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Dear reader,

Everything starts best in the middle.

I don’t ask you to flip a few entries ahead. I can tell you the article there meditates on troublesome developments, as do its sisters before and after it. And as this volume arose, I found a common voice gather between its pieces. This volume grabs us by the ears and begs us to listen to the ancient rumbling below our feet: change.

But that rests in the middle between mundane and cosmic. It takes the safe sureties we once knew and delivers them back to us as a blurry future. Somewhere in that disruption, change occurs: a cold apartment; an empty beach; or a flooded field. If you flip between pages, you will see it.

Though intense, that is the gift of the middle. This being our 10th volume—our 5th anniversary—we are given perspective. Our esthetic emerged as outwardly edgy and boundless, but internally reserved, calm—wind caught in amber. Equally, this volume contains pieces which discuss flux: from the mutating of human nature in the Victorian Era, to lesbian life during the Cold War; from queering Harry Potter, to the strange task of ordering a ‘taxi.’ This breadth of knowledge lets us recombine the old with the imperative moment and refocus. History in this way is about seeing.

And I believe Forbes & Fifth edifies this message: to pilot away from a vanishing genesis and toward the unknown borders. We are given the chance to remember and to dream. We are—luckily—in the middle.

With that, I invite you to read on. Enjoy what’s in store.

Happy reading,

Lucas Grasha

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Dear reader,

This semester marks Forbes & Fifth’s tenth volume and my second semester working as a designer. Although working on Issue 9 was a fantastic experience, I have to say that Issue 10 is by far my favorite. There’s something special about the tenth volume, and I designed with this in mind. I kept in mind Forbes & Fifth’s five-year history and its place on campus: as a home for arts and sciences, combined.

My inspiration for this volume stemmed from our cover art, which is simultaneously an ethereal and dark introduction to our contents this semester. I was inspired by the way texture and form is transferred across a two-dimensional medium; as such, you will see varied textures inside this volume, representing their subjects by translating touch across the page.

I hope you will find your reading experience enhanced by the art in this volume, which I strived to keep emblematic of the core of each article. From poetry to analyses of ecotourism, our authors grappled with complexity, with humanity and nature colliding, and with communities that have gone voiceless. Through their work, they have given a voice to their subjects and to their own conclusions, questions, and inquiries.

The beauty of Forbes & Fifth is its ability as a publication to call together artists and scientists, researchers and poets, and writers from all academic backgrounds. I hope that as a designer, I have given all of these voices, artists, and writers a place to live, grow; and change—in order to live, grow, and change within our readers.

Now, go on and read what our writers and artists have created.

Happy reading,

Shannon Pender
COMING OUT OF THE BROOM CLOSET

Subtexts and Shortcomings of Queer Narrative in *Harry Potter*

**BRIAN MURRAY**
The University of Pittsburgh

*BRIAN MURRAY* is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh studying fiction and English Literature with a certificate in children's literature. Like many in his generation, his love of both reading and writing began with an introduction to the works of J. K. Rowling. While his interests in both can be eclectic (young adult literature, magical realism, and postmodernism just to name a few), he can always call Hogwarts his home.
If Harry Potter taught us anything, it's that no one should live in a closet. Harry Potter fans and social activists alike have applied themes of J. K. Rowling's series to gay rights. Rowling's seven book series contains many political themes and allegories, such as fascism, racism, and genocide. Prejudice, discrimination, and advocacy are themes in Harry Potter strikingly relevant to the fight for the equality of the LGBTQIA community. In his psychological case study “Reading Harry Potter: Popular Culture, Queer Theory and the Fashioning of Youth Identity,” David Nyhlund explores how Rowling's texts help with social and behavioral therapy, a discovery that started with Nyhlund's gay and adolescent patient Steven.

Steven was a seventeen-year-old living in foster care, because as a toddler, his parents were both killed tragically in a car accident. Throughout his time in foster care, Steven struggled with abuse and homophobia; when Nyhlund "asked him who he might imagine struggling with abuse and homophobia; when Nyhlund "asked him who he might imagine being one of his antihomophobic allies, he surprisingly replied, 'Harry Potter!'". The isolation and abuse Steven experienced in foster care resembles Harry's troubles at the beginning of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. This discovery lead Nyhlund to use Harry Potter in Steven's therapy to help him better understand and navigate his life, thus demonstrating the deep, personal connection readers have with this beloved series.

On a wider scale, Rowling's work also has the ability to promote social change. In a broader psychological study, Lois Vezzali and other researchers found that "reading the novels of Harry Potter is associated with improved attitudes toward a stigmatized group such as homosexuals among a sample of high school students." Vezzali's study also demonstrates how the series similarly aids to fight racism and xenophobia, and thus frames Harry Potter as a considerably progressive text. Both communally and individually, Rowling's work promotes the acceptance and support of outsiders, especially for the LGBTQIA community.

When looking at the texts themselves, however, such an inference can appear perplexing. The original seven novels only contain one confirmed gay character: Albus Dumbledore (albeit only after the publication of the final novel). Although critical queer readings of subtext abound, it is difficult to understand how Harry Potter connects concretely with this specific community. Many readers decry the series for its lack of representation, whereas other children and young adult series—such as The Mortal Instruments, The Heroes of Olympus, and The Raven Cycle—have made strides in crafting queer characters.

This conversation only grew more contested when looking outside of the original series. Popularity of the Harry Potter series saw tremendous resurgence over the 2015-2016 period. Much of this revival comes from new, canonical texts, such as the play Harry Potter and the Cursed Child and the film Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, and noncanonical, as with Rainbow Rowell's satire of Rowling's series and its influence, Carry On.

This ‘Potter Renaissance’ I describe takes place only after Western nations have made strides in the promotion of LGBTQIA rights. Thus, themes and representations of homosexuality and queerness in Rowling's original work as well as her next texts deserve more exploration. These themes are present throughout the Potter Renaissance and have consequently changed the series. Whether these themes prove better or more problematic to present gay identity politically, socially, and narratively will be examined.

Harry Potter: Prejudice, Dumbledore, and Other Queer-ies

Establishing how a queer reading should operate is important here, because studying queerness in texts has many implications. While a queer critical reading explores alternative sexualities and gender expressions, this tool also applies to a relationality between queerness and the non-normativity exhibited in narratives. Therefore, this critical lens applies to themes and subtext as much as it does to alternative expressions of gender and sexuality, and proves to be especially intriguing in fantastical texts. Works of low fantasy are fundamentally based in alternative representations of reality and thus reframe conflict outside of our world. Consequently, Harry Potter has the potential to present us with new understandings of queerness in our own world.

Harry Potter reestablishes itself as a considerably queer text in its first installment. Though the series follows the adventures of a boy wizard who attends a magical boarding school, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone declares in our reality: "Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense."

In a series about witchcraft and wizardry, Rowling portrays the Dursleys as a clear embodiment of normativity and its strict enforcement. Though Harry is initially
Harry begins to realize his queer, wizardly status, which transmutes his realization into a wizarding equivalent of the traditional coming-out narrative. This queerness empowers Harry onwards. Rowling clearly explores morality in each installment of *Harry Potter*. Much of these moral conflicts arise early in the series with Draco Malfoy, a character notorious for his elitism and prejudice. In *Sorcerer’s Stone*, he publicly identifies Ron as a Weasley because they “have red hair, freckles, and more children than they can afford,” and warns Harry to not “go making friends with the wrong sort”. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Draco’s bigotry grows explicitly racist, as he calls Hermione Granger, a muggle-born witch, a “filthy little mudblood”.

Vezzali et al. find that these scenes of bullying fight against prejudice, writing, “The world of *Harry Potter* is characterized by strict social hierarchies and resulting prejudices, with obvious parallels to our society". Rowling’s solution for this is to make Harry “the main positive character, who fights against social inequality and injustice”. We see Harry’s moral integrity in his response to Draco’s warning about the Weasleys, declaring that he “can tell who the wrong sort are for [himself], thanks”. Ron also takes up this mantle when he attempts to curse Draco for his remarks against Hermione. Though his curse backfires to his embarrassment, Ron later establishes the morality through his response: “It’s a disgusting thing to call someone…. Dirty blood, see. Common blood. It’s ridiculous. Most wizards these days are half-blood anyway”. Harry and his friends actively work throughout their schooling to fight prejudice and discrimination in the Wizarding Community. With such a strong moral compass, it is easy to see why in Nylund’s study Steven saw Harry as a potential activist and ally in the face of homophobia.

Despite these apparent virtues, morality in *Harry Potter* appears somewhat soured when looking at the queer elements in later parts of the series. Same-sex attraction is mostly absent from Rowling’s writing. One of the few—if not only—direct addresses of homosexuality occurs in the series’ final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Before the trio embark to break into Gringotts Wizard Bank, Harry comments on Ron’s physical transfiguration, “Well, he’s not my type, but he’ll do”. The only time our hero Harry addresses homosexuality and its presence in this world is as a gay joke. Harry’s heroic, moral position and casual homophobia combined with the book’s lack of queer representation is dangerous. William Irwin writes on this lack in his essay “Authorial Declaration and Extreme Actual Intentionalism: Is Dumbledore Gay?” He comments that the absence of same-sex attraction from the series “makes the world of *Harry Potter* seem more intolerant than the real world”. Rowling’s deep, diverse, and complex world manages to span thousands of pages. Yet by erasing same-sex attraction, the series manages to further marginalize an already stigmatized community, presenting it as something more severe than abnormal. Though Rowling’s series keenly explores racism and discrimination for children and teens, it selectively condemns prejudices.

Granted, there is an argument for literal
and canonical homosexual representation in the series. Rowling rattled her readership when she revealed in a 2007 interview that she had “always thought of Dumbledore as gay”. This bombshell sent readers scrambling back to their copies, searching for evidence they may have missed in their original reading. Many have come to believe that the relationship between Dumbledore and the dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald to be homosexual, or at least an infatuation from Dumbledore. Rowling supported this interpretation herself, saying in an interview “It is in the book. He had—it’s very clear in the book…I think a child will see a friendship and a sensitive adult may well understand that it was an infatuation”. As the author of Harry Potter, it is easy to take Rowling’s words as fact. However, exploring Dumbledore’s implied sexuality does not align with her suggestion. William Irwin remains skeptical of Rowling’s authority to define her work, as he explains, “A person’s declaration of intention is not always sufficient to establish that intention”. Rowling’s comments on Dumbledore’s implied homosexuality, nonetheless, deserves consideration, especially with the series’ intrinsic queer themes. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows explores much of Dumbledore’s yet unknown past. In an obituary, Dumbledore’s old friend Elphias Doge praises the late headmaster, with only a brief reference to Grindelwald in describing his duel with Dumbledore in 1945. Most of the revelations about Dumbledore come from the book The Life and Lies of Albus Dumbledore by Rita Skeeter, a notoriously ruthless and biased reporter in the Harry Potter series. We, like Harry, are expected to take Skeeter’s gossip with a grain of salt, as she spent much of Goblet of Fire and Order of the Phoenix deliberately perpetuating falsehoods about Harry. She describes young Dumbledore and Grindelwald as “[taking] to each other at once” to form “a close friendship”. She mentions how the two of them flirted with ideas of Muggle oppression and the dark arts, later detailing that this friendship lasted approximately two months. This is all that Rowling provided regarding Dumbledore and Grindelwald’s relationship. Despite Skeeter’s general untrustworthiness, Dumbledore’s brother Aberforth confirms Dumbledore’s dark past she relays. When discussing the inevitable confrontation between Dumbledore and Grindelwald in 1945, Skeeter rhetorically asks, “Was it lingering affection for the man or fear of exposure as his once best friend that caused Dumbledore to hesitate?” As far as implying Dumbledore’s homosexuality, that is the most explicitly Rowling writes. Because this implication is nearly invisible in the original text, it begs the question that the presentation of Dumbledore’s affections may only be Rowling’s later authorial invention.

Much clearer than Rowling’s suggesting Dumbledore’s infatuation is Skeeter’s implying that Dumbledore is a pedophile, an implication which recalls a dangerous and incredibly damaging history of association of pedophilia with homosexuality.

If Skeeter’s implications about Dumbledore are to be believed as Rowling would have, then there is far greater danger in the text’s minimalistic representation of its singular queer character. In an interview with Skeeter, she suggests “there is no question that Dumbledore took an unnatural interest in Potter,” characterizing the relationship as “unhealthy, even sinister”. Much clearer than Rowling’s suggesting Dumbledore’s infatuation is Skeeter’s implying that Dumbledore is a pedophile, an implication which recalls a dangerous and incredibly damaging history of association of pedophilia with homosexuality. Yet by Rowling’s logic, we have just as much reason to believe all of Skeeter’s implications. As far as concrete queer presence in the series, Rowling crafts each moment with microaggressions, archaic associations, or complete erasure. Thus, we should shift our critical eye from the texts to Rowling herself.

Tison Pugh and David L. Wallace share a similar cynicism about the representation of Dumbledore as gay in, “A Postscript to ‘Heteronormative Heroism and queering the School Story in J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Series’”. If Rowling intended for Dumbledore to be gay, then readers must recognize “it was J. K. Rowling who put Dumbledore in the closet, and she now receives credit for taking him out of it”. While Rowling attempted to recognize the existence of gay characters after the publication of her novels, this perspective does not include challenging homophobia but rather is complicit in maintaining heteronormativity.

The Cursed Child, Masculinity, and Homophobia

The announcement of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child marked both a continuation of and clear departure from the Harry Potter series. Fans spent nine years lamenting the end of the books and five years without seeing a major film adaptation. Rowling made many comments on events which took place after the books through Twitter and Pottermore, a constructed multimedia center for the Potter
fandom, but neither sated the world’s appetite. To many, *Harry Potter* was over, but Rowling rekindled her magic. June of 2015 saw the announcement of *Cursed Child*, the touted “eighth story”. This came a few years after the development of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* was publicized in September of 2013. It seemed *Harry Potter* returned. Fans would experience a new era of Rowling’s universe during the Potter Renaissance, but would engage with these texts in new, unfamiliar ways.

*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* splits its narrative between Harry and his son, Albus. The play starts where the epilogue of *Deathly Hallows* ended, at King’s Cross, the Hogwarts Express, and Albus trying to make new friends. A familiar narrative in the series, but Thorne twists these Potter hallmarks. The first new element comes when Albus is placed into Slytherin by the Sorting Hat, which Thorne describes as having “A perfect, profound silence. One that sits low, twists a bit, and has damage within it” (Thorne 21). Many students are distraught around him, particularly his family. This difference leads to Albus’ isolation from and conflict with his father, who futilely wishes his son to be different. This conflict operates the same way a queer child exists in a suffocating, heteronormative environment.

A distinct departure from the series’ portrayal of friendship and masculinity comes from the depicted relationship between Albus Potter and Scorpius Malfoy. Their friendship already breaks new ground, given the turbulent history between Harry and Draco Malfoy, Scorpius’ father, which connotes their relationship as star-crossed. Despite the attempts of both fathers to separate their sons, the emotional intimacy between Albus and Scorpius grows. Albus freely proclaims his admiration to Scorpius when he says, “In fact, you’re probably the best person I know” (Thorne 143). This unabashed expression of affection would feel out of place in a male friendship like that of Harry and Ron. Not only is their relationship deeply woven, but it builds upon and seems to correct some of the earlier, prejudicial elements. Although Draco was a racist, elitist bully, his son Scorpius exhibits opposite characteristics.

Later in the play, Scorpius uses a time turner which accidentally leads to Harry’s death and Voldemort’s reign, thus erasing Albus from existence. Scorpius implores the now present Severus Snape to help him restore the original timeline. Snape comments, “You’re a king…think about Albus. You’re giving up your kingdom for Albus, right?” (Thorne 193). In this timeline, Scorpius assumes a similar role to his father Draco, living atop a social hierarchy with considerable power and influence. Despite his new position, the series’ stress on the power of empathy and compassion causes Scorpius to choose his love for Albus over great personal gain. The intimacy between Albus and Scorpius is noticeable to secondary characters also. In conversing with Scorpius, Delphi Diggory observes, “Albus needs you, Scorpius. That’s a wonderful thing…. You two—you belong together” (Thorne 134). Scorpius and Albus’ friendship is distinct in its depth and its non-normativity. Their intimate relationship breaks down previous forms of masculinized friendships, clearing way for new, queer possibilities.

Although the entire play builds from this friendship, Albus and Scorpius never progress beyond this point in queer representation. Rather, the play retreats to the series’ original homophobia, reinforced with rushed, heterosexual pairings in its conclusion. Despite the thoroughly explored depths of their friendship, the two boys do not know how to consider physical contact between each other. After suffering a long break away his father and Scorpius, Albus greets Scorpius...
with a firm hug, to which he replies, “Hello. Um. Have we hugged before? Do we hug?” (Thorne 51). The line appears out of character, given their previously free verbal affection. The clear discomfort reinforces traditional masculinity, dispelling any possibility that these characters are homosexual. This isolated moment holds little purpose past evoking awkwardness and discomfort.

Thorne later reinforces heteronormativity through these otherwise queer Harry Potter characters. In the final scene involving the two boys, Scorpius recounts his failed attempt to ask Rose Granger-Weasley on a date, proclaiming, “I planted the acorn. The acorn that will grow into our eventual marriage” (Thorne 300). This line presents an incredibly rushed, unmotivated romantic pairing. Scorpius and Rose occupy few scenes together and share fewer exchanges of dialogue. The sudden expectation of the audience/reader to accept this new romantic possibility is baffling. Thorne could have been new ground for Harry Potter.

**Fantastic Beasts and Queering Magic**

As Rowling built on the Wizarding World lore, the scope of her themes of prejudice has grown. Whereas in earlier entries Rowling displays compassion, activism, and prejudice in the daily lives of her characters, her later, darker novels politicize these conflicts. This politicization appeared as the power of the Ministry of Magic and Daily Prophet in Order of the Phoenix or as Voldemort’s fascist regime in Deathly Hallows. Rowling’s screenplay Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them further evolves her political narratives. In tandem, the queer subtexts also undergo this politicization.

The screenplay takes place in 1920s New York City, and explores social and political fears of that time and in the context of a fantastic narrative. We see magic differently here than in the original series. Whereas magic causes joy, excitement and wonder for both Harry and the reader, Rowling suddenly introduces a world where magic causes overwhelming anxiety, panic and danger. Much of this scare comes from No-Maj hysteria embodied by the Second Salemers, an organization bent on exposing the magical threat plaguing New York. The leader Mary Lou holds several rallies to instigate this fear, once proclaiming, “But where there is light there is shadow, friend. Something is stalking our city, wreaking destruction and then disappearing without a trace...We have to fight” (Fantastic Beasts 11). Her militarized rhetoric recalls the language used by the religious right during several moments of the American gay rights movement. Specifically, unrelenting fear causes No-Majs to blame the paranormal just as the heterosexual population scapegoated the gay community during the AIDS epidemic, only serving to further instigate fear, perpetuate ignorance, and worsen fatality. This intolerance in Fantastic Beasts feels even more grounded in our reality coming from Modesty, one of Mary Lou’s adopted children, who recites:

> My momma, your momma, gonna catch a witch,
> My momma, your momma, flying on a switch,
> My momma, your momma, witchés never cry,
> My momma, your momma

witches gonna die!

(Fantastic Beasts 52)

Modesty exhibits an indoctrinated fervor containing notes of religious fundamentalism, whose rhetoric has been especially used to dehumanize the queer population. Here, however, Modesty’s rhyme perpetuates the otherness of the Wizarding Community. By implementing such familiar language of hate, Rowling works to deconstruct the prejudice in Fantastic Beasts, allowing the audience to understand (but not to identify with) these ultimately fearful No-Majs.

The paranoia culled by the Second Salemers applies to other forms of oppression. The group’s violent, dehumanizing language mirrors that used per homophobia, a narrative which Rowling identifies as queer by the Wizarding World’s reaction to this paranoia. Responding to the rising number of magic-related killings, Madam Picquery, President of the Magical Congress of the United States (M.A.C.U.S.A.), meets with her advisors to form a plan of action in the Wizarding Community. She warns, “It’s terrorizing No-Majs and when No-Majs are afraid, they attack. This could mean war” (Fantastic Beasts 42). Though Rowling has previously explored the Wizarding World’s sense of superiority, community, and even protective attitude...
towards the non-magical population, here she introduces us to a surprising sense of fear. The threat of the No-Majs feels especially surprising since they are usually subservient or absent in Rowling’s series. However, it is a fear that develops from cultural attitudes into concrete law. Newt Scamander, a British wizard and Magizoologist, comments on the reactionary legislation of the American Wizarding Community, criticizing, “I know you have rather backwards laws about relations with non-magic people. That you’re not meant to befriend them, that you can’t marry them, which seems mildly absurd to me” (Fantastic Beasts 64). Newt’s commentary ultimately aligns with Rowling’s in the disapproval of this insulation. Whereas the Dursleys were the ones who closeted Harry, this community closets itself out of fear of persecution and violence. The mention of backwards laws regarding marriage especially feels reminiscent of the recent fight for marriage equality. This demonstrates Rowling to be keenly aware of evolving social attitudes coupled with the manipulation of her own writing. As far as queer themes, she graduates from non-magic people. That you’re not meant to befriend them, that you can’t marry them, which seems mildly absurd to me.”

In the narrative Rowling shows the dangers of closeting her characters, by providing the twist that Credence, a Second Salem, is a wizard, who suppresses his own magic. He shares the fears of the American Wizarding Community, like receiving hatred and abuse (in his case, from his adopted mother Mary Lou) (Fantastic Beasts 119). In reading his character queerly, Credence’s sexuality is suggested. When Credence meets with M.A.C.U.S.A. Auror Percival Graves, he “rests a hand on Credence’s arm. The human contact seems to both stirrle and captivate Credence” (Fantastic Beasts 88). But in keeping with the temper of the American Wizarding Community, Credence hides and internalizes his magic, a process which turns him into an Obscurial. Newt describes this form of magic: “when we were still being hunted by Muggles, young wizards and witches sometimes tried to suppress their magic to avoid persecution. Instead of learning to harness or to control their powers, they developed what was called an Obscurial” (Fantastic Beasts 150). Tina comments, “It’s an unstable uncontrollable Dark force that bursts out and—and attacks…and then vanishes…. Obscurials can’t survive long” (Fantastic Beasts 151). Credence’s concealment, Rowling reveals, is the source of the rampant killings and ensuing paranoia. Frankly, the same relationship applies to Rowling herself, as her concealment and erasure of queer characters has resulted in new criticism of the series. This would seem to imply a clear, political, and distinctly queer message. Closeting oneself promotes fear and hatred, and the only solution to find peace and break barriers is to live openly. Applying this sentiment to Rowling’s writing, her simple solution is to directly address the suppressed queerness of her work.

Unfortunately, Rowling’s screenplay does not end on this note. Credence rampages across the city, causes massive destruction, and is ultimately killed by Aurors, keeping in the archaic narrative tradition of killing-off queer characters. Although producer David Heyman has gone on record revealing Credence in fact survives in a deleted scene, its lack of inclusion cements Rowling’s reluctance to challenge her own status-quo (Wakeman). Unfortunately, this easy disposal of queer characters continues in the following moments of the story. In the screenplay, Rowling reveals Graves to be Gellert Grindelwald in disguise. He mourns Credence’s destruction, and directly addresses the present members of the M.A.C.U.S.A. about the current political state of the American Wizarding Community:

A law that has us scuttling like rats in the gutter! A law that demands that we conceal our true nature! A law that directs those under its dominion to cower in fear lest we risk discovery! I ask you, Madam President…I ask all of you…who does this law protect? Us?…Or them?…I refuse to bow down any longer. (Fantastic Beasts 255)

Grindelwald’s condemnation of this concealment is perfectly justified by Credence’s death. This speech is akin to many of those made by heroes of Harry Potter, as it both challenges authority and advocates for openness. However, Grindelwald, as we know from Deathly Hallows, is one of the greatest dark wizards in wizarding history. Concerningly, Grindelwald is a character who advocates for values associated with gay rights, and—as he was previously close with Dumbledore—could be a queer character. Even the earlier, physical intimacy he demonstrates with Credence as Graves hints at a direct representation. Consequently, Rowling creates another potentially queer character who fundamentally rejects concealment, yet whom the audience should decry for his villainy. Rowling frames his arrest as a triumph, but for a queer reading it feels like the opposite. By attributing this queer philosophy for acceptance with such a character, Rowling gives little reason to celebrate Grindelwald’s valid arguments. The screenplay reinforces this in its resolution. Although several No-Majs witnessed the
destruction, the incident ends with Newt and M.A.C.U.S.A. obliviating the entire city. The wizarding community returns to its position in the shadows, and the audience is expected to see this as a happy ending. In doing so, Rowling manages to sabotage any message of acceptance, tolerance, and openness, thus demonstrating her painfully slow progress as far as queer representation: two steps forward, one step back.

**Carry On and Utopia**

At the end of Rowling’s explorations of the Wizarding World, strong, positive queer characters are still unfound. Rowling presents subtexts, side-commentary, and baseless assertions on queer identities unsuccessfully. However, some of Rowling’s shortcomings are understandable. Harry Potter began in the mid-1990s, when gay visibility was cause enough for international headlines, as was the case with Ellen DeGeneres’ coming-out, and ended in the mid-2000s, when the fights for marriage equality and hate-crime legislation saw major progress. Regardless of time, her novels have received strong criticism from the far right. Danièle M. Soulliere writes about this difficult position in “Much Ado about Harry: *Harry Potter* and the creation of a Moral Panic.” She defines moral panic as “a period of heightened concern over some issue in which the societal reaction is disproportionate to the actual seriousness of the event,” which in relation to Potter she defines as the religious right’s anxiety over the series’ depiction of the occult (Soulliere 4, 7). It is this same group she credits as creating a moral panic around “a variety of social issues including homosexuality and same-sex marriage” (Soulliere 7). She also cites Catholic writer Nancy Carpentier Brown, who suggests that the series is fundamentally Christian in its themes of redemption (Soulliere 22). Perhaps there was an appeasement to satisfy this audience. William Irwin questions this from a liberal perspective, writing “she may have said that Dumbledore was gay in an effort to please secular readers and distance herself from a conservative worldview,” which is a naturally safer move to make after the publication of the final novel (Irwin 142). But as explored with her depiction of Dumbledore, authorial intention has little weight on the operations of the literal text.

Harry Potter extends beyond Rowling’s writings. Fanfiction for instance proves a great source for fans wanting to return to Rowling’s world. One of the most popular forms of fanfiction is called slash fanfiction. Catherine Tosenberger thoroughly explores this literary medium in relation to *Harry Potter*. She defines slash fanfiction as “concern[ing] a romantic and/or sexual relationship between characters of the same gender” (“Oh my God, the Fanfiction!” 200). Per *Harry Potter*, popular pairings are Harry/Draco, Seamus/Dean, Remus/Sirius, and Ginny/Cho. Yet that the pairings and the writing which explore them are so explicitly non-canonical proves troubling. Tosenberger writes on the transgressive potential of these pairings in her essay “Homosexuality at the Online Hogwarts: *Harry Potter* Slash Fanfiction.” In fanfiction’s relation to canon, she writes “the insistence that slash must transgress the existing canon rather troublingly assigns to the canon a heteronormativity it may not necessarily possess” (“Homosexuality at the Online Hogwarts” 187). Rowling’s canon has considerable queer subtext, though explicit representation lacks. The series contains heteronormativity, which Tosenberger mentions, in expressing masculinity and homophobia, thus making its attempts to be otherwise feel trivial. Thus queer *Harry Potter* fanfiction is important in relation to the series canonical attitudes. Ruminating on this potential, Tosenberger writes, “in a homophobic culture that attempts to police or censor expressions of non-heteronormativity, any depiction of queerness, especially a positive, sympathetic depiction, qualifies as [transgressive and subversive]” (“Homosexuality at the Online Hogwarts” 187). This slash fanfiction demonstrates that queer characters coexist with canon, and shows the ease with which they are created.

One of the most celebrated and widely-read slash fanfictions of the Potter Renaissance, Rainbow Rowell’s novel *Carry On*, has a complicated history with *Harry Potter*. The main characters of the novel, Simon Snow and Baz Pitch serve as stand-ins for Harry and Draco, respectively. This novel notably portrays a same-sex relationship between Simon and Baz. Although archenemies, the two realize their mutual attraction, as the growing sexual tension between the two results in Simon and Baz sharing a kiss. Baz attempts to make sense of this act, asking himself, “Is this a good kiss? I don’t know. Snow’s mouth is hot. Everything is hot. He’s pushing me, so I push back” (Rowell 342). The explicit description of this kiss does not only contrast with Rowling’s original work, but generally with young adult fiction. Tosenberger argues that, “While YA literature has gradually allowed itself to become more sexually explicit, there is still a strong imperative towards pedagogy—inculcating ‘correct’ attitudes about sexuality to an audience deemed in need of education” (“Homosexuality at the Online Hogwarts”)
We see this transition in *Harry Potter*, which gradually introduces elements of romance and relationships as Harry grows up over the series, but excludes sexuality. *Carry On*, however, establishes itself as more explicit than the Potter series, as it includes a same-sex romance and explicitly describes its moments in detail.

As a piece of fanfiction, *Carry On* provides commentary on *Harry Potter* and the state of young adult fiction. Baz describes another kissing scene between himself and Simon: “[Simon] held himself up on all fours above me and made me reach up for his mouth—and I did, I would again. I’d cross every line for him” (Rowell 364). Baz expresses the ease with which he would cross lines for Simon, echoing the lines of explicit language and sexuality Rainbow Rowell freely crosses in her world that Rowling will not in hers. Rowell crosses these lines so freely because she normalizes such intersections and diversity in identity. She reconsiders and normalizes non-normativity in a way Rowling has yet to accomplish. Simon and Baz end the novel in a relationship, although Simon is not upset because he is suddenly lesser, but because one of the defining features that made him special that made him non-normative and queer is lost. This recalls not the racist ideology of supremacy that some witches and wizards in *Harry Potter*, but rather the unselective celebration of differences. In line with this idea, Baz rebuts Simon, saying, “Simon. You have a tail” (Rowell 507). This line represents Rowell’s approach and sentiment toward diversity and inclusion. She shows the value of all differences, even of Simon’s tail, which by extension also show the value of his same-sex attraction to Baz. Rowing’s work shares a similar approach to the pointlessness of enforcing normativity, as demonstrated with the opening pages on the Dursleys. Yet Rowell’s novel accomplishes the same goals by being inclusive of queer characters. Rowell creates a queer utopia, where individual traits like race, gender, sexuality, and magical ability can all coexist in one narrative world equally. Rowling has failed to accomplish the same feat across the seven-book series, a stage play, and a complete screenplay that Rowling achieves in one novel. Though both *Harry Potter* and *Carry On* are fantastical works full of diverse possibilities, Rowell’s work is limitless. Whereas Rowling reserves themes of sexuality, gender and race to subtext, Rowell gives them equal narrative attention, appraising the reader of the possibilities inherent in Rowling’s Wizarding World.

Baz expresses the ease with which he would cross lines for Simon, echoing the lines of explicit language and sexuality Rainbow Rowell freely crosses in her world that Rowling will not in hers. Rowell crosses these lines so freely because she normalizes such intersections and diversity in identity. *Carry On* is a young-adult bestseller with explicit moments of queer sexuality, so why has the threat of moral panic not been nearly as troubling for Rowell? Though incredibly successful, it is difficult for any contemporary writer of youth literature to inhabit the stage of immense popularity and scrutiny that Rowling does. Perhaps its more limited audience allows it to be more transgressive of traditional if outdated social norms without much opposition. Yet this only stresses the importance of the potential of Rowling’s work. Because of the unprecedented literary phenomenon of *Harry Potter*, Rowling has a greater obligation to promote social equality through her writing. Although she continues to fall short, she has an ideal example to follow in the work of Rainbow Rowell.

**Conclusion: Where from Here?**

*Harry Potter* and its related texts prove themselves to be progressive yet problematic in their representations of the gay experience. Rowling’s original series provides queer subtext, but when critically examined, the series is deeply troubling in its queer representations and lack thereof, despite Rowling’s authorial claims. The Potter Renaissance tires to fix these problems, as *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* explores non-normative within the Wizarding Community. However, that stage play unfortunately succumbs to rigid masculinity and homophobia in its depiction of male relationships. Rowling’s screenplay for *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* politicizes the queer subtext of her original series, but once again falls in its representation of gay characters and themes. One point of solace is Rainbow Rowell’s *Carry On*, which celebrates queering and non-normativity by using defined gay characters who take the spotlight. Despite the virtues of Rowling’s work, her explorations fall short at best and dangerously misguide at worst. Her muted rhetoric and homophobic expressions of masculinity counteract her work’s queer themes, and thus
subvert its otherwise praiseworthy messages of acceptance and condemnation of prejudice.

To find positive queer representation within *Harry Potter*, one must look outside of the beloved series. If this is the case, then where does *Harry Potter* go from here?

As far as the community surrounding Rowling, the situation is fine. Through similar texts or fan appropriation of characters and themes, *Harry Potter* has a progressive path ahead as far as representations of queer characters. As for Rowling and the canonical *Harry Potter*, there is much potential ahead. On the future of the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise, Rowling revealed, “You will see Dumbledore as a younger man and quite a troubled man…. We’ll see him at that formative period of his life. As far as his sexuality is concerned…watch this space” (Setoodeh). It is a vague promise, but it sounds like she may finally deliver a gay Dumbledore in coming installments. As fans, we hope she stays true to her word and learns from both fans and critics alike.

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**Works Cited**


How it Impacted the Minoan Decline

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JENNA FRAWLEY is a senior about to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh, majoring in Neuroscience with minors in English Literature and History. Entering her freshman year, her uncle told her that attending a university wasn’t just about getting a degree, it was about making the most out of every opportunity presented and exploring fields you had never even thought about. From that advice, she decided to step outside her major and take on a research project in archaeology, the culmination of which is presented here.
During the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1750-1450 BCE), the island of Crete emerged as a long-distance trading center. Modern scholarship characterizes this center as the Minoan civilization, which organized local production and trade in large regional structures usually referred to as “palaces” at Knossos, Malia, Phaistos, and Zakro. Most scholars agree that these “palaces” served as administrative centers, marketplaces, and places for religious ceremonies. Despite the name, no monarch seems to have seated these “palaces”. By 1750 BCE, the influence of this palace-directed trading culture grew in its archaeological visibility throughout the Aegean region, suggesting that Crete’s commercial and cultural dominance. But by 1450 BCE, the palaces collapsed with no clear historical nor archeological explanation. Two explanations for this collapse express traditional views: 1) a major earthquake (Demand 2011, 137). They were to 1700 BCE, when the palaces were destroyed by a cultural and economic centers until ca. 1450, when all except Knossos were destroyed and never rebuilt.

The eruption of the nearby volcanic island of Thera destroyed the palaces; or 2) the Mycenaeans—a contemporaneous culture from southern Greece—invaded and occupied Crete. Archaeological evidence indeed shows Mycenaean occupation of Knossos from ca. 1450-1250 BCE, but this overly simplistic argument cites only a single component of the Minoans’ loss of economic power.

Recent scholarly debate has become more nuanced, seeking to understand the extent to which the volcanic eruption or other natural forces impacted the Minoan decline. For example, Jan Driessen and Colin MacDonald argued in 1997 that the Theran eruption led to a gradual breakdown of the Minoan economy and ultimately their social and political system. This paper independently arrives at a similar conclusion by comparing evidence for the eruption and its impacts with evidence from other, later volcanic events.

Minoan Influence Before the Eruption

The strongest evidence for the influence of Minoan palace culture on surrounding cultures is from the Aegean region. The Cycladic islanders adopted Minoan palace styles in ritual art and practices, including perhaps a distinctively Minoan type of “conical cup” made on the potter’s wheel and used for pouring libations. The use of these distinctive cups spread throughout the islands along with Minoan-style masonry, lustral basins, and figural frescoes. The widespread adoption of Minoan material culture implies an ongoing relationship between the Minoans and their Cycladic partners throughout the middle bronze age. The Minoans had economic ties outside the Cyclades as well. Frescoes depicting Minoan traders or “tribute-bearers” appear in the tombs of contemporary officials at Egyptian Thebes. The Minoans carry vessels, jewelry, ingots, and, in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb, a goat horn. Angela Hussein argues that the Cretan goat horn was imported into Egypt for the fabrication of composite bows. The value of the frescos as evidence for Minoan trade is often questioned, but Egyptian figurines, bowls, and alabastra have been found on Crete along with broken containers of Mycenaean presence at Knossos after ca. 1450 BCE is suggested by the discovery of Linear B tablets (Demand 2011, 180) and Mycenaean-style warrior graves in the surrounding area (Cavannagh 2008, 335).

Similarly, Driessen and MacDonald 1997, 106-113, provide a useful summary of the arguments.


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The model shows a particularly strong tie...
between Crete and Thera and suggests that, before the eruption, Akrotiri was a key trading post between the Minoans and the Cyclades.

The Impact of The Eruption on Minoan Agriculture and Trade

The cataclysmic eruption of Thera split the island into three smaller ones, the largest of which (Santorini) forms a crescent surrounding a large caldera. Just as in the eruption of Pompeii, volcanic ash buried and preserved Akrotiri. Its two-story houses and shrines lie along an irregular system of streets and squares. No human remains are yet discovered, since the presence of full storage containers for food (pithoi) and other functional items suggest that the inhabitants evacuated before the eruption. The date of the Thera eruption is controversial and—since the discovery of Akrotiri—the debate became inseparable from the controversy surrounding the fall of the Minoan palaces.

Carbon dating is the most common approach to dating the eruption. Sturt Manning compiled a list of organic materials preserved on Akrotiri and concluded that the eruption occurred in the late 17th century BCE (1650-1600); these carbon dates have been supported by others. Evidence from tree ring dating (dendrochronology) corroborates Manning’s work (2013, 683) of the preserved remains of bean weevils in storage jars from Akrotiri. Manning (1988, 63) prefers a “lower” date in the 16th century determined through comparisons with Egyptian records as opposed to carbon dating. In the end, however, they reach the conclusion similar to this paper, that the exact date does not matter, only that it certainly occurred well before the Minoan collapse.

Although observers have been aware of the effects of volcanic eruptions on human activity for centuries, systematic accounts of volcanic activity were not available prior to the 20th century. In 1982, the Volcanic Explosivity Index (VEI) was developed to rank the size and violence of an eruption by its intensity, destructiveness, energy release, and amount of ejecta. The VEI does not differentiate between ejecta—gas, ash, rock, lava—but rather gives a general impression of a volcanic event, allowing scholars to compare and categorize volcanic activity across time.

The VEI ranking of a prehistoric eruption is determined through geologic evidence, such as the size of the eruption’s caldera or the spread of volcanic tephra. In rare cases, eyewitness accounts survive, like that of Pliny the Younger, who described the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. This early account spurred the word “Plinian,” which describes a volcanic eruption like the one he witnessed: incredibly violent and explosive, ejecting lava, pumice, and ash hundreds of meters into the air. Geologists assign the eruption of Vesuvius a VEI of 5. Though there are no eyewitness accounts of the eruption of Thera, the geologic record suggests its similarity in size and character to the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815. Mount Tambora is located on Sumbawa, an island of the Indonesian Archipelago, and British and Dutch colonizers recorded the eruption. The initial explosion was heard 1400 km away in Java, and some British officers reported volcanic ash falling on their ships. The VEI of this eruption is calculated at 7, one hundred times larger than that of Mt. Vesuvius.

Scientific models and archaeological data suggest that most of the ash cloud produced by the Theran eruption moved southeast over the lower Aegean and the Dodecanese. Rhodes received up to 1 m. of precipitation and Kos received up to 30 cm. Traces of ash and sediment have been found in the Nile River Delta and on the shores of modern-day Turkey. The Minoans received less: approximately 15 cm. of ash and pumice have fallen on the shores of Crete and the western half of the Crete bears no evidence of volcanic precipitation.

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1 Manning 1988, 63. Panagiotakopulu et al’s study (2013, 683) of the preserved remains of bean weevils in storage jars from Akrotiri corroborates Manning’s work and deserves special consideration for determining that the eruption likely took place in the summer, a fact that could have interesting implications for the extent of the impact of the eruption from both a food production and a trade perspective. That question, however, is out of the scope of this paper.

2 Manning 1988, 63. Panagiotakopulu et al’s study (2013, 683) of the preserved remains of bean weevils in storage jars from Akrotiri corroborates Manning’s work and deserves special consideration for determining that the eruption likely took place in the summer, a fact that could have interesting implications for the extent of the impact of the eruption from both a food production and a trade perspective. That question, however, is out of the scope of this paper.

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4 Driessen and Macdonald (1997, 23) prefer a “lower” date in the 16th century determined through comparisons with Egyptian records as opposed to carbon dating. In the end, however, they reach the conclusion similar to this paper, that the exact date does not matter, only that it certainly occurred well before the Minoan collapse.

5 Driessen and Macdonald (1997, 23) prefer a “lower” date in the 16th century determined through comparisons with Egyptian records as opposed to carbon dating. In the end, however, they reach the conclusion similar to this paper, that the exact date does not matter, only that it certainly occurred well before the Minoan collapse.
been recovered at Palaikastro, a Minoan port on the northeastern end of the island. The absence of significant ash, falling rock, or even fire in the period 1650-1600 BCE confirms the theory that the Minoan palaces did not suffer destruction because of Thera’s initial blast.

Historically documented eruptions often cause other natural disasters such as tsunamis, earth displacement, or ash veils that linger in the atmosphere for months or years. These can have longer term effects than the eruption itself. A tsunami, for example, is a massive displacement of water that results in waves that travel underneath the surface of the ocean. When a tsunami reaches shallow shores, it emerges as a huge wall of water followed by the withdrawal of the tide for up to hundreds of meters. Difficulties arise in estimating a tsunami’s size for many reasons, such as the differing heights and inundations of waves, which impact the shore differently; and isolating the tsunami’s geological evidence, when factoring in erosion.

A 2011 study by Novikova, Papadopoulos and McCoy used transfer of energy to theorize the size of the tsunami waves that resulted from two events in the Theran eruption: the fall of the tsunami waves that resulted from the Theran pyroclastic flows entered the sea. The study observed that Palaikastro was struck by waves up to 9 m. tall with inundations of up to 300 m. inland. Other evidence suggests that Gouves—some 15 km. east of Knossos in the center of the northern coast—received waves which reached a height of at least 2-3 m. above the present sea level, and that travelled 30-90 m. inland from the Minoan harbor; a potter’s workshop uncovered there contained a layer of marine carbonate sand and pumice with tephra like that of the Theran eruption. The comparative evidence from Palaikastro and Gouves clarifies that the impact of the waves was felt along the entire northern coast of the island with varied severity. Though Crete experienced some of the most intense waves, Novikova, Papadopoulos and McCoy calculated the waves which hit other islands, such as: a 10 m. wave for Naxos, 11 m. for Amorgos, and 24 m. for Ios.

Though these studies measure tsunami height and physical devastation, they do not attempt to measure the human costs of the tsunami. Harbors and seaside settlements would have been likely decimated by the waves, as would any ships docked at Knossos, Palaikastro, Gournia and Malia. The costs to infrastructure and the loss of expert artisans (given that mariners and shipbuilders tended to live on the coast) cannot be estimated. Other Cycladic islands like Naxos, Amorgos, and Ios likely suffered similar losses in infrastructure, ships, and population. Many smaller islands likely lacked the resources resources and manpower to rebuild. These drastic losses among trading partners would have affected the Minoans economically as well.

Agriculturalists are also affected by eruptions and their associated disasters. For example, in 1956, an earthquake in the eastern Cyclades (including Santorini) precipitated an underwater landslide whose resulting tsunami inundated the vineyards and orchards surrounding Palaikastro with salt water, “rendering them useless” for almost 20 years. Since olive trees and grape vines take years to grow before producing fruit, operating without their fecundity can devastate a region’s economy. Earthquakes can also impact water sources, causing them to dry up or become brackish. In 1998, wells in Pennsylvania went dry after a 5.6 magnitude earthquake, and in 2001, the Gujarat earthquake in India caused groundwater levels to vary and increase in salinity. Changes like these may occur immediately as groundwater leaves the well, or in the months following the event when the changes in the porosity of the surrounding rock prevent fresh water replenishment. Events like these easily destroy farms or entire communities, since wells are difficult and dangerous to dig, and it can be difficult to locate new sources of groundwater.

Additionally, it has long been recognized that the ash veils from volcanic eruptions affect local and global climates for months to years. For example, Mount Tambora’s eruption in 1815 disrupted seasonal patterns across the globe and caused widespread crop failures. Due to its unusually cold temperatures...

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1 Novikova, Papadopoulos and McCoy 2011, 671-675. Pyroclastic flows consist of fast-moving currents of lava, tephra, and other volcanic matter downslope.

8 Bruins et al. 2008. It is not clear what the authors mean by “useless” although the land would have to have been desalinated and it would have taken years for new olive trees and grape vines to become established.

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4 Driessen (2013, 10) place less emphasis on groundwater than I do, in part perhaps because it has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence.
caused by Tambora’s ash veil, 1816 was dubbed “The Year without a Summer” in New England. Crop failures resulting from the ash veil caused famine in Ireland, Germany, and the Yunnan province of China. Abnormally heavy rains flooded Geneva, and for years, the sunsets across Europe were an unusually vibrant red.\textsuperscript{10} Baillie and Munro\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{xx} dendrochronological work in Northern Ireland suggests that the Theran eruption had similarly long-term consequences. While ash veils from a volcano normally clear up within 2-3 years, the oak trees they studied showed limited growth for up to a decade. Although disruptions in temperature and light levels seem inconsequential to a modern audience, they would have had important implications for light-sensitive trees like the olive, which, debilitated, would not have the capacity to produce crop surpluses necessary to trade. Thus, while the levels of precipitated ash and tephra on Crete do not seem extreme, the culmination of environmental changes likely presented many long-term difficulties.\textsuperscript{10}

The greatest impact of the eruptions on Minoan trade may have been the loss of Akrotiri as a trading center. Knappett, Rivers, and Evans argue that Akrotiri served as a vital trading post, and without it, Minoan ships had to take longer routes to get to other ports, which increased shipping costs. These researchers’ model of the Aegean trade network suggests that, after the eruption, once-prominent trade centers around the Aegean were forced to trade more regionally to cope with increased expenses, or as the authors explained, “invest their resources in just a handful of key exchange links, putting their eggs in a few baskets.”\textsuperscript{xxii} This led to a new, more fragmented trade network, which the authors posit would be more susceptible to collapse because of the unexpected strains on the economic systems.\textsuperscript{xxii} The findings from their model hold implications for the metal trade on Crete, since the island had limited sources of metal. The lack of the Minoan’s agricultural surpluses, combined with higher shipping costs and new difficulty in acquiring in critical resources, likely compromised the entire Minoan economy.

Conclusion

Though the Minoans seeded their influence throughout the Aegean region, by 1450 BCE the palace culture everywhere but Knossos had collapsed. Based on the presented evidence, a variety of factors clearly led to the decline of the Minoan civilization. The eruption of Thera somewhere between 1650 and 1600 BCE began a series of severe environmental changes that abased Minoan stability on Crete and throughout the Aegean. The Minoans maintained their regional power for some time, but faced a steady, gradual decline as the Mycenaeans established their own trade network across the Aegean. By the time the Mycenaeans’ influence grew, the Minoans were a shell of their former selves, no longer an economic powerhouse.

The argument presented here cannot cover every facet of Minoan culture and their economic decline. For example, some argue that the Minoans traded continuously into the 15th century BCE with Egypt, since Minoans are depicted as traders in frescos of that time.\textsuperscript{11} Studies on this tomb imagery cast doubt on their value as historical documents, but the issue illustrates the complexity of studying the Minoan palatial collapse. The traditional binary arguments are far simpler and more straightforward, which may explain the appeal they present to the popular imagination, with popular books and documentaries citing either the eruption or an invasion as the sole cause of Minoan collapse. In the face of this widespread oversimplification of the subject, it is important to remember that, as new archaeological evidence comes to light, theories on the course of history must be reevaluated to reflect such changes. In the end, it is rare for one, sole thing to cause the decline of an entire civilization.

\textsuperscript{10} This is in contradiction to Driessen (2002, 254-255), who argues that the ash-fall could have been incredibly detrimental to farms on the eastern half of the island. This paper does not explore that idea due to conflicting evidence that volcanic ash is frequently beneficial to farmland.

\textsuperscript{11} On the other hand, recent studies of the Minoans (Keftiu) in Theban tombs (summarized by Anthony 2017, 79) suggest that these are not documentary representations of Minoans or other foreigners. The broader problem posed by Minoan trade goods in Egypt is beyond the scope of this paper.
Appendix 1. Map of the Aegean Bronze Age

Acknowledgements:

The paper presented here began as a term paper for a Greek Art class (CLASS 1510) that I took in the Fall of 2014. First and foremost, I would like to thank the professor of that class, Anne Weis, for becoming a mentor to me and encouraging me to follow through with this endeavor. This would never have become anything more than a term paper without her and I will miss our weekly meetings after I have graduated. I am also grateful to the Brackenridge Scholarship for providing the funding and structure to complete this project. Thank you to my roommate and writing tutor, Casey Talay, as well for helping me to prepare the proposal for the Brackenridge program and the final paper I am submitting. I also would like to acknowledge Jan Driessen and Colin F. MacDonald for their book The Troubled Island: Minoan Crete Before and After the Santorini Eruption. I only recently became aware of this work, and although it presents a notably similar thesis to my own, we came to our conclusions separately. Still, I made every effort to acknowledge where our arguments converge and where they deviate both in the text and in footnotes. Finally, I extend my profuse gratitude to the librarians at the Interlibrary Loan Office for helping me get a last-minute copy of Driessen and MacDonald’s work.

The guidelines for the references in this paper were set forth by the American Journal of Archaeology. A map has been appended to the end of the paper as a reference for the reader.
Bibliography


Endnotes

\(^i\) Girella and Pavuk 2016, 17.

\(^ii\) Driessen and MacDonald 1997, 117-18.


\(^iv\) Hussein 2011, 559-561.

\(^v\) Knappett and Nikolakopoulou 2008, 7-9.


\(^vii\) Computer Model: Knappett, Rivers and Evans 2011, 1019-1020.

\(^viii\) Panagiotakopulu et al. 2013, 684.

\(^ix\) Baillie and Munro 1988, 344-346.

\(^x\) Newhall and Self 1982, 1234-1235.

\(^xi\) Sigurdson and Carey 2006, 337.

\(^xii\) Wood 2014, 24.

\(^xiii\) Wood 2014, 58. xiv Friedrich 2009, 95.

\(^xiv\) Novikova, Papdopoulos and McCoy 2011, 671-675.

\(^xv\) Workshop: Minoura et al. 2000, 60. xvii Novikova, Papdopoulos and McCoy 2011, 671-675.

\(^xvi\) Gorokhovich 2005, 219-220.

\(^ xvii\) Wood 2014, 8-10. xx Baillie and Munro 1988, 344-346.

\(^xviii\) Knappett, Rivers, and Evans 2011, 1019-1020.

\(^xix\) Knappett, Rivers, and Evans 2011, 1019-1020.
Upon becoming a senior at the University of Pittsburgh, **Evan Malachosky** understood the next two semesters as an English Writing Major and History minor would be in preparation for entering the “real world.” He realized there’s no better way to understand today than to study yesterday. Particular to the stories of people versus their environment, he spent the better half of 2016 observing, interviewing, and understanding Pittsburgh’s industrious and complex transportation industry.
A Yellow Cab van pulls into the unloading lane of a hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. Inside, the rider awaits an amount from the driver. “You owe me $48,” he says without turning his head. The drive from Pittsburgh Airport to downtown—17.8 miles if you take the most direct route—lasts no longer than 30 minutes and would have cost about $22 had the rider taken Uber or Lyft. The rider cringes and lifts himself from the seat to pull out his wallet from beneath the tail of his suit to begin the process of swiping his card until the machine works. Cabs in Pittsburgh (many in need of refurbishing and updating) are equipped with a credit card machine on the back of the front passenger seat headrest, acting as a screen to display the total owed. To pay, though, the driver will hand you an iPad (or similar tablet device), ask you to swipe your card, sign, review the receipt and wait for the driver’s device to connect to the onboard printer. This process can take up to 15 minutes.

I work as a bellman at a hotel and watch this scene unfold before gesturing toward the trunk—the universal sign for “is there any luggage back here?” The driver nods and the trunk door swings open. I begin removing the luggage and placing it on a cart, taking all six pieces before heading inside to wait for the guest to begin the check-in process. After a few minutes, the cab driver comes in with the rider. The driver turns and says, “That’s mine,” pointing to a suitcase on the cart. “Okay, sorry about that,” I say after handing it back. The rider, confused, turns toward the desk. Later that day, that same rider opted for Uber to commute to his worksite. Meanwhile, that cab driver sat in the same spot he pulled into hours before, first in the cab line, waiting for business.

After my shift that night, I walked with a coworker who offered me a ride home. He had parked in an alley a few blocks from the hotel. Three cabs were parked in front of my coworker’s car. Two unoccupied cabs preceded the third. The driver with the suitcase was asleep in the front seat. His car, turned off, rested peacefully in the sleeping city. It was as if he would become a part of it, trapped in it—never allowed to leave unless an airport trip dangled before him. His seat leaned back toward the cabin of the van, pressed outward beyond the outline of his body. The taupe, suppressed cushioning of the seat showed obvious signs of repeated wear well beyond daily seating—the reclined position was not new. His sleeping position had become engrained into the seat, but a sign of battled fatigue rested in the cup holder: A 7-11 coffee mug, the kind you buy once to reap the benefit of cheap, often refills. It was battered, old, and could use a replacement. A lot of people viewed him the same way.

My coworker and I get into the car behind him, and a conversation arose about the sleeping driver ahead of us.

“Do they always do that?”
“A few of them, yeah.”
“Just overnight?”
“Some—others live out of their cabs.”

I thought back to the cab driver’s suitcase. It contained his belongings, his possessions, what he lived out of. I thought back to how defensive he had gotten; he had almost lost everything. I had previously never thought of anyone’s cab as his or her home. His passenger’s seat was full of newspapers and Styrofoam food containers: signs of a life imprisoned in the cab; signs of an industry cornering its workers into a lifestyle of deception, disfranchisement, and desperation; signs of a demographic switch in a city where blue-collar workers fueled its growth into a technological, trendy hotspot. Where do cab drivers fit in now, with millennial workers coming to Pittsburgh to work for high-tech companies like Uber, Facebook, Google, and Carnegie Mellon, and forcing the city to adapt to their burgeoning lifestyle?

This lifestyle and professional switch has cab companies backed up against the wall by a larger, convenience-driven competitor: Uber. The company recently opened headquarters in Pittsburgh and began to employ self-driving cars in its fleet. This type of car picks riders up, takes them to their destination, and returns to the roads to retrieve the next customer, effectively eliminating the need for a driver. It is still too early to know whether riders are keen on the idea of driverless vehicles, in that it would be utopic to believe that no issues might arise. In a city like Pittsburgh, which has been molded into a center of the transportation industry, cab drivers seem unfazed: stuck in their ways of poor service, dirty vehicles, and the occasional trip to and from the Pittsburgh airport. Cab drivers are rapidly losing customers to their new competitors in what results as an unprecedented market shakeup. In September of 2016, there were just fewer than 240,000 taxi drivers in the United States, and according to December 2015 numbers, just about 327,000 drove for Uber.

Cabs in Pittsburgh return to two cabstands centrally located downtown. Their demand, however, for airport trips deters riders from hailing cabs to other locations. If the cabs...
are not stacked in the cab lane downtown, they are likely waiting in line at the airport. Drivers do not waste their fuel or time driving back downtown without a passenger. This creates a problem for riders who demand the use of the cab service for what it is: a mode of transportation. Drivers often omit destination details until the rider is inside so as to prevent this shady, airport-only tactic.

Tyler Falk, a Cities Fellow, ranked “the 10 major U.S. airports that are the 10 farthest from the downtown cores of the cities they serve.” Pittsburgh ranked 9th, with 19.2 miles from the downtown center—a 28-30-minute trip with no traffic. Pittsburgh may not be the largest city, nor the most airport-dependent, but for a city that now headquarters a vast variety of international companies and prestigious universities, the influx of workers, visitors and tourists is at an all-time high and can no longer rely solely on the hard, blue-collar work of its residents.

An outsider company like Uber employs more people in the city of Pittsburgh than the city of Pittsburgh itself does. On a national scale, Uber drivers outnumber cab drivers. With Pittsburgh’s recent adoption of the transportation giant, the number of Uber’s “partners” (as the company calls its employees) has risen exponentially. Despite having no set hourly wage or benefits, Uber appeals to potential employees because of the self-decided hours, use of one’s own vehicle, and the do-it-yourself incentive. The stark contrast between employees of both the cab companies and Uber becomes even more divisive when the income is viewed as a secondary source. There is no sense of desperation in most Uber drivers. They do not seem as tense or as reliant on longer, more lucrative trips. They are willing to take a rider from their house to a friend’s, back from the bar, or to the airport.

The demographics of Uber drivers also differs. It seems rare to find an Uber driver who works full-time or regular hours with the company. This does not mean that they do not work 40 or more hours a week: their schedules may be more like: 6 A.M. to 12 P.M.; off; 6 P.M. to 12 A.M. Uber drivers are frequently college students, full-time employees elsewhere, or stay-at-home mothers or fathers. The risks—infrequent, short, or unavailable rides—do not impact the Uber drivers too significantly. The income from Uber is usually a bonus. Uber drivers usually thank their riders rather than rushing them out the vehicle to quickly snatch the next ride. Uber cars are also better-kept, the drivers more personable, and the trips cheaper. To add to the personable element, Uber drivers offer riders the car stereo’s auxiliary cord, or let them seamlessly play music via Bluetooth on the Pandora Radio App. Riders may enter the vehicle, scroll their phone, and play their music. It feels like the driver is your personal chauffeur rather than an unwelcoming stranger.

Though cab-driving companies and Uber offer the same services, they recruit their employees in different ways. One immediate observation of both employee fields is the heavy reliance on ‘transplants,’ a term which refers to non-locals and recent immigrants to the city. This trend of recruiting transplants seems more typical of Uber. Billboards across Pittsburgh read: “A little drive goes a long way”. The slogan was taken from a thirty second YouTube clip that accompanied the release of the billboards. The billboard and video target the transplant audience by creating a narrative that calls on all “go-getters, early-risers, providers, self-motivated, self-earners, 9-5ers, and night-owls”. The video continues, and a chef in a kitchen says, “Technically, I’m a cook,” implying that he drives Uber once the kitchen closes. “That’s extra buy-you-stuff money, or buy-them-stuff money,” the narrator continues. “Start earning this week!”. These suggestions—that those who can’t find work elsewhere want to work for themselves, want to make their own hours, or want to make extra money—make those who come to work for Uber feel like they made their own decision. Employment with Uber is an agreement. The company’s drivers are not beholden to strict hours, cabstands, or airport trips.

The owners of the two biggest cab companies agree that their services differ in quality and business. CEO of Star Transportation Group Bob DeLucia said, “Pittsburgh is not a cab town [because it is a small city]. If there are no conventions here, drivers can’t make a living. That’s why they like to do trips to the airport.” Rather than blame the city’s layout, Jerry Campolongo of Yellow Cab defended the cab service: “I know people think this is a huge problem here, but if you gauge us against other cities, we’re actually better. We have more than one taxi per every thousand people in the population. You won’t find near that in other cities our size.” Mr. Campolongo argues that what the cabs lack in service they make up for in availability. When there is an
excess of supply and a shortage in demand, however, the company founders. The solution nor the problem is clear. For a city spotlighted as a global innovator in the transportation industry, even a legislative agreement would be a step forward. Mayor Bill Peduto, vocally supportive of the introduction of Uber and Lyft into Pittsburgh, has not recommended the legal ban on the transportation.

When you think of the infatuating, nostalgic buzz of hundreds of taxis swarming the streets of New York City, weaving among the crowds of tourists and the streamlined herds of businessmen and women, you do not think of Pittsburgh in the same light. It is smaller and less bustling. Even so, it is all starkly different from the dull, grey-poupon yellow cabs that inhabited Pittsburgh prior to October of 2016. Though the last of a dying fleet, Yellow Cabs in Pittsburgh still encircle hotels. The cabs’ interiors—as expected—are beaten and stained rather than nostalgic and vintage-chic. The seats are missing headrests, seatbelt buckles, and more. The company markets themselves as Scion hatchbacks, Dodge minivans, and black cars. The company markets themselves as a convenient alternative to traditional taxis, eerily like those used by Uber in its preliminary stages. “Need a ride? Get the app,” Z-Trip’s website reads. They introduced a smartphone app that allows riders to pre-book rides, order a driver, and even track the driver to your pick-up location. Subtle jabs at competitors often appear: Z-Trip boasts “Up-Front Pricing” where you would “enter your drop off destination to get an accurate rate quote – no surprises and no surge pricing” as well as Customizable Pickup where you “select locations using our list of airports, nearby places, and your favorite and recent addresses.” These two features were initially unique—at least in Pittsburgh—to Z-Trip. Uber introduced similar features in September, offering prices upon ordering (a contrast from their original method of estimating within $4 in either direction price range, which frequently changed due to surges or other unknowing circumstances) and a “Schedule a Ride” button for users on the ordering homepage, allowing riders to schedule a ride for 15 minutes from now or 30 days later.

Sure enough, two months later, Yellow-Cab began their assimilation into the Z-Trip fleet. Z-Trip hosts a fleet of cabs that appear as Scion hatchbacks, Dodge minivans, and black cars. The company markets themselves as a convenient alternative to traditional taxis, eerily like those used by Uber in its preliminary stages. “Need a ride? Get the app,” Z-Trip’s website reads. They introduced a smartphone app that allows riders to pre-book rides, order a driver, and even track the driver to your pick-up location. Subtle jabs at competitors often appear: Z-Trip boasts “Up-Front Pricing” where you would “enter your drop off destination to get an accurate rate quote – no surprises and no surge pricing” as well as Customizable Pickup where you “select locations using our list of airports, nearby places, and your favorite and recent addresses.” These two features were initially unique—at least in Pittsburgh—to Z-Trip. Uber introduced similar features in September, offering prices upon ordering (a contrast from their original method of estimating within $4 in either direction price range, which frequently changed due to surges or other unknowing circumstances) and a “Schedule a Ride” button for users on the ordering homepage, allowing riders to schedule a ride for 15 minutes from now or 30 days later.

As the two brands grew increasingly similar, their differences become more glaring. Uber drivers feel more personal, that they are just somebody there to pick you up. They start up conversations. They may even grab a bottle of water and some candy out of the backseat. When you ask the driver how their day has been they could say they ran errands in between rides, if they have plans to go out to dinner, and then come back out later tonight. Their schedules are flexible, and you may even see them out one night. Uber drivers strive to impart a memorable riding experience. They offer the same services as Z-Trip, but theirs is wrapped in a pretty bow of personality, spritzed with conversation and sound-tracked by your favorite album.

Across their website, Z-Trip continues the
This autonomous way of working—which entails switching back and forth from the Public Utility Commission (PUC) transporter to Mom-on-the-move—has not always appealed to everyone, nor been entirely legal. In May, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and Mayor Bill Peduto, along with county executive Rich Fitzgerald, asked the PUC to reconsider its fine against ride-sharing apps Uber and Lyft for operating without proper licensing. In their letter, they stated that:

“We are writing today to address fairness in business regulation, and especially fairness toward one business -- Uber -- which is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is poised to invest millions more. However, all this could be lost if we send the message that Pennsylvania is not a welcoming place for 21st century businesses and other job-creators looking to make our state a home,” and reiterated that, “Decisions like this unprecedented fine against Uber will make it difficult for Pittsburgh and other cities to attract technology companies to our state and have a chilling effect on the new economy we are trying to build in Pennsylvania. We hope that the PUC would use its considerable powers to encourage the sharing economy in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, this substantial fine sends the wrong message about the business climate for innovation in the Commonwealth.”

Although Bill Peduto genuinely wants to help Pittsburgh grow economically, technologically, and socially, he also maintains a personal relationship with Uber CEO, Travis Kalanick. The outcry for Peduto’s support of the PUC and its desire to remain true to its original beneficiaries, of which cabs and other taxis comprise the silent majority. Cabs feel pressured when it comes to competing with Uber or Lyft. These ride-sharing services caused the need for cabs and their service ratings to plummet. Prior to Uber’s arrival in 2014, cabs were the only option, remaining a necessity only because they were benefiting from Pittsburgh’s lack of transportation options.

Since the war between PUC-regulated cabs and Uber or Lyft, the city became divided in trying to understand its significance. Over the years, Pittsburgh has quietly become a technology epicenter. Its older generations remember the days of the steel mills. The late 1970’s and early 80’s began the collapse of the steel industry, and by 1982, more than 150,000 workers had been laid off in the Pittsburgh area. The decline continued until 1991, when the Homestead Works Mills were demolished, thereby marking the end of an era. Eight years later, a shopping mall was built where mills once were, signifying a new decade and a new city. Pittsburgh’s current incarnation depends on its past foundation.

Considering this, Mayor Peduto rests somewhere between the old and the new. He benefits from “new Pittsburgh” and may have catalyzed its change. Peduto believes that technology and innovation can be Pittsburgh’s 21st-century commodity. As evidenced by e-mails released on October 14th, a close public-private relationship between Pittsburgh, the Pennsylvania government, and Uber mirrors that between Mayor Bill Peduto and Uber CEO Kalanick, which underscores the notion that Pittsburgh is “open for business.”

Pittsburgh, amidst change, has found its “change-promisor.” Uber is a company capable of and willing to offer “widespread benefit to the entire Commonwealth in the form of improved transportation and new job opportunities for thousands.” One can see how this would be appealing for a governor at the reigns of a city known as “Most Livable”, “Foodie Destination 2016,” and formerly as the “Steel City.” The desire to become something better, to attract
more citizens, and to garner more national recognition is something any mayor would wish for. Though, in a city like Pittsburgh, it is possible that companies like Uber, Facebook and Google are taking advantage of a naïve Pittsburgh. The city's readiness to advance became a readiness to rid themselves of past inconveniences. Cabs bear the brunt, because the transportation industry seems to have taken the brunt of focus, have been ousted and overpowered by the abundance of ride-sharers.

A legislative agreement would be a step in the right direction. For Pittsburgh as a city on the cusp of an economic explosion, a governmental agreement between citizens and employers may be necessary. In e-mails acquired by Vice News, Uber and Peduto exchanged e-mails. In one chain, Peduto and his staff even offered Uber a spot in the city’s bicentennial parade:

“Hi Kevin, Nice seeing you Friday! As promised, I am sending you an official email to request that Uber participate in the parade via driver less [sic] cars on July 9th 11 a.m. Again, this parade will include community groups, cultural groups and famous Pittsburghers. We are hoping to celebrate both our past and future. We would love to have Uber participate.”

Though Vice News admits, “Uber did not respond to the e-mail,” it is hard to believe there was no further communication on the subject. Pittsburgh’s government, it seems, has become intertwined in and infatuated with the idea of Uber's promised advances. As a growing city, is it smart to trust Uber and effectively eliminate the previous cab industry? Uber recently pulled all operations out of Austin, Texas. Could or would the company do the same to Pittsburgh one day, possibly beginning a surge of “big-tech” departures? It is impossible to guess now, and the relationship between Pittsburgh’s government and the private company suggests Uber is in it for the long-haul.

It appears that Peduto has it all figured out on a grander scale, but the minute details remain unclear. Daily life for cab drivers has changed significantly since Uber first got wind of a nearby rider-request. They appear anonymously at first. They pull their Uber signs from the dash or “look for directions” or let the valet lane monitor know “I’ll be out of here in a second.” More recently, Uber drivers have become more aggressive and more demanding of the spots in these cabstands. Uber drivers watch movies on their phones, listen to music, or grab coffees while occupying these spots. One morning, two cab drivers noticed the

Uber drivers in their spots and pulled in front of them to park them in, letting them know, “You’re not leaving until I get somebody,” clearly stating that the cab drivers would get the next business. A shouting match with the cabs on either side of the street ensued. After the shouting subsided, two older gentlemen waited outside of their vehicles parked tightly in the cab stand. The two drivers chatted closely and glanced occasionally at the cab drivers they were feuding with.

I decided I would check in on both parties, attempting to remain neutral in the matter.

“He’s just an old shit. I drove that—I know I can park here.” He meant he drove taxis before Uber, so I played it off as banter between former colleagues and presumed “traitors.” The drivers all looked similar: they did not have the “coolness” Uber drivers are portrayed having. They had the same dull jeans, scuffed, square-toe dress shoes, and hoodies. They just had different cars, but they stuck out amongst the fleet of younger, cleaner drivers. Eventually, they all reentered their cars when riders hailed them. The cabs left first, filling in the last spot at the hotel across the street. The Ubers left too, presumably because they each were pinged by awaiting riders. But when I turned around, another vehicle had spurred their sudden departures.
Two Pittsburgh Police cars pulled into the spaces the Ubers and cab previously occupied.

Officer J. Nicholas of the Pittsburgh Police Department was the first to exit his vehicle. He approached the valet and I, as we asked, “Is this about the cabs?”

“Yeah, I got a call about two cabs yelling at some cars?”

“Two Ubers were parked in a cab stand and the cab parked them in.”

He laughed, pulled out his phone and began dialing. He told us he was calling back to the station to see if he could get an answer on the matter.

Can Ubers park in cabstands? We initially thought not. They share rides rather than provide transportation services. As the conversation continued and the officer seemingly becoming more puzzled, he concluded that: “We don’t really have any regulations on that.” During his phone call, we went back and forth, at one point asking, “Uber is considered a taxi? What is an Uber?”

He told us he’d call his lieutenant, hoping for an answer. He, like the rest of us, seemed becoming more puzzled. He approached the valet and, avoiding all meaningless small talk, and treated the ride like public transportation.

“Yeah, I got a call about two cabs yelling at some cars?”

As a zoomed-in version of Pittsburgh’s complex transportation transition, the hotel valet lane represents the possible problems of a mishandled future. Assimilated fleets of vehicles blend into normal traffic, allowing rides to travel anonymously. Their drivers are like chauffeurs who provide a seamless operation and a guaranteed ride at any moment of any day. These assimilated fleets then transform into autonomous vehicles without an operator. The rider enters the vehicle, avoids all meaningless small talk, and treats the ride like public transportation.

This idea has come to fruition because of Uber. More specifically in Pittsburgh, Uber takes a glimpse into modern cities and their deplorable with controlling the way their citizens travel around town. On November 4th, Governor Tom Wolf signed Senate Bill 984 into law, which allows Uber and Lyft to operate permanently in the Commonwealth, allowing them to become full partners with the cities and communities where they operate and invest, including Pittsburgh where Uber has headquartered its advanced robotics research.”

Wolf reiterates Peduto’s message: we want Uber here for the long run. Uber now operates legally with few restrictions, though, their time here might outlast the brief stint in Austin, Texas. Austin began restricting Uber’s operations, which did not harmonize with their vision of “innovation.” Austin, which quickly for the “Smart City Initiative” grant alongside Pittsburgh, seemingly terminated their chances because of their feud with Uber.

Neither city’s proposal detailing their part in the initiative specifically mentioned ride-sharing, company or autonomous vehicles, and focused more on public and traditional transit. Both cities mention buses, trains, cars, and training employees. The Austin proposal specifically featured a plug for the car-rental service: ZipCar. The company does not rival Uber or Lyft in customer use or size, but offers fuller service closer to car ownership. This strategy may appeal to older or more established users who need to transport more than just themselves. Was this a jab to Uber? Probably—but after Uber and Lyft left Austin, the community still showed a need and preference for them:

“Combine the city’s affinity for drinking with a largely despised transportation system, cabs that refuse to take people on short trips and severely limited ridesharing options and you’re asking for midnight mayhem. ‘The first Friday and Saturday after Uber was gone, we were joking that it was like the zombie apocalypse of drunk people,’ Cooper said. People were so desperate for rides, she said, that they’d pull up to a corner and pedestrians would offer to hop in her car as soon as they spotted her old Uber and Lyft emblems in the windshield. ‘They don’t even know who I am,’ she chuckled in amazement,” Driver Sarah Cooper said in an interview with Vocativ.

Neither city won the grant, but Uber seems to have chosen the city that appeals to their needs most: a city with a thirst for innovation, remodeling, and restarting. Since Uber has established a hub in Pittsburgh, the city’s glaring preference for Uber has come to light. Whether citizens still depend on taxis remains a question. Peduto tries diligently to handle this question as Pittsburgh and its citizens take sweeping action on this global issue. Uber can legally operate—but not without local discomfiture. On a smaller scale, legal issues remain among police departments. Then come
the issues with the indigenous competitors.

Cab drivers see less business. Uber and its ‘partners’ bully their way around downtown. Trust in Uber causes cab-company owners to feel unwanted, overlooked in a city whose turf they once securely owned. Now, Pittsburgh grows because of the technological giants it invites into its economy. Those who once ruled the roads of the city are paved over by innovation and forgotten as a dull, off-yellow memento of Pittsburgh’s origins.

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**Bibliography**


AND WHY NOT BELONG?

Cold War Discourse, Gender, and the Lesbian Assimilationist Movement

MARIÉ-EVE DESJARDINS
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MARIÉ-EVE DESJARDINS is graduating this year from the University of Ottawa with an Honors Bachelor of Arts in History and Minor in English. She is primarily interested in the history of gender and sexuality in Western thought, as well as the history of the Second World War and of the Cold War. Many professors, most notably B. Craig and M. Lessard, have encouraged and inspired her throughout her undergraduate studies.
and why not ‘belong’?"  
This question was penned by Del Martin in the first publication of The Ladder and epitomizes the mentality of the first wave of the gay rights movement, dubbed homophile or assimilationist. This generation of gay activists wanted to belong alongside the American majority. They wanted to convince this majority that gay people can be respectable citizens, so that they would be able to live among the rest of society without harassment. The qualifier “respectable” is an important one to note: many LGBT+ people did not fall into “respectability”, and thus were shunned by the assimilationists. As a result, this wave has been classified as classist, racist, and exclusionary, especially by the second wave of the gay rights movement, which was drastically more radical.

While these criticisms are valid and important to keep in mind, few historical studies seem to consider the fact that this first wave, emerging during the 1950s, carried with it the heritage of early American Cold War mentality. This intersection imposed a frame of conventionality to which the assimilationist lesbians had to adhere more strictly than homosexual men to fit into society. However, lesbian assimilationist strategy strove not for societal acceptance, but rather minimal tolerance. These lesbians thought that society would not and should not change for them, but if they adapted to it instead, they would be tolerated on an individual basis. The Ladder was first published in 1956-1957 by the Daughters of Bilitis, the first widespread lesbian homophile social group. The publication gives insight into how assimilationist discourse mirrors Cold War discourse concerning gender in the United States. To fit into the American majority, lesbian assimilationists used gender performance as their integration tool.

By the early 1950s, the United States and its citizens began to interpret the Cold War as an unprecedented clash of civilizations. To preserve the American way of life, state and society aggressively promoted traditional gender roles. This discourse included an aggressive anti-homosexual element. Already in 1952 John F. Kennedy proclaimed that “it would be a mistake to judge the Communist threat as primarily military”. The war was to be fought on ideological grounds—the capitalist way of life pitted for survival against that of communism. As such, the nation looked inwards to find and eliminate covert communist agents. This introspection reached a frenzied peak during what is now known as the second Red Scare. Homosexuality was under-stood to threaten the American way of life because it rejected religion, morality, and dominant culture. It was conflated with communism (especially in Senator McCarthy’s influential rhetoric) by these shared elements of deviancy, thus implicitly justifying rampant prejudice and discrim-ination towards homosexuals.

Homosexuality was also understood to be a serious security risk. People believed that homosexuals could be blackmailed by communist agents for sensitive information, especially if they desired to stay in the closer. This belief gave rise most notably to McCarthyism and the Lavender Scare, both undercurrents of the Red Scare. The Lavender Scare is notable because McCarthy suggested that subversive, homosexual elements operated within the government, which caused thousands of governmental employees suspected or rumored to be homosexual to be fired from their positions.

Thus, homosexuals were automatically lumped in with com-munism because of their deviancy, despite any outward loyalty to the United States. Homosexuality was considered an infection to be neutralized to secure the United States’ ideological supremacy over that of the communists.

It was within such context that the lesbian assimilationist discourse emerged. As the United States strove to combat the enemy of communism in its society, its mentality concerning the female gender shifted to strictly and aggressively prescribe the American way of being a woman. The image of the true American woman was white, suburban, middle-class, Christian, nurturing, feminine-looking, passive, submissive to her husband, “prefer[ing] marriage to a career”, etc. Lesbian assimilationist strategy was thus not only inherently framed by Cold War discourse concerning homosexuality, but also concerning
communicating one’s position and attitude in and towards society. The first volume of *The Ladder* continually stresses the importance of avoiding the “fly-front pants [and the] butch haircuts and mannish manner [which are] the worst publicity that [they] can get”. Working-class lesbians at the time were known for their butch/femme pairs. Especially in the case of the butch, assimilationists understood this to be a flaunted attack on society. The butches, and the females who approved of their deviant performance, seemingly did not want to belong. “Thus the ‘obvious’ Lesbians [created] in the public a stereotyped picture of all Lesbians” as anti-societal monsters, not only endangering themselves but negatively affecting the whole community.

Therefore, assimilationists posited that “their attire should be that which society will accept” and should present themselves and dress as femininely as any other woman would and should. Namely, they should wear women’s clothes (dresses and tailored slacks), and let their hair grow long. In respecting prescribed gender performance, assimilationist lesbians would be given space to exist in society. As prime example of this, *The Ladder* touted that ‘converted’ butches had more friends than before and “no longer have the feeling that everyone is watching [them]”. This sentiment of surveillance is not to be dismissed as paranoia, given the context of the Cold War discourse and abating Red Scare. Adhering to the image of the feminine American woman allowed lesbians to evade society’s gaze, and their gender performance made them worthy of tolerance.

The same gendered conventions were prescribed in *The Ladder* concerning the assimilationists’ activities within society. Interactions with others were framed by the ideas of how re-spectable women ought to act. American women had a good temperament, were “mild-mannered”, “agreeable” and “delightful”—not engaging in violent or agitative behavior, which was dangerous and suspect. The Daughters of Bilitis were primarily formed with the goal of creating a group to socialize with other lesbians, and of creating safe spaces which would not automatically be associated with non-respectable lesbians. These non-respectable lesbians flaunted their sexuality and apparent disdain for traditional gender roles and dress. An example of such a non-respectable locale was the gay bar, where the rough butch scene was omnipresent. The president of the Daughters of Bilitis implied one ought to be ashamed to be seen in such settings. In contrast, some example activities which periodically appear in *The Ladder’s* calendar of events are bowling, picnics, and brunches. These classy, calm venues and activities fit well within the Cold War propaganda image of the middle-class white woman’s social life and expected behavior.

To conform to societal expectations of the respectable woman, it was suggested, during a meeting between the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society (a mostly male homophile group), that homosexual men and lesbians should date: “Living in a predominantly heterosexual world, an individual at times must, or should, have a date … it very often leaves a lot better im-pressure” Always, when organizing activities for themselves or when considering their image in society, the Daughters of Bilitis did so within a cadre of respectable femininity as dictated by Cold War mentality. They would act in such a way as to avoid the labels of agitators. They instead acted as respectable women, “public spirited”, considerate of the American image and of the societal majority’s comfort and safety.

Finally, an important element of Cold War discourse concerns the family. It served as the bastion of American values, the first educational milieu of children, and a capitalistic economic unit of its own right. The family became one of the first lines of defense to ensure that the American/Western
The fear of subversion also created the image of the closeted lesbian wife, who, much like undercover communist agents, would destroy the institution of marriage from within, and by extension, American civilization. The fear of subversion also created the image of the closeted lesbian wife, who, much like undercover communist agents, would destroy the institution of marriage from within, and by extension, American civilization.

Children, and their relationship to their mother, were also held as a sacred element of the American family. Unlike their communist counterparts, American mothers could spend time with their children and indulge in motherly love. To Americans, motherhood was the most valued aspect of a woman's life. As opposed to communist children who were held hostage to a destructive system and trained in a corrupting ideology, American children had to be shielded from deviant ideas and educated in American values to allow such values to endure. Lesbian mothers especially were understood as problematic. Mothers who turned to lesbianism “no longer cared for any more children” and were understood to be revolting against their roles as wives and mothers. People believed lesbians scorned the family, badly influenced impressionable children, and thus contributed to American society’s destruction.

In the first volume of *The Ladder*, it is repeatedly observed that many readers are faced with the problem of family and marriage, especially if the lesbian in question discovers her sexuality when she is already married and/or already has a child. These are especially central and important questions to *The Ladder*’s readers. On the question of marriage, while published opinions differ, it is concluded by most readers that if a lesbian is already married, she should let her husband know but not act upon her desires. One short story published in the periodical concludes with the lesbian protagonist being instructed by her lover to return to her husband, and to try above all to make her marriage work. Divorce was also understood as a sign of failure in society and constituted a badge of disgrace; to divorce because of one’s lesbianism only exacerbated that stigma. Marriage was thus too important an institution to renege if one wished to remain respectable, as the lesbian assimilationists wanted.

A similar conclusion is reached concerning the question of children. As children and their relationship with their mother was held in such high esteem, so too does *The Ladder* consider the children to be of foremost importance when considering one’s lesbianism. During a group discussion, it was agreed that “children need strong contact with both male and female figures to balance out their life” thereby accepting the heterosexual model of the family as normal and healthy. This follows assimilationist strategy, as respectable lesbians are women first and thus cannot provide masculine influence. If the lesbian does have a child within a heterosexual marriage, then “in order to provide security for the innocent” child, she must “build a life contrary to her own desires”. Though lesbianism is grounds for losing custody of children, this is never used as a reason to justify the assimilationist discourse. The children’s well-being was the fore-most concern. Respecting the primacy of marriage and of children, even at the expense of the lesbian’s happiness, was considered inevitable if assimilationist lesbians were to respect expected gender performance and solidify their image as respectable women.

In conclusion, lesbian assimilationist discourse centered largely on respecting gendered conventions regarding dress, society, and family as prescribed in the dominant ideological discourse stemming from the Cold War.
War in the United States. Adhering to this image would allow others to tolerate the lesbians in their society. In truth, performing the female gender as dictated by Cold War discourse was a coherent strategy for living relatively free from harassment. Despite justified criticisms concerning their exclusionary rhetoric, it might simply have been the best strategy for this specific group of women to give themselves a chance to be overlooked as lesbians, and to live a safe life regardless of their choice of partner. Performing the female gender to the best of their abilities would lead to the individual acceptance of the lesbian, because their strategy showed they could minimize the damages their existence inflicted upon American civilization. After all, while they were homosexual, “they [were] women first”.

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xxvii Stieglitz, “Is Mom to Blame?”, 249.

xxviii Breines, Young, White and Miserable, 48-49.

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xxiv Stieglitz, “Is Mom to Blame?”, 255.


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xxx Gutterman, “Another Enemy Within”, 482-483.

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Food systems have been changing since the beginnings of human history, during most of which humans hunted and gathered for food nomadically. Today’s food systems are by contrast complex and globally interconnected, as food products may be grown in the United States, processed in China, and then distributed in South America. Throughout history, parts of the world have often experienced continuous periods of hunger, which have often come about because of war, plague, or hostile weather. The past 70 years’ technological advancements counteract this, and increasing global cooperation has begun to suggest the possibility for nations to significantly reduce hunger throughout the world. Despite such progress, the United Nations World Food Programme reports that over 800 million people lack the food to support a healthy, active life. Efforts to end hunger improve each year, but climate change stands as an obstacle to this goal which may worsen global hunger. Changes in the earth’s climate, temperature, and weather patterns have been occurring for millions of years. World climate has undergone changes which disrupt these more normal, epochal changes. These changes consequently abet trends that will in turn cause scenarios threatening to human life and behavior.

One of these threats is to food security. Four major parts comprise the food system: production, stability, access, and utilization. Agricultural determinants of food security are broadly defined as all effects of climate change on food production and its process. These effects include increased temperatures and frequency of storms and severe weather. I believe that these effects and their associated case studies afford understanding of food security within the context of their impacts on crops and livestock, thus allowing the public to understand climate change directly from the perspectives of agricultural industries.

Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture Production and Crop Stability

Agriculture and its related industries depend immensely on climate. Crop production and livestock are the largest global food industries and are highly sensitive to climatic shifts. Increases in temperature, changes in precipitation patterns, and changes in storm frequency and severity often significantly affect food production. Though effects vary across regions, climate change presents troubles and uncertainty to countries across the globe. Climate scientists anticipate that climate change will cause short-run increases in agricultural productivity in some high-income, high-latitude countries, but these scientists expect the effects in equatorial countries to be devastating. Low-income countries primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America already suffer from poor agricultural productivity and food insecurity, conditions which climate change is expected to exacerbate.

Because temperature determines plant growth cycles, seasonal variations and temperature extremes pose dangers to crop production. Crops only tolerate specific temperatures which, if exceeded, result in lessened crop productivity. Many rain-fed crops in Africa and South America for example are currently near their temperature tolerances, which means that even a modest temperature increase will lead to drastic reductions in crop yields. This is because temperature and heat stress directly influence plant composition. Likewise, temperature shifts disrupt seasonal biomass growth, because critical windows in crop development, such as pollination, are obstructed or delayed. Increases in temperature also speed up crop maturation, shortening the seeding
and harvesting period. Consequently, this increases the rate of senescence, which is the aging and deterioration of crops. Stable temperatures are important to perennial plants, which flower and mature over Spring and Summer, then die every Autumn and Winter to return the following Spring from their rootstocks. Perennial plants are vulnerable to inauspicious climate changes because they require a certain number of frost days to maintain optimum yields and quality. Climate change threatens to damage perennial plant production because it is expected to lengthen warm seasons and shorten the cold.

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency of severe weather patterns, notably droughts and floods. Drought can destroy entire yields or can result in drastically reduced production, even for farmers who irrigate their fields. Similarly, flooding and excess precipitation damage farmland. According to a report from DuPont Pioneer, the magnitude of damage depends on several factors: the crop, its growth stage, the duration of flooding, and the temperature during flooding. Aside from rice, most crops are largely intolerant to flooding. Potatoes, dry beans, and wheat for example can endure submerged soils no longer than one to two days. Other crops, such as corn and soybeans, may survive four days in submerged soils. Damage to submerged crops occurs because the soil quickly becomes deficient of oxygen, an element necessary for plants’ growth and development. Especially during the reproductive stages, such as during pollination, crops are more easily damaged by flooding than during the vegetative and flowering stages.

Changes in Access to Arable Land

Climate change is expected to increase the availability of arable farmland in high-latitude regions, such as in northeastern Europe and Russia, but reduce it in equatorial regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Brazil. By the end of the century, low-lying regions and islands are expected to lose a significant portion of arable farmland to rising sea levels.

In high-latitude regions, global warming will create favorable conditions for crop growth in areas previously too cold for agricultural productivity. The northern United States and northeastern Europe may benefit from the northward expansion of farmable land. There are, however, conflicting expectations for the productivity of new farmland. In Russia, for example, agronomists believe that projected future temperatures will positively affect agricultural productivity, but may cause a lack of water and an increased risk of drought.

Perhaps the most severe degradation of agricultural land will occur because of rising sea levels. Since 1993, the global sea level has risen between 2.6mm and 3.0mm annually and has accelerated rapidly in recent years. Rising temperatures globally and collectively increase sea levels by melting polar ice caps. From 2003 to 2010, over 4.3 trillion tons of ice were lost from Greenland, the Earth’s glaciers, and the North and South Poles. Studies by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggest that the complete melting of Antarctica and Greenland would respectively cause a 60-meter and 7-meter rise in sea level. Melting of smaller ice concentrations and glaciers would have a much smaller effect, estimated roughly between a 2.5 and 7-meter rise in sea level. While Antarctic and Greenlandic ice sheets are not expected to melt entirely, the later figures (though modest in comparison) represent scenarios likely to occur within this decade. Moreover, future sea level estimates fail to consider the exponential nature of melting ice. Once ice caps melt to certain degree, water behaves as a lubricant, triggering more rapid melting.

The IPCC reports that a significant rise in sea level would severely negative affect agriculture, primarily by submerging arable farmland, but also by reducing water and soil quality and by eroding of coasts, with transportation and food processing systems are also vulnerable to a rising sea level.

Agricultural Utilization of Carbon Dioxide

Carbon dioxide is essential to photosynthesis, as plants use energy from sunlight and water to convert the CO2 absorbed from the atmosphere into their food source, glucose. Rising CO2 concentration in the atmosphere can have both positive and negative consequences on many plant functions, with some variations between plant species. In controlled environments, a rise in CO2 has been strongly associated with increased plant growth and reproduction. Studies suggest that under controlled, optimal conditions, a two-fold increase in CO2 can increase yields by as much as 36%. There is, however, substantial uncertainty concerning how well these results hold given actual conditions.
Because rising CO2 stimulates crop growth, it also stimulates the growth of other plants, such as harmful weeds, fungi, pests and other unwanted plants. The expedited growth of these unwanted plants necessitates a greater use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Last year alone, US farmers spent over $11 billion on pesticides. This number is expected to increase in future years. The proliferated use of pesticides raises concerns about harmful chemicals entering food grown for human consumption. Rising CO2 has further implications on the nutritional quality of crops. According to the IPCC, crops grown in an abundance of CO2 have been shown to yield lower nutritional value. Higher CO2 levels are consistent with lower concentrations of protein and essential minerals in crops including wheat, rice, and soybeans. Consequently, decreased nutritional quality may have severe implications on human health.

**Case Studies**

Climate change is expected to affect crops unevenly, as some crops are more resilient to fluctuations in their environment, while others are extremely sensitive to slight changes. The estimations of climate change’s impact on food security is well-indicated by agricultural products essential to human consumption: wheat, rice, and livestock. 729 million metric tons of wheat are produced annually and production continually increases. Wheat is the most-consumed crop in the world overall, most frequently consumed in high-income countries. Conversely, rice is the most-consumed crop in the developing world, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, with rice production estimated at over 483.8 million metric tons in 2016.

**Case Study I: Wheat**

The world currently produces more than 700 million tons of wheat annually, of which 500 million tons are converted directly into products for human consumption. A research study by Nature Climate Change (NCC) suggests that increasing temperatures are associated with significant decreases in wheat yields. This study gathered data from institutions in China, the U.S., Europe and globally to conclude that a one-degree Celsius increase in temperature may reduce global wheat productivity by 4.1 to 6.4 percent. To assess the impact of temperature changes on wheat production, researchers used statistical analysis reliant on historical observations of climate and global wheat yields to infer future productivity. In addition, the NCC used two different types of crop modeling simulations to integrate contextual differences between regions.

This study, though, had major limitations. As described earlier, crop growth is determined by several interrelated mechanisms, temperature being only one of these factors. The research study fails to consider increases in atmospheric CO2, which are associated with some increases in crop growth and increased efficiency in water usage. Neither is freshwater availability addressed in the study. Water availability is vital to crop growth regardless of temperature, and a drought-like conditions will dramatically reduce overall yields. Furthermore, adaptive capacity is not considered and likely has significant implications for ensuring wheat productivity. Because adaptive capacity relies on several indicators, including human resources, physical resources, financial resources, information and diversity, it differs considerably across regions and contexts. This makes it a reasonably difficult variable to incorporate into crop modeling. Nonetheless, it is a necessary factor to illustrate an accurate picture of future wheat yields.

**Case Study II: Rice**

Next, we will examine climate change effects on the most consumed crop in the developing world: rice. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over 3 billion people are characterized as having very high dependence on rice (i.e. more than half of all calories consumed are from rice). Studies have suggested that high temperatures and other climate change effects will negatively affect rice production, since rice is most vulnerable to exposure to extreme temperatures. However, depending on the location, temperature increases may positively or negatively affect rice yields. In areas of colder, milder weather, temperature will likely have a positive effect on rice productivity, while in tropical and warmer climates—where the clear majority of rice is currently produced—modest temperature increases may significantly reduce yields. In the Philippines, a one-degree increase in growing season temperatures was linked to a 15% reduction in yield. Rice's exposure to extremely high temperatures for just 1 to 2 hours during anthesis (roughly 9 days before heading) typically results in great damage to grain fertility.

In the long-run, rice fields located in
proximity to coastlines will be vulnerable to rising sea levels. Low-lying farmland, such as within Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam, will face significant reductions of rice cropland if sea levels rise as projected. In Vietnam, for example, most of the country’s rice is cultivated near the Mekong Delta. A comparatively modest rise in sea level of one meter would submerge large areas of rice paddies and likely render the country incapable of supporting its main staple and export.

Case Study III: Heat Stress on US Livestock

Growth in the world economy continues to largely determine diets and food preferences. As wealth increases globally, so too does the demand for meat and livestock products. Most of the world’s meat is consumed in high-income countries, but this is quickly changing. In developing countries, the consumption of meat grows between 5-6% annually and the consumption of milk and dairy grows roughly 3.6% annually.

Climate change presents significant danger to livestock productivity. As with crop production, only appropriate environmental conditions ensure efficient production. Climate change is expected to impact animal agriculture in four major ways: feed-grain production, availability, and price; pastures and forage crop production and quality; animal health, growth, and reproduction; and disease and pest distributions. Firstly, feed-grain production and forage crop production would be aggravated by climate change via the same mechanisms discussed in the previous section. Fluctuations in crop productivity will directly affect the supply of feed for livestock. Animal feed in the US, for example, is made from crops grown domestically. Secondly, livestock consumes 47% of all soy and 60% of all corn produced in the US. Decreases in the supply of feed grain may increase meat prices dramatically. Thirdly, heat stress on livestock has detrimental effects on health, productivity, and fertility. While most animals can adequately adjust to some deviations in temperature, most struggle to cope with extreme weather events. Deviations in core body temperature of greater than 4-5 degrees Fahrenheit stress livestock animals substantially, leading to severe losses in productivity and reproduction rates. Deviations in core body temperature of greater than 9 degrees Fahrenheit are often fatal.

Livestock animals are far more vulnerable to temperature extremes than to increases in average temperature. And fourthly, high temperatures have been shown to decrease milk production, weaken the immune and digestive systems of animals, and increase the mortality rates of dairy cattle. On days where ambient temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit, the risk of pig mortality doubles.

Research published by The University of Illinois and The Ohio State University analyzed the economic implications of heat stress on US livestock. The researchers modeled the effects on livestock productivity and health on existing research on animal heat responses.

The study found that the US livestock industries will experience severe economic losses. The researchers considered four scenarios of heat abatement adaptation ranging from minimal to intensive. With only minimum adaptive measures, estimates of economic losses averaged over $2.4 billion annually. Even with exhaustive adaptive measures, losses averaged over $1.7 billion annually. In the model, the dairy and beef industries withstood the greatest losses ($897 million and $369 million respectively), likely because cows require extensive outdoor grazing and are sensitive to temperature. The poultry industry fared comparatively better ($128 million), as chickens are generally raised within indoor chicken coops. Severe economic losses to the meat and dairy industry may dramatically increase food prices. The US will likely have some of the world’s most sophisticated adaptive technology, but still suffer significant economic losses as fewer consumers purchase livestock products.
Climate change threatens to aggravate food insecurity if production practices neglect making critical adjustments. In this case, adaptation, which involves adapting to changing climate, is necessary as it maximizes benefits and minimizes harms. Adaptation seeks to reduce the harmful effects of climate change on human development, and these adaptations range from as using air-conditioners to tolerate hotter temperatures, to altering consumption practices to compensate for agricultural limitations. Adaptation capacity is also closely tied to wealth. The wealthier a society, the greater its adaptability to changes in regional climate, with poorer societies having lesser adaptability and more vulnerability to the effects of climate change. Unfortunately, the poorer regions will be worst affected by climate change, while the wealthiest regions are expected to face the least harmful effects. There are three major challenges to achieving broader global food security: closing yield gaps, increasing production limits, and reducing food waste. However, considerable barriers exist to equipping Africa and other regions with the tools to close yield gaps. Providing agricultural technology and knowledge to large amounts of poor farmers requires strong political leadership and large public investments. These ambitions have been historically challenging even without the damaging effects of climate change, and future efforts may require considerably more effort to close these gaps.

Secondly, increasing agricultural production limits occurs in a variety of ways. Improved farming practices, technological advances, and alternate food source utilization catalyze new production potentials. In developed countries with low yield gaps, increasing production limits helps to maintain strong food market systems and enable the distribution of more aid to countries in need. Also, maintaining depositories of genetic material is critical to expanding yield potential. According to the USDA, maintaining large depositories of various crop seed genotypes and genetic materials allows farmers to select optimal crop variations each season, based on soil, weather, and pest conditions. Diverse genetic material also allows scientists and agronomists to genetically engineer stronger plants to better resist pests.

1“The Green Revolution refers to a set of research and development of technology transfer initiatives occurring between the 1930s and the late 1960s that increased agricultural production worldwide, particularly in the developing world beginning most markedly in the late 1960s.” (Hazell 2009)
a region’s means. Short-term predictions discuss conflicting effects of climate change on food security, for instance, that some regions may prosper because of climate change over the next 20 years. No matter fleeting benefits, though, the long-run predictions state with immense certainty that climate change will severely exacerbate global malnutrition and food insecurity. But if regions increase crop yields independent of climate change, only then can nations lessen its grim consequences.

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i.
yesterday, we went running at the lip of dusk
by the foot of the old bridge—a sliver
of horizon in persimmon dystopia—you turned
and said I feel like we're in the future.
How far? I said. But you were watching a single
car drive past, hands on your purpled kneecaps
as the headlights snapped our shadows
back into place. There shouldn't be
cars in the future, you said,
like you were disappointed

ii.
in school we learned to fit
1,000 Earths in Jupiter's belly
heads tilted up,
we watched in awe as stars rolled
with each flick of the teacher's fingers
and you told me this theory—whispered
among a constellation of first graders—
that on 1,000 Earths you could fit
1,000 lives, 1,000 different ways
to make the same mistake
or fix them if we're lucky

iii.
I still wonder if you're mad
about when I took you out on your birthday
and we were tailing the moon to Sunoco
and breathing in the scent of gasoline.
Where to? I asked, tracing Ursa Major with my thumb
but you shut yourself back into the truck
and told me to take you home.

iv.
you won't eat fruit unless it's cut up for you.
I place a silver bowl of persimmon slices on the kitchen table
and count the freckles on your shoulders from the porch window:
you're standing out in the garden, barefooted, breathing in comets,
eyes closed like you could somehow
spin a solar system out of yearning alone
it never works—you know this—but you keep trying,
until a kidney stone the size of Pluto
starts to weigh you down.

v.
without students, the planetarium is a husk,
an empty galaxy. You climb behind the console,
—a self-professed God—and flick the switches
like we remembered. The universe moves but
there's something missing
in another life, I could be anything, you say
but that's just it; you've always been
trapped—by this ceiling—in this orbit.
the spin cycle is only for heavy loads
and four cups of rice is too much for one person.

craigslist is merciful
and doesn’t tell you
that the house is too big
and too dark

but that’s not the point—the point is that you’ve been
sleeping in your own bed and you’re still homesick
until your stomach hurts, until you’ve slept 14 hours
but your bones feel like plastic straws.
you remember weekends at noon, the covers swept off
your naked legs, your sunshine belly, a happy shriek.

now, the kitchen table is empty. A chipped bowl sits
next to the computer, frozen on a screensaver of careening stars
and the memory of your brother lining up his cheerios like planets.

but here’s the thing, here’s what no one tells you: tomorrow
you’ll be pouring cereal milk down the drain
sucking the dregs between your teeth and
watching the computer cursor waver on
the precipice of another empty document

(in all the places rubbed raw
your lavender bathrobe still smells like home, at least).

perhaps it always did, you just never noticed
until last night when you were wrinkling
in the shower, shoving your breasts together until
finally, the pale curvature of a sphere emerged.

but if you still aren’t ready,
know this: facing the showerhead brings back
a thrumming that reminds you of the metro in Vancouver,
pillowed on your mother’s thighs at 3 am where somehow
there were still people aboard, bobbing and swaying
with the vestige current like electrons, like seaweed.
first: you're just a trace of dandelion fuzz tucked into the crease of a couch cushion. your elbows don't work yet but they will. you're a monolid, an apple blush, and it's warm.

second: you're aluminum foil, shiny, with jagged teeth, clinging summers are made from watermelon cubes, magnolia leaves, and while you like the smell of frozen peas, you still have doubts about eating them.

third: you're a dragon scale, a gleaming set of wings. you try on every shoe in Nordstrom, though none seem to fit. it's fine, you like the shape of your toes, and every night you dream in color.

fourth: you're the wrapper on a cereal bar. google says your skin is worth $10 per square inch. i promise you're something to look at.

fifth: you feel like a napkin, sometimes coffee-stained upholstery. you wear scarves in the dead of summer, and Band-Aids everywhere else. the dishwasher is full to bursting.

sixth: you're a folded parachute. you've started collecting paint swatches and memorizing the names on top. on saturdays, you ride the subway, on sundays, you stay at home.

seventh: you're a window screen stippled with dew. sometimes, you like to imagine an empty highway playing connect-the-dots with your scars and you glow.
Anna Nguyen is an adventurous soul who strives to be a catalyst – a voice and a hand – through her responsibility as a writer and an aspiring physician assistant. Currently a senior at the University of Pittsburgh with a major in Spanish Language and Literature, minors in Creative Writing and Chemistry, and a certificate in Latin American Studies, she hopes to explore and absorb as much of the world as she can before she returns to pursue her masters. At the end of the day, she is also a dancer who loves writing letters and hiking in Vermont.

Costa Rica’s Focus on Ecotourism and Its Lending Effect on Leatherback Sea Turtles

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ANNA NGUYEN is an adventurous soul who strives to be a catalyst – a voice and a hand – through her responsibility as a writer and an aspiring physician assistant. Currently a senior at the University of Pittsburgh with a major in Spanish Language and Literature, minors in Creative Writing and Chemistry, and a certificate in Latin American Studies, she hopes to explore and absorb as much of the world as she can before she returns to pursue her masters. At the end of the day, she is also a dancer who loves writing letters and hiking in Vermont.
In discussing the Costa Rican economy, two themes arise: the sustainability of ecotourism and the growing endangerment of leatherback sea turtles, *Dermochelys coriacea*. A relationship that is either damaging or beneficial will initially be declared based on past and present data collections that highlight the origins, perceptions and importance of recognizing human influence on the environment. In turn, this relationship’s influence on our lives and generations to come will be evaluated. This information will help to identify potential goals and expectations.

For centuries, human activity has left imprints on the Earth. Anthropogenic impact has shown explosive results that display the accumulative negativity entailed. As resources and habitats are constantly under pressure to adapt, many living organisms are subject to exploitation and destruction. The environment is juxtaposed against the product of human. Leatherbacks and ecotourism will serve here as representatives of this juxtaposition.

**Overview of Ecotourism**

The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as, “A social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.” With a basis inscribed in human nature for curiosity, the desire to travel and explore is realized through tourism. An industry dependent on technology will continuously evolve and prosper. However, this expansion also entails a gamble that has drawbacks. As tourism is mediated by technology, the environment and other communities are vulnerable to degradation. Ecotourism, one of the many branches of tourism, has advanced as a more suitable manner to travel. “Ecotourism” is defined by the World Conservation Union as, “Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people.”

The International Ecotourism Society lists the principles of ecotourism as “uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel.” Ecotourism places emphasis on conservation through the following characteristics:

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation effort and local participation in decision-making
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

While measured differently for each site of ecotourism, these characteristics above must be exercised to define tourism as ecologically friendly.

The exploration of unfamiliar places where individuals or groups complete environmentally friendly activities separates ecotourism from the other kinds of tourism, as the purpose of the visit is directed towards ecology. Ecology here is defined as “the branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and their physical surroundings.” It becomes clear that ecotourism has emerged as a more ideal mode of exploration, in that it offers natural experiences paired with responsibility and education. Ecotourism thrives in supplementing conservation through the economy, government funding, local businesses, and cultural exchange.

In a study done by Jessica Blue, she notes how different countries noticed a supplemental economic boom and as ecotourism becomes more popular. The income these countries reap is then recycled into ecotourism to further it, which bolsters ecotourism’s success. Blue goes on to quote Alison Ormsby and Kathryn Mannie:

“In Costa Rica, ecotourism’s popularity led to the creation of several national parks and reserves, which established a protected wildlife corridor. In turn, governments must have the funds to maintain their parks and keep hunters, poachers and loggers out of them. In Madagascar, poor infrastructure, government instability and the local communities’ need for the food and lumber inside the Masoala National Park’s borders have limited the park’s success.”

**Overview of Costa Rica**

Costa Rica, a relatively small southern Central American country about the size of West Virginia (51,100 km$^2$), boasts a diverse landscape, rich with culture and different ecosystems. Costa has a population of roughly 4.872 million people, about the same as Los Angeles and San Diego. In the last three decades Costa Rica has emerged as a leader...
in Central America by paving the path for the growth of ecotourism. The ecotourism boom began in Costa Rica in 1987. In 2012 alone, about 2.34 million tourists generated over $2.4 billion USD in income for Costa Rica. The extensive biodiversity, manageable location, safety, stability, environmental support, international support, and overall higher standard of living are strong facets in the success of ecotourism in Costa Rica.

While accounting for barely 0.3% of the earth’s land mass, Costa Rica contains over 5% of the world’s biodiversity. The rainforests, beaches, flora, and fauna attract crowds of tourists monthly. The Caribbean and Pacific coastline both give range to tours for rainforests, beaches, flora, and fauna. The World Fact book applauds the stable economic development, with a 4% annual growth rate. Martha Honey, the co-founder of the Center for Responsible Travel, said, “Costa Rica is not all eco, but the ecotourism revolution in Costa Rica has been profound. It still remains the best example in the world of successful ecotourism.”

The Sustainability and Benefits of Ecotourism

Distinct from Western familiarities, Costa Rica may entice tourists with ‘exotic’ adventures. Costa Rica has taken advantage of a tourism angle countries such as France, Spain, and Italy cannot provide. As a result, Costa Rica has profited from the economic development mediated by ecotourism. For example, according to Weaver’s study on Ecotourism in the Less Developed World, “Since 1984, international tourism receipts have grown from $117 million to $136 million in 1987 and $577 million in 1993.”

As a demonstrative cycle of giving and receiving, the country benefits from employment, improved infrastructure, and increased business for local communities.

Ecotourism also supports protected areas. Costa Rica’s national parks have entrance fees that maintain the parks. Protection is essential, as forests and communities are disappearing with the advance of modernization. As this branch of tourism strives to conserve, tourists are often educated about the necessity of preservation. Having the chance to witness the objects of conversation, tourists are encouraged to lead ecologically friendly lifestyles to minimize the environmental destruction often caused by traditional tourism.

An example includes the Lapa Rios Lodge which was constructed in 2003. This renowned eco-lodge is in the Costa Rican rainforest that overlooks the Pacific Ocean in Puntarenas. In attempts to uphold their eco-friendliness, locals use recycled or renewable materials like bamboo straws to create furniture and other structures throughout. A personal account from a Yale University graduate, Alice Henly, reflected on her visit, saying, “During the four days I stayed at Lapa Rios, I began to appreciate first-hand the rich, diverse beauty of our surroundings. I swam underneath a waterfall. I surfed at a volcanic black sand beach. I hiked through the rainforest, watched howler monkeys swing through the trees, and held a baby green iguana.”

The Negative Aspects of Ecotourism

As ecotourism promises a quintessential substitute for tourism, there are in fact drawbacks. For one, as the popularity continues to grow and attract more eco-aware tourists, principle of managing low-impact visitation is violated. “Nearly a third of travelers (30%) would choose a destination for a trip because it is considered eco-friendly. Costa Rica is the most popular destination in the world for travelers interested in an eco-friendly trip, according to a 2012 TripAdvisor survey.” However, this increased interest also attracts negative impacts including, “solid waste generation, habitat disturbance, and forest degradation resulting from trail erosion.” While enjoyment is an expected part of the package, visitors tend to neglect their individual presence. Paradoxically, human presence and its increase in protected areas undermines the principles of ecotourism.

In a past study of How ‘Eco’ is Ecotourism? A Comparative Case Study of Ecotourism in Costa Rica completed at Cornell University, students concluded that:

“Study results imply ecotourism falls short of having a significant influence on conservation knowledge or perspectives. Ecotourism is not likely to be an effective conservation...”
The idea of whether awareness is being raised appropriately and efficiently for conservation remains a concern. Additionally, locals are often exploited as little or no revenue is given to them. The disturbance from development can also affect the social and cultural structure of these communities, disrupting long-held local customs.

The construction of the hydroelectric Boruca Dam unearthed such issues. Though it generates hydroelectric energy for more than one million Costa Rican consumers, its benefits have not held because of the long-term impacts of its construction. Some state that the building of this hydroelectric dam will destroy habitats, species, and the surrounding communities due to the prospect of ecotourism. As a result, this project has been underway for over 30 years while simultaneously being paired with numerous indigenous protests. The hydroelectric dam is one example of how modernization within an environment displaces a community's culture and tradition. Modernization sometimes necessitates the removal of natural habitats. Ecotourism, in turn, tries to diminish this disturbance, providing the chance for tourists to become aware of the importance of conservation.

Overview of Leatherback Sea Turtles

The leatherback sea turtles, or known as las tortugas baulas in Costa Rica, are the largest of the seven sea turtle species (leatherback, loggerhead, green turtle, hawksbill, Kemp’s ridley, olive ridley, and flatback). As a grown adult averagely weighs 2,000 pounds and is 6.5 feet in length, the Leatherbacks’ eponymous name comes from their top shell, made of “leathery, oil-saturated connective tissue overlaying loosely interlocking dermal bones.” It is the fourth largest reptile behind three types of crocodiles as well as the fastest swimming reptile. Leatherbacks generate heat through constant swimming with studies stating that they only spend 0.1% of their days resting. The exact lifespan of these reptiles is unknown, but fossils can be traced all the way back to 110 million years ago. These modern-day dinosaurs have been listed as endangered since 1970 and more recently categorized as critically endangered.

Leatherback sea turtles are pelagic, meaning that they are open ocean animals. They are found throughout the Atlantic, Pacific, South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Yet they are not constrained to these areas as they generally travel to follow their prey, jellyfish. In terms of mating and nesting, they tend to return to familiar areas that can properly support their clutches that average 100 eggs. Leatherbacks can be found at Isla Corcovado National Park, Gandoca Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge, Marimo Las Baulas National Park, Ostional National Wildlife Refuge, and Tortuguero Park in Costa Rica. Their nesting sites seem to remain enclosed at the beaches of Playa Grande, Tortuguero, Parismina, and Gandoca. Though subjective to other factors, the nesting season for Leatherbacks at Playa Grande range from October to January with December and January as the peaked months. On the Caribbean coast with Tortuguero, Parismina, and Gandoca, the nesting season is presumably consistent from March to June with April and May as the peaked months for most births.

The Pacific leatherback population has declined all the way back to 110 million years ago. These modern-day dinosaurs have been listed as endangered since 1970 and more recently categorized as critically endangered.

Because Costa Rica has the appropriate tropical beaches for the nesting of leatherbacks, hundreds of conservation sites have been constructed. Due to their role in maintaining ecosystem balance, it is imperative that more attention is given to leatherbacks’ staggering decrease. Additionally, because “the spread of human development around the globe [has caused] sea turtle numbers [to drop] to 0.1 percent of their historical abundance,” we should prioritize prevention of their decline.

The Threats to The Leatherbacks

The main threats accounting for leatherback endangerment, both on nesting beaches and in the marine environment, include surrounding human-driven development, fishing, nest disturbance, pollution, and climate change.

Human development disturbs populations because terrains must be cleared. Seeing that Leatherbacks migrate to certain beaches with suitable temperatures for nesting, and these beaches also often appeal as ideal destinations for private and public companies. Any development within proximity invites further disturbance. The Leatherback Trust, an international non-profit conservation organization that protects leatherback turtles and other sea turtle species from extinction, adds that even without direct development on their nesting sites:
“Costal construction and dredging can reshape beaches, making them too steep for nesting leatherbacks to haul themselves out of the water. Construction noise can also drive turtles away. Cutting down shoreline trees and shrubs may improve ocean views but also permits light from beachfront buildings and streets to shine on the beach, disorienting hatchlings and deterring turtles from nesting. Human use and development of nesting beaches can also threaten turtles with pollution from septic systems, trash, and pet feces.”

In building new areas on or near their nesting sites, human activity disturbs their ability to repopulate.

Fishing also contributes to depopulation because leatherbacks are constantly getting trapped in fishing gear and especially gillnets. With seafood constantly in strong demand, fishermen unintentionally catch turtles within them. Many problems arise when turtles become trapped within nets, such as being “Unable to surface to breathe, many turtles drown after becoming entangled in fishing lines or ensnared by nets [or that] other turtles, lured by fishing bait, become hooked and sustain injuries that can still kill them even if they are released.” With awareness of this effect could reduce unintentional capturing of Leatherbacks. However, because many are unaware, unintentional capturing still stands as a threat. Additionally, the Leatherback Trust shares that:

“The Leatherback Trust shares that:

“Female turtles lay their eggs in the sand, covering each clutch well to protect it after she returns to sea. The sun’s warmth incubates the eggs and shifting tides deliver fresh oxygen to the developing embryos. Disturbance of nests by poachers, predators, and uniformed beachgoers can imprint eggs and nesting turtles. Unfortunately, poachers use this market as cover for sale of illegally collected sea turtle eggs, including critically endangered leatherback eggs. Beachgoers are often unaware that walking above the high tide line or driving on the beach can crush nests and kill nestlings. Visitors pitching beach umbrellas in the sand to create shade on a sunny day may unknowingly penetrate turtle nests. Pet owners are usually unable to react fast enough to stop unleashed dogs from digging up turtle eggs. Turtle eggs and nestlings are easy targets for predators with a strong sense of smell. But introduced species like domesticated dogs and cats are creating new threats to sea turtle nest along with the natural predators, like coatimundis in Costa Rica.”

Premeditated and accidental disturbances greatly affect the nests and populations. And with their listing as critically endangered, it is imperative that the population grow and reproduce. In a 2010 study, Matthew Spanier from the Associated Colleges of the Midwest sought to research the relationship between beach erosion and nesting sites of leatherback sea turtles (by the implications of management practices precisely in Playa Gandoca, Costa Rica). He suggests that relocation practices should be reevaluated because leatherbacks seem to actively select the nest sites that are not undergoing erosive processes. To ensure proper conservation of these turtles, relocation of nesting sites is strongly discouraged. Whether it is from predators intentionally disturbing the nests or from conservations relocating the nest with good intentions or even unknowing guests that wander onto the areas, disturbances to the nest sites can contribute to the fact that Leatherback sea turtles are classified as critically endangered.

Human waste and light and noise pollution comprise some major threats to leatherback sea turtle populations. While looking for food, leatherbacks often confuse plastic debris with jellyfish. If swallowed, plastic blocks leatherback’ digestive tracts, causing the turtle to starve to death. Pertaining to more pollution threats, agricultural runoff, chemical containments, and oil spills in the coastal waters make the turtles more prone to diseases and other problems such as respiratory inflammation, cancer, organ damage, and reproductive failure. Also, light and noise from pollution can distinctly drive them away from their preferred nesting sites. And even after eggs have been nested, low-frequency noises can disturb the turtles and even damage their hearing, drastically shortening their life expectancy.

Moreover, rising temperatures, shifting ocean currents, rising sea levels, and increasing ocean acidification—all linked to climatic change—negatively impact the turtles. Studies have shown that overheating can kill nesting turtles while also skewing the sex ratio to produce more females. Shifting ocean currents also disrupt the leatherbacks’ nesting habits, as they struggle to navigate back to their nesting sites. The vice-president of Conservation International, Roderic Mast, said, “Sea turtles act as our warning mechanism for the health of the ocean, and what they’re telling us is quite alarming. Their plummeting numbers...
Even though these threats can be separated into development, fishing, nest disturbance, pollution, and climate change, it seems that most, if not all, can be branched with the root of human actions. Out of awareness or ignorance, these actions negatively impact leatherback sea turtles. Their drastic diminishment within the past three decades is alarming.

The Relationship Between Ecotourism and Leatherbacks

The expansion of ecotourism in Costa Rica has increased awareness about the current state of leatherback sea turtles. Conservation sites that promote protection, research, education, and advocacy along with volunteering opportunities have paved ways for protecting these critically endangered reptiles. Ecotourism ultimately appears to be the ideal approach for environmentally concerned tourists who strive to be environmentally responsible while receiving the opportunity to experience nature. Though, with ecotourism’s negatives in mind, it is useful to evaluate if the turtles benefit. Seemingly, the ultimately damaging impacts on Leatherback Sea Turtles seem to outweigh the beneficial results.

As education leads to awareness, it is assumed that measures will be taken to protect, research, and advocate more conscientiousness. Many tourists become aware but often return to their countries without second thoughts towards what they’ve learned. Tourists mainly end up leaving imprints that cause disturbances, which override the efforts of protection. It seems that ecotourism is only another threat to the survival of these reptiles as the damaging effects clearly surpass the positive efforts.

Fieldwork Methodology

Although my research has led me to believe that ecotourism’s detractors outweigh its benefits, further research was required. To remedy this, I carried out a variety of interviews from which I gathered first-hand accounts of what has been done, what is being done, what has worked, and what hasn’t worked. I interviewed professors, advocates, and volunteers to understand these turtles more and to also gain better knowledge of the inputs and outputs of humanitarian actions. With experts on the environment somewhat standing as the mediator between ecotourism and Leatherbacks, I wanted to comprehend their take on this situation and what they thought was the best or the most appropriate approach for the future. Observing tourist interactions also added to my research and results. Additionally, I handed out surveys around the tourist landmarks and national parks to gain a broader view on general opinions and thoughts towards ecotourism. The questionnaire focused on uses of interests versus actions and general awareness and education about leatherbacks and environmental protection.

Gathered Fieldwork

Ecotourism:

Eco-Lodge: For our first week in Costa Rica, my group and I dedicated our time towards seeing and experiencing the beauty of the country. On one of our stays in Paraiso was at a lodge hosted by Carolina Velaquez. This lodge was different in that it followed ecotourist guidelines. Within the farm we had visited, our group became more educated upon the approach of ecologically-friendly production. Their main focuses seemed to target the protection of ecosystems and the production of their own substances or support of local businesses. They insisted people should buy locally because doing so strengthens their local economy.

In staying at Rinconcito Verde, we could see that relatively similar goals were withheld in this eco-lodge. This eco-lodge is self-sufficient, while depending on locally-run businesses to provide home-cooked meals. The water itself naturally originates from nearby systems. Overall, this eco-lodge strives to protect the environment and to educate others about the manner in which they are doing this. Through little actions such as purchasing and using local products, the economy and environment can be protected.

Playa Tamarindo Pura Vida Hostel: The Pura Vida Hostel in Playa Tamarindo is amidst an extremely touristy area. Because of that, I completed several interviews and surveys while gaining a different perspective. The owner at the hostel elaborated on how local businesses (the hostels, hotels, restaurants, and stores) promoted each other to the tourists to prosper financially. With that, this hostel along with many others, provided and promoted series of appealing adventurous activities. In turn, many tourists are indeed attracted to the environmentally-friendly experience that they can participate in. Yet, while I was there, I also discovered through several discussions with backpackers that many did not know what “ecotourism” meant. To them, ecotourism has the word eco and tourism in it and therefore referred to completing environmental activities in another country. Accordingly, I realized that while Costa Rica strives to educate the importance of ecotourism, fiscal objectives are ultimately prioritized.

Manuel Antonio National Park Eco-Tourism
This reserve makes every effort to rescue turtles that were abandoned by previous owners. With over 150 turtles, they take care of these turtles and put effort into increasing their longevity. The owner proceeded to inform me that a lot of people who own turtles do not know how to truly take care of them.

**Pura Vida Hostel:** While staying at the Pura Vida Hostel, I sought out an excursion to see Leatherback Sea Turtles hatching at night in a nearby reserve. I had made plans through the host to travel with a biologist, and was disappointed when another manager approached me telling me I should not go. He informed me that this reputed biologist was not a biologist, but a poacher who took tourists out to see the turtles only to later steal the turtles’ eggs. This illegal activity is unfortunately considered to be common. On a larger note, this draws attention to the fact that ecotourism has to do with tourism that is environmentally friendly and that these sea turtles are endangered. Yet, few knew.

**University of Costa Rica (UCR) Professor:** In talking to a professor and several students at TEC, it was made clear that a lot of Costa Ricans care about the environment. Reitering a commonality, they are proud of what their country offers and they want others to enjoy it as well.

**Surveys:**

In the end, I gathered a total of 60 surveys. While not indicative of an entire population, the gathered results still display interesting points. From the 60 surveys I collected, the average age ranged from 18-35. Most of these adventure-seeking tourists were Americans, Canadians, or Europeans who were not familiar with the relationship between ecotourism and this specific species creating tension. Leatherbacks are quite obviously in danger, yet, few knew. With much to offer culturally, aesthetically, and environmentally, Costa Rica attracts millions of tourists each year. When asking why travelers go to Costa Rica, the initial answer ranged but it mostly entailed the desire for adventure or for an “escape.” Similarly, Costa Rica also projects this image that it is the perfect country for an escape from the mundane.

Through my research, I still had questions, such as how are specific environments supposed to be kept undisturbed if human vicinity disturbs it? People can become more educated, but how many of them act upon this knowledge? And what portions of the income fund the preservation of these areas? Leatherbacks are quite obviously in danger, with the relationship between ecotourism and this specific species creating tension.

ICT’s mission according to their National Development Plan has proposed that they want to “Promote a wholesome tourism development, with the purpose of improving
Costa Ricans’ quality of life, by maintaining a balance between the economic and social boundaries, environmental protection, culture, and facilities.” Keeping this in mind, it is rather hard to keep a complete balance between all factors when facility improvements are necessary and the environment is considered secondary. As ecotourism’s goal is to preserve the nation’s natural resources while profiting from them, the primary objective comes into question. Ecotourism is damaging when weighing the pros and cons against each other. However, with the need for progress and advancement, it seems inevitable. Therefore, it seems that while my hypothesis is supported, the next steps need to be taken. Ecotourism is ecologically damaging when tourists are allowed into protected areas, and the construction of high-rise hotels and resorts occludes ecotourism’s benefits.

Education may be the key in resolving this. Tourists and civilians need to know the importance of what they must protect and what they must do to take care of the ecosystems. The fact that leatherbacks are endangered shows us where our future is headed. People are not aware of the reality and therefore do not care. However, they need to care because this is our world and this is our future. Therefore, the only means to making more people care is to inform and educate them, and to raise their awareness.

Bibliography


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Samantha Toner is a soon-to-be graduate at the University of Pittsburgh with a major in Fiction Writing, a minor in English Literature, and a certificate in Public and Professional Writing. Her fiction has appeared in The Original Magazine and she is currently the co-Editor in Chief of the Three Rivers Review. She derives most of her inspiration from the professors around her and the fictional worlds—from screen to page to headphones—she spends far too much time in.
The Victorian era established several relationships and social classes among the population that determined a person’s humanity. Despite Enlightenment advances in science and studies of human and animal nature, lower classes were considered almost inhuman, more of a mechanical appendage to factory machines than a human worker. Non-Europeans and women were considered to possess as much power as an animal, as white males believed non-Europeans could “evolve” into an Englishman, and a woman was about as cooperative as a dog. Though the definition of humanity has been debated before, events such as the Industrial Revolution and the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* forced Victorians to redefine what it meant to be human through an animalistic and mechanical mode, that process bled through to the literature of the time including Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet* and Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*.

These historical events of the Victorian era greatly influenced the previously understood relationship between humans, animals, and machines. Dominic Pettman, author of *Human Error: Species-Being and Media Machines*, refers to this series of connections as the “cybernetic triangle[,] . . . the unholy trinity of human, animal, and machine, including the various ways in which they have been figured and reconfigured, conceptually over time: sometimes spliced together, other times branching off into different directions”: While humans express a number of mechanical and animalistic traits in Victorian literature, there are also moments when the animals are given human and mechanical traits and machines are likened to human (and arguably animal) appendages. This concept was recreated and further challenged within several Victorian texts as the authors debated whether “[h]umanity” [was] located in the eye of the beholder: a beholder who is beholden to ideas of his, her, or its own belonging—or exclusion—from this privileged set? However, during this time the “beholder” was often a member of a higher class who determined others’ humanity, such as that of the Industrial Revolution’s factory worker, based on the jobs they performed.

In the late eighteenth century, England shifted from a rural and farming-based culture to one powered by factories mass-producing goods for industries—such as textiles—with the Industrial Revolution. While this process produced cheaper goods, it also dehumanized workers within the factories, as “the dominance of machinery, manufacture, and the factory all [contributed] to the making of a radically altered and foreshortened notion of the human”.

Workers were called “hands” to distance them from a complete human and became no more than an “appendage” of the machines as well: “Interested in the human-machine complex, Victorian thinkers did not find humanness and the body congruent. Instead, they questioned the position of a subject that is no longer, strictly speaking, a body but a prosthetic part.” A large portion of the working class was considered to be composed of human and mechanical characteristics. As the revolution progressed, these working “humanoids” were demoted further when machines were given human “appendages”:

As an extended prosthetic conglomereration, the machine not only surpasses its human host, it also threatens to supplant the human entirely. Making human workers superfluous the machine “performs with its tools the same operations as the worker formerly did with similar tools” (495). The worker is, in effect, stripped bare by his supplement. In turn, the machine acquires this worker’s former tools/organs, which are “converted from being the manual implements of a man into the parts of a mechanical apparatus of a machine” (499)

The mechanical era represents one leg of the cybernetic triangle as human workers were further dehumanized by upper classes, who gradually assigned machines more humanity than the working class.

The dehumanization of Victorian workers became so widespread that it appeared in essay collections, such as Thomas Carlyle’s 1829 essay “Signs of the Times”. In this essay, Carlyle commented on the debate “between deep human feeling and shallow mechanical soullessness”. He noticed the growing connections between factory workers and machines as the Victorian culture expanded to “the Machine of Society”. This society expected workers to “adapt” to mechanical roles: “Considered merely as a metaphor, as is well enough; but here, as in so many other cases, the ‘foam hardens itself into a shell,’ and the shadow we gave wantonly evoked stands terrible before us, and will not depart at our bidding.” Here the “foam” represents the early and un-solidified comparisons between humans and machines, which eventually solidifies into a “shell” or acknowledged relationship that dehumanized hundreds of workers. Therefore the “Body-politic [is] more than ever worshipped and tended: But the Soul-politic less than ever.” Without
a body to work, the lower classes would be worthless to both their employers and their own families. Without work at all, the lower classes could not survive in the Victorian era. The damages done to these workers’ souls from long hours and poor working conditions were disregarded as a necessity for the physical body to persist. Upper classes concerned themselves more with the body of a worker—the iron shell of a machine—than the soul within that established a worker’s humanity.

This passion for machinery and scientific knowledge grew out of theories of the Enlightenment, a period which also inspired a change in the relationship between humans and animals. People once believed themselves to be at the mercy of nature's whim and therefore punished animals as humans, thus “awarding” animals the same rights and responsibilities humans possessed. At times, this resulted in an animal standing trial for a “crime” committed out of instinct or human mishandling.\(^\text{x}\) The Victorian era ended this form of punishment, which was praised as “the incipient triumph of ‘refined and humanitarian modern conceptions of justice’ over ‘gross and brutal medieval conceptions’”.\(^\text{x}\)

This signified that Victorians no longer feared the animals they once considered worthy of trial, and instead regained control over natural forces.\(^\text{x}\) While this stopped the cruelty of animals, it also provided Victorians a source with which to compare animals to humans, many of whom of the lower class.

As people appropriated the power they previously assigned to animals and nature, they began to associate powerless animals with powerless humans in the Victorian era, notably women and people of the lower classes. Once animals were stripped of all power assigned by humans, “wild animals, like the peasants and exotic foreigners with whom they were increasingly classed, might evoke sympathy rather than scorn”.\(^\text{x}\) In literature, animals were used to connect and justify several human concerns regarding the powerful natural world,\(^\text{x}\) which led to several real-life associations between humans and animals. For instance, women were often viewed with the same “sexual proclivities” as a dog breeder’s uncooperative bitch that refused to mate with the selected male dog. This serves as commentary on both the perspective of women and rape culture within the Victorian era.\(^\text{x}\)

Since women were virtually powerless in the Victorian era, they were considered no better than leashed dogs at a show, paraded around in expensive clothing with high collars. However, in the mid-1800s Darwin’s discoveries expanded this comparison to include every member of humanity instead of just the powerless.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, which discussed evolutionary patterns within humanity. This discovery produced a strong push to find a superiority factor within humanity that would place the species above animals, which led people to “[declaim] indefinitely about Intellect, Soul, Understanding, and Self-consciousness, and all other immanent qualities of mankind”.\(^\text{xx}\)

Victorians latched on to this idea of mental prowess and claimed human’s superiority was “an enlargement of the mental powers, leading to the accumulation of stores of knowledge utterly unattainable by brute creatures, proving in man a mental development in some sense differing in kind as well as in degree”.\(^\text{x}\) Humankind could reason and conduct their lives through moral rights and wrongs, unlike animals that survived by instinctual means. Darwin's evolutionary theories were also used to compare non-Europeans to animals as people believed that:

“[if the] transformation of species admitted, then the possibility of the origin of all human races from one pair must also be admitted; for if an amphibium [is] can become a bird or a mammal, surely a negro can become a Mongol or a Caucasian”.\(^\text{x}\)

This superiority complex extended outside of natural animals as Victorians placed their fair skin and English nature above Africans, who were dehumanized nearly equivalent to the animals displayed in Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*.

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There is also constant mention of the Law of the Jungle, a strict set of rules that maintains control in the jungle like the laws humans obey to preserve order in society. In this lawful organization, Kipling’s animals appear more refined and human in comparison to some of the lower classes, and traits that continue through Mowgli’s lesser intelligence.

The animals in *The Jungle Book* are given several human qualities that the Victorians used to express superiority over inferior creatures. For example, the novel humanizes the animals by identifying each group of animals as “people”: “For a wolf, no,” said Tabaqui, “but for so mean a person as myself a dry bone is a good feast. Who are we, the [the Jackal-People], to pick and choose”.\(^\text{xxx}\) Tabaqui calls himself a person within the first few pages of the book, which
explicitly places him as a jackal at the same level as the readers as human beings. There is also constant mention of the Law of the Jungle, a strict set of rules that maintains control in the jungle like the laws humans obey to preserve order in society. In this lawful organization, Kipling’s animals appear more refined and human in comparison to some of the lower classes, and traits that continue through Mowgli’s lesser intelligence.

_The Jungle Book_ challenges humanity’s claim to superior mental intellect when Kipling demonstrates Mowgli’s limited memory. Though Mowgli is a young boy and supposedly more intelligent and skillful than his animalistic counterparts, “a young wolf would have remembered that advice every hour, Mowgli forgot it because he was only a boy”.

Though man is supposed to be able to store far more knowledge than animals, we can see Mowgli’s intelligence stooping below that of the wolves. Humans are further demoted after harming the ‘Lone Wolf,’ who “had fallen twice into a wolf-trap in his youth, and once he had been beaten and left for dead; so he knew the manners and customs of men”. The Lone Wolf has not committed any crime such as those animals of the Enlightenment and therefore has no cause to be beaten such as this (while this kind of behavior may even be classified as unruly and animalistic in and of itself). Within Kipling’s jungle world, humankind behaves no better than the animals who display intellect, order, and choice.

There is another demonstration of humanity within the animal population of _The Jungle Book_ that normally separates human from animals: choice. As opposed to animals, the ability to choose allows humans to not rely purely on instincts and rather has led to the sophisticated environment we live in today. However, in _The Jungle Book_ Shere Khan and Father Wolf argue over Mowgli’s fate in the jungle when Father Wolf declares, “The wolves are the free people… They take orders from the head of the pack, and not from any striped cattle-killer. The man’s cub is ours—to kill if we choose”, to which Shere Khan responds, “Ye choose and ye do not choose! What talk is this of choosing?”. Choice is a human trait, arguably a similar humanity determinant as higher intelligence or the soul. Animals are not defined by the ability to choose, which is why punishing them as criminals before the Victorian era sounded ridiculous and cruel: their actions are driven by instincts while a human’s actions are driven by consequence (or the inability to predict or worry about such). The discussion of “choice” among these animals demonstrates the strong relationship between humans and animals within the cybernetic triangle, a relationship that becomes further complicated when man is given mechanical qualities.

Though Sherlock Holmes exhibits mechanical traits, he also acts like an animal in _A Study in Scarlet_. When Holmes first comes across the corpse at the beginning of the mystery, he pokes and prods at the body like an animal sniffing abandoned food:

> “As [Holmes] spoke, his nimble fingers were flying here, there, and everywhere, feeling, pressing, unbuttoning, examining…Finally, he sniffed the dead man’s lips, and then glanced at the soles of his patent leather boots”.

Scavenging and carnivorous animals will smell a dead animal before carrying it off to consume, and while Holmes does not intend on eating the body in front of him, his mannerisms reflect that of a fox or dog coming across dead prey. Watson remarks on this similarity as well, as he observes Holmes during the investigation and “was irresistibly reminded of a pure-blooded well-trained foxhound as it dashes backwards and forwards through the covert, whining in its eagerness until it comes across the lost scent”. The mystery seems more like a hunt rather than investigative work, where detectives are more akin to hunting dogs than humans tracking down a murderer. This thrill of the chase is depicted in Gregson’s account of finding the false murderer: “I began to smell a rat. You know the feeling, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, when you come upon the right scent—a kind of thrill in your nerves”. This is an animalistic thrill that comes at the end of savagery, such as killing prey or having intercourse. Since Holmes does not explicitly represent a specific race or class, Doyle’s narrative implies that this human-animal relationship is not isolated to a group but includes most or all of the Victorian population.

While animals and humans share more obvious similarities from that of machines, animals rely on a more rote, almost mechanical, natural force to survive: instinct. Animals act instinctively without thinking, forming what Victorians called an _animal machine_.

> “The concept is two-fold: on the one hand, it envisions machines as bestial and instinctive organisms; on the other hand, it refers to animal bodies fueled by powerful mechanical drives that reproduce the hydraulic energetics of steam”.

The Victorians thought of animals as self-powered machines that relied on
instincts to fuel animation, which differed from a human's definition of “living”: Let us then consider the source of that motion which springs from within the body; which, in better words, is evolved in the body; which gives animal power, but does not give intelligence; which makes the animal an engine, but not an animal; which is constructive and locomotive, but not animating; but which yet prepares the machine for animation, and without which there is no life.\textsuperscript{180}

This suggests that because animals are missing the intelligence and soul of a human, they are nothing more than machines with fur. However, there are other accounts that imply an animal possesses both a soul and mechanical instincts, consequently completing the cybernetic triangle.

The relationships expressed in the cybernetic triangle interact at different moments throughout the Victorian era, and sometimes all three points of the triangle interact at once. While humans claimed superiority over animals and machines because of the possession of the soul, there may be a deeper connection that ties humans, animals, and machines together. Victorians believed that the soul provided humans with the will of life and action but refused to believe animals could possess something similar, despite the actions animals performed.\textsuperscript{181} Charles Wake—who wrote a number of articles regarding the human-animal relationship during the Victorian era—believed that animals possessed the soul humans bragged about, creating an organism with characteristics of humans, animals, and machines.\textsuperscript{182} This idea was also expressed during Descartes and La Mettrie’s era, becoming a philosophy that became so popular in the Victorian era that a number of their books were reprinted:

> “ Whereas Descartes separates the spiritual acts of thinking and feeling from the material processes of the beast-machine, La Mettrie claims that ‘man is but an animal made up of a number of springs…[and] [t]he soul is only the first principle of motion.’”\textsuperscript{183}

While humans may demonstrate a higher intellect and the ability to choose that animals and machines do not possess, humans are known to exhibit mechanical and animalistic drives that have come to define humanity both in and outside of fiction. These relationships can be seen in the rhetoric used in conversation to describe a person: Some people are described as “party animals,” which indicates they may act boisterously without regard for the consequences. If a person’s work method is described “like a machine,” we assume the person in question works tirelessly on an exact schedule that an average employee would never manage to maintain. While these are not strictly Victorian phrases, these quotes demonstrate just how blurred the lines can become between humans, animals, and machines.

This three-way relationship also appears within Victorian literature as humans, animals, and machines come together to challenge the previous notion of humanity. The Jungle Book shows Mowgli caught in between his animal family and fellow humans, though he is cast out of both groups because of the conflicting relationship between human and animal within him. Before this conflict surfaces, the narrator briefly mentions where Mowgli’s skill set originated: “Of course Mowgli, as a woodcutter’s child, inherited all sorts of instincts, and used to make little huts of fallen branches without thinking how he came to do it”.\textsuperscript{184} Mowgli’s actions resemble that of a bird or squirrel grabbing twigs and scraps to build a nest, or a beaver building a dam in a river. Kipling explicitly states that these actions are not conscious, but rather rote, mechanical actions Mowgli completes without prior instructions. Along with possessing animal and human qualities, Mowgli is driven by mechanical instincts inherited from his family, such as building shelter from chopped wood.

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Sherlock Holmes demonstrates a similar conflict. While Holmes is described with both animal and mechanical traits, the combination of qualities does not become apparent until Watson describes Holmes’s hands as “invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch”.\textsuperscript{185} The first observation notes how messy his hands are, clearly more human and animal than anything, but then Watson acknowledges the delicate touch Holmes uses when experimenting: this delicacy is more characteristic of machine than animal or human. Holmes and Mowgli’s humanity is thus a combination of human, animal, and machine qualities.

Animals and machines are both modes of
humanity, though not fully recognized until the Victorian era. Human workers were treated like machines during the Industrial Revolution, completing rote actions as an appendage of a factory mechanism. Humans and animals converged at the end of the Enlightenment when Victorians no longer feared natural forces and attributed animalistic qualities to non-Europeans and women. After Darwin’s *Origin of Species* suggested all Victorians had animalistic ancestors, humans boasted of their intellect, soul, and choice to prove their superiority. Animals demonstrated instinctual reactions that were almost mechanical, at times completed without the animal’s knowledge.

These three relationships combined into the cybernetic triangle, a network that demonstrates a redefined explanation of humanity that incorporates animalistic and mechanical features apparent in both Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet* and Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*.

While this discussion was limited to the Victorian era, the growing number of modern dystopian narratives continues to blur the line between humans, animals, and machines. Some narratives present robots so lifelike we forget their mechanical insides, while others offer several interpretations regarding the human-animal conflicts within the werewolf lore, as well as technology that can translate an animal’s unintelligible growls. Too, though cybernetic triangle exists within a vast amount of literature produced, the fact that these lines continue to be blurred force us to reconsider how each era interprets the relationships between humans, animals, and machines.

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**Endnotes**

1. Dominic Pettman, *Human Error: Species-Being and Media Machines*, 5
2. Ibid, 7.
4. Ibid, 18.
8. Ibid, 155.
10. Ibid, 2.
11. Ibid, 3.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
17. Wake, 366.
18. Schaffhausen, ex.
19. Kipling, 6, bold added.
22. Ibid, 9.
23. Ibid.
25. Ibid, 16.
28. Richardson, 35.
29. Machines, of course, cannot yet claim to possess a soul.
30. Victorian machines are not quite equal with animals and humans as they do not possess the will to decide action; however modern machines are getting closer to the human thought process, which may later redefine this definition once again.
Bibliography


Maimonides’ Influence on Modern Judaic Thought and Practice

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Sarah Koros is a sophomore at University of Pittsburgh Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. She is majoring in Religious Studies and Sociology, minoring in Philosophy, and pursuing a Jewish Studies Certificate. She is inspired by people’s ability to upend and accept adversity. She especially admires those who use art, music, and spirituality to describe these experiences.
Moses Maimonides, renowned Rabbi, physician, and philosopher, profoundly impacted modern Judaism. The common aphorism, “From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses”, even associates Maimonides with the revered Judaic prophet. Like many other great thinkers, Maimonides (also known as Rambam) made contributions to medicine, philosophy, and Judaism—but perhaps his true legacy lies in his systematization of Judaism that provided an entry point to the more uniform modern Judaic practices. Maimonides wrote at a time when Judaic law (essentially a guide for Jewish conduct) was dispersed throughout various holy texts, commentaries, and responses. Even though Judaism emphasized praxis over belief, the haphazard organization of Jewish law made it difficult for a common person who was untrained in Jewish texts to interact with the rules to which they were meant to adhere. As one of the first systematizers of Jewish law, Maimonides brought Jewish law to the people primarily by creating the Mishneh Torah, or The Repetition of the Torah.

One of Maimonides’ earliest works is his Commentary on the Mishnah, said to have been finished in 1168. In this seminal contribution to the Jewish canon, Maimonides introduces the tenth chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin with the section, Pereq Heleq, and presents his thirteen articles of faith: 1) The existence of the creator; 2) God’s oneness; 3) God’s incorporeality; 4) God’s eternity; 5) God alone is to be worshiped; 6) Prophecy; 7) Prophecy of Moses; 8) Divinity of the Torah; 9) Immutability of the Torah; 10) God’s omniscience; 11) God rewards those who follow the Law and punishes those who do not; 12) The coming of the Messiah; 13) Resurrection.

Maimonides devised these principles at a time when Jewish scholars resisted theological dogma, decreeing “that deeds, not creed, were the things for which a person enjoyed the fruits of this world”. The issue of doctrine proved to be a difficult problem for Maimonides’ contemporaries. Judaism is a faith rooted in interpretation and debate. If the answers were already elucidated by Maimonides’ thirteen principles, would anyone debate? Would anyone study the sacred texts? What would become of Judaism? These were the anxieties that Maimonides’ peers faced. Yet Maimonides realized that most people did not have the luxury of being able to study or debate the sacred texts; he identified a need among the Jewish people for a set of beliefs that they could live by. For this reason, he strived to clarify the tenets of Jewish faith—especially for those who were solely reliant upon Rabbis for religious interpretation.

The thirteen principles of faith were so admired that they were transformed into hymns, Ani Ma’Amin (I believe) and Yigdal (O Loving God), both of which are performed in regular synagogue services. One of the most commonly used siddurim (prayer books) in orthodox synagogues, The Complete Artscroll Siddur, repeats the thirteen principles every weekday morning after Shacharit; each principle is preceded by the phrase “Ani Ma’Amin b’emuna shelema,” or “I believe with complete faith”. Another version Ani Ma’Amin was composed by Rabbi Azriel David Fastag during the Holocaust and is frequently sung on Yom Ha’Shoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day. Inspired also by Maimonides’ thirteen principles is Yigdal, which is included in the daily morning prayers that are to be recited when entering synagogue. The short poem translates as follows: “Exalted be the Living God and praised / He exists—unbounded by time is His existence. / He is One—and there is no unity like His Oneness. / Inscribed and infinite is His Oneness”.

In spite of this tension, Maimonides’ thirteen principles prevailed and became doctrine for many Orthodox Jews. Scholars postulate that this is due to the principles’ multiplicity, unambiguity, and clear Biblical foundation. Regarding multiplicity, Marc B. Shapiro states:
Had Maimonides never drawn up his Principles, issues of Jewish belief in the popular mind would have developed very differently. In fact, the widespread acceptance of Maimonides’ creed is not so much a function of scholarly approval but rather of popular acceptance… because popular piety prefers more dogmatic statements rather than fewer.

The swift adoption of Maimonides’ principles was therefore augmented by popular culture. Islam and Christianity’s belief in doctrine was especially strong by the time Maimonides wrote the principles, and Jews were motivated to embrace their own dogma to “fit in” or prove their religion’s validity. As a perpetual minority, defense of their own beliefs or assimilation into others’ was sociologically, psychologically, and intellectually crucial. Moreover, Maimonides’ principles were easily comprehended, allowing the common people to devote themselves entirely to a “true” Judaism, though they did not study the texts themselves. Some also believe that each of the principles is grounded in obvious and direct evidence from the Torah and easily digestible for the masses. Rabbi Simeon ben Zemah Duran “maintains that Maimonides chose his thirteen principles because they were all explicitly taught by biblical verses and not because they are the thirteen most important principles of Judaism”. Thus, Duran implicitly differentiates Maimonides’ summation of Jewish themes versus Jewish criteria of goodness.

Again, it is important to emphasize that this is just one perspective. Maimonides is not a monolith and many Rabbis disagree with the tenants—particularly God’s incorporeality, or formlessness. (His understanding of God was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy—a topic that will be discussed later.) After all, the Torah is filled with anthropomorphizations of God such as, “I HaShem thy G-d am a jealous G-d”, “And G-d created man in His own image”, and “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm”. Meir Bar-Ilan even states that “in the first centuries Jews in the Land of Israel and in Babylon believed in an anthropomorphic God”. To Maimonides, however, incorporeality was logically necessary. For God to be one and eternal (his first and second principle, respectively), God could not have had physical form. Seeing that Jews today no longer believe in an anthropomorphic God, Maimonides’ account of incorporeality has certainly made an impact on modern Judaic interpretation of God’s physicality.

Another transformative element of Maimonides’ legacy is his Mishneh Torah, or Repetition of the Torah, written during 1168 to 1177. As a compilation and analysis of Jewish laws from the Torah, Oral Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud, Maimonides endeavored to systematize and simplify Jewish thought. This was not a straightforward task as the laws were entirely—and intentionally—disorganized. Scholar Ruth Birnbaum writes:

Up until this period, the laws of the rabbi had not been arranged in a systematic topical format for several reasons: 1. The laws are scattered throughout different parts of the Talmud; 2. The Talmud is written as an account of discussions appropriately called “the sea” of the Talmud in its successive association of ideas and arguments; 3. The Talmud contains the conflicting opinions of the Sages.

While it seems inconceivable to us that a religion existed without a compendium of important regulations, this circumstance was encouraged—indeed, designed by Rabbis who valued the study of holy texts above all else. If an abridged version of the sacred Jewish texts were available, who would study the Torah? This fear instigated much criticism of Maimonides and his work.

But again, Maimonides prevailed, inspiring a wave of writings on halakha (Jewish law) and providing a basis for Orthodox Judaism; specifically, Maimonides’ identification of the 613 mitzvot (commandments or laws) is highly integrated with orthodox practice. Menachem Marc Kellner contends, “This idea that the Torah contained exactly 613 commandments became widely accepted in the Jewish tradition and gave rise to a whole genre of literature dedicated to identifying and enumerating the 613 commandments”. The 613 mitzvot are organized into fourteen sections based on their purpose: The Book of Knowledge, The Book of Love, The Book of the Seasons, The Book of Women, The Book of Holiness, The Book of Utterances, The Book of Agricultural [Laws], The Book of [the Temple and its] Service, The Book of Sacrifices, The Book of Ritual Purity, The Book of Damages, The Book of Acquisition [of Property], The Book of Judgments, and The Book of Judges. Within each of these categories, Maimonides further classifies the mitzvot as scriptural or rabbinic, negative or positive, and between people, or between an individual and God. For example, within The Book of Knowledge, there are five
that is
in the overwhelmingly
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That one must not desecrate God’s name. Whereas an example of a positive commandment is the sixth, which states that one must sanctify God’s name; whereas an example of a negative commandment, the seventh, states that one must not desecrate God’s name. This thorough codification and analysis of Jewish law was the first of its kind. Debates, enumerations, and studies of halakha have since escalated and now incorporate a large portion of Orthodox tradition and practice.

Maimonides’ ladder of charity is one such feat of the Mishneh Torah that is commonly observed today. In the Mishneh Torah’s Book of Agricultural [Laws], Maimonides details “eight rungs in the ladder of charity”, all of which have been adopted into Jewish culture. A tsedakah box (anonymous donation box), which is often found at synagogues or neighborhood businesses, is frequently in the shape of an eight-tiered pyramid, thereby mimicking Maimonides’ eight-tiered ladder of charity.

The success of the Mishneh Torah is underwritten by Maimonides’ intentions. Namely, he aspired to deliver the difficult, extensive body of Jewish texts to the masses in one painlessly intelligible book. This was crucial for the widespread understanding of Judaism because the common, uneducated person did not have spare time to study the considerable amount of sacred texts, much less understand Biblical Hebrew. Consequently, Maimonides decided to write the Mishneh Torah in the overwhelmingly accessible Hebrew. This, in turn, “created a style of elegant Hebrew that serves even today”. Birnbaum writes, “[Maimonides] wanted those Jews who were not learned in the Talmud to have a clear and open code and not be dependent on the judges”. Unsurprisingly, the Mishneh Torah amassed a global following within Maimonides’ lifetime.

Intentionally or otherwise, Maimonides imbued his Mishneh Torah with many of his own opinions—an action that garnered much criticism. Whereas law was famously debated among Rabbis and scholars, Maimonides’ Mishneh Torah presented singular viewpoints, unopposed, and therefore asserted himself as the arbiter of the laws. Meanwhile, he incorporated many philosophical viewpoints from sources like Aristotle and Plato; for example, Maimonides refers to God as the “first being”—a distinctly Greek sentiment. In Rabbi Marc D. Angel’s commentary of The Book of Knowledge from the Mishneh Torah, he observes that “Maimonides’s description of God as the ‘First Being who brings into being all that exists’ sounds very much like the God of the philosophers, that is, a Prime Mover who is not necessarily concerned with the ongoing operations of the world”.

Indeed, Maimonides instills many of his philosophically based beliefs into his Mishneh Torah and thereby begins a Jewish tradition of harmonizing religion with reason. While discussing The Book of Knowledge, scholar Joel L. Kraemer describes the passage’s eminence from the Mishneh Torah and thereby begins a Jewish tradition of harmonizing religion with reason. While discussing The Book of Knowledge, scholar Joel L. Kraemer describes the passage’s eminence from the Mishneh Torah and thereby begins a Jewish tradition of harmonizing religion with reason. While discussing The Book of Knowledge, scholar Joel L. Kraemer describes the passage’s eminence from the Mishneh Torah and thereby begins a Jewish tradition of harmonizing religion with reason. While discussing The Book of Knowledge, scholar Joel L. Kraemer describes the passage’s eminence from the Mishneh Torah and thereby begins a Jewish tradition of harmonizing religion with reason. 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ART GALLERY
Differing from the majority my work due to the use of photography and editing tools, From the Shadows is a digital work comprised of photographic layers of shadows cast from a paper sculpture installation and printed on watercolor paper. As in this piece, my work often manifests in forms that writhe, grow, and climb. The cutting, twisting, tearing, and occasional burning of paper, wood, canvas, or string reduces materials to a state of devastation or uselessness; however once reconstructed through weaving, plaiting, painting, or knotting, the formerly fragile materials become aesthetic, whole, strong, and healed. Once printed, charcoal is added on top of the piece. The intricate meticulousness of a repetitive process gives me unwavering control as I explore the subject of emotional healing from sexual violence.
Bore is a sculptural relief made by repetitively drilling holes into sheets of plywood until the pressure of the drill causes the plywood to splinter. The expression itself is defined by dictionary.com as both “to make (a hole) by drilling with some rotary cutting instrument,” but also to describe “a dull, tiresome, or uncongenial person.” In this sense, the title refers both to the mark-making and to the human psyche, eluding to figural interpretations of cognition. This duality speaks to both the cause of the damage that rots one away, and the resulting symptom: the misery of a bore.
Bare
2" x 4"
Plywood
In this piece I aimed to express movement across a plain that contains a similar transience to that of a dream like state. The subject is in a position which is rooted in a more concrete setting from their perspective facing inward. Conversely, abstraction in shapes formed in both the foreground and distancing background form the essence of a continuous and interwoven setting that separate the reality of the setting at large and that of the subject. The separate, shapely components of this piece that are rooted in concreteness and abstraction seem to be independent of another, but closer examination reveals that they are all in unison as they complement on another in form and interchangeable perspectives.

*Echo (2017)*  
*Acrylic and charcoal on canvas*
This piece was an exploration of layering translucent colors in order to accentuate the dichotomy between those layers of color in relation to the similarly-translucent subject. Each individual layer works to complement and influences the next to both create the color scheme as a whole and characterize the subject more directly.
Pistoia (2012)  
Intaglio Etching  
8 x 10 inches

Victoria Woshner

Pistoia is one of five etchings based upon photographs I took in Italy. The series evokes the tradition of prints produced in the 18th and 19th centuries as inexpensive souvenirs for tourists. The subjects of such etchings were frequently icons of classical architecture in scenes either real or imagined. My pieces, including Pistoia, reflect more personal impressions of places and moments that captivated me while abroad.
These two prints come from a series of three in which I manipulated various textures to create compositions meant to evoke different emotions. Through this project, I wanted to explore the idea of using a representational object or image—in this case, the pattern of a piece of fabric—to depict an abstract concept. Using the imprint of textures from two separate fabrics (an effect achieved through an intaglio technique called soft ground) as a starting point. From there I used various etching techniques and further manipulated the image in order to achieve the desired emotional effect.
Lethargic

Agitated
Forbes & Fifth, the undergraduate magazine of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, is seeking submissions for its 11th issue, Fall 2017. Submissions will be accepted from all schools and disciplines, and from any accredited undergraduate university in the world.

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