a dream this afternoon," he proclaimed, that there will be a day that we no longer face the atrocities that Emmett Till had to face."[1]

As King put Till's story at the heart of his dream, it felt like Till's story would never lose its place in the movement. But it was not to be. King removed Till from the "dream" speech that he gave at the March on Washington—the version of the speech that became famous. At the same moment that the "I have a dream" speech became the defining text of the American civil rights movement, Till lost his place in that document. While I do not imagine that King cut Till intentionally, the deletion of Till from the dream speech is a good way to remember a basic fact: Till's story has never been well told. In Mississippi, the state waited forty-nine years and eleven months before dropping a single dollar on Till commemoration. When commemoration did come in the early twenty-first century, it was immediately plagued by vandalism (Tell, "Put the Vandalized").

As I document in my book *Remembering Emmett Till* (2019), the story of the on-again, off-again attempts to remember the murder has been subject to unending controversy (5–32). Fueled by intellectual debates, patronage, nepotism, racism, and—above all—the simple fact that stories of Till's murder are one of the few Delta commodities not controlled by agribusiness, even the most basic elements of the story have remained unsettled. Perhaps the most surprising actor in the dramatic life of the Till story, however, is the Tallahatchie River itself.

In what follows, I suggest that the river and all it entails—floods, sediment-enriched soils, flattened land, and bridges—have been the mechanisms, or transfer points, through which questions of race came to influence commemoration and by which practices of commemoration evolved in a way that served the racial interests of the planter class.[2] Although we are not accustomed to thinking of water, soils, and bridges as agents of

memory or perpetrators of racism, the following two stories aim to suggest that they are just that.

Story #1: Those racist jurors from the hills

The infamous trial of Roy Bryant and John William Milam for the murder of Emmett Till was held in September 1955, in the Second-District Tallahatchie County Courthouse. Before the first day of the trial was over, the course of the Tallahatchie River made its presence felt. Thinking they would be better served by securing jurors unfamiliar with the defendants, the prosecution pursued jurors from the county's police beat 1, east of the river (Whitaker 136; Anderson 92, 100). The key point is the location of the jurors' homes relative to the river.

By the late nineteenth century, the Tallahatchie River was a boundary marker for the county in several different registers. Topographically, it divided the flat alluvial plains of the Delta from the rolling hills of the east. Economically, it divided the affluent cotton kingdom of Delta plantations from the small, poor farms hewed out of the hills (Dunbar 15). Culturally, it divided the self-styled aristocratic Delta "planters" from the lower-class "farmers" of the hills. Racially, the river has divided two different styles of oppression, the paternalistic *noblesse oblige* of the Delta aristocracy and the caustic racism of the hills. In practice, of course, these distinctions can hardly be separated: the wealth of the Delta depends on the alluvial plains, reproduces distinctions of class, and engenders paternalism as the dominant form of racism. I list them discretely only to stress the sheer range of cultural divisions made possible by the river. The hills and Delta may both be in Tallahatchie County, but they stand for two entirely different ways of life. There is hardly a domain of public life in the county unaffected by the course of the Tallahatchie River.

The antagonism between the two sides of the river (between the hills and the Delta) has never been much of a secret. By the 1940s, it was the subject of *Dollar Cotton* (1942)*,* a novel by John Faulkner (William Faulkner's younger brother). Although the larger plotlines of the story are not relevant here, it is worth stressing that the novel uses the journey of a hills-farmer-turned-Delta-planter to dramatize the animosity between the two sides of the river. For Faulkner, the cultural tension between the two sides of the river was strong enough to support the conceit of a novel.

If there was one cultural institution in Tallahatchie County that was not confined to a single side of the Tallahatchie River, it was white supremacy. As James Cobb explains, there was never, at any point, "any sign of significant

disagreement between Delta and hill-country whites about the necessity of maintaining absolute and ironclad supremacy over blacks" (146).

In the self-understanding of the Delta aristocracy, however, there was a profound difference at the level of method. Indeed, an essential aspect of the "river planter myth" is paternalism: the planter's belief that their own racial superiority required kindness on their part toward the less fortunate. Although this kindness was sometimes real, it must not be mistaken for justice. It was a form of self-preservation. Because the river made Delta land both flat and rich, it created an economy in which Black labor stood between white planters and vast fortunes. No wonder the planters were kind: their fortunes turned upon retaining a labor force that was only too quick to run north.

The key point is that the river is modulating various forms of white supremacy. West of the river, in the flatlands of the Delta, the river enriched the soil, fueled the cotton kingdom, and shaped racial domination by combining structural supremacy with interpersonal kindness. To the east of the river, where the land was hilly, where the river had not deposited years of silt or created 40 feet of topsoil, such kindness had no economic incentives, and racism took a more caustic form. Although white supremacy reigned over all, the river modulated its expressions. As the river flattened the land to its west, it also changed the terms by which white planters interacted with Black labor.

The racial distinctions set in motion by the course of the river are the key to understanding how the white planters of the Delta used the composition of the jury—and even the location of jurors' homes relative to the river—to explain away their own complicity in the culture that killed Emmett Till. Because the white jurymen came from the hills, the logic ran, they felt none of the *noblesse oblige* proper to Delta planters and were, for this reason, easily swayed by the race-baiting of the defense. Thus it was that before the first witness was called, the Delta planters had a commemorative logic that exonerated themselves and shifted the burden of the acquittal away from the Delta, across the Tallahatchie River, and into the hills (Huie 28).

This rationale appears to have begun with lead defense lawyers Jesse Josiah Breland and John Whitten Jr. In a 1960s interview with Hugh Stephen Whitaker, the first historian to write about the murder, Breland claimed that "after the jury had been chosen, any first-year law student could have won the case" (qtd. in Whitaker 146). Whitaker explained this sentiment in terms of the relative location of the jury-members' homes. He created a hand-drawn map of Tallahatchie County, subdivided it into the five police beats, and then

drew a line that separated the Delta from the hills. The very crudeness of his map emphasizes the importance he gave to the role of the river—which, having been drawn as a straight line was clearly intended to divide regions rather than chart the course of the water. Although three of the jury members were from the Delta side of the river, he stressed that none of these "were considered to have been endowed with any paternalism toward Negroes" (Whitaker 146). Whitaker thus accepted the racial premise of the river planter mythology—that Delta planters were more tolerant than farmers from the hills—and he used it as a commemorative logic by which the responsibility for the acquittal was pushed out of the Delta.

It is difficult to overstate the influence of this argument in the history of Till commemoration. One of the most fascinating instances of this logic comes from Ellen Whitten. Granddaughter of defense lawyer John W. Whitten, Jr., Ellen Whitten grew up in Sumner and learned of the Till case through family connections. "What [the prosecution] did not understand about Tallahatchie County," she wrote in her undergraduate thesis, "is that it is and always has been divided, half hill country, half Delta land, with distinct differences between the residents and distinct antagonism as well" (24). She then listed each member of the jury, categorizing them not only by their hometown and their profession (this much was common), but also by which side of the river they lived on. Of those from the hills she noted, "[N]ot only was their presence in town unappreciated, their presence on the jury proved beneficial to the defense" (25). Her thesis included a map printed from the internet that marked the course of the river with an exaggerated blue line, presumably designed to emphasize the cultural importance of the river.

Finally, in 2015, Devery Anderson's *Emmett Till*—the encyclopedic history of the murder—repeated the logic yet again. Of the jurors he wrote, "[M]ost of them were from Beat 1 [the hills] and ran smaller farms. They were actually less friendly toward blacks because they usually found themselves competing with them" (92).

It is important to stress the intellectual genealogy of these claims. To establish the racist-jury-from-the-hills argument, Anderson, Whitten (and other historians) rely exclusively on Whitaker's 1963 MA thesis. Whitaker, in turn, had two primary sources, both of whom he interviewed in the early 1960s: defense lawyer J. J. Breland and *Look's* William Bradford Huie. However, because Huie got his story from Breland and his law partner John Whitten, the ultimate origin of the logic reaches back to two of the Delta's most established white families, the Whittens and the Brelands. Thus, despite its repetition in a wide variety of respected histories, the claim that the jury

was racist because they were from the hills has its ultimate origin in two, white, aristocratic Deltans. This suggests that the endless rehearsal of where the jurors were from was not simply an account of the facts; given its origin, it was also a partisan commemorative strategy geared toward vindicating the Delta's planter class by pushing responsibility for the acquittal eastward, out of the Delta, over the river, and into the hills.

The rhetorical strategy implicit in the planter's endless rehearsal of the jury's composition is particularly evident when we compare it to accounts of the murder (and even accounts of the jury selection) that do not originate with the planters themselves. Most telling in this category is Mamie Till-Mobley's account of the jury selection. Till-Mobley delves into such details as the occupations of the jurors and the various things that might disqualify them for service, but she never once invokes the hills/Delta schism (Till-Mobley and Benson 160, 166). For her, the *whole* of Tallahatchie County "had a reputation for being a mean place" (161). Before Emmett boarded a train for Mississippi, Till-Mobley spoke to her son about southern racial mores. She did not warn him to be careful in the hills; she told him to be careful in Mississippi (100). In other words, from her perspective, racism was hardly confined to the hills and the fact that the jury was drawn predominantly from east of the river was an inconsequential fact.

The distribution of racial attitudes along the path of the Tallahatchie is thus only one way to explain the racial context in which the murderers were acquitted. In fact, the myth of the river planter (and the history of *noblesse oblige*) has been relevant only for those historians who are working from evidence provided by planters themselves. When Tallahatchie County planters needed a strategy by which to minimize their own culpability, they found a resource in the ecology of their own county. The Tallahatchie River had long divided the county in a myriad of registers; in the wake of the acquittal, the planters (and their historians) turned to the path of the river once more. From the earliest Till history (by Whitaker in 1963) to the 2015 volume by Devery Anderson, the topography of the county has been the relay point through which racism shaped commemoration. The very contours of the land have, for too many historians, confined racism to a demographic that was both exogenous and essential: the jury. The river thus provided a mechanism for remembrance without responsibility; much like the planter myth, it acknowledged racism but moved it east, over the river, away from the economic and cultural engines of the plantation economy. Located in the hills, racism required nothing of Deltans save condemnation. And condemn they did, time and again, those racist jurors from the hills.

Story #2: Of rivers and renovation

Because the flooding of the Tallahatchie River occasionally prevented passage between the Delta and the hills, the county has had two courthouses since 1903, one on each side of the river (Gurney; Porteous). The first county seat was in the hills, in the 3000-person town of Charleston, the largest town in the county. When the county decided to create a Delta courthouse to accommodate the annual flooding of the river, the town of Sumner competed with the town of Webb to become the second county seat (Gurney 145). Although the two towns, separated by less than three miles, were comparable at the turn of the century, the different economic fortunes of the two towns are now immediately recognizable. While Webb is little more than a block of abandoned storefronts in a state of disrepair, Sumner, which won the battle for the courthouse and the legal industry attached to it, is one of the county's few thriving towns. The town square now boasts a few legal offices, art galleries, and a Black-woman-owned upscale restaurant. This prosperity was ultimately a function of the Tallahatchie River which, because it was prone to flooding, redistributed the profits of government.

The fortunes of Sumner, however, were not long secure. In 1949, six years before the Till trial, Tallahatchie County built a through-truss bridge on State Highway 32 over the Tallahatchie River. The river was now passable year round, and there was no longer a compelling rationale for two courthouses. By the time of the trial in 1955, it was already obvious that the bridge threatened the economic stability of Sumner—a town whose relative prosperity was grounded in a duplicate courthouse. As the Sumner courthouse gradually fell into disrepair, anxieties over the fate of the courthouse—and the future of the town—were only heightened. Residents of Charleston saw in the ill-repaired Sumner courthouse an opportunity for consolidation and a chance to recover the profits of the county's legal business (MacLean 91; Barton and Leonard 308). The Charleston courthouse had itself recently been renovated, and "east-siders" saw no reason to duplicate their efforts (Pearson).[3] As the local paper made explicit, opinions about the future of the Sumner courthouse followed, precisely, the path of the Tallahatchie River. "Eastern Tallahatchie folk" favored "cost-cutting" and consolidation while Delta residents on the west side of the county advocated saving the courthouse. It had become, the *Sun-Sentinel* noted, "a war between the Halves, East against West, with the Tallahatchie River pretty much marking the line of demarcation" (McFerrin, "Sumner Courthouse" 1).

By April of 2004, the condition of the courthouse was so poor that a Tallahatchie County Grand Jury provided a bullet-point list of seventeen

items it found objectionable. The list included everything from collapsing ceilings, to broken tiles, to faulty plumbing, to a stairwell that was "in overall terrible general decay."[4]

It was in this context that the commemoration of Emmett Till came to the foreground in Tallahatchie County. If, some fifty-plus years after the murder, the county was finally willing to break the silence that had long enveloped Till's murder, this was because the memory of Emmett Till now answered a "critical need." While there was no tax money to *repair* the courthouse, the memory of Emmett Till could provide grant money to *restore* the courthouse to its 1955 condition. The local newspaper put that matter bluntly. "It is precisely the Till tie-in that is viewed as the long-term hope for solving many local ills, not the least of which is acquiring funds to repair and improve the facility [courthouse]" (McFerrin, "Till Commission" 1).

Thus it was that Harvey Henderson, the last living lawyer who, in 1955, had defended the murderers, reached out to the Clarksdale architect Richie Dickson. Dickson, in turn, created a $4,000,000 proposal not simply to repair the courthouse and thereby save Henderson's job, but to return the courthouse to its 1955 condition (and thus commemorate the murder). In the wake of Dickson's proposal, a group of local activists formed the Emmett Till Memorial Commission. The commission has done amazing things. They restored the courthouse (and thereby saved the town), established relationships with the Till family, worked with the National Park Service, created the most visited digital exhibit in the history of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, and, in general, have done more for Till's memory than any other group in the world. Full disclosure: I work extensively with the commission and have great respect for their work. But, it is important to remember this basic, aquatic fact: the Emmett Till Memorial Commission would never have existed were it not for the north-to-south path of the Tallahatchie River.

The irony is thick. When the murderers dumped Till's body in the Tallahatchie, they no doubt intended that the muddy waters would prove an impenetrable grave. If bodies ended up in rivers, it is because rivers were a form expediting forgetfulness. In fact, after Till was reported missing, the first place the authorities looked was under bridges. Who could have guessed that a through-truss bridge 17 miles upstream would set in motion a series of events that would lead to the single largest effort to commemorate Emmett Till ever. The water produced a courthouse and later a bridge. The bridge made the courthouse unnecessary and threatened a town, which responded by forming a memory commission. The memory commission—the largest

and most influential of its kind—transformed the landscape of the county. Although Till was neither kidnapped, nor tortured, nor murdered, nor recovered in Tallahatchie County, and although the county had zero memorials until 2005, its landscape is now literally dotted with Till memorials.

The irony is particularly vexing when we consider the role of Harvey Henderson, who has twice capitalized on the productive combination of the Tallahatchie River and the Till murder: once in 1955 when flood patterns meant that his courthouse got a national trial and he was paid to acquit the murderers, and once in 2005, when the memory of the murder saved his bridge-threatened job. In both instances, Henderson would never have made a dime were it not for the river, which gave up the body in the second-judicial district of Tallahatchie County and, fifty years later, created a memorial commission that got its start in an attempt to save a courthouse that was threatened by, of all things, a bridge.

Scholars of memory have long fought to keep memory and nature apart from each other. Kirk Savage writes: "Public monuments do not arise as by natural law to celebrate the deserving; they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent for their creation" (135). The point of this insistence is the obvious fact that commemoration is a political act. There is, the logic runs, nothing natural about the way the past is remembered. I take his point.

But, at least in Tallahatchie County, commemorative politics have long accomplished their most powerful work through the mediation of the natural environment. The county's rivers, hills, soils, and bridges have, for decades, been transfer points through which questions of race came to influence commemoration and by which practices of commemoration evolved in a way that served the racial interests of the planter class. Harvey Henderson must be example #1: he died, still employed and sleeping well, convinced that the blame for the acquittal could be placed squarely on the racial politics of hill-country farmers.

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Notes

1 For the history of the "Dream" speech, see "I have a Dream," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. Stanford. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/i-have-dream. For the full-text of the Detroit version of the speech, see "Speech at the Great March on Detroit by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." https://www.mesaartscenter.com/download.php/engagement/jazz-a-to-z/resources/archive/2016-2017/teacher-resources/speech-at-the-great-march-detroit

2 I have explored the relationship between ecology and memory elsewhere. See *Remembering Emmett Till* (2019) and "Remembering Emmett Till" (2017). The argument here consolidates, focuses, and augments the arguments made previously.

3 Betty Pearson. Telephone interview with the author about Emmett Till. 19 Oct. 2015.

4 "Grand Jury Report," Tallahatchie County, Second Judicial District, Apr. 2004, Folder: Community Heritage Preservation Grant #2002-029, Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Jackson, Mississippi.

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SPECIAL THEMATIC BLOCK II
Affect, Immersion, and Games
Guest Editors: Norbert Krek and Zsófia O. Réti

A Quest for the "Missing People": Posthuman Affect in *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*

Imola Bülgözdi

_____*HJEAS*

ABSTRACT

The narrative-adventure game, *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* (2018) is "a bleak American folk tale about traveling, sharing stories, and surviving manifest destiny," whose objective is to introduce the player to voices formerly overshadowed or muted by the mainstream myth of the American dream. Players are tasked to find "the greatest stories," that is "the ones people will tell you about their own lives," meeting marginalized characters, like the migrant Mexican worker or the Navajo woman, as well as well-known figures of resistance, like Beat author Neal Cassady.

Relying on Aubrey Anable's definition of video games as affective systems, the article demonstrates that the player's non-linear, rhizomic wandering results in a more accurate, affective cartography of the USA and provides the opportunity to tap into the experience of becoming posthuman via a marginalized avatar. *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* thus aligns with the objectives of Rosi Braidotti's critical posthumanism: it facilitates a different, more democratic future achieved by actualizing as political subjects of knowledge the "missing people," who did not qualify as fully human according to the humanist idea of "man." (IB)

KEYWORDS: critical posthumanism, video games, affective cartography, American dream, *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*, posthuman subject, utopian impulse

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The narrative-adventure game *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* (2018) is described by the creators as "a bleak American folk tale about traveling, sharing stories, and surviving manifest destiny," (*Where the Water Tastes Like Wine,* 2015–2017*)* the objective of which is to introduce the player to voices and stories of twentieth-century USA, which were formerly overshadowed or outright muted by the mainstream myth of the American dream and the pursuit of success narrowly defined in material terms. What sets this game apart is its reliance on gathering narratives not only as the aim of the quest—the player is given the task to find "the greatest stories," that is, "the true

ones; the ones people will tell you about their own lives" (*Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*)[1]—but also as a form of currency, since the game can only be completed if the player discovers, listens to, and then re-tells them to the right characters who will reveal their own life stories in exchange. As clarified by the initial instructions, *WWTW* is a deliberate critique of the American dream:

> . . . this land is built on stories. It's one big story, this county, woven of many small ones. Few of the small ones are strictly true, and the big one is mostly a lie. . . . The more true stories you can find and tell, the more truth you can weave into the big story. Tarnish it a bit, perhaps, but isn't a dingy and battered truth better than a shining lie? . . . Hunger, weariness, thirst, and despair. They're all part of stories—the part not often told.
>
> (*WWTW*)

The player is free to wander mainland USA on foot, hitchhiking, or hopping a train until they meet all sixteen main characters, whose life stories are equally vital for finishing the quest. The fact that these characters are on the road themselves emphasizes their marginalized status, all the more apparent as they present different iterations of ethnicity, race, gender, class, age, disability, and beliefs, giving ample room for a wide variety of life stories covering a period from the mid-nineteenth century into the 1970s.

Based on the above, it is my contention that *WWTW* fosters the appreciation of locally embedded experience by relying on a set of marginalized characters and the player's unstructured, non-linear wandering across the USA, which results in an affective remapping of the American dream, creating a cartography, defined by Rosi Braidotti as "a theoretically based and politically informed map of the present that aims at tracking the production of knowledge and subjectivity" ("A Theoretical Framework" 3). The exploration of subjectivities that propose alternatives to the humanist idea of man and of the affects involved in new possible configurations of the (post)human is the main aim of this paper, since video games are, by definition, affective systems which may express novel, emergent "ways of being in the world and ways of feeling in the present" (Anable xii). I also argue that medium-specific features of video games, especially the "narrativization of space through movement [that] stands in stark contrast to sequential forms of storytelling most prominently found in literature and film" (Meinel 5), construct an affective environment that draws attention to the embedded and embodied player's imbrication in the nature-culture

continuum as a relational being, and also conceptualize affect "as a social, subjectivizing, but also collectivizing force" (Anable xviii). With this in mind, I propose a reading of *WWTW* through the lens of Rosi Braidotti's posthuman critical theory, the objective of which is to strive for a more equitable future by means of actualizing as political subjects of knowledge the "missing people,"[2] that is, "real-life subjects whose knowledge never made it into any of the official cartographies" ("A Theoretical Framework" 21).

Video games and critical posthumanism

The growing importance of video games as a medium is undeniable both in economic and cultural terms, as pointed out by Alenda Y. Chang, who considers academic engagement with video games necessary because they "have undergone a cultural transformation, from being a largely private and youthful subculture to being a ubiquitous phenomenon that now spans domestic and public space and all demographic categories" (5). Her volume, *Playing Nature: Ecology in Video Games*, sheds light on the potential of games to encapsulate covert ecological lessons that help cope with the Anthropocene's prevailing environmental affects. By offering less moralizing and didactic engagement with environmental problems in a medium that provides agency, video games can invite players to combat both apathy caused by denial and paralysis due to eco-anxiety (15), thus raising awareness of the human subject's enmeshment with non-human others.

The benefits of studying this emerging field are also underscored by the volume *Video Games and Spatiality in American Studies* (2022), edited by Dietmar Meinel, who invites American Studies to "expand its notions of space as a practice or a form of doing" based on how Video Game Studies "understand the production of space also as an act of playing" (3). *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* expects the player to populate the map of the US through exploration, during which they relate to places, the local stories they find, and the objective of the quest based on the real-life cognitive pattern to semanticize spaces: "As we experience spaces, . . . we read them for their meaning and the stories they contain, and as we perform these spaces through movement and interaction, we inscribe our own narrative into them" (Domsch 104). This is the premise of the player's task, built on two contrasting perspectives: one is the well-known "big story" to be challenged—"all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" ("The Declaration of Independence") coupled with manifest destiny, which translates power relations into spatial terms,

specifying the master narrative relating to American soil. The game's title, however, hints at the other side of the coin, being a line from an American folk song, first recorded in the 1920s ("Lonesome Road Blues"), and it has been around with variations since then under the titles "Lonesome Road Blues" and "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad." The song belongs to a musical genre that focuses on the lives of marginalized groups, according to Woody Guthrie, one of the most significant figures of American folk music,[3] who identifies lonesomeness as the genre's main theme:

> the blues . . . is about lonesomeness. It may be lonesomeness for a lover, but alternatively lonesomeness for a job, for spending money, for good times, for estranged children, for getting out of jail. . . . the most searing blues [is] traced back to the runaway slave, violently deprived of home and heritage, torn loose from family, fleeing for a freedom of vast uncertainty and insecurity. (Guthrie qtd. in Clapp 27)

The search for the place where the water tastes like wine is not compatible at all with the lofty ideals formulated by manifest destiny, as demonstrated by the sixteen main characters' specific life stories that chronicle different forms of alienation and the sense of unbelonging that Guthrie posits as a defining element of lonesomeness.

Being "uniquely structured as an anthology of short stories" instead of relying on a single central narrative, the creators of *WWTW* made a specific effort to bring to life a wide variety of characters by working with sixteen different writers, who crafted the unique background, personality, and tale of each Campfire Companion to the player ("Exciting Announcements"). Four to five meetings and story-telling sessions are required to gain the trust of each character, who slowly reveal their innermost concerns, feelings, memories, and hopes, giving an account of the embedded and embodied experience of living in the USA. Since the main characters also wander around the map, the player needs to look for them while criss-crossing the country, collecting local stories and engaging in their exchange to make them grow with the telling (for example, meeting a man who planted an orchard turns into the story of Johnny Appleseed after several retellings) and have a set of new stories to entertain the Campfire Companions. The game contains 237 stories altogether and is praised by reviewer Allison Meier for delving into the origins of American folklore and for the connections forged by storytelling. However, she fails to note the socio-historical relevance of the life stories as situated knowledges of marginalized people, though going back

to the 1870s via the elderly Navajo woman's account of the forceful displacement of her youth and the pain of losing the tribe's sacred lands is hard to miss as a counter-narrative. The American Indian woman's experience, like the fate of the rest of the characters—for instance, the black sharecropper, the Dust Bowl refugee, the Mexican migrant worker or the trade unionist miner on the run—has been disregarded, suppressed, and discarded as stories of failure, at odds with American optimism and success stories of self-reliance. By devoting the whole game to voices that could hardly be called staple characters of video games and that have a long history of misrepresentation in mainstream culture, *WWTW* accomplishes what Braidotti defines as the aim of an adequate cartography: "to bring forth alternative figurations . . . for the kind of knowing subjects currently constructed" ("A Theoretical Framework" 4). Furthermore, the game also manages to fulfill the double task of cartography that Braidotti sees in providing a critique of actual conditions, while being "creative in terms of new figurations or navigational tools that aim at *actualizing* the virtual"; also formulated as "acting as the record of what we are ceasing to be and the seed of what we are in the process of becoming" ("Posthuman Critical Theory" 11, emphasis in the original).

It is the aspect of actualizing the virtual that provides a crucial link between posthuman critical theory and video games as a medium, on more than one level. On the one hand, utopian visions, that is, "political anticipatory projections of more equitable, pleasurable and sustainable futures" (Braidotti, *Posthuman Feminism* 221) are integral part of the process of becoming posthuman, as they can give ample room to think outside of the box of humanism. Michał Kłosiński demonstrates very convincingly that "video games offer all three elements . . . crucial in thinking about utopia: a critique of social reality as such—utopian archeology; almost infinite potential for designing alternative social, political and economic order—utopian architecture; and a re-definition of being human, ethics and morality—utopian ontology" (12). The tendency to embrace posthuman affirmative ethics is already obvious from the main objective of this specific game, which is devoted to the creation of a world that includes the missing people, uncovered by the player in a process of reterritorialization, as the blank map of the US is slowly filled with a plethora of stories instead of the dominant myth of the American dream. On the other hand, as "laboratories which allow us to simulate consequences of different social, political and economic policies in real time" (Kłosiński 12), video games not only provide insight into how different social and political systems work, but also foster player

involvement as "a feeling and active subject" (Anable xiv). Unlike consumers of traditional media, video game players assume a dual role of both protagonist and audience in these participatory narratives (Owen 27). Here the narrative stalls without the player performing actions to move it forward (47), consequently experiencing a feeling of agency in the diegetic world. Although *WWTW* does not follow the pattern of classic dystopian games that offer the player the possibility of attaining a better future and the choice whether to become an agent of change (Farca 27), it definitely raises the player's awareness of negative trends within empirical reality, cementing links to the real world by using historical events and personages, such as the Coal Wars,[4] the famous WWI Black regiment nicknamed Harlem Hellfighters, or the life of beat poet Neal Cassady as starting points for the Campfire Companions' stories.

Gerald Farca's extensively researched volume, *Playing Dystopia: Nightmarish Worlds in Video Games and the Player's Aesthetic Response*, proclaims the video game dystopia as "a new strategic enterprise of the utopian philosophy" due to the fact that it offers emancipatory routes that may bring improvements to the game world, and emphasizes its role "as a subversive example and inducement to effect social change and transformation in the empirical world" (16). *WWTW* instead has the Campfire Companions reflect on real life grievances and injustices, like the racism experienced by the Black Pullman porter in Jim Crow South or the desperation of WWI veterans that culminated in the Bonus Army's March on Washington on 1932, in the form of personal accounts, reminiscent of oral histories. Since the player's role is confined to exchanging stories with these characters and has no means to improve their status, discovering and listening to the American dream's counter-narratives becomes in itself a subversive act. At the same time, the only place left for the player to effect change is in the real world, fulfilling the utopian impulse along the affirmative ethics outlined by Braidotti. More specifically, the game also complies with many of Braidotti's methodological guidelines for critical posthumanities: "cartographic accuracy, with the corollary of ethical accountability, and the combination of critique with creativity, . . . non-linearity, [reliance on] the powers of memory and the imagination and the strategy of de-familiarization" ("A Theoretical Framework" 16). The rhizomic wandering across the map and the local stories are part of the process of de-familiarization, which results in a more accurate affective cartography of the United States, while the life stories of the Campfire Companions concurrently harness the powers of memory and imagination to envision a world where the happiness promised by the

American dream is not defined along individualistic principles and is not reserved for those who most approximate the ideal Man of humanism. *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* encourages the player to look beyond the myth of the self-reliant subject as an independent agent based on the life stories and to recognize the characters as "relational beings, defined by the capacity to affect and be affected" (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 45) as embodied and embedded posthuman subjects.

It is the analysis of the connection between player and avatar in video games that leads Kelly I. Aliano to the conclusion that the virtual experiences that allow for performative interaction "have expanded our posthuman positionality," which entails that "we have become a version of ourselves that is both real and digital, and both human and posthuman simultaneously" (423). This relationship receives ample treatment in *Parables of the Posthuman: Digital Realities, Gaming, and the Player Experience,* where Jonathan Boulter elaborates on video games as sites of cultural imagination capable of providing "new ways of conceiving the self" that result in a unique experience for the player due to the technologically mediated complex network of "player-console/computer, player-avatar, player-narrative" (2). His analysis of video games thematizing the entry into the posthuman condition concludes that by mirroring "the player's own entry into the posthuman condition as s/he plays: the games move thus from merely thematizing the posthuman to instantiating that condition" (15). Boulter's enquiry based on positing the player-avatar hybrid as a cyborg highlights that the modus operandi of these games brings about "a practical demonstration of the extended, posthuman self" (5), that is, in Braidotti's terms, they create an alternative figuration to the current notion of knowing subjects, "a conceptual persona" ("A Theoretical Framework" 4), resulting from a critical cartography conducted in an environment posited as technologically mediated nature-culture continuum.

Affect and the relational subject in video games

"Posthuman subjectivity starts with the acknowledgement that what defines us as an autonomous capacity is not rationality, nor our cerebral faculty alone, but rather the autonomy of affect as a virtual force that gets actualized through relational bonds," not to be conflated with individualized emotions, Braidotti cautions, while arguing for the need to de-psychologize and de-link affect from individualism "in order to match the complexity of our human and nonhuman relational universe" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 45). To gain insight into how the affects linking individuals and their relational

universe are theorized regarding this specific medium, I will rely on recent research by Aubrey Anable and David Owen, whose starting point for approaching video games is to interpret them as "structures of feeling" (see Anable's "Introduction"), and to explore the affects specific to the medium by applying performance studies to the player's experience, respectively. These angles will serve well the investigation of the process of becoming posthuman as played out in video games in general, modeling both the "material net in which everything is actually connected and potentially intra-acting" and the "entangled, symbiotic, hybrid" existence, which defy fixed notions of being (Ferrando 168, 170) that posthumanism posits.

Anable's volume *Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect* (2018) operates, in her view, with the most basic definition of affect underlying most approaches,[5] formulated succinctly as "forces that inform our emotional states" (xvii), and, as its starting point, it deploys a critique of Deleuzian versions of affect theory. These strands, Anable argues, proclaim that "the body in movement and the virtual capacity of affect model a new politics and a new ethics. Yet this potential, this becoming, is never actually here," since by entering the realm of signification and representation once formulated and comprehensible as "feeling" the radical potential of affect is lost (xviii). Anable sets out to demonstrate that video games have the potential to surpass the unique space-time of individual bodies (human or otherwise) and are able to describe the new type of relationality (xix), as they "engage and entangle us in a circuit of feeling between their computational systems and the broader systems with which they interface: ideology, narrative, aesthetics, and flesh" (xii). She finds the theory of becoming as conceptualized in Deleuzian affect theories unable to grasp the virtual potential of affect either as "a way of talking about the myriad ways everyday experience is felt but is not articulated or is inarticulable," or as "the embodied capacity to feel—that which simultaneously opens us up to the world as relational beings and reminds us that our own sense of individuation and connection is always partial and extremely limited" (xviii). Anable justifies turning to Silvan Tomkins's work instead by pointing out that the birth of both video games and his affect theory can be traced back to the mid-twentieth-century "cybernetic fold," a term coined by Sedgwick and Frank to denote the period roughly between 1940 and 1960 (Anable 17). This era is characterized by the tendency of all fields of research, even art, to experiment with the use of cybernetics and systems theory to make sense of phenomena as diverse as world politics, animal communication, or the human mind (17). Tomkins's insistence on affects and cognition being mutually interdependent systems that are

influenced by specific social and biological contexts is now regarded as the foundation for conceiving the sensing body as a historical, biological, technological, and social assemblage, underscores Anable (23), who deploys his notion of the self "as constantly formed and re-formed through daily, ordinary interpersonal and intrapersonal transmissions of feeling and sensation" (25) to investigate a pressing question of the present: the role of video games in the constant shaping of the contemporary sensorium.

It is not difficult to note the affinity between the role of affect as seen by Tomkins and the process of actualization of the embodied and embedded posthuman subject, which occurs through "networks of natural, social, political and physiological relations," and results in "a sense of engagement in a web of ever-shifting relations and perpetual becoming," as asserted by Braidotti (*Posthuman Knowledge*, 53). Although Anable does not elaborate on situating her research in the specific context of critical posthumanism, she concludes that video games as structures of feeling provide insight into the "collective desires, fears, and rhythms of everyday life in our precarious, networked, and procedurally generated world" (132), shedding light on the relationality of technologically mediated posthuman subjects, while not losing focus on the body, enmeshed in other webs of connections within the techno-natural-cultural continuum. Anable, who analyzes video games as media objects and cultural practices as well, justifies her inclusion of the embodied subject in the affective assemblage by citing Tomkins's emphasis on the surfaces that transmit affect, which, in this case, is the material surface of contact: the video game screen. She, therefore, postulates the screen "as a space of representation, and . . . a site of everyday intimacy and entanglement" (59), denouncing game analysis and affect theory that would diminish the importance of questions of subjectivity and representation (57).

In *Player and Avatar: The Affective Potential of Videogames* (2017), Owen explores in detail the affective response of video game players based on performance theory, emphasizing the doubleness inherent in being both protagonist of the game and the audience enjoying and evaluating the performance. The medium provides a new form of suspension of disbelief compared to the traditional theatrical or cinematic model, in which the player chooses to join the fiction, extends the borders of their physical body or their perceived location and imagines the fiction affects them personally (3).[6] Thus, video games move "from witnessing the other to being the other" (Causey qtd. in Owen 2), a feat accomplished via an extension of the self, the avatar, which functions as the player's placeholder in the game world. Owen's analysis is underpinned by the avatar's definition as "an affective conduit

between the player and the game world" (4), which fulfills the role of the surface that transmits affects in Tomkins's theory. The in-depth look at the affective potential of video games from a dramaturgical approach, defined by Owen as "the study of structure and interaction of representations in the performance of a story" (209), also complements Anable's insistence on the growing importance of computational forms of representation and video games as "a particularly popular form of representation through which we can trace and analyze how affect moves across bodies and objects in the present" (132).

Owen's work takes up the general observations Anable formulates in the Conclusion about video games' significance as contemporary sites that enable the investigation of the mediation of bodies, the impact of such mediation on the notion of what the *body* is, and which bodies matter (Owen 132), all central questions in *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*. Owen cites the fact that video game situations provide a feeling of agency to the player as well as an empathetic connection to one's avatar (and even non-player characters) as evidence for the feeling of telepresence within the game world and the affective power of the medium in general (23). The relationship between player and avatar goes beyond identification, since the player experiences extended, both physical and mental, presence in a virtual space, as the result of their projection within the game world (26), creating a new, hitherto unavailable relationality. "The phenomenological relationship between the body and affect, virtual or otherwise, is a powerful means to not only expose players to novel experiences but through them, create change in the player," contends Owen (27), who concludes that the short-term affective reactions of the player can lead to behavioral and ideological changes. This is explained by the fact that immersion occurs not only due to the presence of compelling narratives well known from traditional storytelling mediums, but also because the player can discover them through their actions, choices, and exploration (46). In addition, the performativity inherent in video games also aligns with becoming posthuman, bringing this process to the attention of the player more efficiently than non-participatory narratives.

The growing role of video games in facilitating empathy, education, and transformation is documented by Mary Flanagan's research, which demonstrates that games with embedded design relying on specific narrative mechanics in a subtle manner have the potential to shift beliefs and biases (280). Games that employ scenarios that allow for psychological distance by operating with places, ideas, and people not present in the player's direct, daily experience of reality are more likely to engage the imagination and to

provoke less judgmental reactions (286). In a similar spirit, in order to ensure a more favorable affective disposition to questions of marginalization in the USA, *WWTW* combines distance in time with social distance by offering as entry point into the game a skeletal avatar with a hat and a bundle on a stick, recalling the poverty-stricken wanderers of the Great Depression, but also reminiscent of the Everyman of medieval morality plays. The mechanism of identification with the avatar is also different from the pattern observed in traditional narrative mediums, as explained by Owen: "*because* the character lacks depth in a traditionally theatrical sense, the player is allowed to impose or interpret her own psychological complexities onto the game character she is playing" (3, emphasis in original). *WWTW* literally offers the bare bones of a character to the player, who is addressed as "you" by the other characters and the narrator of the game, to facilitate identification. Contrary to the practice of using direct address to break the fourth wall in theater and cinema, thus breaking the suspension of disbelief, the use of the second person perspective in video games signals inclusion into the game world and enhances immersion. While gathering stories, the player is referred to as *you* by the narrator, who describes the choices they may make and what they see, hear, and feel, in a game environment reminiscent of early text-based games from the 1970s and 1980s, which were modeled after choose-your-adventure-books. Owen points out that this perspective already identified the reader as "an entity that is both essential but separate from the story itself, and . . . necessary to move the narrative forward" (52).This technique, however, fulfills a vital role from an affective perspective when interacting with the Campfire Companions, who tell their life stories to "you," the player/avatar sitting at the campfire they graciously share with another person down on their luck. What is more, they finish each storytelling session with a question or comment directed at the player, prompting them to reflect on and form an opinion about the topics and problems they have just described, and to compare how these issues are manifested in the non-diegetic world: in the player's personal experience in the twenty-first century. For instance, after describing how veterans' service bonuses were withheld by the government for years after WWI, the ex-soldier asks: "What about you—is there something somebody owes you?" (*WWTW*), leaving the player ample space for contemplation.

Despite the vivid dialogue scenes when the player's perspective is that of someone facing a storyteller and interacting over the crackling fire, the psychological distance is maintained by the game's frame story, based on "Direwolf," a song by the Grateful Dead. The game starts by showing the

player lose at cards against a mysterious stranger who turns out to be a direwolf, tasking them to collect the true stories overshadowed by the myth of the American dream to pay off their debt. The lyrics of the song, "I said my prayers and went to bed / That's the last they saw of me" (Grateful Dead), suggest that the game of cards has deadly consequences, and indeed, while traveling back in time, the player is transferred to a different plane of existence: in the form of the skeletal avatar, they are not encumbered by physical needs, nor can they die until the debt is paid off.

Flanagan also establishes that addressing a real-world problem in a fantasy setting can allow players to feel more open to the message (286), which in *WWTW* is supported by embedded design. For the player to settle the debt and save themselves from a fate of restless wandering and unhappiness, all sixteen Campfire Companions' life stories must be heard out. The gameplay thus fosters relationality, requiring the player to open up to the flow of affects in the form of empathetic listening and to attempt to tell stories that suit the character's interest and taste to gain their trust. By ensuring that there is no hierarchy of importance among the Campfire Companions and making the expansion of the American dream with their embedded and embodied knowledges, a prerequisite for the player to save themselves, the game manages to activate "subjects to enter into new affective transversal assemblages, to co-create alternative ethical forces and political codes—in other words, to compose a missing people" (Braidotti, "A Theoretical Framework" 19).

The cartography of happiness

"Only by knowing our history, our stories—and why they were allowed to happen—can we strive forward to a better tomorrow," proclaims a minor character in *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*, formulating the utopian impulse and the aim of posthuman cartography at the same time. Often thought to be synonymous with the pursuit of happiness, the American dream in various iterations has been a powerful driving force since the Mayflower set sail. "Desire as positivity and relationality is experienced as affect," declares Braidotti in her latest work, *Posthuman Feminism* (205), which intends to express its affirmative force and make things happen, but is always social and contextualized (206). This role of affect has already been pinpointed by Tomkins, who saw affect as "the prime 'interest' motivator that comes to put the drive in bodily drives" (Gregg and Seigworth 6),[7] and was also formulated by Sara Ahmed as intentionality and orientation, in this particular case towards happiness. "Happiness functions as a promise that

directs us toward certain objects, which then circulate as social goods" (Ahmed 29) that can obviously be physical or material objects but may be "anything that we imagine might lead us to happiness, including objects in the sense of values, practice, and styles, as well as aspirations" (41). The fulfillment of the American dream has been historically associated with various material and immaterial "happy objects," as put by Ahmed, with the myth conferring value upon them, as, presumably, happiness would follow their possession. Their dependence on ideas of American exceptionalism is reflected upon by the Direwolf as follows: "trapped by this country, perhaps. . . . Seduced into believing it has all they need and that none will ever be better" (*WWTW*).

The common denominator of the Campfire Companions' life stories is the exact opposite of the fulfillment of the dream: they feel excluded, which can be collectively formulated as "the experience of being alienated from the affective promise of happy objects" (Ahmed 50). What they see as happy objects varies widely: it is the restoration of sacred lands for Dehaaya, the Navajo woman, the comradeship and the freedom of roaming the seas for August, the ex-Merchant Marine injured in WWII, the harmonious family life of loving siblings lost due to the Great War for Mason, the veteran, decent pay for backbreaking labor for Rocio, the Mexican migrant worker, a life well lived in the service of the community for Fidelina, the Native curandera (healer), or equality as imagined by Little Ben, the trade unionist miner: "Nobody left wantin', nobody eaten up by the gears of industry. Nobody's money settin' them up above you" (*WWTW*). Besides stories and scenes that include looking for odd jobs, panhandling, sleeping in abandoned buildings and occasionally being beaten for hopping trains, the game's soundtrack serves as a constant reminder for the player of the sense of unbelonging experienced by the characters. The "Vagrant Song," written specifically for the game by Ryan Ike, dominates the map: it accompanies the player in the Deep South, the Midwest, the Northwest, Appalachia, and the Southwest, recorded with Spanish lyrics for the latter, and in five variants by male and female singers in the typical folk music style of each region, to enhance identification and immersion. The game ensures that the avatar is in the same situation as the characters, summarized by Shaw, the black sharecropper as "Realizin [*sic*] that you have nothing and belong nowhere feels both like death and freedom at the same time" (*WWTW*). From this liminal position the player is encouraged to talk to the Campfire Companions as equals and use the roadside camp's freedom from social constraints to explore affects and relationality with less bias than in real-life social contexts.

The game groups the stories the player finds under sixteen topical headings, which can be sorted according to the affective value the majority ascribes to them. Some, as also reflected in the American dream, are typical "happy objects": family, nature/country/home, freedom, love, faith/trust, heaven/desires fulfilled/wishes come true, future, and joy. The affective value of others, like choice/morality, authority, travel, the past/memories, and fortune/fate/luck is not as unanimously thought to be positive, while sadness, bondage/traps/imprisonment, death/change/endings/moving on cause most people to move away instead of orienting themselves towards them. The Campfire Companions' personal stories open up a far more sophisticated relationship with happy objects than postulated by the American Dream. Liberty is no more than a fancy word when "some chains ain't ever come off you, don't matter what sorta [*sic*] proclamation a white man in a suit makes" (*WWTW*) as noted by Jimmy, the Black preacher who just buried a young lynching victim, while the perpetrators walked away. The myth of the Wild West is also questioned, quite ironically by a cowboy who ended up in the desert as the last place that still afforded some semblance of the cherished American freedom, but "every time I close my eyes another piece gets snatched up by those fellers [*sic*] in D.C. Happiness is hard for me to find these days. Everywhere you look now—roads, fences, power lines . . . garbage" (*WWTW*). Refusing to give up his old way of life although he would be able to make a living somewhere else, Ray ended up on the run to Mexico for trespassing and tearing down fences, because no other lifestyle would bring him happiness. This example draws attention to the significance of "melancholic subjects, the ones who refuse to let go of suffering, who are even prepared to kill some forms of joy, as an alternative model of the social good" (Ahmed 50), as a form of resistance, demonstrating a different way of being human, which can also be interpreted as a posthuman becoming.

Other stories also tell about alienation from the main affective community regarding widely valued happy objects, like the family. While some characters remember their parents and siblings fondly, others feel remorse for mistreating loved ones. Rose, for instance, is very critical of the conservative middle-class values of her parents, who gave up on her when she joined a hippie commune. Quinn's story, however, is a child's shocking tale of neglectful and cruel parenting, with a huge gap between the affective value of the object and the affects generated by the actual experience. These situations, according to Ahmed, can involve a range of affects depending on the explanations why a happy object has proved to be disappointing. "Such explanations can involve an anxious narrative of self-doubt . . . or a narrative

of rage" either directed toward the object itself, and rightly so in Quinn's case, or "toward those that promised us happiness through the elevation of this or that object as being good" (37). The latter is very prominent in the tale of both men injured in WWI and II, who were enticed to do their duty but received no support when left disabled. This bitterness is summed up by August: "What's [*sic*] it say about a country if it breaks its people, then throws 'em away?" (*WWTW*), and is echoed by Mason, who can hardly believe that the country he served and suffered for ordered the army to disperse the veterans demanding compensation.

Where the Water Tastes Like Wine treats these melancholic subjects as embedded and embodied, but does not stop at enumerating the social injustices and personal backgrounds that contributed to their becoming affect aliens, and elaborates on how this experience changes their views. Ahmed stresses the role of unhappiness in providing alternatives to imagine "what might count as a good or better life," since unhappiness is not the endpoint (50). This stance is exemplified by elderly Dehaaya, a survivor of the harrowing 1864 Long Walk of the Navajo, followed by years of displacement which had a very rare happy ending in the history of American Indian tribes.[8] She promotes a cautious but hopeful stance regarding the future: "As Diné we must not forget the evil ways of this invasive country, but we must also fight this sickness before it infects our future" (*WWTW*). Exclusion from accessing the happy objects postulated by the American dream also motivates Little Ben, the Appalachian coal miner to subscribe to a different dream, the one provided by the trade union. Bertha, the Dust Bowl refugee abandoned by her husband and daughters, finds hope in joining the agricultural workers' union in California, and Rocio, the Mexican migrant worker sorely missing her family and community, starts to feel she belongs somewhere once involved in the California Grape Boycott of 1965. All these characters who, at the beginning of the game were virtually powerless as individuals due to their ethnicity, gender, class, and/or disability, found some level of agency by going against American individualism and self-reliance, just like Rose, who continues to live a far less consumerist but community-centered life in a commune despite the hard work and the financial difficulties even after the hippie movement stopped being fashionable.

Focusing on characters who fall short when measured against the humanist ideal, the game provides a cartography of the American dream, toppling the monomyth and highlighting the importance of affect as motivation to actualize the virtual and to promote a variety of happy objects. Due to their social status, the characters are weighed down by power as

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entrapment (potestas), excluding them from the affective community created by the American dream, but some of them also experience its other facet as the affirmative mode of potentia,[9] which provides the "means to cultivate degrees of empowerment and affirmation of one's interconnections to others in their multiplicity" (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 158) in the process of becoming posthuman. Instead of the pursuit of happiness channeled toward the happy objects as defined by the American dream, the player's quest results in a cartography that fills in the gap between the myth and reality as experienced by the Campfire Companions and pointed out by the youngest one, in his early teens: "This country . . . I don't rightly know what this thing called 'Merica is. I know what I done been told [*sic*] in school, but the words don't fit the picture" (*WWTW*). This is reiterated by the Direwolf during a subsequent meeting in the form of a question directed at the player: "Do you have Faith in the Dream still? Or for the first time? Is there another dream that we could build, a better one for everyone?" (*WWTW*), which explicitly invites them to participate in imagining a more equitable future, based on the collected stories. The exploration of the situated knowledges and affects of the Campfire Companions takes place on the road, in a liminal position that matches spatially the posthuman subject's process of becoming, which should be "regulated by an ethics of joy and affirmation that functions through the transformation of negative into positive passions" (Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* 158): from the unhappiness of exclusion toward the pursuit of different avenues that lead to happiness.

Once the player manages to collect all sixteen life stories and complete the quest, they meet the Direwolf, who reveals that the place where the water tastes like wine is non-existent. This idealized place cannot be found on the map, instead, the player is rewarded with a male-female duet of "Heavy Hands" during the end credits, which summarizes the affects the game investigates: the resistance of the lyrical I to power as entrapment ("a Heavy Hand / Laid across this land") and the search for power as agency by means of preserving the tale of a land where the "Sky will shimmer and sun will shine / Where the water tastes like wine" (Ike, "Heavy Hands"). It is the personal version of the story that conserves the utopian impulse and it acts as a happy object to remember and strive for, even "[w]hen the words won't flow . . . / And the song you carry / Goes dull and gray." According to the lyrics, once reaching this place "the soul burns clean / And the verse it's singin' / Rings pure and true" (Ike, "Heavy Hands"), which reinforces the game's purpose to bring muted stories to the attention of the player, because "[h]earing stories is important work. Everyone wants to be heard, and so few

are listening," as put by the Direwolf (*WWTW*). By allowing the player to explore these stories while experiencing similar marginalization via their avatar, the game expands their relationality and during their search they inscribe the map of the USA with the missing people. *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* pointedly focuses on enhancing relational affectivity, which, in Braidotti's view, "produces a shared sense of belonging to, and knowledge of, the common world we are sharing" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 47). Placing the game into the context of Anable, Owen, and Flanagan's research into video games as affective systems, it clearly invites the player to tap into the experience of becoming posthuman and, ultimately, to transfer the affects generated by meeting the Campfire Companions to the real world. This is also strengthened by the constant prompting to compare issues in the gameworld with the player's own experience and by the fact that the quest for the place where the water tastes like wine cannot be completed in the diegetic world. Consequently, the subsequent lack of closure that denies the player the cathartic experience is more likely to help carry the utopian impulse over to the real world and to actualize the virtual experience of posthuman relationality through finding the missing people.

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Notes

1 Subsequently to be abbreviated as *WWTW*.

2 Braidotti sets the formation of a new alliance as the aim of posthumanism, which should lead to "a transversal composition of multiple assemblages of active minoritarian subjects," including "non-human agents, technologically-mediated elements, earth-others (land, waters, plants, animals) and non-human inorganic agents (plastic, wires, information highways, algorithms, etc.)" ("A Theoretical Framework" 20–22).

3 Guthrie, whose career started in the 1930s, was one of the most significant figures of American folk music, dubbed a "poet of the people." (see Clapp 27–30)

4 A series of strikes and armed labor conflict between coal miners' unions and mining companies in Appalachia in the decades between 1890 and 1930. (see Boissoneault)

5 For an overview of the most significant affectual orientations see Gregg and Seigworth (4–10).

6 For a discussion of various interfaces and the processes occurring between the human subject and digital information see Stasienko's *Media Technologies and Posthuman Intimacy*.

7 See psychologist Silvan Tomkins's *Affect, Imagery, and Consciousness: The Positive Affects* (1962) and *Affect, Cognition, and Personality: Empirical Studies* (1966) with Carroll E. Hard.

8 In 1868 the Navajo were allowed to return to their tribal lands, part of which was turned into a reservation when signing the Treaty of Bosque Redondo. (see Ault)

9 Braidotti distinguishes between power as entrapment (potestas) and as empowerment (potentia); both to be investigated in a cartography ("A Theoretical Framework" 3).

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Immersion Through Ruins: Entanglement, Pleasure, and Struggle in *Celeste*

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ABSTRACT
This article argues that the 2D side-scrolling adventure platformer video game *Celeste* (2018) mobilizes the tradition of ruin-gazing to provide a metaphor for self-exploration and then crucially transforms the psychoanalytic "cure" into a gamified experience. Video games that contain ruins inherit the tradition of "ruin-gazing" from the eighteenth century and expand on the affective experiences ruins produce through immersion and play. Ruins disabuse players of the notion of stability or safety, and assert the significance of player actions in spaces that, when ruined, become culturally, socially, or psychologically destabilized. Thus, they are readable spaces that strategically engage the player, and the ludic actions taken by players constitute the act of reading the game as text. This article analyzes the ruined spaces of *Celeste* and how the actions available to players within those ruined spaces reinforce the game's narrative themes of self-healing. It also aims to demonstrate how the ruins that Madeline (the player avatar) navigates are a representation of her fractured psyche, mind, and identity. The player's success is dependent on their capacity to navigate Madeline's (literally) ruined sense of self, which through their ludic subject-position and entanglement with Madeline, invites the player to participate in and experience Madeline's emotional and mental catharsis. (RC)

KEYWORDS: ruins, navigation, platformer, narrative, phenomenology, affect, *Celeste*.

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Introduction
Representations of ruins are pervasive in video games. From mobile games like *Temple Run* (2011) to AAA budget games like *The Last of Us Part II* (2020) and indie games like *Abzû* (2017), ruins are prolific settings for video game play. Representations of ruins in video games draw upon the history of ruins as cultural objects for their role and meaning. This includes both the history of "real" ruins and the history of "fake" ruins, namely the artificial ruins found in the tradition of the eighteenth-century folly.[1] Both histories understand ruins as spaces of mediated experience defined by the act of "ruin-gazing," which refers to the affective contemplation experienced by an observer of ruins. Numerous ruin-thinkers describe this experience; for instance, Georg Simmel writes that "the aesthetic value of the ruin combines the disharmony, the eternal becoming of the soul struggling against itself,

with the satisfaction of form, the firm limitedness, of the work of art" (23), while Denis Diderot claims "[w]herever I cast my glance [in the ruin], the objects surrounding me announce death and compel my resignation to what awaits me" (22).[2] To gaze upon a ruin is to be confronted by feelings and meanings. The observer experiences a temporal puncturing or distortion in which the whole, intact structures that the ruins used to be are still possible to imagine or recognize (Dillon, Introduction 11). This is the act of reading ruins in a cultural context. In many ways, ruins are defined as much by their state of decay, erosion, or damage as by the way that it affects us to look at them.

This paper discusses how navigation as an act of play produces unique meaning and affective experience when it is performed in a ruined virtual space. To that end, I engage in a close-reading (or close-playing) of both the ruins and the act of navigating them in the game *Celeste* (2018).

Developed by Extremely Okay Games, *Celeste* is a 2D side-scrolling adventure platformer and a Gothic bildungsroman that deploys Jungian concepts like the Shadow as narrative tropes.[3] Players take on the role of the protagonist, Madeline, as she attempts to climb a fictional version of Mount Celeste.[4] Navigation by jumping, climbing, and dashing is the method by which players access meaning in the gameworld. The ruins exteriorize Madeline's psyche and reflect her fractured sense of Self,[5] which underlines Jacques Derrida's claim that "[r]uin is the self-portrait" (43).

Ruins feature in four main sections of *Celeste*. Chapter 1 is set in the Forsaken City, an abandoned urban environment of skyscrapers, while the locale of Chapter 2 is an underground temple, referred to as the Old Site. The Celestial Resort, a deserted hotel on the mountain is the setting in Chapter 3, whereas the events in Chapter 5 take place in the Mirror Temple, an ancient temple that magnifies the Mountain's power to access the subconscious of those who climb it, thus allowing Madeline to pass into the Mirror Dimension. Each chapter is divided into distinct "rooms" that contain unique jumping puzzles that must be completed by the player to advance. In Chapters 2 and 5 the ruins that Madeline enters are connected to her subconscious therefore most explicitly representing the function of the ruins in shaping the affective experience of the game. Navigating them becomes not just an exercise in the player's physical dexterity and mental acuity, but also one in their capacity to read and comprehend Madeline's internal ruined landscape. The player is invited to become directly involved in Madeline's struggle to jump, dash, climb, fall, (and die) her way through a representation of herself. The pleasure of this process is a direct result of the relationship

created between the ruins and the act of navigating them; in other words, navigating the ruins produces meaning out of the pleasurable struggle to play out Madeline's psychotherapeutic journey.

Ruins are culturally and historically affective spaces that produce novel experiences when they become the site of play. Navigating the ruins in *Celeste* becomes the act of self-healing and gamifies Madeline's journey into herself. I argue that *Celeste* mobilizes the tradition of ruin-gazing to provide a metaphor for self-exploration and then crucially transforms the psychoanalytic "cure" into a gamified experience. Analyzing navigation and ruins as mutually constitutive elements of video games substantiates that video games bring together physical, mental, and emotional processes. Actions such as navigation expand upon the possibilities historically offered by ruin-gazing. Ruins situate actions, including navigation, within a recognizable cultural context that changes the significance of those actions. Analyzing ruined spaces (and player action within the ruined spaces) helps to reveal complex meanings and values that are unique to the narrative and gameplay of a video game. I will show how in *Celeste* the ruins reflect Madeline's sense of self, while the player's actions reveal the value of repetitive practice in the process of self-healing.

Virtual ruination

While ruins in video games have historically been examined as navigable spaces for active participants, my work differs in its focus on the interaction between ruins and navigation. Ruins feature as narrative and ideological spaces: however, they also function as highly affective territories that intersect with the pleasure of play. Robert Yeates explains their presence in video games as "rich narrative landscape[s] . . . which allow players to explore post-apocalyptic worlds" (119). He interprets them as objects which players observe and interact with for narrative and ideological purposes (145). While acknowledging the uniqueness of the "intervention of the player" (145) in the virtual ruined space, Yeates emphasizes that ruins in video games offer the opportunity to navigate "speculative ruins" (145), meaning imaginary ruins that do not exist outside of the virtual space. The ruins in *Celeste* are an example of these kinds of ruins. Inspired by Yeates's call for further study into what he aptly names "the preponderance in video games of [ruins]" (121), I will conduct an extended close-reading of what navigating ruins involves and produces in *Celeste*.

The representations of ruins in video games do not merely replicate the cultural history of ruins as objects but they expand on those possibilities

by offering spaces of play where a player's action changes their relationship to the space. In the same tradition as the eighteenth-century folly, virtual ruins seek to recreate the affective experience of ruin-gazing as aesthetic. But unlike the decorative folly, players are invited and even required to interact with the virtual (ruined) spaces. Interacting with virtual space takes the form of play, and I would argue that navigating virtual space is a foundational act taken by a player that constitutes the act of playing a video game.[6] Pete Etchell proposes that "moving visual units" are required for something to be considered a "true video game," even if more static precursors, such as Bernie the Brain's light display of Tic Tac Toe, do exist (21–22). Some of the earliest video games, for instance *Pong* (1977), *Space Invaders* (1978), *Pac-Man* (1980), and *Donkey Kong* (1981) (Hansen), focused almost exclusively on movement and navigation as their primary gameplay. This history demonstrates that navigation is essential to how numerous video games generate meaning and how players can access and experience that meaning.

Navigation gamifies virtual space. Through navigation, players become entangled both with their avatars and with the game's environment since pressing the buttons that cause their avatars to move, grab a wall, and begin to climb, means they are imperfectly touching what their avatars are touching and awkwardly moving through what the avatars are moving through. Daniel Vella calls this "the embodied ludic subject-position" (4), which is to say how "an 'I-in-the-gameworld' [the form 'I' as the player take in the game] is established for the player, as a subjective existence to which experiences of, and actions towards, the gameworld are attributed" (13). Furthermore, Brendan Keogh argues that "[t]hrough an entanglement of eyes-at-screens, ears-at-speakers, and muscles-against-interface, we perceive videogames as virtual spaces consisting of objects and actions with texture and weight" (4).

Play is not an innocuous activity. Miguel Sicart explains it is "dangerous" in part because it is "not necessarily fun. It is pleasurable, but the pleasures it creates are not always submissive to enjoyment, happiness, or positive traits. Play can be pleasurable when it hurts, offends, challenges us and teases us" (3). I use "play" in Sicart's understanding as pleasure is not necessarily restricted to positive experiences. Since ruins often exist as evidence of catastrophes, failures, negligence, or decay, and even deaths, they are always potentially spaces of negative affect. Or, as Emma Fraser describes it in regard to post-apocalyptic urban ruins: "in the moment of ruin, the utopian dreaming of the past is revealed as such, showing 'precisely this dream as a dream' to a waking humanity, looking not only backwards at a past

suddenly clarified in ruins, but also the truth of the moment in which they awaken" (185). However, ruins are not exclusively sites of dread and oppression as Diderot reveals "[i]f I feel safe there, I'm freer, more alone, more myself, closer to myself" (22). In the Romantic tradition of ruin-gazing, the goal was to seek contemplation as a kind of intellectual or emotional pleasure (Dillon, Introduction 12). When navigation in video games turns ruins into sites of play, those potential affects become accessible in a new way, and become part of the pleasure of playing. The player is invited to access these virtual ruined spaces through their entanglement and ludic subjectivity with their avatar, much like the ruin-gazers of the eighteenth-century folly, and is also affected by them.[7]

The act of navigating video game ruins qualifies as an act of reading them.[8] Moving through a ruin changes the nature of the relationship between the player and the virtual space as opposed to simply looking, since the player touches the ruins, albeit in a manner mediated by hands on keyboards or controllers as well as avatars on the screen. By enacting agency[9] in this way, the player goes beyond the tradition of merely "ruin-gazing," and what is more, they are offered the opportunity not only to experience the negative affect of the ruined space but also to respond to it.[10] While players may respond emotionally in different ways, they have the opportunity to channel those emotional responses through the act of play. Playing a video game successfully—by whatever metric that game uses to measure success—requires two basic actions. First the players must interpret the signs and symbols of the virtual world. Examples include obstacles that do harm to your avatars, enemy non-player characters (NPC) who attempt to attack their avatars, and virtual objects that the avatars can interact with beneficially. The second basic action is a response to the information conveyed by those signs and symbols. Examples include jumping over harmful obstacles, avoiding or attacking enemy NPCs, and making use of virtual objects to gain an advantage. Ian Bogost claims that when a text "is a video game instead of a photograph, it is able to extend a way of looking into a way of moving as well" (74). In a game like *Celeste*, recognizing in what order to jump across platforms, which surfaces force a reset of progress, as well as accomplishing them allows the player to advance both narratively and ludically. This complete process is the act of close-playing a video game.

In *Celeste*, the ruins—specifically those of the Old Site and the Mirror Temple—tend to gesture towards the more negative affects, though not exclusively. When Madeline becomes "closer to [herself]" (Diderot 22) she is confronted by her own pain and propensity for self-harm. Until she can

achieve individuation, the ruins reflect a hostile and cruel psychic landscape. Players are invited to take responsibility for that individuation. The player's ability to demonstrate their proficiency at reading virtual ruined spaces, and then navigating them successfully, metaphorizes Madeline's cathartic effort. As each successive ruin further clarifies the metaphor of Madeline's self-harm, represented by the increased hostility of these spaces towards her, it becomes apparent that Madeline's adherence to a regime of self-reliance hinders her efforts at self-healing. Madeline cannot resolve her psychic turmoil by herself, so the player is invited to enact and form mutually beneficial partnerships. This entanglement with Madeline's metaphorical psychotherapeutic journey ensures that the player's pleasurable experience is entwined with that of Madeline. The ruins and the process of navigating them become pleasurable precisely because of how their interaction triggers narrative and ludic catharsis.

The Old Site: getting attached to the struggle

Madeline's journey to climb Mount Celeste, even though she is not an experienced mountain climber, comes from her desire to escape a powerful but ambiguous sense of anxiety that she is a failure. This anxiety becomes manifested in an initially antagonistic in-game character referred to as Part of Me, but affectionately called Badeline by the *Celeste* community. Badeline bursts from a mirror as a literal Shadow of Madeline, which pursues her throughout the game. On her journey, Madeline encounters other characters struggling with their own anxieties, like Theo, a social media obsessive, and Mr. Oshiro, a ghost haunting an abandoned hotel. In the game's conclusion, the player's actions allow Madeline to reintegrate herself with Badeline and form a mutually supportive community with the other characters.

In *Celeste*, the Old Site metaphorizes Madeline's loss of personal support and the pain that accompanies it. Madeline visits the Old Site ruins in a dream. They are not created from memory because she has never been there before. Instead, they symbolize Madeline's psyche, representing her own inner world or perception of herself. The ruins represent her Derridean self-portrait. The choice to have Madeline's inner world represented by ruins—as opposed to some other viable metaphorical spaces like a forest, an ocean, a desert, or even an intact building—musters certain affects and traditions of thought. A ruin implies a formerly intact structure, even if no such history exists within the virtual space. It is the evidence of some form of failure that an unknown and unspecified event may have caused.

Furthermore, a ruin implies that an effort was made to build a structure that was lost in some devastating way. In this case, it refers to the loss of the relationship Madeline had with her ex-partner.[11] The failure of that relationship has resulted in psychological turmoil for Madeline, which produces the fissures in her psyche and sense of self, leading to her being persecuted within the ruins by her Shadow, Badeline. Before Madeline wakes up from her dream, she has a phone conversation with her former partner that ambiguously describes how the end of their relationship caused a loss of support for Madeline, which is metaphorized in the literal loss of integrity of the architecture of the Old Site in Madeline's mind. The ruins symbolize Madeline's wounded psyche and pain; thus, her trauma is virtually represented for the player.

Further reflecting Madeline's pain, the Old Site is located underground. This subterranean location exemplifies both Madeline's attempt to protect herself from the dangers of the climb that awaits her (a journey downwards to mirror her fear of the ascent upwards) as well as a plunge into the secrets of her inner self. It is at the bottom of the Old Site ruins that Madeline finds a mirror which allows Badeline to manifest herself with a body given to her by the Mountain. Like secrets underlying Gothic texts, Badeline is a part of herself that Madeline rejects. Madeline's fears are externalized and made manifest both in the architecture and the Shadow that is born there. With reference to the significance of tunnels in the works of Gothic authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Sofia Lee, literary scholar Catherine Redford points out that the "underground tunnels and chambers hide all manner of secrets. Often dark, claustrophobic, and labyrinthine, these spaces reflect the fears and oppression of those who inhabit them . . . terror at being followed is externalized in [the] underground surroundings." Like the underground tunnels of Gothic texts, the Old Site is dark, claustrophobic, and labyrinthine, and Badeline literalizes the terror of being followed by mirroring exactly Madeline's every move. Madeline cannot kill Badeline. *Celeste* is not a game of survival where the manifestations of the subconscious can be destroyed. *Celeste* is a game of readable spaces where the player expresses their comprehension of the space through pure navigational gameplay. There is no fighting or killing, only Madeline's and the player's capacity to read and move through the ruins successfully.

While jumping, dashing, and climbing are all necessary to navigate the ruins successfully, there is a fourth element crucial to navigation that is foregrounded in the Old Site: dying. In *Celeste*, death is not a punishment, but part of the process, as it is a common mechanic or mode of ludic engagement

in video games. However, in *Celeste* dying takes on a particular significance because the game links the death mechanic to the metaphors and themes of Madeline's psychotherapeutic journey. Death forces the player's exposure to the ruins, thereby a confrontation with the negative affect it communicates about Madeline's sense of self. It is both inevitable and necessary from a gameplay perspective. Every time the player misjudges the physical dexterity or mental acuity needed to complete a combination of jumps, dashes, and climbs to complete a room, Madeline dies. Every time players make human errors, Madeline dies. When players hesitate because they have reached a new part of the jumping puzzle, Madeline dies. Yet no matter how many times player actions result in Madeline's death, she always respawns at the start of the room in a matter of seconds.

Nevertheless, there are consequences of these failures as the player loses time. Further on, one must start over from the beginning because *Celeste* requires players to complete each room in its entirety to move Madeline's respawn point forward, and there are no mid-way checkpoints to reward partial completion. The player may also experience frustration, anger, annoyance, and self-deprecating amusement, which Patrick Jagoda identifies as *Celeste*'s "affective difficulty" (201). Arguably, the "pleasure" of playing this video game involves experiencing unfavorable emotions as well. However, this frustration becomes part of the pleasure of success when it is finally achieved, a contradiction described by Jesper Juul as "the general paradox of painful art" (115). Incidentally, success is always possible in the game as no room in *Celeste* is designed to be unbeatable. Instead, the purpose of death is to slow the player down so that they can get to know the virtual space and train their body to react to it appropriately.

In other words, death of the avatar or the failure of the player are essential to learn how to navigate *Celeste* successfully. Many definitions exist for the process of learning to play a game. Keogh suggests that the body must learn the "rhythms" (153). Flow, a psychological state "in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter" (Csíkszentmihályi 4) is another and arguably more common term. In video games, flow refers to varying degrees of concentration and immersion in the performance of play. When a player is focused on the game world and the events taking place therein to the (partial) exclusion of their immediate material world surroundings they are in a state of flow. Braxton Soderman praises games that choose to disrupt or trifle with flow (14). Much of *Celeste* is a process of the pleasurable struggle to find flow. While there are players who seek so-called perfect runs with no deaths, getting to this point involves training and

perfecting their physical dexterity and mental acuity. However, that training and practicing, unavoidably, involves failure.

Flow is elusive in *Celeste*. To achieve it, the player must first attain a certain amount of hand-eye coordination, physical and mental memory, and familiarity with the virtual space.[12] The player must also struggle with how the game mechanics at their disposal interact with the virtual space where these in-game actions must be performed. In this way, *Celeste*'s narrative and ludic elements are synergized. As Madeline struggles narratively with her own fear of failure and inadequacy, the player is invited to struggle ludically against challenges that will result in a repeated failure. When the player overcomes the challenges of a given room (or an entire Chapter) by learning from a repeated failure, Madeline's narrative and character growth progresses. The gameplay requires the player's physical body to become responsible for the success or failure of Madeline's virtual body as it navigates the gameworld. The entanglement is both physical and emotional since the player physically acts to achieve results in the gameworld, and in so doing they are encouraged to develop an emotional investment in Madeline. This process of involvement is accentuated because the virtual world the player navigates is a representation of Madeline's ruined psyche.

As part of that struggle, the ruins and Badeline (who is born from the contact made between Madeline and the ruins) try to harm Madeline because they are reflections of her own pain. As a result, when the player navigates the ruins, it is both an effort to help Madeline avoid injury and an attempt to mend the damage that has already been done to Madeline's psyche. Ultimately, Badeline does not wish to hurt anyone, but the self-doubt and anxiety that she represents are unavoidably damaging to Madeline at this stage of her psychic turmoil. When Madeline reaches the bottom of the Old Site ruins, Badeline attempts to convince the protagonist to give up on her quest to reach the summit of Mount Celeste. After Madeline refuses to heed the warning to abandon her quest, Badeline says "Let's go home together," which does not sound like a threat but a supplication, and the player regains control over Madeline. What follows is a series of rooms the player must complete while Badeline chases Madeline, which always involves moving upwards out of the ruins. Badeline perfectly duplicates all the actions the player takes. If Badeline touches Madeline, Madeline dies, and the player must start the room over again.

Many of the rooms in *Celeste* require the player to double-back on parts they have previously traversed to complete them, thus increasing the risk of accidentally bumping into Badeline. The ruined rooms of the Old Site

require the player to plan their movement carefully and to make a deliberate and well-timed use of platforms and walls to cross over hazards while not bumping into Badeline in the narrow, enclosed spaces. At certain points the player also must hit switches scattered across rooms so as to open the path forward. All throughout making mistakes is possible. A player's mistimed jump leads to Madeline landing on spikes. If the player fails to take Badeline's path into account, Madeline will bump into her and she will "die." Yet, with each death comes new knowledge. The player can use the walls and platforms to set up loops that Badeline will have to follow, giving the player time to properly execute the jumps and dashes that are necessary to proceed. A player only needs to get each room's route right once. The ruins stop being an obstacle and start functioning as an aid. When the player needs to hit three switches in a room to open a door, they can reach them because of ruined walls, crumbling platforms, and cracked floors. While gazing upon the ruins produces a sense of foreboding and dread, the ruins are not a threat but the evidence of Madeline's unresolved pain that, through the player's capacity to navigate it, becomes a process of self-healing.

Jumping in between crumbling platforms, climbing cracked walls, and dashing over exposed spikes turn out to be the means of Madeline's self-healing. The ruins reflect Madeline's loss of self-confidence, and navigation becomes the means of responding to and even overcoming that lack of confidence, for, as much as Badeline's motives are not as sinister as they might first appear, Badeline is still wrong. Madeline may not be a mountain climber at the start of the game, but she can grow into one if the player does not give up. Madeline's inner self may be in ruins, but she can become whole again if the player navigates her out of them. The fact that there is a way out of the ruins gives hope for rejuvenation and even though the path might be challenging, it exists. Madeline's success is dependent on the player's continued efforts to complete the game. Her narrative journey towards a healthy re-integration with Badeline is also dependent on this success. Thus, the interaction between the ruins of the Old Site and the player's act of navigating those ruins actualizes Madeline's journey toward self-healing for the player. In other words, ruin-navigation produces a unique pleasure specifically because it represents Madeline's psychic integration, although it remains thematic only. Madeline's individuation becomes a matter of the player's capacity to train their eyes and body to contemplate ruined spaces and then navigate them. The ruins are thus a space of pleasurable struggle produced by the specific combination of ruin-gazing and navigating.

The Mirror Temple: trespasser in my own world

The Mirror Temple in Chapter 5 is a metaphorical ruined space, which confronts Madeline with how she has adopted a distorted understanding of herself. Rather than a dream, the Mirror Temple acts as a gateway to the Mirror Dimension, a space that (literally) reflects Madeline's unconscious. The Mirror Temple functions as a reflection of Madeline: the walls of the ruins are actual mirrors that reveal an image of herself. The mirrors, however, are cracked, crumbling, and covered in grime in their ruined state. Because of the ruination Madeline can only see a distorted view of herself, the cause of which she is unable to identify.

The Mirror Temple ruins reproduce Madeline's own hostile and self-destructive patterns of thought. In many ways the persecution she experiences in the Old Site ruins anticipates the elements of Madeline's psyche that are represented in the Mirror Temple; thus, the metaphors become clearer and she moves closer to full self-apprehension. For instance, the Mirror Dimension contains quasi-Lovecraftian monsters that appear as floating heads with many eyes and tentacles coming out of the back. Called Seekers, these monsters are reminiscent of the Freudian unchecked Id, or the pre-Oedipal/pre-social Self, given their purely instinctual behavior and (self-)destructive aggression towards Madeline (Freud 103–104), or in other words, the so-called Life instinct (the player/Eros) versus the "manifestation of a death instinct" (147) (the Seekers/Thanatos). The player is briefly given control of a Seeker and can experiment with the monster's movement: learn its capacity for vertical and horizontal movements, test the range and speed of its dash attack, and see which environmental objects it can destroy (dirt walls) and which ones it cannot pass through (walls of shimmering light). By giving the player control of the Seeker and allowing the player to navigate a small virtual ruined space, the player is briefly entangled in the monster, making it clear that it comes from Madeline's mind.[13] Then the monsters become hostile upon spotting Madeline and launch themselves through the air at her, killing her when they touch her. Furthermore, the narrow corridors, tight vertical shafts, and twisting hallways of the ruins become covered in red tentacles and jagged red crystals, which kill Madeline on contact. The Mirror Temple translates Madeline's distorted perspective into this hostile environment. As another Derridean self-portrait, the ruins project back to Madeline her mind as a dark, hostile, suffocating, and, most importantly, isolating environment. This is a dramatic extension of the self-harming thoughts that Madeline encountered in the ruins of the Old Site.

The reason for complicating Madeline's self-persecution is her erroneous belief that her self-healing will be achieved solely through individual prowess. Rather than rehashing the psychotherapeutic metaphors of the Old Site, the Mirror Temple demonstrates Madeline's cognitive change, which, however, has given rise to a new difficulty. The Old Site reflects Madeline's pain over the loss of support from her romantic partner, whereas the interim levels exhibit her flawed attempt to recover from that pain by growing entirely self-reliant. Madeline confirms that "I don't need your help. I'll do this alone" when Badeline refuses to help her in the Mirror Dimension. But the player is aware that Chapter 5 is the second time that the game centers on Madeline's attempt to help another person. In Chapter 3 Madeline tries to help Mr. Oshiro restore the ruins of the abandoned hotel by removing the clutter. She becomes overwhelmed trying to complete the task alone and inadvertently drives Mr. Oshiro deeper into his self-loathing depression. Contextually, Madeline has already failed to take on a difficult task single-handedly. Her belief in self-sufficient strength turns out to be self-destructive. Thus, Madeline's conviction that she must do everything alone develops into a new form of self-harm. Consequently, Madeline's unhealthy perspective manifests as the hostile environment she encounters in the Mirror Dimension. Because *Celeste* is a single-player game by design—the player is wholly self-reliant and no second player is present to offer aid during gameplay—tension begins to form from the player's actions in the gameworld causing Madeline unintended further pain.[14]

However, the tension created by the player's actions inadvertently causing Madeline harm is relieved when the player discovers that Madeline's metaphorical psychotherapeutic journey through the ruins of her psyche cannot progress without Theo, the social media obsessed fellow climber she has befriended during her climb. From a ludic perspective, *Celeste* appears to extol the self-determination and individuality of both Madeline and the player because they are taking on the challenge of climbing the mountain alone and playing the game alone. Success for both Madeline and the player comes down to physical dexterity to succeed. However, the player's attempt to control the Seeker, a self-reliant metaphor for trying to control the Id, fails and the Seeker becomes a new threat to Madeline. On the other hand, Theo, who is not an aspect of Madeline, provides the opportunity for genuine partnership. Once Madeline locates Theo, she finds him trapped in a crystal and must carry him through the remaining rooms of the Mirror Temple so that she can escape. Theo is not autonomous—being trapped in a crystal he cannot take any actions on his own—yet he helps. Theo can be picked up,

then held or thrown, whereby he interacts with objects in the world just as Madeline does, so he can be flung against a switch to activate it. The player can even hurl him at the Seekers directly to defend Madeline. Theo is also required to open the door at the end of each new room after he is found. He may be isolated from the ruins in his crystal, but he can still affect them. In other words, Theo's presence directly helps Madeline to move through her own fragmented sense of self. Rather than empowering or self-actualizing, Madeline's self-reliance manifests as the labyrinthine ruins found in the Mirror Dimension where she is trapped and isolated. Theo allows Madeline to escape from that mentality through their mutual support and aid.

In the final rooms of the Mirror Temple, the goal is still to escape, but the player has the added difficulty of bringing Theo along. Each failure reinforces the importance of reaching and keeping Theo. The goal set by the game remains the same, which is to complete the level and chapter. But the process of achieving it is changed by how the ruins expose Madeline's self-harm and the navigational gameplay reorients the player to address it. The final message is that the player needs Theo, that is, the aid of another person.[15] Since the player cannot leave any room without Theo, the ruins make Theo essential to Madeline's escape, thus to her psychotherapeutic journey, as well as for the pleasure of playing the game. The game orients the player to maintain that investment by centering the act of carrying Theo within the matrix of actions that are taken in navigating the ruins. The act of navigating the ruins thus becomes a tension between an individual struggle (the player's efforts to navigate around the ruins and the Seekers) and interpersonal support (Theo's necessity to the player's ability to progress forward). In this way, ruin-navigation in Chapter 5 foreshadows the game's concluding scenes in which Madeline forms a mutually supportive community with the other characters from the game (Theo, Mr. Oshiro, and Badeline included). Once again, the ruins represent a space of pleasurable struggle as gazing upon them affects the player with a sense of isolation and hostility, while navigating the ruins offers release from that tension through companionship and cooperation.

Conclusion

The interaction between the ruins of the Old Site, the Mirror Temple, and the navigational gameplay in *Celeste* has unique affective consequences for both Madeline and the player. The player's experience of failure, frustration, and struggle when navigating the ruins is entangled with the process of Madeline's psychotherapeutic self-healing. The aesthetic of

catastrophe, dread, doubt, pain, collapse, and more is mobilized by the virtual ruins of the gameworld just as the follies of the eighteenth century brought this aesthetic to the aristocrat's garden. The player gains a privileged access to an ostensibly harmless (virtual) space that is nevertheless characterized by her gazing upon the ruins to experience the vast potential of both beneficial and defeatist affects. Meanwhile, the player's failure to respond to the virtual world encourages the development of the necessary bodily dexterity and perceptual acumen to complete each room. This physical/cognitive improvement stands in for the cathartic journey of *Celeste*'s protagonist. While *Celeste* is by design an individualistic experience as a single-player game, the struggle for self-healing is not unidirectionally aimed at producing the self-sufficient individual. In other words, though navigating the ruins involves a personal struggle, the importance and value of others cannot be rejected.

To gaze upon a ruin is to be confronted by a variety of feelings that can range from productive self-affirmation to melancholy or oppression. To act within a ruin is to bring your agency to bear on those emotions. Ruins in video games offer the opportunity to respond to the affective experience of ruination. By playing in the ruins, a player of video games can experience pleasure within a more complex matrix of emotion that leaves room for the value of both positive and negative affect. As the Old Woman NPC in *Celeste* puts it: "Funny how we get attached to the struggle." The ruins of *Celeste* function as symbolic spaces replicating Madeline's sense of self, thus confronting players with her ruinous self-portrait. Consequently, for Madeline the journey in and through her psyche is physically arduous, emotionally challenging, and lonesome at times. But Madeline's reward for persevering is a triumphant sense of accomplishment, a return to wholeness, and the emergence of a reciprocally compassionate community with the friendly NPCs she encounters on her journey. Through the player's entanglement in Madeline's quest and their function as the locus for Madeline's action, the player is invited to share Madeline's exhausting, formidable, and solitary journey. As a result, they also share in the rewards for success, albeit mediated by the virtual form and accessed through hands on keys and controllers and eyes on screens. The history of ruin-gazing has given rise to a legacy of artistic depictions of ruination that function as an affective space. Representations of ruins in video games expand on this artistic inheritance through the introduction of play. Thus, navigating the representations of ruins in *Celeste* offers players affective entanglement with spaces of personal unease, physical struggle, and, ultimately, narrative and ludic catharsis.

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Notes

1 Follies were essentially fake ruins. They were intentionally constructed for their aesthetic appeal in British and sometimes French gardens or on estate grounds. As Dona Guimaraes puts it, "A nicely contrived ruin gave a touch of Arcadian splendor or a shiver of Gothic gloom to the 18th-century British squire who wanted to be in the forefront of the new fashion for The Picturesque" ("Exploring English Follies"). For more on the eighteenth-century folly, I recommend the "The Whimsical World of Garden Follies" by Robert Khederian, "Follies in English Landscape" by David Ross, "English Garden Follies: Enchanting and Enduring" by Terri Robertson, "The Eighteenth-Century Taste for Follies" by Philip V. Allingham, and *Follies: An Architectural Journey* by Rory Fraser.

2 Other ruins thinkers who focus on the significance of looking upon ruins and the mental or emotional affect they invoke include Andreas Huyssen in "Authentic Ruins," Walter Benjamin in "On the Concept of History," Jacques Derrida in "Memoirs of the Blind," Magali Arriola in "A Victim and a Viewer: Some Thoughts on Anticipated Ruins," and Rebecca Solnit in "The Ruins of Memory."

3 The developers at Extremely Okay Games did not consult a professional when creating the psychological world or narrative of *Celeste* (Grayson). This is important because it firmly places the psychological elements of *Celeste*'s Gothic narrative in the history of pop-Jungianism, which often simplifies Jungian archetypes and deploys them as tropes.

4 Located on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, Mount Celeste is the mountain's unofficial name. The mountain has no official name, though it is located at the northern end of Rees Ridge.

5 Part of Me (Badeline), for example, is quite explicitly presented as Madeline's "Shadow." In Jungian terms, the Shadow is a part of the Self that "challenges the whole ego-personality" (Campbell 145).

6 I do not wish to discount the strong tradition of text-based games or textual adventure games, but simply to acknowledge that the trajectory of video games has placed a particular emphasis on visual movement in video games, though the text-based call-and-response style interfaces found in games like *The Sumerian Game* (1964) and *The Oregon Trail* (1971), appear and reoccur.

7 Even earlier than Vella and Keogh, Michael Nitsche gestures towards this idea in his book *Video Game Spaces: Image, Play, and Structure in 3D Game Worlds* when he says, "We [the players] are not analyzing the events [of the game] as neutral onlookers but share the space with [our avatars]" (10).

8 In this context, I use *reading* to mean the act of accessing meaning and understanding from and through the act of play.

9 In her book *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, Janet H. Murray argues that "one form of agency . . . is spatial navigation" and that it "allow[s] us to experience pleasures specific to intentional navigation" (129).

10 This understanding of player action in ruined virtual space enriches ideas first put forward by David Chandler in his 2015 article "Video Games and the Aesthetics of Ruins."

11 The reason for their separation is left ambiguous. This allows the break-up to act as a blank slate and offers players the chance to project their own emotional experiences as part of their singular embodied ludic subject-position (Vella 5) with Madeline.

12 It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the ways in which players of video games improve their skills over time. Let it suffice to call upon Elizabeth F. Loftus and Geoffrey R. Loftus from their book *Mind at Play: The Psychology of Video Games* who claim "that we can continue to improve is a feature of the human motor system that is particularly felicitous when you are becoming skilled at a video game since, as pointed out earlier, most video games are programmed to keep getting harder and harder as you keep getting better and better" (66).

13 Or, to put it in terms Vella would use, the parameters of how the player understands their singular embodied ludic subject-position in Madeline briefly changes (the Seeker is still part of Madeline, so the subject-position remains singular).

14 There is a mod for *Celeste* entitled "CelesteNet" which introduces an online multiplayer option for people to play through the game together ("CelesteNet"). But other than that, the game is designed as a single-player experience.

15 This analysis follows from and agrees with the work of Blakey Vermeule (2011) on how fictional characters foster genuine feelings of attachment from consumers. In this case, players care about Theo and the other fictional characters, just as Madeline does, because their subject-position entangles them in Madeline's narrative and the feelings and relationships she develops with these other entities.

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The Ludic Impact of Horror Games on the Body: *Until Dawn,*
Amnesia: The Dark Descent, **and** *Alien: Isolation*

Victoria Hawco

_____***HJEAS***

ABSTRACT
Horror video games create an enhanced sense of fear compared to film and television of the same genre due to their use of ludic elements. These ludic elements, specifically haptic game design mechanics, play conditioning, and the coding of the games themselves all bypass the screen and controller to impact the body of the player. Understanding affect as the relationship of the body to the world, video games are therefore a strong affective medium for the horror genre.

Three aspects enable video games to have this strong impact: haptic game design mechanics, play conditioning, and game coding. Using the controller as a threshold object, video games physically interact with players to create a horror experience that compels the body to mirror the fear on screen. Additionally, horror games condition players to play them in a specific way to heighten tension and deny control. Finally, the coding of horror games can create obstacles that deny player control and create an environment of fear.

The aim of the essay is to explore the effective use of all these elements and mechanics in three games: the 2015 game *Until Dawn*, the 2016 horror game *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, and the 2014 game *Alien: Isolation*. (VH)

KEYWORDS: affect theory, horror, video game studies, ludology, survival horror, game mechanics, play conditioning, coding

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A popular trend in the YouTube gaming community features two journalists for Polygon playing the survival horror video game *Outlast 2*, with one participant connected to a heart rate monitor ("Outlast 2 With Simone And Jeff"). As one player is hooked up to the monitor, the other, who holds the controller, asks: "Do you think anything's gonna happen as I crawl out of this fence?" The heart rate monitor spikes from the mid-80s up to the mid-90s. The jump in heart rate represents an increase in anxiety in the watcher, who anticipates something jumping out as the game character begins to crawl through the fence. Yet, nothing happens. The video game character finishes crawling, stands up, and—controlled by the player—begins to walk away. The heart rate on screen drops a little but is still quick and fluctuates up and down as the flashlight bounces around the screen.

Outlast 2 is one entry in a long line of video games in the horror genre which have experimented with gameplay mechanics that act on the body directly, working in concert with the other elements of atmosphere, visuals, and sound to create a ludo-consonant experience of horror. From buttons coded to specific in-game actions, to the vibrating of the controller, and even the motion-sensing gyroscope of the controller, horror video games are designed to produce fear and nervousness within the body directly together with the general trappings of the genre. Video games, unlike their other on-screen counterparts in film and television, have a tactile and bodily dimension, while the ability to tap into that from the mechanics of the game can produce highly affective experiences, as affect involves the relationship between stimuli and the body.

Though the horror video game genre has been present through the last forty years of game history—emerging perhaps as early as 1982 with Atari's *Haunted House*—numerous more recent games focus on using game mechanics to produce a sense of ludic affect to enrich the horror experience. As video game hardware has evolved over the decades, controller design and the coding of games systems have enabled video game developers to fulfill video games' ability to be a highly affective medium, and the most affective form of horror as a genre. Video game developers designing in the horror genre can code games that use haptic response technology such as vibrating controllers and motion sense feedback to heighten the different senses of fear that horror games create. Haptic feedback, gameplay mechanics and game design, as well as atmosphere all work in tandem to reinforce the sense of horror both in terms of genre and feeling. Specifically, *Until Dawn* (Supermassive Games, 2014), *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* (Frictional Games, 2016)*,* and *Alien: Isolation* (Creative Assembly, 2014) utilize video game mechanics along with atmospheric elements to create an embodied, affective sense of horror. These three games each showcase different aspects of ludic affective gameplay to particularly strong effect. *Until Dawn* uses inventive haptic controls to compel the player to feel the panic of the avatars on screen. *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* uses atmosphere and the flow of the gameplay to condition the player to increase the game's affective sense of fear. *Alien: Isolation* uses AI coding to create an antagonist that maintains tension, seeming to react to the player's actions. In doing so, these three games prove that by using ludic mechanics video games can create a heightened sense of the horror genre and affect the players.

On affect

  Horror games manipulate players through a strong sense of affect, specifically by utilizing ludic game mechanics that bodily connect the player to the horror on screen. To understand how this is done, I will first examine critical understandings of affect theory, and how they are applied to video games. Affect theory concerns emotions and their transposition in the body. It is a case of taking in stimuli from the world, filtered through the lenses of biology, culture, and experience, and producing actions and reactions. However, in connecting biological responses and the filters of culture and experience, affect becomes slippery. As Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth remark "[a]ffect arises in the midst of *in-betweenness*" (1). They describe affect as an extension of the body into the world, marking "a body's belonging to a world of encounters" (1) and characterizing it in terms of action and reaction. Thus, as Tanya Krzywinksa aptly sums up, affect "is best understood as *potential*, the force that produces sensation and which grows in intensity to prepare the body for action" ("Gaming Horror's Horror" 294).

  The fuzzy middle space between connection and disconnection with regards to emotions, the body, and action is where affect lies, and where horror as a genre can take advantage of it to affect players even further. Bernard Perron considers horror "an extended body genre" ("The Survival Horror" 141), a statement that is furthered when examining horror games, as video games require a physical connection of the person to the game console. Horror gaming acts in this space between the body and the machine. To Dan Pinchbeck, horror gameplay has two levels of affect, namely the biological and felt reactions to stimuli, and a cultural reaction derived from established frameworks of living and moving in the world (84–85).

  Aubrey Anable argues that video games and affect theory are "related historical and intellectual projects" (xi), in which both are understood as structures of feeling (xii). Further, affect theory as applied to video games provides a way "to read across code, images, and bodies without reducing video games to either their representational qualities or their digital and mechanical properties" (xvi). Affect, through its connection to video games, treats the body as a form of mediation, in which the world is felt and acted on and within. Anable specifically uses the term affect "to refer to the aspects of emotions, feelings, and bodily engagement that circulate through people and things" (xviii) and is "the embodied capacity to feel" (xix).

  When thinking of horror games as an experience that requires the mediation of the player's body, affect is an important dimension. In horror gaming, players are moved emotionally by the experience to feel a range of

physical responses. Affect is crucial for examining how horror games are uniquely positioned to impart feelings of fear to players compared to the passive experiences of watching a horror film. Not only are the visuals and sounds of horror games stimulating, but they require a physical interaction of the body to play, and therefore demand a closer, affective connection of the body to the horror experience. Video games reduce the affective distance between the experience and the player. Here, Pinchbeck's separation of affect to the physical stimuli and the cultural response and Krzywinksa's understanding of affect as leading to action are most pertinent, as horror games act physically on the body through their ludic game design mechanics. Though the cultural and aesthetic aspects of horror reinforce this, it is the physical dimension that is most important when considering the relationship between horror, gaming, and affect, as it is the physical dimension that sets horror games apart from other horror experiences.

Video games and affect

Video games can and do have an affective dimension to them. Vanus Vachiratamporn states: "[T]he form of gameplay where the player's current emotional state is used to manipulate or adapt to a game scenario is commonly referred to as affective gaming" ("Towards the Design" 576). The ways players must manipulate controllers and approach gameplay additionally cause the body to mediate the elements of horror to enrich the player experience. Horror as a genre is at its most successful in gaming because both horror and playing video games require a connection of the body to the material. They mutually reinforce each other.

Video games act, as related to television and film, through plot, visuals, and sound. Atmosphere is particularly important in horror gaming and will be a key factor in establishing its affect, as atmospheres of horror—all visual and auditory elements of the game that the mechanics of the game do not impact—can trigger feelings in the body such as disgust and excitement. The use of lighting and shadows, music, sound effects, voice acting of the game characters, and the animated visuals all factor into the atmosphere the game creates. In horror games, lighting is a key element of priming the player for the experience, in which the player can anticipate the kind of experience they will have through visual and auditory storytelling.

However, video games are at their most affective, and therefore impactful, through the mechanics of gameplay. The mechanics of gaming are a spectrum including which buttons create what in-game actions all the way to larger strategies for approaching gameplay, but here I more narrowly refer

to how the player manipulates the controller to act in the game, and then how the game reacts to the player's actions. Video games thus constitute an interactive medium in which the stories being told are changed based on a dialectic relationship between the player and the game, mediated through a bodily dimension in the form of the controller. Video games are an affective medium since they require physicality. Anable writes at length on this idea of the bodily interface with games. She views games as affective assemblages in which touching a game is "an intimate encounter" (38). Although simple button presses produce complex actions on screen, there is a sense of what Laura Marks calls haptic visuality, in which what is seen is also felt (3). In the first instance, as I present in the case studies of games *Until Dawn* and *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, atmosphere helps prime the player to understand the kind of experience they are participating in, and therefore creates a sense of anticipation for hallmarks of the horror genre, such as violence, jump-scares, and the supernatural.

Preceding players' immersion and affect through gameplay is their immersion through visual elements, and in particular the avatar that the player controls. By avatar I refer here to the narrower definition meaning the "[g]raphical representation of the user in an online forum" (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 324). Though many video games use avatars to connect the player to the game by allowing them creative control over the appearance of the avatar, here I refer to the pre-existing designed characters that the player controls, with agency only over his/her in-game actions, and no control over the avatar's appearance. Due to the innate immersion of video games as a participative medium, the players can "experience the story directly through their avatar" (Habel and Kooyman 1), therefore the function of the avatar within the game affects the player and primes them for the gameplay experience by giving them a person with which to identify.

Researchers studying video games differ on how the use of perspective in video games changes the sense of affect. Chad Habel and Ben Kooyman argue that the use of a first-person perspective is an immersive and engaging approach, which lets the player see through the eyes of the avatar. They state that the first-person perspective could increase the player's connection with the digital avatar (6). Theoretically, the use of the first-person fully immerses the player in what the avatar sees and does and would heighten all the experiences the avatar undergoes. However, the opposite can also be true. The third-person perspective can create an extended body (Habel and Kooyman 7), in which the player feels more affected when they see the body of the avatar acting and being acted upon. Third-person perspective, Perron states, "intensifies the corporealized sensations" ("The Survival Horror" 132).

Additionally, Maral Tajerian asserts that video games using a third person perspective have a heightened ability to affect players via mirror neurons. In brief, mirror neurons are brain cells activated when a person witnesses another either perform an action or have an action performed on them, activating a sense of empathy and sympathy as the brain produces an emotional reaction to the sight. I believe that players who witness the full body of the in-game avatar will feel a stronger empathetic connection than in a first-person perspective. In horror gaming, where the use of violence is prevalent, players playing in a third person perspective are deeply affected by witnessing the avatar acted upon with violence or moving in scary and suspenseful atmospheres. Anxiety, suspense, and fear can all be mediated through the body by witnessing another undergoing the same. Seeing emotions in the avatar can help to produce mirrored responses in the player. The players' experience is made more impactful by their identification with the avatars, which is further enhanced through ludic affect and gameplay design.

The affect of horror

Horror is an affective genre. Horror is built on shock, fear, and disgust, and these feelings can freeze our body or compel it forward (Perron, "The Survival Horror" 121–22). At the same time, these feelings affect the body. Horror and affect theory are closely connected, as they both concern the relationship of the body to the world. Horror lives in the in-between space that plays with cultural expectations and bodily feelings. Transgression is determined by culture, but the way its spectacle affects people has a distinctively corporeal aspect to it. Horror thus hits on the in-betweenness that Gregg and Seigworth emphasize (1).

Horror games can make people feel actual physical symptoms in reaction to fear. Vachiratamporn et al. studied subjects who played horror games and paid specific attention to the subjects' heart rate, skin conductance (sweat), and various metrics of brain activity. The results substantiate that horror games scared the players, and the fear was felt in the body ("Towards the Design" 577–79). Noël Carroll asserts that the fear felt from what he terms "art-horror," or horror in fiction, is not performative but genuine, and evokes a deep connection to the body. Horror is not just a genre, but a feeling, bringing with it a physical state (24–25). The physical state is prompted in part by a connection to the human characters in horror fiction, since when they are scared, readers too physically feel that they are scared (35). Carroll states, "[W]e share with characters the emotive evaluations of monsters as

fearsome and impure . . . and this causes the relevant sensations in us" (53). Christian McCrea sums up horror and games' abilities to affect us: "[G]ame horror's ability to overwhelm us, its tangible and tactile power, is measured by our quickened heartbeat, the sweat on our skin, and our silent shout" (220).

I find it important to make a distinction between the different fear responses that test subjects and researchers have used on horror, affect, and horror video games. In "Towards the Design of Affective Survival Games," Vachiratamporn differentiates between anxiety, suspense, and fear, in which horror games seemed to rely on creating the first two responses, and in which test subjects self-reported that the elements that produced anxiety and suspense were most effective (576). Similarly, Tajerian maintains that "games that raise the player's anxiety actually sensitize them to danger."

The idea of "priming" or sensitizing players to an experience so that they are more likely to feel fear when it is prompted comes up frequently in literature on horror gaming and will also be integrated in my analysis of the selected horror games. Here I refer to anxiety as the general state of unease in which the player understands that fear is possible, while the atmosphere, in general, creates a lower level of a fear response. I take suspense as the state of anticipation when the player feels tense because they expect to have a scare at any moment. I associate the response of fear with panic when the player is overwhelmed and lacks complete control over their responses. This tends to be associated more directly with the fight or flight responses, in which the player must act to accomplish something in the game but may struggle to do it if they are overcome by fear. This reaction is created commonly in the horror gaming experience. As gaming requires player action to proceed, the ability to physically scare players so that they struggle to act is seen as a powerful expression of the horror genre. Horror games utilize gameplay mechanics to trigger this response in players. Other researchers identify slightly different stages or progressions of fear responses (Vachiratamporn "An Analysis of Player Affect" 44), but for this article anxiety, suspense, and fear or panic are the most suitable for analysis.

In looking at how horror video games develop a sense of affect, I have identified a few key factors including the mediation between impotence and agency, the use of atmospheric elements, ludic mechanics, and haptic responses. By *agency* I mean the twofold abilities of the player to act through the avatar in a way that it is not in a pre-rendered cutscene, and second, the ability of the player to perform within the game to have an impact on the game space regardless of the scripted endings of games. Habel and Kooyman

define agency in terms of gameplay as mechanics that allow creative or restrictive use of agency within normal gameplay parameters (8).

The strongest sense of powerlessness as opposed to agency in horror video games comes down to the presence, or lack, of combat. Many horror games remove the ability for the player to have his/her avatar fight back and restrict gameplay options to running and hiding when dealing with enemies. The inability of the avatar to fight back in horror scenarios can generate a mirrored feeling of impotence and stress in the player. Additionally, many horror games employ depleting health—or sanity, as in the case of *Amnesia*—mechanics. These mechanics further incentivize players to flee and hide from dangerous encounters to preserve their resources, which can feed into a growing feeling of helplessness. Habel and Kooyman state that the restricted use of camera angles, in which the player cannot alter the position of the camera depicting the action, as well as the use of limited lighting further contribute to feelings of impotency (8). The player cannot control what they can see, thus their lack of accurate knowledge about the surroundings builds tension. The difficulty lies in allowing the player to manipulate the avatar and environment while not allowing them so much agency as to reduce the potential for fear by eliminating threats. Krzywinska poignantly illustrates the affect derived from this balance: "[T]hrough the juxtaposition of being in and out of control, horror-based videogames facilitate the visceral and oscillating pleasures and unpleasures of anxiety and expectation. The interactive dimension heightens this fluctuating sense of anticipation" (21).

Horror games rely a great deal on atmosphere for prime players to become receptive to panic. In terms of atmosphere, three key elements are of evident importance: lighting, sound, and overall aesthetic. With reference to the seminal game *Alone in the Dark,* Guillaume Roux-Girard states that the main use of lighting is "to create a dreadful atmosphere in which each bit of space may contain an unpleasant encounter" (161). The use of lighting, or more specifically, the use of lighting to create *shadows*, creates a suspenseful atmosphere based on the unknown. The player is primed to expect the unexpected and is forced to peer closer to make out every detail, further sensitizing them to possible jump-scares.

Sound can also create nervousness based on anticipation. Sound has the ability to "tap into the emotional responses in a way that is extremely powerful, yet subtle enough to escape our conscious attention" (Ekman and Lankoski 181). Many games use sound cues as shorthand for the player to know that something dangerous is expected so that one must be prepared to either run or hide. In *Alien: Isolation*, the motion detector—the player's only

advanced warning that the invincible Alien is coming towards them—beeps when it detects nearby presences, which eventually takes on a menacing quality. This frightening sound compels the player to pay close attention to the auditory aspects of the game, which further primes them for fear. The warning sounds in combination with creepy or ominous music are accentuated, therefore they have a substantial impact on the player.

Finally, overall aesthetic functions as a key element in establishing an atmosphere of horror to affect the player. Anable asserts that though the aesthetic is usually linked solely to images and artistic styles, there is also a definite interactive element to it (120). Aesthetic aspects may impact the physicality of players directly. For example, many horror games rely on dark lighting to create a gothic atmosphere. However, due to playing games on screens, darkly lit horror games often compel players to turn out the lights in the room in which they play, thus darkness enfolds them in their real environment. As a result, the horror aesthetic leaks into the environment of the player.

Ultimately the most effective ways horror games affect players is via ludic mechanics and haptic inputs. By mechanics and haptic inputs I mean how the game is designed and how the controller must be manipulated to effect change within the game. Closely related is the literal physical interface of the player with the controller. Taking the realm of the haptic and tactile dimension first, Michael Nitsche states that the controller functions as a "threshold object" (206). As the body controls what happens on screen through mechanical inputs of the controller, the player is literally able to connect to the action on screen. Games emphasize the bodily connection to the screen further by applying the rumble feature in modern controllers. In correspondence with certain kinds of action on screen, the controller rumbles, creating a physical bond between the player and the avatar. The rumble of the controller engages the body in the suspense and action on screen (Taylor 52), enriching the potential for an affect of horror in which the characters feel the tension both emotionally and physically. When referring to the video game *Resident Evil* (Capcom, 1996), Laurie Taylor remarks that the game includes the rumble feature to mimic a fast-paced human heartbeat (52). The physical response directly affects the player by demonstrating what they should feel, which in this case is a fear response represented by a racing heart.

The other ludic mechanics of horror games that create an affective sense of horror are more varied and complex. For example, depleting health and sanity mechanics change the ways players approach gameplay to ensure

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they are as enmeshed in the atmospheric horror elements as possible. In *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem*, as the avatar's sanity decreases, bugs may start crawling over the game's screen, obscuring the player's vision and hindering their ability to process information and react accordingly to succeed at the game. Consequently, monitoring sanity is crucial to the ability for players to succeed. To see these mechanics at work and see how their ludic aspects most potently create an affective experience, I have selected three horror games that are emblematic of the three key ways ludic mechanics can be implemented.

Haptic feedback and *Until Dawn*

The definition of operant or play conditioning is important for further discussion of the ludic affect in the ensuing analysis of gameplay. I specifically rely on Daniel Vu's identification of operant conditioning from the work of psychologist Burrhus Frederic Skinner for the purposes of analyzing video games. According to Vu, operant conditioning can be applied from psychology to the study of video games to demonstrate that "the correlation between the numbers of times an action is executed is dependent on if that action is rewarded or punished" (2). Vu cites Skinner's term operant conditioning to make an argument regarding how video games discipline players through their game design. In horror gaming, game developers rely on this method of conditioning to guide play to increase the affect of horror. For example, by rewarding the character for playing the game quickly and frenetically with success or extra resources in the game, the game developers positively reinforce and encourage the player to play in that same style more frequently, which can impact the overall themes the game imparts on the player. The design of these games disciplines players to approach gameplay in a specific way to emphasize nervousness and panic.

Until Dawn is a horror game developed as a choose-your-own-adventure survival horror experience, styled with references to classic horror films. In the game, the player controls eight different characters who have all journeyed up to an old winter cabin for the anniversary of a friend's death. While there, they are terrorized by masked killers and strange monsters, and the player—navigating the eight characters—must make snap decisions to ensure that as many of the playable characters survive as possible, while trying to decipher the mysteries of the story.

The game—set entirely at night, creating a spooky atmosphere of uncertainty—frequently provides lighters and flashlights, which the player can move by shifting the controller around, giving them a limited sense of

agency within the dark, and connecting their real body to the action on screen. This sense of connection through the controller means that when violence happens on screen, players are already strongly connected to the physicality of the avatars. The aesthetic of the game is reminiscent of slasher movies, and the sets and avatars are rendered in fantastic details as the game developers use motion capture technology to animate the characters according to a realistic aesthetic, including every panicked expression. Recalling the use of mirror neurons in horror game design, by playing in third person with such realistic looking avatars, the player is able to connect strongly to the horror experience on screen.

From a game mechanical perspective, *Until Dawn* also utilizes the PlayStation DualShock controller to produce a haptic connection. The controller vibrates throughout the game to connect the player to the action and horror on screen. The DualShock touchpad on the PS4 controller is also used throughout the game to interact with objects within the game world. This sense of physical interaction, through moving the controller's gyroscope to move a flashlight and using the touchpad to flip pages in a book, connects the player to the game world corporeally, evoking that sense of controller as the threshold object.

Until Dawn is most potent in affecting the body by using its mechanics to act affectively in two primary ways, playing on both the flight and then the freeze responses: the use of quick-time events, and the "Don't Move" mechanics. Both haptic mechanics emphasize the powerlessness that the game establishes through removing the ability for the player to fight back against threats. Quick-time events in games refer to moments of action in which the player is prompted to press specific buttons with a short timer. In *Until Dawn*, quick-time events are frequently used during chase sequences. The avatar, being chased by the killer, must run through the house, and the player must press buttons to leap over obstacles. Failure to do so can result in the character being killed on screen. The use of accompanying music coupled with fast motion induces tension in the body, while the need to accurately manipulate the controller means the player must be reactive. As a player, I found my heart racing, my hands sweating, and my muscles locked up as I attempted to focus through the panic. The player is rewarded for fast and accurate actions and punished for being slow, which conditions the players to act quickly and compels them to feel a mirrored response of panic to the running avatars.

Until Dawn makes unique use of the PS4 controller's internal gyroscope to connect the player to the horror on screen, ensuring the horror

genre affects the body directly. During the horror sequences, the characters frequently hide in closets or underneath furniture, and the player is prompted: "Don't Move." As the game explains, the player must hold the controller still—with the internal gyroscope reading all motion—for the avatar to be motionless and quiet. Failure to do so alerts the enemy to the player's location and results in death sequences that are stressful and scary to watch, recalling the affective nature of third person avatar design. The game developers have created a haptic mechanism in which the horror leaks into the physical world, into the body. The need to be physically still in the game involves the body in all dimensions. It compels the player to lock their muscles, which increases bodily tension. As the game mechanics affect the body, forcing the player to sit in the scare, they create the response that the horror material aims to achieve: panic, tension, and fear. Due to the use of ludic haptic mechanics, *Until Dawn* is an incredibly impactful horror experience, bypassing the screen to affect the player's physicality directly.

Play conditioning and atmospheric design in *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*

Amnesia: The Dark Descent also combines both ludic mechanics and atmospheric elements to create an affect of horror, though this is done to the greatest impact through play conditioning. In the game, the player controls a man named Daniel, who awakens to find himself in a large, gothic castle, with no memory of himself or how he got there except that he must journey deeper to kill a man named Alexander. As Daniel makes his way down, he encounters monsters and horrible sights, and through diary entries and flashbacks, Daniel begins to remember what has happened.

The castle is dark and ghostly, and from the beginning the game's setting is supernatural. Doors open on their own and in places a strange red muck covers the surface and harms the player if they touch it. However, before the game loads, *Amnesia* gives the player directions on how to play it. In doing so, the game provides an obvious form of conditioning, as the game communicates an authorial intent on how best to play it to enjoy its core themes. Upon starting a new game, a text screen reads: "*Amnesia* should not be played to win. Instead, focus on immersing yourself in the game's world and story . . . [t]he world of *Amnesia* is a dangerous place, and you are extremely vulnerable." The game directs players to play in a dark room with headphones on. All three of these aspects help prime the player to experience fear. By playing in a dark room with headphones on, the player is fully immersed in the game, whereby the horrifying visuals and sound may exert a

stronger impact. By directing the player to focus less on defeating enemies and more on immersing themselves in the story, and significantly by telling the player that they cannot fight, they condition helplessness in the player from the outset.

The graphical style of *Amnesia*—limited in part due to the technology with which it was made—can be characterized as gothic rather than realistic, and perhaps less immersive. However, *Amnesia* does several things to mitigate the lack of graphical immersion. The game relies on usual features of gothic horror including dark castles, distant sounds of ghostly moaning, and emotional voice acting all help to immerse the player in the story. The gothic distinctions of darkness and light forces the player to look closely at the screen which immerses them in the visuals. The use of sound editing in *Amnesia* is highly effective. The game overlays the sounds of footsteps as Daniel traverses the castle, and using headphones, you can at times hear other footsteps coming from somewhere else. The sound compels the player to listen closely to try to figure out whether the footsteps are coming from above or perhaps even behind. Additionally, in times of low sanity (a condition I will explore), Daniel's heavy breathing can be heard, while he mutters inane statements being driven out of his mind by fear.

The developers of *Amnesia* have said that the game relies heavily upon its various gameplay mechanics ("Amnesia: The Dark Descent"). The player can prompt Daniel to walk, run, and interact with objects. With no fighting mechanics, there is still a feeling of powerlessness, but the ability to tactilely interact with the world connects the body to what is unfolding on screen. For example, instead of pressing a single button to open a door, the player must press a sequence of buttons and use the analog sticks to do so. Although the player has no ability to fight back, they can still accomplish tasks and progress through the game, which is reinforced throughout the game in terms of its sanity and health mechanics.

In brief, the game employs two depleting resource mechanics to condition the player to be primed for fear. The first is health. Health is lost if the player touches the dangerous red substance or is attacked by a monster, though they can recover using items found throughout the game. Sanity is another depleting resource mechanic, and just like in the case of health, losing it has serious consequences. Sanity is decreased when the player character is surrounded by darkness or when they witness awful sights of wrongness, such as supernatural occurrences. The only ways to recover sanity are to stand in well-lit areas—which can be created using a lantern and tinderboxes—to look away from monsters, or to accomplish tasks. The sanity mechanic plays

directly into the atmosphere of light and dark that the gothic aesthetic helps establish. The player controls how much light there is, but as the lantern has limited oil and the player has limited tinderboxes, they must strike a careful balance between maintaining sanity and not running out of resources.

The sanity mechanics also help reinforce the balance between agency and impotence. When there are monsters around, the player is instructed to look away to maintain sanity. As a result, I frequently found myself having to stare at a wall to maintain sanity. However, when doing so, I lacked awareness of my surroundings, including the monster's location. The sense of helplessness is emphasized by Tajerian, who writes that "some may remember locking themselves in a closet, or hiding in a corner staring at a blank wall for several minutes, because you're convinced that if you move, even an inch, a certain and horrible death will soon ensue."

Three additional factors contribute to the complexity of the game's balance. If sanity is low, Daniel begins breathing quickly, mumbling, and stumbling. The sound and movements can alert nearby monsters to Daniel's location. To address low sanity, many players would be tempted to raise the lantern to create some light. However, in certain sections, the use of light will also attract monsters. The player must therefore carefully find moments to recover sanity and sometimes sacrifice the ability to use light in favor of staying hidden in the dark. They must sit in the scare, primed for further moments of panic. However, one of the best ways for the player to remedy low sanity is by accomplishing tasks. They can do so by solving the many small puzzles that comprise *Amnesia*'s gameplay. Carrying out tasks sets off a sound effect like a loud sigh, and sanity is recovered. The interplay of all these elements acts on the ludic flow of the player, conditioning players to approach the game in a specific way. They are incentivized both to go slowly by looking at the wall and waiting for the monster to leave, and to go fast by running away from the monsters to accomplish tasks, which inevitably create feelings of anxiety or panic in the player.

The player is thus conditioned through these mechanics combined with atmosphere, like in a particular chase sequence. Due to tight quarters, the player must allow the chasing monster to get close before running around to get away. If not done in this way, Daniel will be injured when trying to escape, hence causing visceral fear in the player. The route to success involves allowing the tension to build and the object of fear to get as close as possible to the avatar. The game conditions the player through its gameplay mechanics to build suspense, which reverberates through the body to enrich the scary, gothic, and atmospheric elements. The game rewards slowness and paying

careful attention to the atmosphere, and in times of terrible fear, requires the player not to act. This fluctuation between slow anxiety-inducing moments and quick, panicky reactions creates a strong sense of helplessness in the player.

Affective gameplay design in *Alien: Isolation*

Underscoring all game design mechanics is the actual coding of the digital games. Though most ludic mechanics are best analyzed through an examination of player interaction with the code, in *Alien: Isolation* the coding itself demonstrates how game designers are able to create a ludic experience of fear for the player. In the game—set in the world of Ridley Scott's *Alien* movies—the player embodies Amanda Ripley, the daughter of the heroine of the first film. She and her crew dock at a derelict space station and spend the game trying to repair their own ship while evading both android enemies and the Xenomorph as well as unraveling the mystery of what has happened at Sevastopol Station.

Aesthetically the game follows the original films. An excellent sound design is coupled with an interplay of harsh fluorescent lighting and darkness. From the sound of heavy footfalls on metal surfaces, to the clunky sounds of pressing buttons, they all contain a very affective and haptic dimension, relying in part on the nostalgia of sound that is connected to the *Alien* franchise. In particular, the game utilizes sound cues to enrich the dimensions of horror that the lighting and animations first establish. In the game, Amanda finds a motion tracker that highlights beings when there are some nearby. The dots that appear on the screen represent the location of enemies, and the soft beeping that emits from the tracker as they get closer takes on a menacing quality, inducing a sense of suspense as the player knows the Xenomorph is near and may jump out to attack. The use of the motion tracker is intriguing. The coding of the motion tracker identifies the lateral distance of an enemy to the player but does not indicate whether it is above or on the same level, giving him/her imperfect knowledge and therefore reducing any agency. Further, using the motion tracker means it will beep when it senses motion, and the Xenomorph is sensitive to sound. As a consequence, using the motion tracker provides *imperfect* knowledge of the location of the Xenomorph, and makes the player vulnerable. Similarly to *Amnesia*, using the motion tracker conditions the player to listen closely, and therefore they become more sensitive to the skittering and hissing sounds of the Xenomorph, which creates a richer environment of suspense.

From a mechanical perspective, *Alien: Isolation* differs from the other two case studies as it has a fully-fledged combat system. Many enemies can be defeated, which engenders a feeling of agency for the player. However, the player is unable to defeat the Xenomorph and is only able to distract it and then run away or hide. The player still lacks ultimate power. Other controls work in tandem to emphasize a feeling of helplessness. The game introduces the ability for the player character to lean and peek around corners, and the ability to press a button to hold Ripley's breath when hiding in lockers. In both cases, these two gameplay systems act on the body. When Ripley leans to widen her field of view, the player may feel compelled to do the same, and as Ripley holds her breath in the locker to avoid detection by the enemy, the player may mirror this and feel the same fear.

However, what *Alien: Isolation* showcases best through its design is a system that can maintain an affective sense of horror through the coding of its main antagonist. Developers of *Alien: Isolation* have spoken at length about the coding of the Xenomorph, which is run by two overlapping systems of AI. One of these manages the alien itself, which is partially supported by a secondary AI called the Director AI. The Director AI has constant knowledge of the location of the player and manages what the developers termed the Menace Gauge. In brief, the Menace Gauge measures how anxious the player may be by weighing the frequency and types of alien interactions, such as attacks. The Director AI's job is to keep the Menace Gauge at a certain level, meaning that if the player has had a stretch of silence, the Director AI will notify the Xenomorph AI of the player's general location so that the alien's sudden proximity will increase player angst. Similarly, if the Xenomorph has come too close too frequently, the Director AI will ensure the Xenomorph leaves to search another area, even though the Director AI knows precisely what locker the player is hiding in (Thompson). The interplay of coding ensures a ludic environment that is suspenseful for the player without resulting in a frustrating gameplay experience in which the monster is impossibly good.

Another aspect of the AI that conditions playstyle is through the alien's abilities. Following the initial release of the game, it is not immediately clear whether the Xenomorph's AI is learning from the player or not. From developer interviews, the AI controlling the alien does not learn *per se* from the player's actions, but it has been developed with coding based on progression to give the illusion of learning (Thompson). Hidden behind the coding of the Xenomorph are large branching trees of possible actions, many of which are locked, and are unlocked and implemented when certain

milestones are hit. Hidden from the knowledge of the players, the AI unlocks new abilities, giving the appearance of learning while also constantly forcing the player to adapt to new ways to approach the game (Thompson). For example, overusing specific abilities, such as that of the flamethrower, can unlock a node of coded behavior so that the alien spends less time distracted by those abilities. The more you play, the harder it becomes to rely on your learned skills. This forces gameplay to change to become more careful or more reckless in response. Either response increases the affective dimension of fear in the body of the player, as the enemy is unpredictable.

Conclusion

What horror games excel at, to a greater extent than other genres of games and other forms of horror media, is affect. Recalling affect to be the state in which the body reacts and acts in the world, mediated by stimuli and emotions, horror is highly affective as a genre. By showing violence and the supernatural, horror can rupture the mind and body through what it sees. As horror is both a genre and an embodied feeling, horror video games create this rupture frequently and impactfully. Video games offer the same kinds of visuals and tell the same types of stories as their on-screen counterparts; however, they use the additional dimensions of ludic mechanics and interactive play to enrich the experience and bring the stories into the dimension of the body. Through video games' use of haptic feedback and design, play conditioning and atmospheric elements, and game design itself through coding, video games create a significant and impactful embodiment of horror.

In *Until Dawn*, developers utilized the controller's gyroscope, quick-time events, and binary choices to create a richer sense of affect. The horror on screen resonates into the body through the controller. By having to hold physically still, players strongly identify with the avatars on screen who are hiding from a masked killer. By making snap decisions and frantically trying to press sequences of buttons, players feel the same panic coursing through the bodies of their on-screen counterparts.

In *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, the ludic affect takes a slightly more metaphorical turn while still impacting the physical body. The use of the sanity mechanics create a knife's edge of gameplay. Players must balance using light, shadow, speed, and slowness to make their way through the game, and the constant switching between those states has a noticeable impact on them. The nervousness derived from standing in a corner, being unable to look away for fear of seeing a monster, and having it impact Daniel's sanity

may cause muscles to tense up, and the player may be compelled to mimic the panicky quick breathing of Daniel. The game conditions players to sit in the scare to succeed, and the darkened atmosphere causes the horror to leak from the screen into the physical world.

Alien: Isolation shows that the ludic affect of horror starts with coding. From a more general perspective, the coding of games determines how the controllers are used; therefore, the coding determines how the body interacts with the game through the controller. But in *Alien: Isolation*, the coding of the Xenomorph conditions the player to act in a way that enriches the atmospheric elements. The player must oscillate between different gameplay styles, and function with imperfect information gained only through vulnerability. Additionally, the coding of the AI ensures that the Xenomorph is never far, and the player is therefore always primed for a scare.

Horror games function with a strong sense of ludo-consonance in which physical gameplay is in accordance with the other elements of the game, such as visuals, narrative, and overall atmosphere. The use of quick and jerky movements, the need to be still, and the conditioning of the game to change the ways players approach them all result in an environment that can quickly move from anxiety to suspense to outright panic. These physical actions cause a rupture in the body, where instead of enjoying a passive medium, the horror experience leaks from the game into the physical world. Horror gameplay heightens the player's connection to their own body in such a way that they feel connected to the horrors on screen even more strongly than when watching a film. Video games do so to such an extent that, when the game has been turned off, in the black of the room, the players see themselves reflected on the dark screen.

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Changing Rules While Playing: On the Affective Potential of In-Game Rule Changes

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ABSTRACT

The essay deals with a powerful feature of games, the phenomenon of in-game rule change or, more specifically, the occasional, even if regulated, breach of contract between the game and the player, which has a dramatic effect on the player's experience. I attempt to define this phenomenon through the concepts of operational rules, meaningful play, board state and victory points, and then review our perceptions and preconceptions of board games, which are seen in most cases as a balanced means of social puzzle solving. The examples discussed demonstrate that some modern games are far more interactive, dynamic, and less balanced than we might imagine, which makes rule changes during play possible and dramatic. (GZK)

KEYWORDS: rules, rule changes, operational rules, victory points, win conditions, board state, core loop

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> As has been noted in recent years, the world of non-digital games has experienced a renaissance both in terms of popularity of specific titles and the creation of new titles. However, critics have been less vocal about the specific dimensions of this renaissance. What kinds of games is it producing? What kinds of interactions are being generated?
>
> (Wehrle, "Affective Networks")

The unique feature of non-digital games is that they have a set of written rules that regulate the way we pass through them. Having a set of rules also means that, by default, certain things are unchanged during play. We do, more or less, the same few things throughout the game, the goals remain the same, and they do not suddenly change into something else. However, there are cases where the opposite happens. In what follows I aim to describe exactly that, a powerful feature of the game medium, the in-game rule change. There is occasionally a breach of contract between the game and the player, which has a dramatic effect on the player's experience. To understand this phenomenon, it is worth clarifying the driving forces behind the medium, the concepts of operational rules, board state, and victory points, among others,

in order to reconsider some traditional ideas and preconceptions about non-digital games, which are mostly seen as a procedural, well-balanced means of social puzzle-solving. The examples will show that some modern games are far more interactive, dynamic, and less balanced than we might imagine. Incidentally, the in-game rule change is itself a set of rules written in the rulebook, which raises the question of why we are still sensitive to it when it takes place during the game, although we are aware of its possibility.

As Bernard Suits claims, play as an activity is a rules-governed process where we solve trivial tasks by non-trivial means (37). What is more, we voluntarily submit to the artificial constraints of the game in order to act in a way that is relevant within the system.[1] Suits defines play as the counterpart of work: during play, we do not want to solve trivial tasks in the most trivial ways in the hope of obtaining the greatest benefit with the least amount of work. By entering the game, as opposed to work, we accept the rules established by the designers, a handicap system or a "selection of inefficient means" (37), to which we must adhere for as long as the game continues, or until we get out of it. The game is not primarily about how we can get through it as easily as possible; on the contrary, it is more about how we can solve its problems within the limited framework provided by the rules. It is therefore essential that the rules are clear and consistent, and that the game offers constant feedback about our choices, as incomplete or insufficient feedback leads to confusion and frustration, which results in a loss of interest.

The expectations of clear, consistent rules and constant feedback refer to a traditional idea of the game, where it is assumed that the rules are fixed and cover all eventualities. I argue that the expectation of consistent rules, although a general principle, is not always valid or exclusive. More specifically, there are cases where the events of the game lead to modifications or even subversions of the rules, which is a conscious, planned part of the game's effects and excitement. The resolution of this apparent self-contradiction and the significance of in-game rule modifications will be approached through the concept of operational rules. After discussing the relationship between operational rules and rule changes through examples, I will explore the social, metagame-related effects of the phenomenon. Finally, I argue that the in-game rule change, besides having a great emotional potential for the player, can be a useful element in our thinking about games.

Operational rules and rule changes

By operational rules we mean the rules in the rulebook, a precise description of the game covering all eventualities. In *Rules of Play* (2004) by

Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, operative rules are introduced as the first member of a three-tier system, alongside the mathematical-logical framework of the game (constitutive rules), and the unwritten rules recognized by the players (implicit rules) (130). It is important to distinguish between the operative and constitutive rules, since the former are operated and kept in mind by the player during the game (in tabletop gaming), while the latter are the responsibility of the game designer, and are related to the pre-established numerical relations and internal economy of the game.[2] The operational rules provide the aforementioned handicap system, to which we as players adapt as long as we are involved in the game. The operational rules do not explain the deeper context of the game, or the reasons behind the decisions of the designers and developers; these reasons, however, can be deduced during play. The role of these rules is to clarify the flow of the game, the objectives, and the conditions for winning, and to provide clear feedback on our decisions. Operational rules are formal statements such as "so and so happens if such and such conditions are met," or instructions such as *Fluxx*'s two-sentence rulebook (Looney Labs, 1997): "Draw 1 card per turn. Play 1 card per turn." (Certainly, the other rules of *Fluxx* are printed on the cards, which do not detract anything from the simplicity and effectiveness of the game.) Non-operational rules are the correlation of item prices in *The Sims* (Maxis, 2000), the monetary value of cards in *Magic: The Gathering* (Wizards of the Coast, 1993), or the quantity and distribution of dice in *The Burning Wheel* (Luke Crane, 2002). These correlations are part of the constitutive rules and are established during development—sometimes, as in *Magic*, along principles established by the community of players. Typically, victory conditions are also described by the operational rules, such as the 30-points victory threshold in *Root* (Leder Games, 2018), where the value itself (the number 30) is determined by the system of constitutive rules and established by the developers.

The need for consistency and clarity in operational rules is understandable: their absence leads to the inoperability of the game and, indirectly, to a loss of meaning (in Salen-Zimmerman's sense of meaningful play).[3] At the same time, in-game rule changes may seem to contradict the need for consistency and clarity of rules, but a closer look at the individual cases reveals that they are well-justified in terms of game experience and are highly codified. The need for a highly affective experience overrides everything within the game medium, sometimes even the operational rules themselves, but how this can be done is determined by other rules. The constraints or handicaps codified by the design should support meaningful

choices, and the system should provide feedback on the consequences of those choices, ensuring that new choices can be made. In *Minecraft: Java Edition* (Mojang, 2009), the player can control the rules of the game, the properties of the world, or the behavior of the opponents with simple commands, and the typed instructions have their own strict and logical consequences. With further instructions, the latter can be bypassed and so on. In this sense, operational rules sometimes explicitly prescribe how and when they are to be transgressed in order to allow the game to continue and provide a higher level of enjoyment.

Once we have familiarized ourselves with the game and its rules, we will act competently within its handicap system, even if these acts are not the most efficient from an external perspective. Drawing on our existing knowledge of the rules, we can understand the feedback from the system, and conversely, only a system with constant and consistent rules is capable of meaningful feedback. But what about those cases where the game suddenly and unpredictably changes its rules? The system then behaves in a seemingly nonsensical way, which can frustrate the players or encourage them to try again under the changed conditions. It does not take away the possibility of meaningful decision-making, but puts it on a different level, under new rules, apart from the previous process of the game.[4]

Changes to the operational rules can take several forms. A well-known case of operational rule change is the quick-time event (QTE) in modern action games, where icons flashing on the screen give instructions to move on, instead of the relative freedom that took place in an earlier state of the game. While the player was previously in control of the game, now control is taken out of their hands and they must follow specific instructions to continue, with very short reaction times. The rule change can also be seen at the hardware level: a classic example is a memorable and quite frustrating scene in *Metal Gear Solid* (Konami, 1998) where the game takes control of the player's character until they find the solution: players have to plug the controller into the other port on the console to get control back. In addition to these examples, which limit the player's agency in some way, there are several other possible scenarios. For instance, the so-called catch-up mechanisms, which address the runaway leader problem, are common. Here the game offers some way for those at a disadvantage to catch up in order to maintain the excitement of the game. Examples include rubber banding, the artificial speed-adjusting of opponents controlled by the game in *Super Mario Kart* (Nintendo, 1992), or specific "speed bumps" in *Suburbia* (Bézier Games, 2012) designed to hold back those going too fast on the victory track.

The in-game rule change is a particularly powerful demonstration of the game medium's newfound emotional potential. During the game, emotionally involved players are shocked to find that the game changes the rules on the fly, which they experience as either an unfair or exhilarating move, depending on the context. Rather than going into the reasons behind the preference for fair play (a concept that basically falls into the category of Salen and Zimmerman's implicit rules), let us return to the question of what actually happens when some rules change during play, or when we allow the normal course of the game to be disrupted. The basic mechanics of the game assume and maintain a specific core loop, a cyclical process that runs from time to time, round to round, cycle to cycle, in accordance with the operational rules. As Jerry Momoda illustrates it in a diagram in his article, the core loop of *Pac-Man* (Namco, 1980) is: *Eat dots—Avoid ghosts—Complete maze* (see Momoda's illustration in his article). Interrupting the flow by introducing new rules greatly increases the sense of urgency and tension here: the four "Power Pellets" give Pac-Man temporary superpowers, and for a time he will be able to eat the ghosts themselves, increasing his points exponentially with each new ghost. Breaking the previous rules (or adding new ones) will bring important changes and will greatly alter the experience of the game, encouraging us to explore new possibilities, to take risks, while we are rewarded with extra points for experimentation. Arcade games in particular are effective at this dynamic; their heightened, temporary "super modes" are classic moments of in-game rule change.

Other possible tools are the introduction of alternative victory conditions: in *Root*, for instance, the game allows us to satisfy a second victory condition instead of the original one based on victory points. Another option to win is called kingmaking, where the leaderboard is decided by the players who are left behind. Kingmaking is particularly problematic in the light of our modern ideas of gaming and fair play, as it is generally considered unethical to steal victory from someone who has come out on top within the rules that apply to all of us—again, an argument that can only be familiar and relevant in the world of work, not play. The ethos of "fairness" is beyond the scope of this essay. It relates not only to the implicit, unwritten rules mentioned by Salen-Zimmerman, but also to the Victorian, didactic-moralizing tradition of play (see Wehrle's GDC presentation "King Me").

In addition to rules and victory points, core loops and meaningful play, there are other factors to be considered about rule change and its affective potential during play. In several of his essays, Cole Wehrle argues that as a game developer, his primary job is to convey a general feeling, and

to make sure that all elements of his games point towards that feeling: "So often games, especially multiplayer games, are understood merely as systems of rules. Although this proceduralist lens provides many insights into the nature of games, it tends to obscure the experiences of players and the emotional dimensions of play. Games allow us to occupy new and strange positions of affective entanglement" ("Affective Networks"). Since the affective potential of games is not negligible, designers take it into account, which largely accounts for the renaissance of tabletop games in recent years. According to Wehrle, "the chief design innovation revolves around the way the decision space of a game seeks to organize the feelings of its players" ("Affective Networks"). One of the main thrusts of today's design is to try to shape the game experience in such a way as to evoke the greatest possible emotional involvement, in line with the notion of "affective involvement" described by Gordon Calleja, who thinks that games have a "potential for a more intense emotional experience, whether satisfying or frustrating, than nonergodic media provide" (135).

Designers are looking for the factors that increase this kind of engagement, describing the different relationships we form within the game, and wondering what it is about each game that attracts us and keeps us coming back to it. Our attraction is largely unconscious and as such belongs to the realm of affect theory or psychology, but in other respects it is objectively measurable, describable, and easy to sustain. We can be attracted to a theme, a story, a setting, a mechanism or a well-timed rule, a sudden turn of the game, or an interaction between us and the system. The object of our attraction is not necessarily positive as the game sometimes forces us into an uncomfortable role or makes us do something we would reject outside the game world. To give just two political examples, *A Distant Plain* (GMT, 2013) and *Fire in the Lake* (GMT, 2014) both put the player in the ambivalent role of the US in the wars in Afghanistan and Vietnam, alongside the Taliban, the Viet Cong, and North Vietnam. The aim is not to offend or judge in either case, but to experiment within the framework provided by the game. Whatever we may think of the positions these games offer, their emotional and controversial potential is certainly powerful. To give a completely different example, in Zenobia Award finalist *Molly House* (Joseph Kelly, 2022), "players work collaboratively as gender-defying queers who secretly meet in London's 'molly houses' of the early 18th century, where they plan together and create joy in the face of opposition by the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, informers, and the real risk of arrest and death" (Kelly). In their search for "joy"—again, a difficult quality to measure—players are confronted with very different feelings than in most games with conventional power fantasies.

Victory points and affective involvement

Returning to the question of measurable play, we see that the points earned in a game are useful in determining who is winning and who will ultimately be the winner, hence the name victory points (VPs). Victory points are abstract values that are not solely related to our actions during play, although they do help us interpret the current state of the game; they have more to do with the internal economics of the game, or its constitutive rules. While playing a game, we are not only accumulating points, but optimizing, converting moves and actions into meaningful sequences, building combos for maximum gain, and points are merely the quantifiable values of the latter. VPs are an abstraction that can only be understood by the players of the game, a measure of the interpersonal capital that is built up within the game, regardless of what we are actually doing, or *feeling*, while playing (Foale uses the term "cultural capital," borrowed from Bourdieu, in connection with victory points). Over the course of a game, we often feel that the victory point is a regrettable necessity, that it justifies its existence merely by making in-game performance measurable and comparable for ourselves and the other players. Referring back to Suits, the victory point is a tool borrowed from the world beyond the game, from the world of work and quantification, and is merely there to quantify the outcome of the game, to help determine the ranking at the end.

Suits's description of games, however, does not consider the cases where the victory point is not only an abstract value or a necessary evil, but an integral part of the game. In *Android: Netrunner* (Fantasy Flight Games, 2012), a cyberpunk themed card game, VPs are tied to specific "agenda" cards as they are part of the game's physical space, and their physical position constantly changes during the game. The victory points are printed on the agendas and one player (the Corp) plays them face down with some other cards while trying to advance them gradually into points as the game progresses. Meanwhile, the other player (the Runner) has to find and "score" the agendas, which their opponent tries to prevent by all means possible. The wandering of the agendas turns the collection of points into a game of hide-and-seek, where one party desperately searches for the ominous point containing cards, while the other slowly tries to convert the value of the cards into actual points.

Doomtown: Reloaded (AEG, 2014), a two-player card game set in a fantasy Wild West, employs two interrelated variables, control and influence, which move on imaginary scales separately for each player. The game is

divided into rounds, and the winner is the one who, at the end of any round, has more control than the opponent's influence. The victory point, as such, does not exist here in its usual form either, but is transformed into two progressively changing values.

Pericles (GMT, 2017), a four-player political game about the Peloponnesian War, makes victory possible on two conditions: on the one hand, players must win the Peloponnesian War, and on the other, in order to become victorious, they must govern the Spartan or Athenian faction they represent. In playing *Pericles*, the goal is to achieve military victory against the external opponent at a time when players are better off in terms of recognition than our internal opposition. Honor is the measure of both military and political victory, and while it is ultimately what all four players are fighting for, it is not at the forefront of the game.

It is perhaps clear from these examples that victory points are not necessarily abstractions as they can be an integral part of the emotional economics of the game, and they do not necessarily lead to a banal score at the end of the exercise. Their active, dynamic values are strongly thematic, closely linked to the setting and the story, thus greatly enhance involvement in the game and the emotional identification with its roles. The conditions for winning are encapsulated in the operational rules; therefore, it is in the light of these rules that we can make meaningful decisions that are coherent, multifaceted, thematic, and relevant to winning. Victory points do not merely quantify the consequences of our decisions, but also influence our affective involvement with the game.

In-game rule changes appear to violate the contract between the game and its players for the consistency of play. Here the inconsistency arises within the bounds of the game's conventions, and it is done in a controlled way, since we are all aware of the changes that are due when they occur. What we are not aware of is the exact moment of the change and its actual consequences for the game as a whole, or the emotional impact it causes. The excitement emerges from these uncertainties. Victory points and victory itself are conventions, created by the need to evaluate and quantify, to make the game measurable and to give it a closure and, in a sense, meaning. Points and victory conditions are not particularly astonishing, but the frameworks and constraints they imply add some urgency and thrill to the game. In *The Well-Played Game* Bernard De Koven argues at length that quantification and victory itself are secondary to the elusive and immeasurable quality that "can only be measured in terms of how well we have been able to play together" (5). Whether we agree with him or not, and for our part we are inclined to

agree with him, it is certainly telling in this regard that the recent game of *Oath: Chronicles of Empire and Exile* by Wehrle (Leder Games, 2021) treats the notions of victory points and the ending in a peculiar, unconventional way, in order to enhance the experience of playing together.[5]

      Oath is divided into eight rounds. From the end of the fifth round a roll of the dice decides whether the game continues or not.[6] The solution has been criticized for its randomness, but Wehrle insists on the uncertainty. Unpredictability, he argues in his "Designer Diary 8" for the game, encourages the players to take risks, as there is an increasing chance of winning if they are well positioned at the right time.[7] The random ending of the game suggests a design ethos that is little in vogue today, and it deliberately manipulates the emotional arc of the game. The urgency caused by randomness increases the interaction, the likelihood of hasty and suboptimal moves, and the excitement of the game in general. The previous, normal level of interaction is increased, and now every single action has an actual impact on the opponents' play. To put it in another way, as Chris Batemen proposes, here "the instant a course of action evolves, structured play begins to express itself": the game moves away from the "toyplay" that was in place before and switches to a higher state, with different emotional conditions (66). The player, who is aware that the game is likely to end at a given length, now plays on a different, more intuitive and improvisational level, willing to take risks and make quick alliances, perhaps breaking existing ones, striving in all respects to be ready to win at the right moment.

Board states

      The ability to determine the current board state is also an important factor for emotional involvement and in-game rule changes. In the case of *Pax Porfiriana* (Sierra Madre Games, 2015), a game about the Mexican Revolution, while the operational rules of the game are relatively simple, it is often quite difficult to determine the board state, mainly due to the game's multi-layered victory system. The correct interpretation of the board state assumes that players see the path to victory and try to create situations to block others from that path. To put it differently, they play their own game and, simultaneously, in their heads, the games of their peers, while trying to get the others to do what will put *them* in a winning position. The opportunity to win opens up at four moments during the game, tied to four "Topple" cards. Topples allow the players to attempt coups against their common in-game opponent, Porfirio Díaz, who historically ruled the country for thirty years, and here he represents the game as our common adversary. In the

normal course of the game, players do things they do in similar games, that is, they draw and play cards, take action, build their economy and political influence, but when the Topple cards come out, they start to play a very different game against Díaz and each other.

Topples, like the other cards, can be purchased from the game's card market by anyone who has enough funds. At these moments the game halts, shifts gears, and activates a procedural set of victory conditions that have been dormant until then. When the card is bought, the following process takes place: 1) players check what the current political regime is (four of these are possible, one active at a time); 2) they determine how invested they are in the current regime (the game ties four types of "prestige" to the four political regimes); and 3) they decide whether any of them has more relevant prestige than the last two players plus Díaz (who always has two).[8] At this point, players can perform three additional actions: they can commit themselves to one possible regime in order to counterweigh the Topple attempt; they may attempt electoral fraud, increasing Díaz's virtual score; or they can "assassinate" the winning player's character with a special card played from their hand (thus weakening his or her chances for the coup). The winner is the one who has enough points to stage a successful Topple under these conditions. The coup attempt may fail due to these unforeseen events, in which case the game continues. (If the fourth Topple also fails, the amount of money accumulated by the players functions as a tiebreaker. This means that there will be games where the focus is on the economic competition, where players do not even try to win the prestige contest and they just try to make sure that no one wins with Topples.)

Figure 1. *Pax Porfiriana* in play. Source: boardgamegeek.com
https://boardgamegeek.com/image/3165127/pax-porfiriana

This description is intended to give an idea of the complex decision-making process that players face when evaluating the board state at a Topple attempt. They need to see who the potential winners are, who the actual winner might be, and what the odds of a successful coup are. Prestige, the game's closest variable to victory points, is not an objective measure in this respect, as the multi-stage win conditions make it difficult to see the actual player order or to predict the outcome of a Topple, even if we clearly see the prestige numbers themselves. The difficulty of evaluating the board state is further compounded by the game's specific perspective: the players do not belong to any team or coalition, they are simply positioned along alliances of interest appropriate to the situation at hand. Neither do they identify emotionally with their character or with the imaginary factions of the game, but they are intensely attentive to the current state of the game and suspicious of the loyalties around them.

So the occasional appearances of Topple cards indicate that the game is changing its rules, moving to another level and allowing us to win. Their very existence means that the player must be ready at any time during the

game to have the means to attempt a successful coup, and they need to know whether the others have similar means or not. The most important takeaway here is that the four Topple attempts have a huge emotional impact; the game practically stops at the appearance of a Topple card and everyone starts to calculate their own and others' chances of who might be in a winning position and what they can do about it. The rule change takes us out of the normal flow of the game, away from the action economy and combo maximization, and focuses our attention on the end.

Social aspects and metagame

In-game rule changes affect us most when they are directly linked to the conditions for winning, when we are forced into a different role, when other paths to victory open up and, suddenly, we must assert ourselves through them. A common tool in video games, when such a phenomenon occurs, is the modification or temporary withdrawal of agency; and since agency is key to meaningful decision-making in the medium of games, and through it players are confronted with the consequences of their choices, its withdrawal is equal to the interruption of the core loop mentioned earlier, or the disruption of the feedback system. Its emotional impact is particularly strong at the most intense moments of the game, in the heat of the action or during the endgame. If it happens at the full extent of our abilities, it is definitely experienced as a loss and it has an urging aspect.[9]

The sense of urgency caused by the loss or displacement of agency is not unique to video games. *Oath: Chronicles of Empire and Exile* introduces several levels of in-game rule modifications which force us to make radical and sudden decisions. It provides asymmetric roles for its players, giving them different abilities and goals, and allows them to offer new roles to each other during the game again, with new abilities and goals. It also extends rule changes and their consequences beyond the game; as individual games are structured into longer campaigns, the game-to-game alliances and factions, values, and value judgments play a substantial part in it. The rulebook of the game gives a concise summary of this metagame: "*Oath* is a game about history. It's about what gets forgotten, who gets left behind, and how power moves from one part of society to another. In each game, players will steer the fate of this land toward their own interests, affecting all the games to come" (Leder Games, 2020). The fantasy world of *Oath*, which resembles most Lloyd Alexander's *The Chronicles of Prydain* pentalogy (1965–69) book series, offers players three different roles. One of them takes on the role of the Chancellor in an attempt to retain the power they inherited from the

previous game, while the others fight against him as Exiles. The third role is played by the Citizens, some of whom act in common interests with the Chancellor, while others seek to seize power for themselves. The Chancellor can offer citizenship to one person at each turn or banish some Citizens under the right conditions, so the ratio of Exiles to Citizens is constantly changing during the game, with the possibility for the latter to exile themselves if it is in their interest. The constant changing of roles, or the mere possibility of it, adds a great deal of tension to the game; and when the change actually happens, it is experienced as an emotional climax similar to the Topple moments previously discussed. Here though, the rule change is related to the role change: while in *Pax Porfiriana* players faced the Topple crises in their permanent roles, here the role change itself causes the crisis through the implied rule change, since different rules and victory conditions apply to Exiles and Citizens. (In his design diaries and various interviews, Wehrle often talks about the problem of "empire" and the historical and political roles played by the different characters of *Oath*, with their appropriate strategies of imperial rule. On the imperial project and its gaming counterparts, see Norcia 1–49.)

Figure 2. *Oath: Chronicles of Empire and Exile*. Source: boardgamegeek.com
https://boardgamegeek.com/image/6085021/oath-chronicles-empire-and-exile

Each of the three roles has different rules and victory is subject to four different conditions. 1) The Chancellor may attempt to win early, from the end of turn five, by fulfilling the oath taken at the beginning of the game *and* rolling the target number. 2) The Exiles may fulfill the Chancellor's oath themselves, in which case the Usurper who emerges from their ranks becomes the next game's Chancellor. 3) The Exiles also have an alternative option as Visionaries: they can secretly prepare and perform a private win condition, outside the framework of the game played by the others. 4) Finally, Citizens can neither be Usurpers nor Visionaries, but as Successors they can inherit the power of the Chancellor if they fulfill the oath more effectively. The four different conditions attached to the three roles extend the original asymmetry towards the conditions of victory. And while the win conditions are simple in themselves, they differ from role to role, making the board state (and the actual roles) difficult to read. Again, as in *Pax Porfiriana*, the difficulty of assessing the board state is a parsing problem and not the result of the complexity of the rules. To complicate matters further, here the victory conditions themselves are either multi-layered or secret (as in the case of an Exile Visionary), which has a serious emotional potential as a threat to others. The game's peak moments, its emotional climaxes provided by the various end game triggers, are linked to moments of Exile–Citizen switches, to the appearance, acquisition, and play of Vision cards, and to the end-game Oathkeeper–Successor dynamic. While the interpretation of the board state is a constant part of the game, it is particularly so at those moments when the trivial win criteria are combined into a non-trivial set of possible and threatening win conditions. Although they differ from an affective point of view, and not all of the victory conditions have the same weight, they offer a broad spectrum of emotional impact and social play. In other words, while some of them are straightforward and procedural, some parts of the victory conditions provide a way to win-win arrangements, kingmaking, and other social opportunities. Built around some basic victory conditions, the design heightens the game's emotional intensity by tightening the interaction of roles and rules change.

Here, the emotional enhancement associated with victory conditions operates in a similar, albeit more complex, way as in the case of *Pax Porfiriana*. Whereas in *Porfiriana* the evaluation of the current board state and the imminent victory carried emotional potential, in *Oath* victory is partly separated from its usual function and influences the metagame. *Oath* places a strong emphasis on the metagame by embedding each session in a larger whole: a series, a "chronicle" of the game. Its metagame, like its history, is

shaped by the last winner, according to the appropriate operational rules. In this respect *Oath* as a game, like comics, lives in the "gutter," the spaces between its individual matches.[10] It is indeed a game of "Chronicles of Empire and Exile," where each game, while satisfying in its own right, makes its real impact within a campaign of subsequent games. In Wehrle's words, *Oath* is a game that remembers: "Essentially, the game uses a campaign system. But there's a critical difference. Most campaign systems have carefully scripted branches or at least a definite endpoint. Oath has neither. Instead, each game you play will alter the nature of the game. A single choice could have a consequence that ripples through dozens of matches" ("Designer Diary 1").

Wehrle also mentions three major things that will change between individual games: "the victory system, the draw deck, and the map (which also informs the available actions and player capabilities)" ("Designer Diary 1"). The evolution of the campaign is influenced by the ways of winning, as has already been pointed out. The deck is the second element of the game that changes between matches. *Oath* contains nearly 200 Denizen cards—the "actors" and "actions" of the game—of which only a small fraction is encountered per game. At the end of each match, six of the cards used in the previous game are removed and six fresh cards are added to the deck, providing relative stability and enough variety to keep the campaign going. The original idea, Werhle admits, was partly inspired by *Pax Porfiriana*, which he transformed into a quasi-campaign game with a simple house rule.[11] The outcome of each game also affects the changes to the map, the third element, which also "remembers." *Oath*'s modular map, with its three-tiered regionality, is both able to maintain a sense of "complex spatial relationships" and is easy to "save," reconstruct, pack up, and reassemble after each game (see the *Oath* Designer Diary 4). The map, the game's spatial world, is built together with its denizens, and with them the conditions for winning also change.

In addition to these three elements, there is a fourth one that evolves between matches: the social metagame. It is based on the memories of the players, on their dissensions and rapprochements during and between games, on alliances of interests and conflicts, on past grievances and victories. These phenomena do not appear merely as a frame or apropos of the game, but as an integral part of the game process. Players try to shape the political space of the game not only during games (even though they make their decisions according to these "external" criteria while playing), but also between them, in order to be in a winning position at later crucial moments and be able to

turn the game campaign into a "dynastic" series of victories. This kind of metagame involves the players in a more intense way than usual. Their positioning in the diplomatic space, their assessment and recognition of the current situation and coalitions, results in a series of loyalty shifts, a constant reinterpretation of their own and their opponents' goals not only in-game, but also in-between game sessions. Those who can correctly identify and bend opportunities to their will, who can make good use of their influence and exploit the friction between others, will run a bright course in the metagame. The game itself functions as a sandbox, an inventory of possibilities between board and denizens, operational rules and victory conditions, where players can experiment with the elements of the system to bend the game's history towards themselves, and thus write its own chronicle.[12]

A new tool to the toolbox

The most common argument made by game apologists for the medium's coming of age is its ability to make the player cry. To this extent, if this is true, games have truly grown up alongside traditional media. What is less often said about this medium, which is also true of traditional media, albeit in a different way, is that it cannot only make people cry, but also make them angry and unsure (see Juul 13), and the scale includes many other emotions as well.[13] We are used to having a limited emotional toolbox when we talk about games, mobilizing "an impoverished emotional and critical language, one that looks for big emotions in a medium that seems to traffic more interestingly in the minor affects" (Anable viii). The affective texture of a game is a mixture of many elements, of which the in-game rule change is one of the most powerful and least conspicuous.

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Gábor Zoltán Kiss, Associate Professor, Rippl-Rónai Institute of Arts and Theatre, Kaposvár researches media, participated in the re-translation of Joyce's *Ulysses* (2012), and published *Efemer galériák. Videojátékok kritikai megközelítésben* [Galleries of Ephemera. A Critical Approach to Video Games] (2013).

Notes

1 For a more detailed explanation see Kiss 9–17.

2 The constitutive rules operate under the hood, and as players we mostly ignore them. Otto von Bismarck's famous saying about laws and sausages, which presumably did not come from him, comes to mind. It is better indeed not to be there when they are made.

3 The operational rules, like the constitutive ones, can change from game to game, even after their release. Long testing sessions often lead to minor changes, which are then corrected in later reprints and patches by the developers, or by the players themselves.

4 At this point, it should be noted that in terms of in-game progression, most games seem to be characterized by in-game rule changes. What we are talking about, however, goes beyond simple progression, or increasing pace as the game progresses.

5 Using or dropping victory points is not a one-way process; the utility of abstract victory points varies from game to game. Wehrle's *Pax Pamir: Second Edition*, unlike the first, brings back the raw, abstract victory points that "allowed me to 'spend' the game's complexity elsewhere, and I decided to spend it building out the victory point system to be more dynamic and responsive to the game state" ("Designer Diary"). The benefit of victory points, in addition to the complexity budget relief, was that they acted as a useful pacing device. Wehrle adds that they simply "allowed me to extend this drama over a much larger period in the game because they could allow players to see the endgame unfold in slow motion and react to the shifting fortunes of the players" ("Designer Diary"). The latter is yet another example of how the victory point is not a necessary evil per se and is sometimes a very useful technical tool.

6 At the end of round five, players have to roll a six with a six-sided dice; at the end of round six, a five or six; and at the end of round seven, a three to six will end the game early.

7 "By not knowing precisely when the game will end, players close to victory are encouraged to stretch out to achieve it. If you know that there's a 1/6 chance that you will win the game outright if you play recklessly, it's probably worth your time to do it. If the die falls in your favor, then it creates an appropriately climatic ending to the game. And, if the game continues, the resulting game state is usually more interesting. Essentially, the uncertainty punishes conservative play." Wehrle refers here to *The Napoleonic Wars* (GMT, 2002), see Wehrle, "Designer Diary 8."

8 If the current regime is the same as the one on the active Topple card, the latter counts as 1. This last rule may seem like a superfluous detail, but it is precisely because of these nuances that a Topple phase becomes tense.

9 *Assassin's Creed's* (Ubisoft, 2007) tutorial mission played on this to great effect. After playing through the intro of the game with all their abilities, players were astonished to see that the game took away most of their abilities and reduced their arsenal to the bare essentials. The rest of their abilities were to be recovered later, as the game progressed.

10 For a detailed explanation of the concept see McCloud 60–73.

11 "Every once in a while, I would swap out some of the cards in the deck but mostly the card list stayed stable" (Wehrle, "Designer Diary 1").

12 Wehrle included a little notebook in the game in which you can write down the chronicle of the game, the course of events that unfold during the matches.

13 Finally, it is worth noting that although different media use different methods to elicit different types of emotions, many elements of playful activity are quite similar to the immersive, cognitive, and emotional processes found in other media. See Therrien 451–58.

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ESSAYS

John Everett Millais's Huguenot Pictures

Éva Péteri

_____*HJEAS*

ABSTRACT

Challenged by the artistic excellence and popular success of his early work, *A Huguenot, on St Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge*, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, John Everett Millais turned to the same theme once more. *Mercy: St Bartholomew's Day, 1572*, however, failed to meet expectations. The essay attempts to reveal certain reasons for the vast difference in the reception of the two pictures and offers a close study of the scenes and characters depicted in them as well as of the social, religious, and cultural contexts of the historical periods the pictures were produced in. (ÉP)

KEYWORDS: Millais, Huguenots, St. Bartholomew's Day, Meyerbeer, Papal Aggression, Protestantism

▼✛◤

The celebrated Victorian painter, John Everett Millais (1828–1896) turned to the theme of the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day (24 Aug. 1572) twice: he painted *A Huguenot, on St Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* in 1851–52, while *Mercy: St Bartholomew's Day, 1572* was completed much later, in 1886. Whereas the former picture won popular as well as critical acclaim, *Mercy* was found a failure by many. Millais was disappointed at the ill-success of *Mercy,* attributing it to the late nineteenth-century spectators' lack of interest in what he called a "serious subject" (qtd. in J. G. Millais 2: 196).[1] There are, however, many factors that led to the wide appeal of *A Huguenot* and to the unfavorable reception of *Mercy*. The popularity of Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Les Huguenots* (1836) and the strong anti-Catholic feelings after the so-called Papal Aggression in England in 1850 are believed to lie behind the success of the early work (see Ash 322; Boime 271–72; Bowness 129; Briggs; Warner, "A Huguenot" 99). But it may equally be due to its presentation of how love puts religious differences aside, much like what Meyerbeer's opera also focuses on. *Mercy*, which has been given far less attention, is commonly discussed as the "reprise" of *A Huguenot* (Ash 376). It is claimed to be "heavy-handed . . . both in conception and execution" (Staley 70), and "effective" but lacking "the emotional impact . . . of its predecessor" (Fleming 273). Paul Barlow

describes the painting as "a dark image of violent male urges" and contends that unlike Millais's "heroic" pictures, such as *The Boyhood of Raleigh,* it depicts "the negative aspects of the masculine vigour" (169). The blunt depiction of brute force and intolerance in this work may truly be regarded as one of the reasons for the lack of recognition concerning *Mercy.* The exploration of how it, too, recalls Meyerbeer's opera, and a close look at the setting, the depicted figures, their gestures, and facial expressions can reveal even more about why *Mercy* could not repeat the success of Millais's early work.

An overview of Millais's oeuvre highlights significant changes in his choice of themes and styles during his more than forty-year-long artistic career. He was not yet twelve when admitted to the Royal Academy's schools, where he soon became a prodigy student, gaining acclaim with pictures painted in the expected Academic manner. However, in 1848 he became one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of artists intending to challenge the artistic tenets of the Academy by adopting a new style of minute realism, often blended with symbolic references. Then, from the mid-1850s, Millais gradually turned towards melancholic subjects, often without any specific narrative content, like in the case of *The Blind Girl* (1854–56) or *Autumn Leaves* (1855–56). From the 1860s, he became a celebrated painter of sweet children—*Cherry Ripe* (1880) or *Bubbles* (1886)—and a prominent portraitist of acknowledged contemporaries like Lillie Langtry, the noted actress, or the Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson. In 1896 he was elected the President of the Royal Academy, the highest rank a Victorian painter could attain.

A Huguenot, on St Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge is one of Millais's early works, painted at the same time as his well-known *Ophelia* (1851–52), when he was only twenty-three. The conception of the *A Huguenot* already shows his growing interest in non-narrative subjects, as his original intention was to depict only "[t]wo lovers whispering by a garden wall" inspired by a line of Tennyson's poem "Circumstance" (Hunt 1: 285). But his friend and Pre-Raphaelite brother William Holman Hunt argued that "a simple pair of lovers without any powerful story, dramatic or historical, attaching to the meeting was not sufficiently important" (qtd. In J. G. Millais 1: 136).

From recollections it seems that Millais was concerned about Hunt's comments. At first, he contemplated turning the lovers into characters belonging to the warring factions of the White and the Red Roses (J. G. Millais 1: 138). Then, as it is described in the memoir of his son, he "suddenly remembered the opera *The Huguenots* and bethought him that a most dramatic

scene could be made from the parting of the two lovers" (1, 138). In the opera, the Catholic Valentine and the Protestant Raoul are caught in the religious conflict of sixteenth-century France at the time of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. Valentine is the daughter of the Comte de St. Bris, the instigator of the slaughter of the Protestant Huguenots, while Raoul is a Huguenot nobleman. In the name of king and God,[2] St. Bris summons the Catholics to set on the Huguenots and "slay them from the land" (Meyerbeer 35). He bids them to distinguish themselves with a white scarf and a cross. The scene that inspired Millais to turn his lovers into a Catholic woman and a Huguenot man takes place in the final scene of Meyerbeer's opera. It is set in the Huguenot cemetery at night, where Valentine desperately tries to tie a white scarf around the arm of Raoul to save him, but he refuses. The opera closes with the lovers being killed on the order of St. Bris, who realizes only too late that the woman he saw collapsing was his own daughter.

Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenot* is regarded as "[perhaps] the most successful opera of the nineteenth century" (Fuller). It had been performed at Covent Garden every year since 1848 with great success (Ash 322; Warner, "A Huguenot" 99). Millais, who loved music, is said to have seen a "particularly moving performance with Pauline Viardot as Valentine" (Warner, "A Huguenot" 99). Nevertheless, it seems that Millais consciously tried to distance his lovers from the opera's characters. As Jo Briggs emphasizes, by using the indefinite article in the title, the painting becomes suggestive of "a representative, even potentially shared, experience." Millais's letter to Mrs Combe (22 Nov. 1851) also underlines that the painting was, indeed, meant to be a portrayal of a common incident:

> It is a scene to take place (as doubtless it did) on the eve of the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day. I shall have two lovers in the act of parting, the woman a Papist and the man a Protestant. The badge worn to distinguish the former from the latter was a white scarf on the left arm. Many was base enough to escape murder by wearing it. The girl will be endeavouring to tie the handkerchief round the man's arm, so to save him; but he, holding his faith above his greatest worldly love, will be softy preventing her. I am in high spirits about the subject, *as it is entirely my own*, and I think contains the highest moral. It will be very quiet, and but slightly suggest the horror of the massacre. The figures will be talking against a secret-looking garden wall . . . (qtd. in J. G Millais 1: 134, emphasis in the original)

Unlike the tragic tension palpably mounting in the last act of Meyerbeer's opera, Millais's picture is peaceful and intimate. As Barlow observes, it shows "a moment of private communion," when "the lovers are cut off from any interaction with a wider world" (41). The brick wall in the background, originally inspired by Tennyson's lines, becomes suggestive of this separation: "it keeps their world enclosed and private from the external world" (Casteras 75).[3]

The plants, so minutely painted, are commonly also seen as carrying symbolic references.[4] According to the language of flowers, the clinging ivy is a symbol of fidelity (Pickles 52), representing here "the fidelity of the pair" (Ruskin qtd. in Casteras 75), while the Canterbury Bells depicted in the foreground on the left mean constancy and faith (Warner, "A Huguenot" 99). The nasturtium on the right, traditionally associated with patriotism, is usually understood as a reference to the Huguenot's loyalty to his faith (Warner, "A Huguenot" 99), or "the sorrow of departure and of unfulfilled love" (Ruskin qtd. in Casteras 75). Barlow emphasizes that according to Millais's diary accounts these details were painted prior to his decision to make the scene a Huguenot picture (6–7). Nevertheless, the symbolic connections might still be relevant, as they might have been found fitting by the painter.

Though "[a]t first glance it appears as a sentimentalized scene of young lovers in historical costume enacting a theatrical narrative" (Wolk Rager 321), the title directs the spectators' attention to the "highest moral" intended by Millais, which is the Huguenot's loyalty to his faith. His rejection of Catholicism was interpreted in the light of the religious debates and the strong anti-Catholic feelings of the mid-nineteenth century. Catholicism was gaining ground in England as the result of the influence of the Oxford, or Tractarian Movement,[5] followed by a number of conversions to Catholicism, even by some of the prominent leaders of the movement, including John Henry Newman in 1845. As a consequence, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was re-established in England, and Nicholas Wiseman was appointed Cardinal. All this was seen as a serious threat to the Established Church, and was characteristically called Papal Aggression. The early Pre-Raphaelite religious works, such as William Holman Hunt's *The Druids: A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (1850), Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (1850), and Millais's *The Carpenter's Shop* (also known as *Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1850) were supposed to promote Tractarian ideas, and the painters themselves were accused of Catholic sympathies. Millais even believed that his *The Return of the Dove* (1851), depicting the

dove's return to Noah's ark with the olive branch in its beak, was again seen by many "as emblematical of the return of all of [them] to [the Catholic] religion" (J. G. Millais 1: 135).

A Huguenot, however, made Millais's "religious position abundantly clear" (Bowness 129). And even though, as Warner writes, "most reviewers emphasised how good-looking the characters were" ("A Huguenot" 99), the picture was often seen in accordance with Millais's emphasis on his intended moral. Bradley writes that the young Protestant was regarded as "an exemplary Englishman who refuses to hide his religion even to save his life" (183), while in Bowness's view the picture suggests that "[f]aith is above love" (129).

Nevertheless, Millais's amiable presentation of the Catholic girl defies the anti-Catholic interpretation of the painting. The lovers are shown immersed in each other's gaze, and their intertwining arms form a delicate, loving embrace. Even the young man's gesture of rejecting the badge and pulling it off his arm is incorporated into the fullness of that embrace. Looking at the gentle and loving expression on the face of the girl, at her "searching gaze" (Rosenfeld 68), one cannot help sympathizing with her. Touched by her affectionate expression, George Eliot commented that "[her] face is never to be forgotten" (qtd. in Haight 30). Moreover, the intricate embrace of the couple creates an inseparable unity: she is, as Jason Rosenfeld writes, leaning into his body (68). Their unity suggests that with love and care religious enmities may be overcome. Thus, in spirit and in its claim for religious tolerance, Millais's painting is much in tune with Meyerbeer's opera. As Fuller writes about the latter: it "attacks bigotry and all futile public fervour inimical to life . . .. It pits religious intolerance and social prejudice against harmony and reconciliation."

At the same time, as Millais's picture is not an illustration to Meyerbeer's opera (Barlow 7), the painter put a quote from Anne Marsh-Caldwell's *The Protestant Reformation in France, or, History of the Hugonots* [*sic*] (1847), a recently published historical account of the massacre into the exhibition catalogue, citing the order of the Duke of Guise: "Observe, the signal—When the clock of the *Palais (de Justice?)* shall sound upon the great bell at day-break, then each good Catholic must bind a strip of white linen round his arm, and place a fair white cross in his hat" (2: 352). Reading the pages describing the details of the massacre one is struck by the irascible, vehement passion of the Catholics and the horror of the consequences:

Dreadful was the scene which ensued. The air resounded with the most hideous noises: the loud huzzas of the assailants as they rushed to the slaughter—the cries and screams of the murdered, . . . the streets steaming with blood—men, women, and children flying in all directions, pursued by the soldiers and by the populace, who were encouraged to every species of cruelty by their dreadful chiefs . . .—who hurrying up and down the streets cried out : "Kill! kill"! (361–62)

When Millais returned to the Huguenot theme later in his life, he might have had the very same account on his mind, as *Mercy* displays the extreme fanaticism of the Catholic noblemen. The idea to re-interpret the theme came to him when the Grosvenor Gallery held a retrospective exhibition of his work (January 1886), and where a number of his early paintings were put on show, including *A Huguenot*. Millais had not seen it since 1852, when it was sold to a dealer. His reaction to seeing his celebrated work again is recalled by the art critic and director of the Gallery, Comyns Carr:

> It was late in the evening when the picture arrived in its case from Preston; but Millais had waited, evidently in some trepidation as to how this first triumph of his youth would impress him when he saw it again. Its place had been reserved on the wall, and the carpenters, quickly unscrewing the case, held up the picture for the painter to see.
> Millais was standing beside me as they hurried forward in their work, and I felt his arm tremble on my shoulder during the few moments that prefaced its appearance; and then, when at last it was raised to its place he said in a voice that was half broken by emotion, "Well, well, not so bad for a youngster." And lighting his little wooden pipe hurried out of the Gallery and took his way downstairs into the street. (90)

Barlow asserts that "Millais has always been inspired by competition," and many of his "major works were responses to other recent exhibits." In the case of *Mercy*, he was challenged by his own youthful work (169). He might have recalled some of the studies made to *A Huguenot* in 1851, as some of these early drawings also feature clerical figures. Nevertheless, Allen Staley maintains that there is a "gulf" between Millais's two Huguenot pictures (70).

Mercy depicts the moment of the beginning of the massacre: a Catholic nobleman is about to set on to slaughter the Huguenots. He is urged by a monk, who is shown pointing upwards, indicating the sound of the bells of

the Palais de Justice. As a contrast to the beckoning of the friar, a nun is on her knees at the man's feet, trying to stop him, pleading for mercy. Rebecca Virag contends that *Mercy* "shows the other side of the story [compared to that in *A Huguenot*] involving the pious devotion of the Catholic who would kill for his beliefs." The blind fanaticism of the man is aptly shown by the duplicated images of the cross and the rosary: although he is wearing a rosary around his neck and a cross on his hat, he is almost trampling on the same hanging from the nun's belt. The flowers shown on the left carry symbolic meanings here, too. The passion flowers refer to the man's fervor, as well as to Christ's Passion and the blind fanaticism of his persecutors, whereas the withering roses refer to the lack of love or charity. The man's face reflects hatred and aggression, and his sword is unsheathed: he is ready to kill. Barlow observes that the hands in this painting "contrast dramatically with the delicate gestures in *A Huguenot*." The painter here "emphasizes veins, muscles and flesh" (169). Though Gordon Fleming believes that "the man has been affected by the [nun's] plea" (273), his gesture and facial expression rather suggest brutal physical force, with no trace of tolerance or understanding. He does not even look at the nun, and his steady gaze, as well as his protruding right leg are indicative of his relentlessness. All the details of the painting contradict the title: the nun's plea for mercy is unheeded. The massacre is imminent and unavoidable. The dark setting—with the door reminding the spectator of a prison cell—might refer to his delusion by his faith: he cannot see that what he is about to commit is not for, but against God's commandments.

Mercy appears rather theatrical, and in its composition it strongly recalls another scene from Meyerbeer's opera. In Act IV, Scene IV Raoul is hiding in Valentine's room, thus overhearing the Catholics' plot against the Huguenots. On their departure, when the church bell starts ringing, signaling the onset of the attack, he is desperate to go and save his friends. Valentine, however, overwhelmed with love and anxiety, tries to restrain him. In this scene in the opera as well as in Millais's painting a man is seen rejecting a woman begging him to stay, but to no avail. However, while in Meyerbeer's opera the woman's plea is denied for the sake of honesty and loyalty, and Raoul is tormented by being compelled to reject Valentine's request, in Millais's picture the nun's call is unattended, as the man is driven by false beliefs.

Millais was not fully content with the picture. He probably sensed that his reprise of the Huguenot theme would not rival the success of his early work. Before putting the finishing touches on the painting, he wrote in a

letter: "I have done the picture. That is, I have only, I hope, small things to complete it. I am sometimes happy over it, but oftener wretched" (qtd. in J. G. Millais 2: 196). His discontent with *Mercy* was reflected in the picture's critical response. As a critic of the *Magazine of Art* stated: "Sir John Millais disappoints expectations" as his figures offer "little else but meaningless violence of gesture" (qtd. in Virag).

After the exhibition of the picture at the Royal Academy in 1886, Millais disappointedly remarked: "People pass it, and go to a little-child picture, and cry 'How sweet!' Always the way with any attempt at something serious" (qtd. in J. G. Millais 2: 196). It seems that he did not recognize, or did not admit it to himself, that *Mercy* failed because of the absence of compassion rather than because of its grave subject. Looking at *A Huguenot* one is touched by the lovers' affection even in adversity. *Mercy*, however, depicts rejection and imminent violence. Furthermore, in *A Huguenot*, as Briggs suggests, Millais leaves the outcome of his narrative "open to question." While he is "lavishly specific in his vision of actors and surroundings," he "give[s] the pleasures of plot over to his viewers by suggesting rather than describing [the] outcome . . ." (Bradley 186). Even though the outcome of the Catholic nobleman's resolution to slaughter the Huguenots is not "described" in *Mercy*, the delineation of his powerful force and determination delivers a verdict that is painfully definite and fatal. In this case Millais offers no relief to the spectators.

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Notes

1 The painter's son, John Guille Millais, wrote a two-volume biography of his father. It contains several letters and diary extracts from his father: *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais, President of the Royal Academy.* 2 vols. London: Methuen and Co., 1905. Further references to this work are made as Millais, J. G.

2 King Charles IX of France (1550–1574). According to the historical accounts, it was his tyrannical mother, Catharine de' Medici, who "instigated the Catholic nobility and gentry . . . to attempt the extirpation of the Huguenots" on St. Bartholomew's Day. "[I]n the original version [of the opera, she] was to take personal part in inflaming the fanaticism of the Catholics," but her role was finally destined to Comte de Saint-Bris (Istel 89–90). Charles IX does not appear in the opera either.

3 Discussing the role of the garden wall in Victorian painting, with an emphasis on Millais's *A Huguenot* as a work that "challenged [the clichéd] preconceptions about dull courtship images by infusing new lifeblood, a powerful amalgam of love and danger, and startling symbolic realism into the otherwise dross sentimentality of [the] subject" (74), Casteras even claims that the "real subject" of Millais's picture is the wall itself (75). Apart from being a barrier for the lovers separating them from the outside world, it may also "allude to the solid resistance created by the confrontation of the two religions," or "the Protestant's unyielding stance of unassailable faith and integrity" (75). Thus, it becomes the "visual correlative of the tragic circumstances of the couple" (76).

4 The painter's celebrated *Ophelia*, painted at the same time as *A Huguenot*, displays similar characteristics: it "contains dozens of different plants and flowers painted with the most painstaking botanical fidelity and in some cases with symbolic significance" (Warner 96).

5 The Tractarians wanted to consolidate the Church of England by the revival of its, as they thought, basically Catholic character; its past enthusiasm, its rituals, and regalia. To advocate their ideas, they published several Tracts from 1833 on.

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The Stalinist Soviet Union in the Disney Animated Cartoon *Tale Spin*

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_____*HJEAS*

ABSTRACT

The Disney animated cartoon television series *TaleSpin* was released in 1990, at the end of a decade that started with an escalation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and ended in the abolition of nuclear weapons, which foreshadowed the eventual downfall of the USSR in 1991. This "adventure-plus comedy" American series successfully combines sources not only from within the studio (the 1967 Disney animated version of *The Jungle Book*), but also from adventure films outside the studio (*Casablanca*, Indiana Jones movies), and most interestingly, it weaves in a harsh parody of Stalinist Soviet Union. *TaleSpin* effectively captures the complex political climate of the 1980s–1990s by presenting the conditions of high Stalinism (mass repressions, executions, and show trials) in the military state Thembria with her Thembrian inhabitants, the anthropomorphic warthogs. The essay explores the characteristic topoi of Stalin's Soviet Union in the series with an overview of US–Soviet relationship and the general perception of the USSR in the United States in the 1980s. The essay argues that the American image of the USSR established in the 1930s–1950s was extrapolated to post-Stalinist periods of Soviet history and was still prevalent in the 1980s, thus shaping the conception of Thembria and the Thembrians. (ÁLK)

KEYWORDS: animated cartoon, Soviet Union, images, Stalinism, Cold War

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Political propaganda in animated cartoons first appeared in the Soviet Union as early as in the 1920s. The aim of these cartoons produced for domestic distribution was to shape the public thinking of citizens in accordance with the official narrative of the communist state. The imperialist West was represented as a system of oppression and exploitation of the people.[1] Following the outbreak of World War II and with the entrance of the US in the war conflict, propaganda animated cartoons were produced by major American film studios as well. Like their Soviet counterparts, the American animated cartoons were also ideologically driven since—tailored to the immediate needs of the country—they aimed at educating people on the necessity of armament, the avoidance of stock piling, and the moral victory of American democracy over the Axis powers' dictatorial regimes, thereby supporting the war efforts of the country.[2] MGM's *Blitz Wolf* (1942), directed

by Tex Avery, places the characters of the classical tale of *The Three Little Pigs* into a war situation. The Big Bad Wolf, wearing a Hitleresque toothbrush mustache and dressed in uniform, attacks the peaceful land of Pigmania and only the last little pig can defeat the aggressor with all the weapons he equips his bunker-like house with. The Academy Award winner Disney cartoon *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943), directed by Jack Kinney, features Donald Duck as a factory worker living in Nazi Germany. The country is depicted as a stern place where Donald has practically to work himself to death while he is bombarded with propaganda slogans all the time. At the end, he awakes realizing that what he has experienced so far has just been a dream, or rather a nightmare.[3]

Propaganda cartoons promote ideology directly, whereas other types of films and cartoons expose audiences to a wide range of beliefs and value systems in a more delicate yet clearly identifiable way. Though not American, an excellent example of the implicit representation of political commentary is the Dutch-Japanese cartoon *Alfred J. Kwak* (1989–1990) created by Herman van Veen. The main antagonist and archenemy of the title character is Dolf, a mixed breed of a crow and a blackbird, who has to paint his yellow beak black to hide his origin. As alluded to by his name—Dolf is a shortened version of Adolf—he is a cartoon parody of Hitler. He even establishes his own political organization named *National Crows Party* and takes power in a coup d'état, proclaiming himself emperor. Obeying the ever-necessary demands of a happy ending in cartoons, Dolf loses his power and he is justly punished.

Similarly, a mainly latent representation of political and historical issues is traceable in the 65-episode long animated cartoon series *TaleSpin* created by Jymn Magon and Mark Zaslove. It was broadcast as part of the "Disney Afternoon" program, a two-hour televised programming block of animated cartoon series that ran from 1990 to 1997.

In *The Encyclopedia of American Animated Television Shows*, David Perlmutter categorizes *TaleSpin* as an "adventure-plus comedy series," a genre that evolved in the "renaissance age of American animation" in the late 1980s. Lei Ye points out that "[i]n this period, many major American mass media and entertainment companies reinvigorated their animation branches, significantly improved the technical quality, developed more forms and genres of animation" (11). Perlmutter describes the genesis of *TaleSpin* as follows:

this was another of the company's syndicated adventure-plus comedy series, combining the standard borrowing from the studio's film heritage [Baloo, King Louie, and Shere Khan had all previously appeared in the 1967 animated version of *The Jungle Book*] with new (by the studio's standards) settings and characters. The borrowing extended to outside sources as well, from the adventure-oriented B films of the 1940s starring such aging has-been actors as Richard Arlen and Chester Morris to the comedic exploits of the Bowery Boys to the Indiana Jones movies. (624)

Unlike in *The Jungle Book*, the original motion picture, the characters in *TaleSpin* are all anthropomorphic. Baloo, the bear is a pilot of an amphibious aircraft named *Sea Duck*; King Louie, the orangutan becomes simply Louie, who owns a pilot's bar named *Louie's* located on a small island, while Shere Khan, the tiger turns into the most powerful business tycoon of the city Cape Suzette (a pun on Crêpes Suzette) where Baloo is based.[4] Apart from these three, some other important characters are introduced: Rebecca Cunningham, also a bear and a young single mother with her daughter, Molly, who takes over Baloo's one-man business in the first episode, renaming it from "Baloo's Air Service" to "Higher for Hire"; Kit Cloudkicker, a bear cub of twelve (human) years of age, who becomes Baloo's navigator, whereby a father-son bond is established between them evoking the relationship between Baloo and Mowgli in *The Jungle Book*; and Wildcat, a lion, who works as an airplane mechanic. Besides the principal ones, two groups of supporting characters also appear: the air pirates led by Don Karnage, a wolf, and the Thembrians living in the fictitious state of Thembria.

Apparently, the series is set in the late 1930s, early 1940s, as suggested by the distinctive features of Art Deco style buildings (including the one where Rebecca lives), as well as by the level of technical development: no television sets are shown, cars in the streets evoke pre-war vehicles, and the main mass medium is the radio. Nevertheless, anachronistic elements that do not fit into the period defined above—like humanoid robots in the episode "From Here to Machinery"—also feature in the series. A pre-World War II environment is indicated by the state of Thembria inhabited by warthogs, many of whom wear army uniforms, thus reinforcing the image of a military state. The country is invariably shown as snowbound and ruled by the dictatorial High Marshall, so a parallel with the Cold War—the political and ideological rivalry between the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union after World War II—and the Stalinist Soviet Union is implied. Arguably, the creators intentionally alluded to this historical era as they

affirmed it in a forum launched by the fan site animationsource.org in 2009.[5] In response to the question of "[W]as Thembria a stereotype of Russia?" Jymn Magon not only confirmed the analogy, but also explained the etymology of the country's name: "Well, definitely the Cold War Soviet Union. For those of you who lived through the Cold War (and I doubt that's very many), you'll know that there was a real 'Us' versus 'Them' attitude in the world at that time. Thus the country names 'Usland' and 'Thembria'" ("Ask the creators! Questions to Jymn Magon"). The explanation also elucidates that the writers did not intend to distinguish between the time of Stalinism (1924–1953) and the post-Stalinist period of the Cold War. Even though the series is set in a period that coincides with the era of high Stalinism, the perception of the Soviet Union in America of the 1980s was not substantially different from the one established decades earlier. For this reason, the country as depicted in the series reflects contemporary assumptions and beliefs rather than earlier historical views.

Practices and conditions in Stalin's Soviet Union are unveiled through ample satirical images verging on the absurd about the state of Thembria and its inhabitants. Though Magon unambiguously refers to the Cold War era of four decades,[6] particular features and practices of Stalin's dictatorship and Leonid Brezhnev's rule are conflated. In addition to the likeness between Thembria in *TaleSpin* and the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule, the environment, the climate, and the social conditions can hardly be told apart from those in the Brezhnev era. Even the physical appearance of the leader of the state is reminiscent of Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who was in office from 1964 until his death in 1982. Characters in power in Thembria often threaten to shoot their subordinates (and sometimes the citizens), which was a pervasive practice in the Stalinist Soviet Union during the "Great Purge" of 1936–1938, an era of political repression.[7] The autocratic head of the state of Thembria, the High Marshall shows a striking resemblance to Brezhnev, being corpulent and having Brezhnev's trademark bushy eyebrows, while the High Marshall's wife, a plump, ever-eating sullen female warthog evokes the figure of the Soviet "first lady," Viktoria Brezhneva. Brezhnev proved to be a dictator who built a personality cult like Stalin, though the persecution of people during his rule was not comparable to that of the Stalinist era. Still, the overall representation of Thembria and the Thembrians is more closely related to Stalin's USSR despite certain anachronisms like the physical appearance of the character of the Brezhnevian High Marshall.

Parallels between Nazism and (Stalin's) Communism, both being totalitarian and oppressive regimes, emerged as early as in the 1930s in the American thinking and persisted in later decades of the twentieth century, despite the alliance between the US and the USSR in the last four years of World War II. As stated by Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson:

> Americans both before and after the Second World War casually and deliberately articulated distorted similarities between Nazi and Communist ideologies, German and Soviet foreign policies, authoritarian controls, and trade practices, and Hitler and Stalin. This popular analogy was a potent and pervasive notion that significantly shaped American perception of world events in the cold war. Once Russia was designated the "enemy" by American leaders, Americans transferred their hatred for Hitler's Germany to Stalin's Russia with considerable ease and persuasion. (1046)

In the bipolar world of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the antithesis of American democracy and not only under Stalin's rule, but well after the dictator's death in 1953. Despite certain differences between Hitler's Nazism and Stalin's Communism—for instance, in the USSR, the individual was discriminated against on the basis of social class, primarily, while in the Third Reich the basis of discrimination was race—the two regimes had much in common[8]; therefore, they proved to be interchangeable in the American mind, sustaining the opposition of "us" and "them." The tension between Usland and Thembria depicted in *TaleSpin* reflects this hostility. In the series, it is Thembria that assumes the role of the aggressor—threatening repeatedly with an act of war—while Usland never acts on the offensive as she does not let herself be antagonized.

US–Soviet relationship in the 1980s

A brief overview of the political climate and some historical events in the 1980s is necessary to elucidate—at least partially—the deeply-rooted antagonism between "us" and "them," as incorporated in *TaleSpin*. The 1980s were a controversial decade in the history of Soviet–American relations, starting with the escalation of the arms race and ending in détente. When the episodes of *TaleSpin* were aired in 1990, the revived Cold War hysteria of the early and mid-1980s was a recent experience for most of the Americans. During the Ronald Reagan Administration in the early 1980s, Soviet–American relations became more strained than before. John Lewis Gaddis states:

> President Reagan in March 1983 made his most memorable pronouncement
> on the Soviet Union: condemning the tendency of his critics to hold both
> sides responsible for the nuclear arms race, he denounced the U.S.S.R. as an
> "evil empire," and as "the focus of evil in the modern world." (122)

This presidential statement—just as striking as Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton in March 1946—was made in a politically unstable period of the Soviet Union. Brezhnev had been dead for four months, the General Secretary was the seriously ill Yuri Andropov, who died the next year, and Mikhail Gorbachev, with his reform initiatives glasnost ("openness") and perestroika ("restructuring"), came to power only after the death of Andropov's successor, Konstantin Chernenko in March 1985. Though the Cold War tensions escalated until the mid-1980s, with the arrival of Gorbachev, a thaw seemed to start. The Reykjavik Summit on 11–12 October 1986 between Reagan and Gorbachev ended with an agreement on the abolition of nuclear weapons and brought the end of the Cold War within reach. According to Gaddis, the summit indicated

> the possibility that the Cold War itself—the occasion for deploying such
> vast quantities of nuclear armaments in the first place—might one day
> end, and that some of us might actually live to see the emergence of a
> new international system capable of moving beyond the condition of
> perpetual confrontation that has overshadowed our lives for the past
> four decades. (134)

Despite Gorbachev's reform efforts and the reconciliation with the US, the Soviet Union began to fall apart. The satellite states gained their independence in late 1989 and after an agony of two years, the USSR finally dissolved in December 1991.

Images of the USSR in the United States

Although there is no reliable information available on the sources the creators of *TaleSpin* used, the Sovietophobe tone of the American press and media may have added to the conception of Thembria. It is highly unlikely that scholarly articles based on facts rather than on impressionistic and stereotypical views were read by the general public.[9] The perception of the USSR in the American public thinking is investigated in Stephen F. Cohen's 1985 monographic work, *Sovieticus: American Perceptions and Soviet Realities*. In search of the root causes of the

newly emerged Sovietophobia, the author claims that a primal responsibility rests with the American media, the press in particular:

> Efforts to show both Soviet achievements and failures are exceedingly rare, whereas wholesale vilifications of the Soviet Union appear frequently. A 1982 article in the *Wall Street Journal* by the influential academic Irving Kristol, for example, informed that the Soviet system is simply a "regime of mafioso types" with "pathological" beliefs and "no popular roots." The problem is not that the opposite is true but that, as a *Washington Post* correspondent returning from Moscow concluded several years ago, "If Americans know anything about the Soviet Union, we probably know what is bad about it." (26–27)

The official narrative was not exempt from exaggerations as Cohen points out, referring to a 1982 CIA report that mentions the existence of four million forced laborers, in fact mostly penal inmates who had to work just like the majority of convicted prisoners in the US. (27). The common misconception of the contemporary Soviet Union had a long history in American public thinking as pointed out by William Zimmerman: "[s]cholars' conceptions of the Soviet system too often led them to extrapolate from the periods of high Stalinism to other periods of Soviet history" (120). This tendency characterized not only scholars specializing in Soviet studies, but the average American as well. The image of the Soviet Union in the United States based on the conditions of Stalin's era survived well beyond its actual existence. Zimmerman accurately summarizes these sentiments:

> The general picture they painted in the 1950s was of a static, self-perpetuating, totally politicized Soviet Union in which "politics" did not exist (except during a succession crisis set off by a dictator's death). The aversion to terms like totalitarianism and terror had been more than overcome. It was widely asserted that terror was the linchpin of the Soviet system; that mass purges were a permanent feature of the Soviet system; that the Soviet leader, like the Tsar, dies in office; that the outcome of a succession crisis would inevitably result in an omnipotent dictator; that (given the party-state's monopoly over the means of communication and violence) major overt dissent was inconceivable; that in foreign policy there had to be a main enemy, the United States. (120)

Additionally, the topoi represented in the series—shortage economy, bureaucracy, lack of freedom of speech—indicate that the creators had access

to sources other than the press. However, in the absence of confirmation from them (see note 5), this point remains unsubstantiated.

In accordance with the narrative outlined, the representation of the Soviet Union in American popular culture in the 1980s was somewhat stern, still farcical, and obsolete. The 1982 parody film *Airplane II: The Sequel* directed by Ken Finkelman (a sequel to the 1980 film *Airplane!* directed by Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, and Jerry Zucker) serves as a case in point. A space shuttle named *Mayflower One* carrying passengers to the recently colonized Moon becomes uncontrollable and is heading towards the Sun. In the movie, short newsreels from the US, Japan, and the Soviet Union are inserted, each starting with news on a city fire then on the shuttle in peril. While the American and the Japanese television announcers state only facts, their Soviet counterpart with a Russian accent is reading the news from his paper while a hand on the left is holding a gun to his head: "A four-alarm fire in downtown Moscow clears way for a glorious new tractor factory, and, on the lighter side of the news, hundreds of capitalists are soon to perish in shuttle disaster" (54:35–54:49). At the end of the scene, when the announcer is not visible anymore, a gunshot is heard. I deem this a false representation of the 1980s since the oppression of people—at least as it is shown in the film—ceased to exist as a practice in the Soviet Union then. Similarly, even though forced industrialization characterized earlier phases in the history of the Soviet Union, this tendency was not as dominant in the 1980s as it used to be. Such an incident may have a basis in reality, though, which can be substantiated by stand-up comedian and actor Yakov Smirnoff's jokes as well. He emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1977 and gained popularity among American audiences, mostly, with his jokes that compared the US to the Soviet Union. The three jokes below by Smirnoff echo with what is suggested by the movie scene in *Airplane II*.

> 1) In Russia we only had two TV channels. Channel One was propaganda. Channel Two consisted of a KGB officer telling you: Turn back at once to Channel One.
> 2) Many people are surprised to hear that we have comedians in Russia, but they are there. They are dead, but they are there.
> 3) In the U.S. the police shoot in the air—in Russia they shoot straight ahead, that's warning for the next guy. ("Yakov Smirnoff Jokes")

In view of these examples, it is no coincidence that the extrapolation of the conditions of earlier periods of Soviet history characterizes—though in a

humorous and inevitably exaggerated form—the animated cartoon *TaleSpin* produced in 1990. However, by the early 1990s—when *TaleSpin* was aired—the perception of the USSR as an enemy of the US had undergone a remarkable transformation due to the Gorbachev thaw from the mid-1980s. The general opinion of the Soviet Union became more favorable as the analysis of poll trends reveals. Alvin Richman asserts:

> Perceptions of a lessened Soviet threat and improved relations with the USSR are reflected in an improvement in the overall image of the Soviet Union. Gallup and ABC/*Washington Post* polls in early 1990 found about three-fifths of Americans expressed a favorable opinion of the USSR-up from about one-fifth in the early 1980s. (138)

Thembria and the Thembrians

The representation of Thembria and the Thembrians evokes common images of the Soviet Union. The state of Thembria first appears—though still unnamed—in the last twenty-three seconds of episode five. Introducing the country, this scene shows two recurring topoi closely related to Thembria: first, the eternal, savage cold and snow, second, the technical underdevelopment. A failed inventor, Professor Torque, with his malfunctioning and thus unsellable robots stands shivering at a small snowbound Thembrian railway station when a haycart equipped with massive train wheels and pulled by a hairy buffalo arrives at the station on the rails. The passengers, a group of Thembrians, descend from the cart, not paying any attention to the professor or his robots ("From Here to Machinery" 21:49–22:12). Cold and snow are typically associated with Russia in general, therefore this feature cannot be regarded as specifically linked to Stalin's era.[10] Also, partial technical underdevelopment, the coexistence of high technology, and primitive ways of agricultural cultivation characterized both the Stalinist and the post-Stalinist era. As Isaac Deutscher claims quoting from his own obituary written on Stalin's death, "[i]t is a fact that 'Stalin found Russia working with a wooden plough and left her equipped with atomic piles,' even though the epoch of the wooden plough still persisted in lingering on all too many levels of her national existence" (624).

The conception of Thembrian characters is explained by Magon on animationsource.org. To the question "What is the significance (if any) of the blue (my guess is because of the cold), Warthog design of the USSR-like Thembrians?" the following answer is provided: "Blue for cold. Warthogs because they are lumpy, ugly critters. We needed an animal that matched the

dumpling-like thinking of the Thembrians" ("Ask the creators! Questions to Jymn Magon."). Indeed, all Thembrians are of the same species, be they soldiers wearing uniforms or ordinary citizens, while other locations of the fictitious universe of the series; for example, Cape Suzette or Louie's bar are populated by various species of anthropomorphic animals. The homogeneity of Thembria's inhabitants conjures up the notion of the classless society envisioned by Communism.

Besides the High Marshall and his wife, recurring Thembrian characters include the head of the Thembrian air force, Colonel Ivanod Spigot and his adjutant, Sergeant Dunder. Col. Spigot is a short stature warthog who has a lisp and shows signs of a Napoleon complex, defined as "a theorized condition of aggressive misbehavior occurring in people of short stature" (Hermanussen and Scheffler 271). To compensate for his shortness, he is despotic to his subordinates, primarily to Sgt. Dunder, but he is subservient to his supreme superior, the High Marshall, a behavior demanded in authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, Col. Spigot's epithets indicate the practice of dictators endowing themselves with illustrious titles and names. Col. Spigot's monikers include "Tyrant of the New Territories," "Beast of the Battle of Baldoon," "Death-dealing Demon of Dimswipe" (in the episode "A Spy in the Ointment"), "The Terror of Tiny Tundra" (in the episode "Flying Dupes"), "The Scourge of Sultan's Creek" (in "Flight School Confidential"). Correspondingly, Stalin's nicknames such as the "Father of Nations," "Builder of Socialism," and the "Architect of Communism" compare to those of Col. Spigot's in grandeur and eminence. In the series, the origins of Col. Spigot's monikers are never explained, it is he who refers to himself by them so they are supposedly self-invented, while Stalin's epithets were introduced by the official Soviet propaganda.[11]

As opposed to his tyrannical and narcissistic superior, the simpleton Sgt. Dunder is not only willing to take the responsibility for Col. Spigot's wrong decisions, but also shows sympathy for non-Thembrians, including Kit and Baloo, even though it is considered as a sin in Col. Spigot's eyes. He exclaims:

> BALOO. "Say, Spiggy, the Sarge was with me. He'll turn up. He was just being friendly."
> SPIGOT. "He's not a friendly. He's a Thembrian!" ("The Golden Sprocket of Friendship" 09:47–09:56)

In light of the numerous allusions to Stalin's regime and the Cold War period in *TaleSpin* discussed here, Magon's commentary concerning the audience targeted with the series appears to be striking:

> A common phrase in TV animation is "It's for 5–12." Well, I defy you to find something a 5 yr old and a 12 yr old would agree on, but be that as it may, that's what *TaleSpin* was aimed at. . . an after school audience. Technically, it would be more 6–10, I would think but then I keep running into older folk (who were teens or adults back then) who enjoyed the show, as well. . . . Anyway, the show was intended for kid after school audiences, but I don't think we actively tried to target any one group. If the little 'uns enjoy the slapstick and the action, then they don't have to get the older concepts. . . 'til they get older.
>
> <div align="right">("Ask the creators! Questions to Jymn Magon")</div>

Besides children, the series was aimed at older audiences as well, primarily with some hints at the particularities of life in the USSR, which were not necessarily understandable for many. It is doubtful whether the average American was familiar with the living conditions in the Soviet Union at the time of the release of the series or in the pre-World War II period. It is assumed that they were not, since scarce information was available in the press or on television, whereas immigration to the US from the Eastern Bloc occurred only in exceptional cases before the mid-1970s. The breakthrough in this respect was the Jackson–Vanik amendment adopted in 1975. As Geoffrey P. Levin states,

> [a]pproved by Congress in 1974 and signed by President Gerald Ford in January 1975, the Jackson–Vanik amendment to the 1974 Trade Act denied "normal trade relations, programs of credits, credit guarantees, or investment guarantees," commercial agreements, and Most Favored Nation status (MFN) to all nonmarket economy countries that prohibited emigration, taxed emigrants, or punished those applying to emigrate. Though the amendment was written in general terms, it was specifically crafted with Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union in mind. (65)

The US thus placed an economic pressure on "all nonmarket economy countries" and on the Soviet Union in particular, to make emigration possible for the masses. Taking the opportunity, hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens, chiefly of Jewish origin emigrated, and many of them chose the US to settle. These former citizens provided their first-hand experiences of the

Soviet system and some, among them Yakov Smirnoff, enjoyed wide publicity. Whilst these accounts may sometimes be distorted or rather tinted with personal bitterness, they served as an additional source of information besides the persistent images of the Stalinist Soviet Union established decades earlier.

Topoi of the Soviet Union

Here I intend to explore the distinct topoi of the notion of Sovietness to offer a more nuanced understanding of Stalin's Soviet Union as shown in *TaleSpin*. The sense of persecution complex—which originated from Stalin, the head of the state—infiltrated all layers of society. He was diagnosed with a possible paranoia as early as in 1927. A. Mark Clarfield recalls that "[i]n his memoirs Dmitri Shostakovich tells the tale of Vladimir Bekhterev, a world renowned psychiatrist who at 70 was summoned to assess Stalin's mental condition. The good doctor described him as ill, perhaps even paranoid. And how right he was. Bekhterev died immediately afterward—poisoned by Stalin" (1488). Suspecting enemies everywhere penetrates everyday life in Thembria: upon the arrival of the Thembrian delegation at the Friendship Festival of Cape Suzette, Col. Spigot orders Sgt. Dunder to "Stay and guard it as if your life depends on it! Because it does. Remember, this is a Friendship Festival. You can't trust anyone" ("The Golden Sprocket of Friendship" 03:26–03:36).

In Stalin's era, citizens declared as "enemy of the people" on the basis of fabricated and often absurd charges were either executed instantly or transported to Gulag camps. As an example in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) illustrates:

> If a husband killed his wife's lover, it was very fortunate for him if the victim turned out not to be a Party member; he would be sentenced under Article 136 as a common criminal, who was a "social ally" and didn't require an armed escort. But if the lover turned out to have been a Party member, the husband became an enemy of the people. (65)

Despite some decrease in the intensity of despotism, political repression persisted until Stalin's death. The citizens who were sentenced to death were often shot without a trial.[12] In *TaleSpin*, threatening by shooting is a recurring detail in almost each and every episode featuring Thembrian characters. Col. Spigot regularly envisages Sgt. Dunder's execution by shooting. In the episode "The Golden Sprocket of Friendship," the reason for the planned

execution is the robbery of the Golden Sprocket, the official present of the State of Thembria to Cape Suzette.

> COL. SPIGOT. "You'll all be shot! Especially you, Sergeant Dunder. You'll have to be shot twice." (14:42–14:46)

Col. Spigot's trademark threat of shooting occurs even in his address to the Thembrian people on the change of Friday to Saturday:

> COL. SPIGOT. "Attention, all Thembrians. This is Colonel Spigot. Perhaps you've heard of me. Today is officially Saturday. Anyone who disagrees will be sent to prison. Anyone who complains will do hard labor. Anyone who sneers will be shot. Have a nice day." ("The Time Bandit" 09:00–09:21)

However, he is also a target of such threats by the High Marshall for disturbing him:

> HIGH MARSHAL. "Spigot! I told you not to disturb me. Now I have to go to the trouble of having you shot." ("Flying Dupes" 20:17–20:22)

In Stalin's USSR, the abuse and cruelty as represented in the series in a humorous and quasi-innocent form was an everyday experience for millions of people. After the death of the Generalissimus—Stalin adopted this title right after the end of World War II—marked the end of mass imprisonments and executions, even though the dictatorial political system remained the same in its essence.

The term "show trial" refers to trials held in public that have a pre-designed concept, largely on political grounds, in which the court judgment is predetermined. Show trials were held not only in the Soviet Union, but also in Nazi Germany, as well as in the socialist satellite countries after the war. The most memorable ones that received international press attention took place under Stalin's rule. As Robert Argenbright remarks:

> [t]he cases of well-known former Communist leaders in the late 1930s have long dominated our view of Soviet show trials. They constituted the most dramatic intentional representation of Stalinism, imparting both a sense of history-in-the-making on a grand scale and, as in the case of Bukharin, a glimpse of agonizing personal tragedy. It is no wonder that absorbing trials of the "Great Terror" period have inspired not only historical accounts but

also works of fiction. The "classic" show trials left an indelible impression of Stalinism but they were not entirely creations of Stalin's era. (250)

The travesties of show trials occur in two episodes of *TaleSpin*: "Flight of the Snow Duck" and "The Time Bandit." There is an implicit and deducible pun on the term "show trial" that is manifest in the inclusion of the radio presenter's character commenting on the events taking place in the courtroom right before the planned execution ("The Time Bandit"). The "show trial" becomes a "trial show."

The outcome of the trial is decided and established already at the moment of the arrest of the accused, as confirmed by Col. Spigot: "[T]rials are the one thing in Thembria that are swift and expedient. You'll have a fair trial, then be shot" ("The Time Bandit" 11:09–11:16). The reasons for arrest—Baloo, Rebecca, and Kit traveling with expired passports in "The Time Bandit"; Molly and Wildcat playing in the snow in "Flight of the Snow Duck"—may sound preposterous exaggerations of the writers' imagination. However, similar cases are depicted in a great number in *The Gulag Archipelago*.[13] The charges outlined in the courtroom in the series are no less absurd. In "Flight of the Snow Duck," Wildcat and Molly, who fly to Thembria so that Molly can finally see snow, "are charged with wanton snowball rolling, frolicking without a license, and failing to compliment the judge on his new hairdo" (07:56–08:04), as well as with stealing Thembrian snow since they wanted to take the snowman they had built back to Cape Suzette. The most serious offence, however, is free thinking, which results in a long jail sentence :

> JUDGE. "Snowman, eh? Doesn't look much like man." (referring to the melting pile of snow in a small trolley in the courtroom)
> MOLLY. "Sure he does. Here's his eyes, and that's his nose. Use your imagination."
> COL. SPIGOT and JUDGE. "Huhh!"
> JUDGE. "Imagination? That is capital offense in Thembria. I hereby sentence you each to one thousand years in prison!" (09:16–09:39)

The wave of rehabilitations of the show trials' victims during Khrushchev's Thaw era from the mid-1950s testifies to the immensity of unlawful and unjust legal procedures in Stalin's era. In "The Time Bandit," it is acutely ironic that the unimportance of truth and the state's ultimate power are uttered by the Judge in the trial:

> JUDGE. "I am not caring about truth. The state says it's Saturday. You are guilty as charged." (12:18–12:24)

In this episode two of the accused, Baloo and Kit are released; however, Rebecca is pronounced guilty as charged. This illogical functioning of the system is illustrated in the memoirs of Soviet poet Olga Ivinskaya, who was the friend and lover of Nobel Prize laureate Russian poet and novelist, Boris Pasternak. According to the anecdote cited by Ivinskaya, Pasternak's name was on a list of planned executions presented to Stalin, who crossed Pasternak's name off and said: "Leave that fool alone" (133). The fate of an individual often depended on the momentary whim of the person in charge.

The animated cartoon *TaleSpin* never presents the full prosecution process; viewers do not see the actual execution as it is never carried out, though Baloo (in "Gruel and Unusual Punishment") and Rebecca (in "The Time Bandit") are both led to the firing squad. By contrast, Thembrian prisons feature in both these episodes. "Gruel and Unusual Punishment" is set on a tropical island where Baloo arrives, thinking that he has come to the Elizabeth Tapir fitness center—a pun on Elizabeth Taylor's name—but actually, it is a Thembrian forced labor camp named Bedevilled Island Prison. He realizes his mistake well after his arrival; up to that point he assumes that the aim of the Spartan circumstances is to help him lose weight. The tropical setting contradicts the general image of Thembria as shown in the series, yet, a fitness center in a snowbound environment would not have fitted into the story of misbelief. The episode presents the common images of a forced labor camp, from a tyrannical camp commander (Warden Slammer) through different torture mechanisms—Baloo is put in a wooden box exposed to direct sunlight—to poor diet: the prisoners get steam as food. However, as Baloo's fellow prisoner, Professor Krackpotkin remarks: "You are lucky. Yesterday it was cold steam" (08:52–08:56). Serving steam as food is both ironic and scathing, yet the representation of the labor camp evokes the accounts of former inmates quoted in *The Gulag Archipelago*. The camp-like prison in "Flight of the Snow Duck" where Molly, Wildcat, and Baloo are incarcerated looks like an arctic-subarctic Siberian labor camp surrounded by a fence. The focus is on Baloo's attempts to escape. The Thembrian power is represented only by a single guard who leads the newly arrived prisoners to their barracks, welcoming them as follows:

> GUARD. "Welcome to prison camp Sunnyvale. Your barracks is equipped with the latest conveniences: cold and colder running water, good reading

light, and air conditioning. If you have any complaints at all, just tell us and you will be shot repeatedly. Have a nice day." (09:48–10:08)

A quintessential element of the USSR in pre- and post-Stalinist times was the bloated bureaucracy that characterized the new system right after power was seized by the Bolsheviks in 1917. As George G. Heltai remarks,

> [e]ven before seizing full power, however, the communists had constituted a totalitarian state in miniature within the party; and immediately after seizing power, those institutions were imposed upon the society. Communists renounced social revolution and became isolated from the masses. Placed by events above the real society, the party rulers had to construct their own social base by creating an immense bureaucratic machine. (170)

After the Stalinist era was over, state bureaucracy was among the few topics still possible to joke about, yet only under strict control. In his 1957 article on Soviet anecdotes, William Henry Chamberlin claims that "[h]umour in official Soviet publications is rationed, controlled, and directed. Therefore, there is not much of it. Occasionally *Krokodil*, the Soviet *Punch*, publishes a story or cartoon hitting off neatly one of the innumerable aspects of Soviet bureaucracy" (27).[14] Excessive red tape and routine are lampooned in the scene where a Thembrian airplane with Col. Spigot and Sgt. Dunder on board arrives in Cape Suzette on the occasion of the Friendship Festival. After landing, Col. Spigot is about to proceed with the administrative tasks following the Thembrian practice:

> COL. SPIGOT. "First, where do we go to get processed? I'm always ready for the proper forms and paperwork."
> SGT. DUNDER. "I don't think they do any of those things here, Colonel, sir."
> COL. SPIGOT. "No triplicate E1-18s? No day-long line?" (very sadly)
> SGT. DUNDER. "Sorry."
> COL. SPIGOT. "What way is this to run a country?" ("The Golden Sprocket of Friendship" 02:54–03:12)

The bureaucratic operation of the state is not applicable outside Thembria. Its inefficiency is proved when it prevents an action of self-defense. Col. Spigot is pointing his gun at Trader Moe, a crocodile who, with his two

henchmen, is trying to rob the award, the golden sprocket that Spigot should hand to the mayor of Cape Suzette.

> TRADER MOE. "Watch where you're pointing that thing. It may be loaded."
> COL. SPIGOT. "It's all right. My bullets are back in Thembria. They can't leave the country without an 11–14 form and we were all out of those." (11:32–11:43)

Col. Spigot cannot defend himself with an unloaded gun, so the golden sprocket is stolen.

In Stalin's USSR, laudatory epithets were used not only to praise the leader, but to emphasize the greatness of the country both literally and figuratively. The same applies to institutions and heroes of labor and war. In the common speech of the era, attributes like "glorious" ("Glorious Red Army") or "great" ("Great Patriotic War") were abundantly used to characterize the usually overstated achievements of the young country, which was commonly named "the paradise of workers and peasants." The phraseology outlined above has identifiable examples in *TaleSpin* since "glorious" and the substantive "glory" recur as adjuncts and identifiers throughout the episodes where Thembria and/or the Thembrians appear: "the glory of my Mommyland, Thembria" ("The Idol Rich"), "the glorious Thembria" ("The Idol Rich"), "Thembrians' glorious Slush Festival" ("A Spy in the Ointment"), "our glorious leader, the High Marshall" ("A Spy in the Ointment"), "the glorious, colossal Thembrian People's Court" ("Flight of the Snow Duck"), "the Glorious People's Air Force" ("The Time Bandit"), "the glorious Thembrian gruel reserve" ("Gruel and Unusual Punishment").

In the episode "Flight School Confidential," the plot comprises the preparation for the "Great Patriotic Flounder Day"—an allusion to the "Great Patriotic War"—where Col. Spigot is responsible for the air parade. The story that serves as a basis for the festival—a myth actually—is explained by Sgt. Dunder while he is instructing flight school trainees how to salute: "This is the Great Patriotic Flounder who jumped from a stream into an enemy cannon, clogging it and saving all of Thembria" (07:23–07:30). These examples demonstrate that certain components of the typical Soviet phraseology are discernible in the Thembrians' enunciations. Even though the word "communist" is not uttered in the series, its antipode is articulated when Col. Spigot explodes with rage thinking that Cape Suzette is a day ahead of Thembria: "No! This is a plot by those capitalist swine in Cape Suzette!"

("The Time Bandit" 07:03–07:06). So, Col. Spigot indirectly reinforces that Thembria is a communist state.

Allusions to oversize goods—with a satirical tinge—made in the Soviet Union abound in *TaleSpin*. Soviet industrial products were typically bigger in size and heavier in weight than their western counterparts, principally because of the technical underdevelopment and the feeble precision of manufacturing capabilities. The artifacts related to Thembria in *TaleSpin* are more massive than those in Cape Suzette. Baloo's Sea Duck seems tiny compared to Thembrian airplanes ("The Golden Sprocket of Friendship," "The Idol Rich"), the firing squad is made up of tanks ("The Time Bandit") or of cannons ("Gruel and Unusual Punishment"), the extra-size, tracked anti-aircraft gun is called "really big Bertha" ("Gruel and Unusual Punishment"), which is a reference to the German World War I cannon Big Bertha. This quality is further reinforced in the dialogue in "A Spy in the Ointment," when the Sea Duck is bombarded by the Thembrian air force:

> REBECCA. "What's making that noise?"
> BALOO. "If I'm not mistaken, a piano. Thembrians like to get your attention with large objects." (03:38–03:45)

Scenes of bombarding reappear throughout the series, though they are never done with actual bombs but, besides the piano referred to above, with bathtubs ("Flight of the Snow Duck"), washbasins, refrigerators, and even lunchmeat and cheese ("Flying Dupes").

The communist-socialist countries, with the USSR at the forefront, all endured the so-called shortage economy, "a system in which activities of firms and other organizations are strictly controlled, forced quantitative growth is a stable phenomenon, budget constraints of firms and organizations are soft, and budget constraints of consumers—hard" (Kersten 375). The shortage economy resulted in the unavailability of many goods and products, and often in their unaffordability by consumers. The Thembrian air force's bombardments with various objects other than actual bombs hints at the consequences of the economic model outlined. In the episode "Gruel and Unusual Punishment," Baloo's planned execution has to be interrupted:

> GUARD. "There's no gunpowder in the shells, sir."
> WARDEN SLUMMER. "They must be leftover from the last gunpowder shortage." (11:14–11:20)

In Thembria, there is a deficiency of everything, even of apartments, as Baloo must realize when he tries to retrieve his plane that, following its confiscation, has been converted into an apartment for people ("The Time Bandit"). Housing shortage was a permanent difficulty in the Soviet Union until the mid-1950s, which led to the widespread emergence of communal apartments, the so-called *kommunalka*s. As summarized by Amy Starecheski in her book review of Paola Messana's *Soviet Communal Living: An Oral History of the Kommunalka*,

> [f]amilies from different classes were forced to share housing, with one room to each family and the kitchen and bathroom shared by all. At times up to 80% of urban Soviets lived in *kommunalka*, which simultaneously addressed the housing crisis, mixed social classes, and created opportunities for State surveillance and informing at the most intimate scales. (174)

In the USSR, the individual's political reliability often, but definitely not always, counterbalanced the potential lack of professional competencies. In *TaleSpin*, even the head of the Thembrian air force, the "Lord of the Flyboys" Col. Spigot turns out not to know how to fly ("Flight School Confidential"). Throughout the history of the Soviet Union, political engagement and devotion overwrote actual professionalism in many instances, like in the case of the infamous pseudoscientist, the enemy of Soviet genetics and three-time winner of the Stalin prize, Trofim Lysenko. As he was a favorite of Stalin, his ineffective and pseudoscientific methods were implemented and led to devastating famines.[15]

The several decade-long Cold War between the US and the USSR never involved any direct military action, but led to a tension between them in which the demonstration of power had a crucial role. Such a display of power was Stalin's Berlin Blockade in 1948–49, when the Soviet forces isolated West Berlin hermetically, blocking all access to the city. The supplies to sustain the citizens were carried by aircraft of the Western powers several times a day for months.[16] Ideological warfare played an important role in the conflict since both sides made attempts to emphasize their superiority over the adversary. In "Flight of the Snow Duck," the pink flamingos imported from Cape Suzette are repainted in Thembria in this spirit:

> BALOO. "What do you guys do with these flamingos anyway?"
> CUSTOMS OFFICER. "We buy them for a dollar each, paint them blue, and then sell them back to Cape Suzette for half what we pay."
> BALOO. "Don't you lose money?"
> CUSTOMS OFFICER. "Yes, but this is a power struggle. They keep painting them pink again and selling them back to us." (05:09–05:28)

Regardless of the costs, the aim is to achieve ideological victory over the enemy. The financial loss of the Thembrians—the sale price of the repainted flamingos is half of the purchase price—is counterbalanced by the fact that the flamingos must be repainted pink in Cape Suzette so extra work is required from the enemy.

According to the "Zhdanov Doctrine" as articulated by Stalin's political ideologist Andrei Zhdanov in 1946, "the world was divided into two camps and . . . the Soviets must rally 'the peace-loving elements in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans for the enslavement of Europe'" (qtd. in Coates 219). On the surface, the USSR posed as the proponent of peace, being the leader of the "peace camp," but Stalin had ambitions to gain influence over new territories; for instance, he supported the North Korean attack against South Korea in 1950. The urge to declare or start a war persists in the series. In the episode "The Golden Sprocket of Friendship," as the sprocket of the title is robbed, Col. Spigot threatens war if it is not returned on time: "My speech is at six. If you're not back by then, it's going to be war. War! War!" (10:43–10:49). In "The Time Bandit," he intends to make war because the Cape Suzette radio—which they listen to in secret since in Thembria, like in the USSR, only state programs are permitted—affirms that it is Saturday instead of Friday to declare war.

The last episode of the series, "Flying Dupes," revolves around a conspiracy by two Thembrians, Wally, the manager of a Thembrian bomb factory and Mac, another leader there. Wally, in disguise, asks Baloo to deliver a package, officially a "present for peace" to the High Marshall's new summer residence. However, there is actually a bomb in it that must be found so that Thembria can declare war. Though the plot is a personal instigation, it illustrates how a *casus belli* is fabricated, like in the case of the "Shelling of Mainila," the provocation by the Soviets that provided the cause for launching the Winter War against Finland in November 1939.[17] The bomb is not found on Baloo's plane and finally, it is delivered to the High Marshall by Col. Spigot himself. Even though the bomb explodes, the High Marshall escapes from death and, expressing his gratitude to Baloo and Col. Spigot, he

offers peace: "I want to thank you both for saving my life and for promoting peace between our countries" (21:28–21:34). The series thus ends in peace between Usland and Thembria, mirroring the real-life reconciliation between the US and the disintegrating Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s.

Conclusion

As described in the introductory part of the essay, the American perception of the Soviet Union in the 1980s continued to reflect several features of the Stalinist era. Some characteristics of Stalin's USSR were extrapolated to the decades after the 1950s in Soviet history and created a distorted image of a country that was evidently far from being a democracy, but it was not the dictator's inhumane and paranoid system either any more. The representation of the USSR in *TaleSpin* demonstrates how deeply the extrapolated view was embedded in the public thinking. By creating the military state Thembria and her inhabitants, the Thembrians in the series, the writers portray the Cold War Soviet Union with the means of irony and expect (at least part of) the adult audiences to understand the allusions and references to Soviet reality as envisaged by the American public. While the depiction of the Soviet Union in American films was fairly regular in the 1980s (for instance the 1984 comedy-drama *Moscow on the Hudson* directed by Paul Mazursky),[18] animated films and cartoons did not focus on this topic with the exception of *TaleSpin*, which, therefore, has a unique place in the American popular culture of the late Cold War era.

Numerous references to incidents of the Stalinist Soviet Union as represented in *TaleSpin* may seem to be both incredible and farcical, yet all of them are grounded in documented facts as illustrated by the examples provided. Stalin's death did not draw a distinctive caesura in the history of the Soviet Union apart from it signaling the end of mass political repressions, so many occurrences and aspects of everyday life in the USSR as depicted in *TaleSpin* prevailed even in the post-Stalinist era. However, the topoi discussed in this essay were all present only in a single, clearly defined period of Soviet history: high Stalinism.

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Notes

1 An early example of Soviet propaganda cartoons is the 1924 animated short film entitled *Межпланетная революция* (Interplanetary Revolution) directed by Zenon Komissarenko, Yuri Merkulov, and Nikolai Khodataev. The bourgeois of the Earth are escaping to Mars to save their wealth. However, they cannot hide themselves even there from the world revolution of the proletariat that reclaims what has been stolen from them. *Блэк энд Уайт* (the Russian title, Black and White, is written in phonetic Cyrillic transcription in English) directed by Ivan Ivanov-Vano and Leonid Amalrik in 1932, is set in the American South, depicting the oppression of African-American workers in the American sugar industry.

2 As film critic and film historian Leonard Maltin states in his introduction to the collection of eleven Warner Bros. wartime cartoons released on VHS in 1989:

> [D]uring the war, filmmakers pursued two special goals: to provide an escape from daily reality and to rally Americans together with a little patriotic flag waving. Back then, every time you went to the movies, you saw a cartoon along with the feature film and they were made to be enjoyed by adults as well as children. While most of the *Looney Tunes* and *Merry Melodies* were just out for fun, they also took up the war as subject matter now and then. They reflected the feelings of their audience. . . . [T]he early forties, a time of turmoil on the warfront as well as the home front . . . the rationing of gasoline and tyres and food, women going to work in factories, and the local draft board calling up all eligible males to serve their Uncle Sam. All of that and more was reflected in these timely cartoons. (*Bugs & Daffy: The Wartime Cartoons* 01:15–02:15).

3 See also: Kwok-Yin Ting, Elle. *Wartime ideology and the American animated cartoon.* 1998. The U of British Columbia, MA thesis.

4 Crêpes Suzette is a French dessert of pancakes in sweet sauce, flambéed when served. The series is overall characterized by puns on words and cultural references, even in the titles of certain episodes, for example "Citizen Khan" refers to Orson Welles' 1941 classic motion picture entitled *Citizen Kane.*

5 At the time of writing this essay, the site *animationsource.org* had been unavailable for months due to a server failure. The online digital archive *Wayback Machine* (*https://archive.org/web/*) stores billions of cached webpages (actually, copies of websites made at a given date and time), including those of *animationsource.org*. The cached pages of *animationsource.org* were accessed via the *Wayback Machine* as shown in the URLs given in *Works Cited.*

6 I reached out to both creators of the series, Jymn Magon and Mark Zaslove in email, hoping that they would respond to some questions and clarify certain points and especially the sources they might have had access to. Until the date of completion of this essay, no answer had been received from them so all information on character creation and development is obtained from the website *animationsource.org.*

7 See also: Conquest, Robert. *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties.* New York: Vintage Publishing, 2018. It must be noted that the Great Purge was only one of the waves of repressions initiated by Stalin; however, it is considered to be the most notorious.

8 See also: Malia, Martin. "Judging Nazism and Communism." *The National Interest* 18.69 (2002): 63–78.

9 For objective, rather than impressionistic, journal articles see: Dunn, Keith A. "Strategy, the Soviet Union and the 1980s." *Naval War College Review* 34.5 (1981): 15–31; and Lapidus, Gail W. "Gorbachev and the Reform of the Soviet System." *Daedalus* 116.2 (1987): 1–30.

10 It is worth noting that Russia and the Soviet Union proved to be commonly interchangeable country names despite the fact that Russia was only a part of the USSR. Even such a renowned scholar as the economist Marshall I. Goldman refers to the Soviet Union as Russia. See: Goldman, Marshall I. and Shigeto Tsuru. "Economics of environment and renewable resources in socialist systems: Part 1: Russia. Part 2: China." *Handbook of Natural Resource and Energy Economics Vol. 2*. Ed. Allen V. Kneese and James L. Sweeney. Amsterdam & New York: North-Holland, 1985. 725–49.

11 See also: Pisch, Anita. "Stalin Is Like a Fairytale Sycamore Tree—Stalin As a Symbol." *The Personality Cult of Stalin in Soviet Posters, 1929–1953*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2016: 191–289.

12 See also: Applebaum, Anne. *Gulag: A History*. New York: Doubleday, 2003; Conquest, Robert. *The Great Terror*. For a statistical analysis of Gulag inmates see: Ellmann, Michael. "Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments." *Europe-Asia Studies* 54.7 (2002): 1151–72.

13 One example of the many: "A half-literate stovemaker used to enjoy writing his name in his free time. This raised his self-esteem. There was no blank paper around, so he wrote on newspapers. His neighbors found his newspaper in the sack in the communal toilet, with pen-and-ink flourishes across the countenance of the Father and Teacher. Anti-Soviet Agitation—ten years" (Solzhenitsyn 75).

14 Chamberlin's article was published four years after Stalin's death in 1957. Even though the de-Stalinization initiated by Nikita Khrushchev had been in progress, the process of liberalization known as the "Khrushchev Thaw" was slow, gradual, and partial. Criticizing the state from any aspect would have been impossible some years earlier in Stalin's Soviet Union.

15 See also: DeJong-Lambert, William. "Biological Utopias East and West. Trofim D. Lysenko and His Critics." *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West*. Ed. Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith, and Joes Segal. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2012. 33–52.

16 See also: Tusa, Ann and John Tusa. *The Berlin Blockade*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988.

17 "(A)t the village of Mainila on the Soviet side of the frontier on the Karelian isthmus four Soviet soldiers were reported by the Soviet authorities to have been killed and more injured by Finnish artillery. This has been considered by Soviet historians to have been a provocation and the immediate cause of the train of events which led to the Soviet action on 30 November. The Finns, however, claimed that they had no artillery close enough to fire into the Soviet village concerned and that the Finnish frontier guards had noted at the time in their reports that the shots sounded as if they came from the south-east and thus from Soviet territory!" (Spring 219)

18 On the Cold War from a cinematic perspective see: Shaw, Tony and Denise Young. *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds*. Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 2010.

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Zsolt Czigányik
Claeys, Gregory. *Utopianism for a Dying Planet: Life after Consumerism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2022. xvi + 584 pages. 978069117004-6. Hb. $39.95.

In his new book Gregory Claeys offers an expansive cultural, political, and philosophical study of the history of utopianism from antiquity till the present day, placing a special emphasis on issues concerning equality and sociability. Beyond the rich analyses of literary and theoretical examples, practical aspects of utopianism are also investigated, such as festivals, pilgrimages, and religious or secular intentional communities like the Quakers, the Amish, or hippie communes. As suggested in the title, the book is not only a guide to the culture of utopianism and a comprehensive history of utopian phenomena, but it also offers a direct, utopian proposal for a future after the current era of consumerism.

Utopianism for a Dying Planet could easily be the most important book on utopianism of this epoch—at least, if most of its suggestions do not come to be realized, civilization as we know it is likely to come to a halt. The author would like to make an impact to avoid this demise, and even though the term may be outmoded, there is a clear message: if we (individuals, governments, and corporations alike) do not change our ways, we will not have a future. This dire message is, however, coupled with an encouraging one: the "Great Change" from consumerism is more than feasible; a new world that focuses not on consumption and possessions, but sociability, can be happier than the one we are living in.

Gregory Claeys, emeritus professor of the History of Political Thought at Royal Holloway, chair of the Utopian Studies Society (Europe), the author and/or editor of over thirty books, is a doyen of utopian studies, with a broad erudition and a thorough knowledge of the subject. This expertise is demonstrated in *Utopianism for a Dying Planet*, the bulk of which is a most detailed and complex history of (mostly Western-European) social and political thought as it is reflected in theoretical, literary, and communal forms of utopianism. For Claeys, utopia is not the synonym of impossibility; it is of central importance in history and in the present. "Utopianism allows us to project ideal societies by imagining what might be but does not exist

yet. Such maps of possibility take us beyond the thousand bubbles of everyday" (8).

The discussion begins with the pre-history of utopianism as it appears in the golden age myths and the idea of the Garden of Eden, the ideal original state of mankind. Christianity has implied that this ideal state may be realized again, while in the Renaissance, the time of the birth of utopia proper, it was assumed that this place might exist somewhere to be discovered. The current, futuristic mode of utopianism came to existence during the Enlightenment with the invention of *euchronia*, the good time, which "became fused with the modern theory of progress" (285). It is argued that after the French Revolution "utopianism became a definitive mode of modernity as such, and most of the moderns became, willy-nilly, utopians in the sense of aspiring to an indefinite improvement of social and economic conditions" (205). The late nineteenth century saw utopia as "an ideal of unlimited abundance" (75), whereas the twentieth century brought the rise of *dystopia*, which, in this book (unlike in his *Dystopia, a Natural History*, 2016) is not manifested primarily as totalitarianism, but it culminates in modern consumerism, "defined by the constancy of relentless desires" (356). As Claeys considers the current crisis essentially stemming from overconsumption, issues concerning luxury (presented as a symbol of proto-consumerism) have a prominence in his analysis of past utopianism, and he recognizes the competing myths of Sparta and Sybaris, ideals of frugality and abundance in various epochs of social thought. Public luxury as opposed to private is given preference as a way for the future, while the obsession with novelty, a feature of modernity, is condemned as dangerously fueling overconsumption.

The investigation of utopianism culminates in an analysis of twentieth-century and contemporary consumerism. Claeys argues that "the greatest paradox of modern progress is that it creates a depressed and unfulfilled populace who are increasingly isolated from others" (381). Various responses to consumerism, from the Soviet model through Aldous Huxley to the "Summer of Love" generation are analyzed, and as a form of applied utopianism, an alternative is also offered. This alternative utopian construct proposes ideas for the structuring of a sustainable post-consumer society, based on the history of utopianism, showing how utopian thought can offer a way out of consumer society with a focus on the real needs of humanity rather than induced desires. As the continual experience of shopping does not lead to happiness, the projected alternative may not only save the environment from the destruction induced by overconsumption, but it also

offers happiness in friendly social relationships based on equality, as opposed to the dehumanizing and desocializing tendencies of consumerism.

The four main parts and the eleven chapters of the book establish a clear structure where the first part outlines the theoretical and methodological backbone of the analysis, focusing on utopian sociability in the various aspects of utopia. The second part discusses literary and practical (communal) utopianism from antiquity to the Enlightenment, whereas the third part continues this analysis in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries highlighting utopians' responses to luxury. The final part of the book in some sixty pages is the detailed description of what the current climate emergency requires from humanity, given in the form of a positive (e)utopia, with the central statement that even though the current economic structures will need to be deconstructed and replaced by sustainable modes, enhanced sociability allows us to benefit from the process, not only in avoiding the extinction of mankind, but also in creating a happier life with less travel and material consumption, but more friendly interactions. "The new paradigm . . . is defined by egalitarianism, voluntary simplicity, sustainable consumption, and as much joyous and celebratory sociability and belongingness as we can muster and afford" (510). Claeys clearly does not believe that technology is able to reverse the climate emergency—fusion energy is not even mentioned—it is human society that can and must do the job.

Claeys follows the consensus in utopian studies based on Lyman Tower Sargent's "Three Faces of Utopianism," namely, the literary, the visionary social theory, and the practical communitarian forms of utopia. Yet Claeys also distinguishes between psychological, religious, and futurological functions, and sees utopia, among other things, as an education of desire and a principle of hope, as well as critical alternatives to empirical, everyday reality. He argues that utopianism should be seen in its complexity, not reduced to any of its forms or functions. As he discusses all these forms and aspects in quite some detail, it is not surprising that the book is rather bulky. Claeys also recognizes that in earlier ages the preferences may have been different, hence not all kinds of past utopia are useful in the current situation of climate emergency, nor are they always compatible with modern life. Agrarian or "back-to-nature" utopias, for instance, cannot be seen as feasible with the current population living mostly in cities. Therefore, it is the cities—in Claeys's terms: the "sociable city" (497)—that need to be made sustainable and supportive of belongingness. We should not give up the liberating urban experience either, and we cannot refrain from using technology, at least not all its forms, as this would not be either feasible, or acceptable to the majority.

But it is made clear that no compromises are acceptable that save the extreme wealth of a few mega-rich. Today "the core of the ideal society is social relationships, not material plenty" (10). The great lesson that Claeys learns from utopianism, and wishes also to teach, is that the pains of the necessity of quickly exiting consumerism may be compensated for by "greatly expanding opportunities for sociability" (11) and he claims that the study of utopianism can help us in this inevitable project. Hence, utopianism is not presented as the pursuit of some infeasible or impracticable state of affairs; on the contrary, today "utopia is important to everyone. It sums up humanity's highest aspirations and defines our best selves" (15). The need for enhanced sociability relativizes the modern focus on individualism and emphasizes the importance of solidarity with both fellow humans and nature. Equality being central, it does not signify uniformity; at the same time, personal ambitions and competition without constraint are presented as dangerous aspects of modernity.

Even though the analysis recognizes the importance of the religious aspects of utopianism, Claeys is generally critical and suspicious of most organized religions; he is not concerned with transcendental aspects, and does not see a potential in religion, or even spirituality, to appear as a positive force in the great change. The forty-two pages of bibliography indicates that there is significant scholarship behind the arguments. In fact, while reading the detailed history of utopianism, we may feel that everything that matters has been read for us. Hardly any important scholar is missing; perhaps with the exception of Tamás Molnár (Thomas Molnar), even though the argument could benefit from his criticism of collectivism, and spiritual scholars like Rudolf Steiner are not mentioned either, neither is the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Claeys does not focus only on recent scholarship, but often reflects on scholars of the early twentieth century. The larger part of the book is likely to draw academic attention to its accurate and complex analyses of the history of utopian ideas, while the last, utopian part is prone to drawing more criticism. Even though reasonable readers are unlikely to deny the severity of the situation, or the fact that without visionary insight it is not possible to reach a new state of affairs, the historical experiences related to prescriptive blueprint utopianism are worrisome. One is afraid that to carry through the radical changes the climate situation demands is not possible without force, as some level of frugality will be inevitable, and a totalitarian regime may follow, as has so often been experienced in human history. Claeys argues that when utopianism is severed from demands of perfectionism and from millenarism—the expectation of a rapid and thorough transformation

of society—the danger that it leads to totalitarianism emerges; nonetheless, the transformation he demands in the last part of the book is meant to be both rapid and thorough.

In a talk given some years ago at ELTE in Budapest, Professor Claeys refused to finish his outline of utopianism on an optimistic note, arguing that the danger of a disaster is too great. The situation has not improved since then. The problems can be seen and a way out of emergency has been suggested. Though if it only remains the matter of historians of ideas, political scientists, and literary scholars—who are clearly the main target audience—there will be no place left for publishing the next book. Unless we want to live in a post-apocalyptic movie, most of the suggestions of this book need to be observed.

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Zsolt Czigányik, lead scholar of the "Democracy in East Central European utopianism" research group of the Gerda Henkel Foundation, published *Utopia Between East and West in Hungarian Literature* with Palgrave Macmillan (2023).

Russia and America: Remembering Bondage Together
Maksim Pelmegov
Bellows, Amanda Brickell. ***American Slavery and Russian Serfdom in the Post-Emancipation Imagination.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2020. 304 pages. ISBN 9781469655543. Pbk $29.95.**

The two paintings juxtaposed on the cover of *American Slavery and Russian Serfdom in the Post-Emancipation Imagination*, one showing dignified and well-dressed Russian peasants gathering rich crops and the other, in contrast, two African American cotton pickers in subdued and worn-out clothes, reflect the study undertaken by Amanda Brickell Bellows, a lecturer in history at The New School, NYC. She focuses on the nearly simultaneous emancipation of Russian serfs and American slaves in the 1860s, investigating how societies of two distant countries, the Russian Empire and the United States, responded to this process throughout the following decades. Arguing that in both countries different social groups created a variety of cultural productions that had a profound influence on public opinion and collective memory, she aims to disclose how different textual and visual sources created and shaped images of freedpeople and liberated peasants as well as those of the past institutions of slavery and serfdom. This interdisciplinary study is a new and relevant contribution to Russian and American history, employing multiple types of sources, and relying on the approach of "comparative history as the contrast of contexts" when analyzing how the legacy of bondage was remembered in both countries (3).

The first chapter is dedicated to literary works, written in support of liberation on the eve of emancipation. To illustrate the increasing impact of literature in both Russia and the United States, the author analyzes works of four authors (Nikolai Nekrasov, Aleksei Pisemskii, Louisa May Alcott, and Martha Griffith Browne) and points to similar literary techniques used by them to raise public concern about emancipation. Their works depict serfs and slaves with honorable character traits as well as portray relations between them and their owners as if they were equal, regardless of existing perceptions of race or social class.

Nevertheless, according to Bellows, following emancipation in the 1870s and 1880s, upper-class Russians and Americans addressed their growing concerns about the assimilation of these new groups to society by producing historical fiction that romanticized their pre-emancipation status. Having examined works of several authors (Russian authors Grigorii Danilevskii, Vsevolod Solov'ev, Evgenii Salias, and Evgenii Opochinin, and

Southern writers Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris), she reveals three techniques which were used by all authors to create nostalgic images of serfdom and slavery (61–62). Their historical fiction shows former serfs and slaves enjoying a high standard of living under their landowner's care, trusting relations between owners and their subjects were emphasized as well as the nostalgia of the latter for the old way of life when failing to support themselves after emancipation. Bellows provides accurate exploration results, stating that these literary works, written primarily by former landowners, who positioned themselves as having real-life experience with bondage, for middle-class readers and people who never saw slavery or serfdom, served as a means of confronting the social changes and gradual loss of the elite's land and power to peasants and freedpeople.

Bellows continues her study by focusing on illustrated periodicals, for example, the Russian *Ogonek* and *Strekoza*, and the American *Harper's Weekly*, as well as lithographs, such as those produced by the printmaking company Currier and Ives, and the Russian popular print called *lubki*, which also played a vital role in constructing collective memory and forming public opinion. She shows how their context and meaning can be divided into five groups: 1) developing romanticized images of peasants and freedpeople working in rural areas; 2) showing their culture, their attempts to adapt to the cities and, contrarily, their bringing disorder to urban life; 3) depicting folk culture; 4) producing dehumanizing images of liberated groups; and, at last, 5) creating respected self-representations of African Americans and peasants. However, while the author acknowledges the parallels, she also distinguishes important features of national identity that influenced representations in all types of cultural production. Whereas in Russia peasants were considered as essential contributors to Russian culture, African Americans in the United States were not regarded as representatives of American identity, on the contrary, they were perceived as outsiders (76). Racial tension also contributed to various types of American cultural products producing more dehumanizing images of freedpeople.

In "Oil Paintings," Bellows argues that American and Russian painters produced thematically similar works and helped to humanize representations of peasants and freedpeople, or at least to present a more complex picture of them. Through scrutinizing the selection of works, she introduces pictorial motifs of relations between former owners and their subjects, peasants and freedpeople as soldiers and as agricultural workers. She also analyzes paintings which display folk culture and traditions, show former slaves and serfs obtaining education as well as their gradual adaptation to

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urban life. Such painterly subject matters recur with different emphases and significations in the two cultures. Russian painters, for instance, condemned the military service of peasants as a kind of enslavement, while Americans portrayed soldiering as an honor, and also, as an opportunity for African Americans to exercise their freedom (131). However, some of Bellows's assumptions could be interpreted with a certain degree of ambiguity. At one point, she argues that depictions of African Americans working in agriculture implied difficult conditions and limited economic opportunities for them; at the same time, American artists expressed concern in their paintings about them leaving the countryside for city life. It is not clear whether she means that painters believed former slaves had few places where they could live properly or not.

Bellows's analysis is also extended onto the field of representations of peasants and freedpeople in advertisements and ephemera that became increasingly popular in the late nineteenth century. The author illustrates how advertisements either featured subtle nostalgic pre-emancipation images or focused on the assimilation of freedpeople and peasants in cities. However, in Russia peasants were believed to be the symbols of Russian history and social life; moreover, peasants became a large consumer group in many cities, influencing marketing strategies. Therefore, many Russian advertisements depicted peasants gradually adapting to an urban lifestyle and becoming equal members of the Russian society. On the contrary, in the United States, African Americans were not considered vital to the nation's identity, and most businesses tried to appeal to white customers by producing dehumanizing and racist advertisements of freedpeople instead (184–85).

Finally, Bellows reflects on how the representatives of Russian and American cultures tried to assess the rapidly changing social and cultural norms at the turn of the twentieth century. Some American and Russian writers, including Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, Evgenii Opochinin, and Alexander Gorskii, continued creating nostalgic representations of former serfs and slaves, which were gradually becoming outdated for modern societies. On the other hand, authors such as Anton Chekhov, and the authors of the magazine *Moskovskii Listok*, Kate Chopin and Charles Waddell Chesnutt, for instance, presented a more complex picture of peasants' and freedpeople's lives by addressing issues including racial identity, poverty, and interracial relationships (187). Similarly, in the United States, African Americans began combating racist representations through *cartes de visite,* produced by representatives of the Black middle-

class showcasing their sophisticated fashion and affluence, while African American civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois challenged stereotypical representations in a series of photographs depicting the everyday life and culture of African Americans, exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition (Exposition Universelle).

Bellows's study has several scholarly merits. It encompasses a huge variety of sources, including archival materials, periodicals, and newspapers from Russia and the United States, numerous works of Russian and American fiction, as well as a range of autobiographies, memoirs, and diaries. The monograph employs a substantial amount of literature in both English and Russian, and also provides auxiliary information from dissertations and websites. Another definite strength is its structure, which creates a chronological recounting of events and cultural manifestations, making it convenient to read. This study brings new conclusions in terms of comparative images of serfdom and slavery, and undeniably possesses novelty for those interested in historic parallels between Russia and the United States in the late nineteenth century. Its conclusive remarks are coherent and, for the most part, leave no desire for the reader to doubt them.

Still, some debatable points should be addressed as well. Mostly based on the periodical *Strekoza* from 1890 to 1905, Bellows argues that Russian peasants living in the cities are presented as the source of disorder in urban life. It must be noted, however, that they gradually became a significant part of the Russian urban sphere, as it is also shown in advertisements encouraging them to adapt to city life, or depicting them as established and dignified city dwellers. There must have been other illustrated periodicals which could also have been examined; these, perhaps, employed a more nuanced imagery of the peasants who moved to urban areas. Furthermore, while there was a logical claim that at the turn of the century African Americans tried to combat racist representations in the United States, it is not sufficiently investigated whether peasants in Russia also tried to tackle dehumanizing images, such as being the source of urban disorder. This study could be further complemented by including a separate chapter on photography and perhaps early films as the most innovative types of cultural production at that period.

Overall, *American Slavery and Russian Serfdom in the Post-Emancipation Imagination* is a well-researched and engaging study in Russian–American comparative history. It is recommended to anyone interested in cultural,

literary, and historical parallels between the two countries, to scholars researching developments in Russia and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to those who want to look at Russian or American culture and national identity from a new perspective, and, finally, to any student studying American or Russian history.

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A Good Guide to America's Unique Art Form
Donald E. Morse
Shipton, Alyn. *On Jazz: A Personal Journey*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2022. 300 pages. ISBN 9781108834230. Hb. $24.95.

Alyn Shipton occupies a unique position vis a vis the world of jazz being well-recognized as, among others, a respected working musician who has played double bass in a wide variety of styles with many of the greats, a co-founder who continues to co-lead the Buck Clayton Legacy Band, and a prolific interviewer who over decades has conducted in-depth interviews with jazz musicians, not only with the leaders of bands but also with their sidemen. Shipton has also had a significant career in publishing and editing as recognized by his two "Awards for Excellence" received from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections: one for his biography of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (1999) and another for his biography of Harry Nilsson (2013). Beginning in 1981 as a commissioning editor at Macmillan he became responsible for a series of jazz lives published by Macmillan in England and around the world and in the United States by Oxford University Press in New York (40). Somewhere and somehow in all this activity he also made time for a regular radio program broadcast every week since 1989 over BBC Radio 3 in which he interviewed numerous jazz musicians. An intrepid traveler, his writing and interviewing was done in England at many festivals and clubs, in the United States where in addition to working as a bass player he also attended and often covered jazz festivals for the BBC, conducting interviews from New Orleans to San Francisco and from New York to Newport.

His omnivorous interest in every period, style, and means of playing jazz is reflected in his knowledgeable interview questions and reflections in *On Jazz* ranging from three chapters on the origins and development of jazz in New Orleans through those on Swing, individual chapters on Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, "Dizzy and Bird," The Modern Jazz Quarter," drummer Roy Haynes, saxophonists Sonny Rollins and Jackie McLean, Oscar Petersen, and Miles Davies, to end up with chapters on Fusion, Free Jazz, and a detailed view of the development of jazz in England.

His New Orleans chapters include a memorable interview with the contemporary traditional pianist Butch Thompson before he became nationally famous for his various roles on the enormously popular NPR program, *The Prairie Home Companion* including playing piano and clarinet while leading the house band, taking part as an actor in many sketches, and

engaging in dialogue with the program's host, Garrison Keillor. Shipton not only discusses the famous or at least the well-known in American show business but also attends to those whose reputations may have been eclipsed by time or a fickle public. Blue Lu Barker and Topsy Chapman had, for example, enviable reputations in their native New Orleans, while Barker was also well known in New York, Chapman had both a local and an international audience (46ff). Both had been neglected in jazz history which these interviews help remedy and both illustrate Shipton's contention that "it's hard to do more than scratch the surface of what a place like New Orleans has to offer" (55).

His lucid discussion of Free Jazz towards the end of the book focuses on the work and reception of Ornette Coleman. Shipton rightly concludes that the saxophonist was the most influential jazz musician of his generation based on his analysis of various recordings and performances backed up by numerous interviews with those who played with him as well as Coleman himself. To the uninitiated, "free jazz" may suggest "anything goes" but Shipton through his in-depth study, extensive interviews and research shows that is simply not the case. Musician after musician who played with Coleman recount spending many days and long hours rehearsing with him so that in performance the result would be held together not by the traditional jazz improvisation based on a piece's chord structure but by extended elements drawn from the improvisation itself. While all jazz musicians have to be aware of their colleague's improvisation to avoid any cacophony and/or chaos, free jazz requires even more careful attention and therefore Coleman trained those jazz musicians who formed his band to be ultra-aware and ultra-sensitive to their colleague's improvising; hence the need for extensive rehearsals and careful preparation in order to play well within such a tight-knit group thus helping establish free jazz as a legitimate, serious contribution to the evolution of jazz.

On Jazz also is the story of one musician's personal odyssey from discovering New Orleans-style combo playing to trying his hand at fusion and free-style jazz—an odyssey that reflects the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries' growth and development of jazz. Along the way, he also personally learned that such development is not an individual progression but a personal expansion of the styles and types of jazz most jazz musicians play. Shipton had this fact brought home to him when playing in a New York club in "a traditional jazz band" that included drummer Stix Evans, he discovered to his surprise that Stix had also "worked with Ornette [Coleman]" (242). A similar revelation occurred when he "played in a traditional band with drummer Wes Landers in New Orleans . . . [and] failed to ask him about the three years he had spent playing hard bop with Gene Ammons in Chicago." In both cases,

he confesses, he "made the false assumption that because both drummers were masterly players of old-style jazz, it was, and always had been, their main interest" (242). This insight into the flexibility of jazz musicians, which Shipton's own career in part illustrates, informs *On Jazz* throughout as Shipton is never judgmental but always informative about whatever style or period he discusses.

The book is chock-a-block filled with revealing incident and anecdote, such as the story of the time that the great drummer, Louie Bellson was playing in Duke Ellington's orchestra and went to the first rehearsal of the Duke's jazz mass. Ellington handed out the parts to the musicians but apparently forgot to give Bellson one. When Bellson asked, "where's my part?" Duke replied that he did not have one to give Louie because "I want the drum part written by Louie Bellson!" (That to which there can be no reply.) Nor is this simply gossip since I can confirm the truth of this story having heard it from Louie Bellson himself.[1]

Finally, in his extensive career as a jazz historian and musician Shipton continually conducted numerous recorded interviews, while at the same time writing extensive essays and reviews, and his substantial books. *On Jazz*, like all of his writing, reflects the gracious and unassuming listener who appears genuinely interested in his subjects yet never fawns over them and always avoids flattery. He has thus provided in this book a missing link between the practice of playing jazz and reflective writing about it as well as a guide through the history of jazz from the earliest jazz performances in New Orleans to contemporary jazz's world-wide audience.

Alyn Shipton's *On Jazz: A Personal Journey* is a goldmine both for researchers in jazz history and for avid or even casual listeners to what began as a uniquely American art form and has now been adopted by much of the world. Highly recommended for university libraries and personal collections.

University of Debrecen

Donald E Morse, Emeritus Professor, Oakland University, Michigan and Honorary University Professor, University of Debrecen, having had a brief career as a drummer, does research in the fantastic, Irish Theatre, Time, James Joyce, Kurt Vonnegut, and W. H. Auden. His latest book is *It's Time: A Mosaic Reflecting What Living in Time Is Like.*

Note

1 Louie Bellson included this incident as part of his banquet speech at the 1987 meeting of the International Percussive Arts Society Conference that I attended in Washington, DC.

Shakespeare, She Wrote
Anna Szirák
Balizet, Ariane M. *Shakespeare and Girls' Studies*. London: Routledge, 2020. 190 pages. ISBN 9781032083056. Pbk. £36.99.

Girlhood has been an object of increasing interest in recent years, yet scholars may struggle to locate books that genuinely reckon with the representations of girls in culture. Ariane M. Balizet's *Shakespeare and Girls' Studies* does exactly that, and although it could disappoint those who wish for exhaustive close readings of the Bard's plays, the book fills a gap in research nonetheless. Connecting William Shakespeare's girl characters with their adaptational counterparts in late twentieth and early twenty-first century media, Balizet manages to interrogate our ideas on the constructions of girlhood in a wholly inventive manner—by taking into consideration the presence of Shakespeare in the genres of film, television, Young Adult literature, and web series alike. Its exceedingly ambitious scope (and indeed, the sheer amount of material covered) might cause concern for some readers, but Balizet's wide tableau of contemporary representations of Shakespearean girlhood functions in order to answer the question clearly set out in the Introduction: "Who does or does not count as a girl?" (Balizet 3).

Shakespeare and Girls' Studies is a welcome addition to the *Routledge Studies in Shakespeare* series as well as to the author's prior research. Balizet's second book, preceded by *Blood and Home in Early Modern Drama: Domestic Identity on the Renaissance Stage* (Routledge, 2014), is the first large academic study interconnecting girlhood with William Shakespeare—or indeed, as the Introduction points out, with any author (6). First and foremost, its triumph lies in this very act of intersection. The author recognizes the need for Shakespeare in the study of girls as well as the apparent need for girls in the study of Shakespeare and creates an impressive framework in which both fields can be facilitated as scholarly approaches to the other.

Shakespeare and Girls' Studies manages to utilize Shakespeare as a discourse that gives voice to contemporary constructions of being a girl. Taking an interdisciplinary approach via adaptation theory, girl studies, and feminist theory, Balizet opens a walkable path between Shakespearean scholarship and girlhood studies. Even though that alone is no small feat, it is decidedly those interested in girl studies who will find this book especially illuminating—its chapters focus on instances of how Shakespearean media construct girlhood in innovative and unique ways, never coming to the same static conclusion. With its current ideas and interdisciplinary method, the

book calls for modern readers ready to find unorthodox renderings of all things Shakespearean, while its clear, accessible style of writing (at times even venturing into the non-academic) makes Balizet's volume one that will appeal to the layperson and the scholar alike.

In the Introduction ("A Girls' Studies Approach to Shakespeare and Adaptation"), the first of six chapters, Balizet highlights what she calls the rhizomatic nature of both Shakespeare and girlhood: acknowledging that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the rhizome befits our idea of Shakespeare and his "fundamentally adaptational nature" (8), she argues that girl as such can also be deemed a rhizomatic category, whose understanding and privilege fluctuates depending on the specific interpersonal and cultural contexts it is used in. With this essential insight, Balizet argues for a similarly rhizomatic network of Shakespeare, his adaptations, and girls, in which all elements "build on and borrow from each other" (8), and the very notion of primariness is refreshingly set aside. The framework visualized in the Introduction is in fact reflected in the democratic structure of the book itself; it is not only Shakespeare and girlhood that inform each other in a rhizomatic fashion, the same can be said of each form of media represented in Balizet's volume, as no hierarchy is established between the different genres. Indeed, it is by the employment of such a rhizomatic structure and the juxtaposition of films and novels or web series, that *Shakespeare and Girls' Studies* yields its most memorable results.

The following four analytical chapters undertake the study of Shakespeare and girl characters. "The End(s) of Girlhood: Film" introduces US federal policy regarding sexual education as its principal apparatus in examining the Shakespeare Boom in Hollywood filmmaking in the 1990s. Balizet sheds light on these "cultural events promoting the concept of 'purity' as a category of identity" (30) for girls, and asserts that the films including *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), *She's the Man* (2006), *Never Been Kissed* (1999), and *Get Over It!* (2001) function as fantasies "of patriarchal control" over girls' bodies and sexuality (33), while the presence of the Shakespearean plot is most relevant in its authoritative role over girlhood. Examining these four films, Balizet presents Shakespeare's girl characters such as Kat, Bianca, and Viola as being assigned a certain cultural value depending on their relationship to being sexually active, and the patterns she discovers—that these films "negotiate girlhood as a provisional category" (35) in which girls practicing abstinence triumph—mark this chapter as her most thought-provoking one. Following this, "The Big Bad Bard: Television and Small Screens" goes on to investigate the act of alluding to Shakespeare in

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contemporary teenage television series, *My So-Called Life* (1994–1995), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), *Gilmore Girls* (2000–2007), *Gossip Girl* (2007–2012), and *Switched at Birth* (2011–2017). Deviating from straightforward adaptations, this chapter highlights "the casual, suggestive citation" of Shakespeare (61) and his narrative function of serving "as an antagonist to girl characters" (62), offering the idea that the presence of Shakespeare as a subject in the classroom signals the weaknesses of girls on American television. In spite of its intriguing stance, the chapter's treatment of minute analyses for so large a number of otherwise unrelated series can be called exhausting as well as exhaustive by the end: as its relentless listing of titles weighs on the reader, the chapter lacks the cohesive power required to make its arguments consistently engaging.

"Time Travelers: Young Adult Fiction" and "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Girls: Web Series" serve the underlying question of the book far more efficiently. Instead of simply reiterating the conclusions at which she has already arrived in her preceding chapters covering film and television, Balizet renegotiates views of both girlhood and Shakespeare as she turns to popular teen content. Whereas chapter 4 restructures the meaning of "Shakespearean" as the kind of cultural property that can be appropriated and recycled as "girlish" (94), the treatment of girlhood in the oncoming chapter, as a category that may be gained, reformed, or even dispensed with when it comes to gender identity, the chapter creates a rhyming scheme within the book, elegantly reflecting on the concept of the rhizome presented in the Introduction. No hierarchical structure is at work here, instead, Shakespeare and girlhood both add to each other: "web series do not borrow *from* Shakespeare but rather catalyze the adaptation of Shakespeare *to* a new ecosystem of pop culture" (132, emphasis in the original). Balizet's ingenious discussion of YouTube adaptations of Shakespeare's plays fundamentally creates the genre of the video blog as a "queer space and time in which young characters actively embrace, reject, and reimagine the cultural frameworks that shape their relationship to girlhood" (134), and in which the trope of dressing up as a boy generates new meanings as it reorganizes our interpretations of gender binarism. In the chapters before, Shakespeare appears as a point of contention and threat for girls, but chapter 5, Balizet's last analytical chapter, emphasizes that in web series such as *Rome and Juliet* or *Like, As It Is*, Shakespeare and his stories emerge as a place of refuge "that encourages the representation of marginalized genders" (139).

It is the final chapter of the book which may make readers ponder on the shortcomings of *Shakespeare and Girls' Studies*. For while its analytical

chapters offer unrelentingly diverse readings of Shakespeare's many roles in contemporary girlhood imagery, the concluding chapter of Balizet's volume, "The Future: Shakespeare and/as Girls' Studies" makes a complete departure from the previous focus on representation and offers a practical guide in the incorporation of girl studies in Shakespeare classes instead. Almost as if the author was afraid of letting her chapters speak for themselves, Balizet's step-by-step case study of teaching *Taming of the Shrew* is, suffice it to say, puzzling. Even though such a direct call to action within the field of girlhood is certainly well-intentioned, the last chapter reveals a certain weakness applicable to the entire book: its elusive relationship with Shakespeare. Albeit its rhizomatic method in merging girlhood with Shakespeare scholarship is logically put and faithfully followed through, Balizet tends to use "Shakespeare" and "Shakespearean" in less than clear terms, referring at certain points to his plays, the man himself, or the Shakespeare machine (encompassing all our knowledge of Shakespeare into a single word) without due explanation. This micro-problem of not fully answering the question of who or what counts as Shakespeare surfaces on a macro level as well, for Balizet's work—rhizomatic as it is—seeks to connect vastly different perspectives and genres in the loosest of ways, with the final pragmatic chapter as a clear stand-out. Leaving behind the realm of cultural analysis and stepping into the practicalities of classroom teaching speaks of a larger issue in girl studies as well, of the fear which a number of academics seem to share: that theoretical discussion is insufficient, and that practical advice must be given, or the scholar shall perish.

Despite its shortcomings, *Shakespeare and Girls' Studies* does not cease to be what it otherwise clearly is: a daring and inventive study successfully making a pathway between Shakespeare and his girl characters. It iterates adaptation in a reinvigorating and democratic fashion, and recaptures girlhood as one of the most inspiring aspects not just in the works of William Shakespeare, but also in our current cultural dialogue. Never static, always diverse, and written in a reader-friendly tone, Ariane M. Balizet's book is a milestone in girlhood studies: it is a girlish book that rewrites Shakespeare, and even more notably, a Shakespeare book that rewrites girlhood.

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