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Bridgewater State College
The Undergraduate Review

Volume I

Student Editors        Amanda C. Forbes
                        Robert J. Cannata

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Preface

The Undergraduate Review began as one of many projects the Bridgewater Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (BUROP) was going to pursue in 2000, when the program was first funded. Too many projects, as it happened, and so the journal waited until 2003 to get underway. That it did get underway, that it flourished in its first year, and that it now appears on the verge of publication as we write, are all due to the extraordinary efforts of several dedicated people. Editors Rob Cannata and Amanda Forbes worked within a barely-defined organizational structure, negotiating between student authors, faculty reviewers, potential publishers, and their own demanding time schedules and ultimately produced an outstanding first issue. We credit them with bringing order out of chaos and solving many of the journal’s first-time problems with skill, patience, unflagging discipline and only occasionally flagging good humor. Lee Torda acted as de facto faculty supervisor of the journal’s production, working closely with Rob and Amanda and providing them with guidance and her own vast stores of energy and devotion. Meredith Eckstrom, the Honors Program secretary, helped facilitate the great flows of paper involved. Kathy Lee, who has since left Bridgewater, also helped with the journal in its early months. The journal would not have been possible without the financial backing of the Bridgewater Foundation and the President’s office, or the less tangible but equally necessary support and guidance of Ron Pitt, Nancy Kleniewski and Dana Mohler-Faria.

We also thank the faculty reviewers who read the submissions; the faculty mentors who encouraged, cajoled and stood behind their students’ work long after their formal roles ended; and most of all the authors themselves. They have invested themselves fully in their work’s publication, and we hope that the first issue of The Undergraduate Review is worthy of their efforts.

Ann Brunjes
ATP Co-coordinator

Ed Brush
ATP Co-coordinator

Andrew Harris
Past ATP Co-coordinator
A Letter from the Editors

Bridgewater State College provides students with opportunities to excel and thrive as undergraduates in preparation for future education and the journey of life. Every discipline on campus challenges their students, setting high expectations and achievable goals. The pages of this journal provide a glimpse into the academic world of those undergraduate students who have met and excelled beyond the challenges presented to them. From research-based essays to creative texts, there is no limit to the remarkable dedication and effort of Bridgewater State College undergraduates.

We were faced with a difficult task: turning an idea into a thing. It has gone from a blank slate to a living document, and we feel great satisfaction in its completion. It denotes a landmark in Bridgewater history. We hope this journal will aid our College in beginning a tradition of scholarship and excellence that future classes will continue year by year, volume by volume.

This is the inaugural issue of The Undergraduate Review, generously funded by the Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research. Never before at Bridgewater has there been a journal devoted to undergraduate thinking, discourse, and research. Students from all academic fields on campus engage daily in discussion, independent research, and critical thinking—the products of which are showcased in this journal. The collected works showcased here exist not simply as texts, but as evidence of an author, a real live person: these writers are exposed to the student body, faculty, family, friends, and colleagues who benefit from reading their work.

We would like to thank the Adrian Tinsley Program for funding this journal in material and in concept. We would also like to show our appreciation to the students who submitted their work; those who took the risk to make their voices heard. We would also like to thank our Adrian Tinsley Program supervisors, Drs. Andrew Harris, Ed Brush and Ann Brunjes. Finally we would like to thank our editorial advisors, Drs. Lee Torda and Katherine Lee: this journal would not be possible without their devotion to us and to every student on this campus.

We present to you the first ever Undergraduate Review.

Amanda C. Forbes and Robert J. Cannata
The Undergraduate Review Student Editors
### The Undergraduate Review, Volume I

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*Photo Credit:
The Clement C. Maxwell Library, Special Collectors/Archives
Title: Bridgewater Normal School Student Studying, circa 1901*
Music in the Heart

by Claudina Silva

It is December 25, 1993. My immediate and mother’s side of the family have all met in front of my grandmother’s house awaiting the annual family Christmas celebration. The most integral part of the celebration, Todo Mundo Canta (Everybody Sing), is about to begin and the sense of anticipation and excitement that is filling the space cannot be completely expressed in words. From the children (myself included), ranging in age from 3 to 12, to the adults who can trace back to when they were children during this family tradition, all that can be heard are each person’s careful consideration of which song he or she should sing that would be most favored by the audience. At the age of 8, I can remember being intensely nervous and thinking really hard about what song to pick. When I finally decide, it is the Noite Feliz melody (“Silent Night”). Throughout the event, the traditional Christmas carols and numerous other songs are performed. At the end, prizes are given to all the participants and everybody sits down for Grandma’s all-time’s best catchupa (Cape Verde’s most popular dish).

Although it is an event that takes place every year, we are all disappointed that it has to end and cannot wait
until next Christmas. Throughout the year, my family also holds musical gatherings for special occasions, such as Easter, Cinza (Ash Wednesday), Carnaval (a celebration held in February), and sometimes birthdays. Occasionally, we also do the Todo Mundo Canta (not with a Christmas theme) where we sing any type of music and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners receive prizes from the judges (usually my uncles). The Christmas singing tradition, which was only one of the ways in which we showed our appreciation for music, was something that my mother’s side of the family started when we – the immediate family – moved to the capital of Cape Verde, Praia, in 1986 (Lima, Angelica).

Everyone has at least one trait that he or she can say is a result of his or her family’s influence, in my case it is the passion associated with music. Having been raised in a culture where music has always been an essential component has ultimately shaped me into a musical person. I remember being just a little girl when my eldest brother started a music group, “C4”, with one of our cousins and a couple of his friends in Cape Verde. The group of four consisted of singers and writers (including my brother), an acoustic guitar player, a pianist, and an electric bass player. They played mostly music for the youth, such as coladera (fun songs of humor, joy, and sensuality) and funana (a faster and more upbeat form of coladera). The little kids (including myself) used to listen and dance while they performed for small audiences in the community. The group also played inspirational songs that either sent out a message to the youth or spoke of tough experiences. Their first song sent out a message to the youth discouraging the use of alcohol and other drugs. When my brother was leaving for the US, his group mates wrote a goodbye song for him that started off with, “During our childhood we played a lot, in our adolescence we had lots of fun, but now we no longer can because destiny is separating us. (Silva, Ramiro)” This song definitely provoked a lot of emotion, and in a way it also reminded me of the types of songs that the early Cape Verden immigrants sang.

According to my mother, two of her younger brothers were involved in the same types of musical activities as my brother. When the eldest one finished school, he was finally able to afford a guitar, so he bought one and started playing while the younger one would sing. Later, when the younger one finished school, he bought a guitar as well. They played and sang together, primarily as a hobby, but later moved on to do talent shows and other activities in the community. My godfather, who later joined the group, currently plays the organ and sometimes the guitar in church Masses (Lima).

In addition to the male part of the family, the females have also been involved in musical activities. My mother and her twin sister and, later, their younger sister were involved in church choirs, from the age of 11 to now. Just as genetics suggests, my two older sisters and I inherited this trait and have also been participating in church and school choirs since our elementary years. The kind of music that we sing in our church is just like in any other church: it consists of gospel lyrics used to praise the Lord. However, singing the words in our own language and using both the guitar and piano in producing the music not only adds our own unique rhythm to it, but also makes us feel closer to God simply because we are speaking to Him in the language that we believe was His gift to us. It reinforces the saying, “When you sing to the Lord, you are praying twice.” Over the years, we have also been involved in many competitive musical events, both as a group as well as separately. Thus, the musical passion has been shared and passed on by numerous members of my family.
From the slavery days in Cape Verde, to the earliest Cape Verdeans who immigrated to the United States by whaling vessels, and finally to today’s descendants of the Cape Verde islands, music has proved to be an essential cultural expression of the life of the Cape Verdean community and an integral part of family and social celebrations. The culture reflects both the European and African influences, which Cape Verde has been affected by over five centuries. The Portuguese colonized Cape Verde until it won its independence on July 5, 1975. Cape Verdean emigration to America began with the ships sailing from the Old World to the New World carrying slaves that were transported from Cape Verde. They were primarily brought to the New England area: Boston, Brockton, New Bedford, and Pawtucket.

In the eighteenth century, whaling vessels stopped at the Cape Verde islands to recruit men to work as the whaling deckhands and harpooners aboard the New England Whalers, and they primarily sought to make money and take it back to their country. They were particularly regarded as superior whalers. When whaling declined in the late nineteenth century, Cape Verdeans bought old whale ships (rigged as packet ships) and sailed home, returning to America with shiploads of immigrants who sought refuge from famine. These packet ships sailed until a series of immigration laws came into play, but a new wave started in the 1960s due to the constant changes in the immigration system [in terms of how many incoming people were allowed by the US at a time] (Barboza 10-11). The Ernestina (one of the packet ships), which Cape Verde gave to the US as a gift, remains in the New Bedford harbor today as a symbol of the long-standing relationship between the two countries.

The Cranberry industry became active, particularly in Southeastern Massachusetts, when whaling began to decline. When Cape Verdeans started to immigrate in larger numbers, the women and children worked in cranberry bogs. Later on the men decided to work in this industry as well, which is mainly why today there is such a heavy concentration of Cape Verdeans in the southeastern Massachusetts area. Although working in the cranberry bogs was difficult, and the pay was not very good, they remained faithful to their jobs because they knew that it was better for them at the time. Drought and famine had taken over their homeland (Coutinho).

As Cape Verdeans settled in, they quickly found that they would soon have to cope with not only homesickness but also discrimination. Being homesick was inevitable, in that they were living in a foreign land that was far away from their home and their loved ones. It was also particularly hard for them to adapt to a new language, customs, and culture. In addition, they also had to face discrimination from other cultural groups. As Cape Verdeans strove to cope with discrimination and homesickness, music became a way in which they could join together as one and comfort each other.

Morna, a ballad similar to the Portuguese fado, which embodies Cape Verdeans' saddest and sweetest poetry, was the most popular at the time when more and more Cape Verdeans were immigrating to the US. According to Barboza, the morna is "accompanied by the haunting strains of guitars and violins, its singers cry the blues, telling stories of cruel fate, or hardship, or lost love" (13-14). For instance, in a song known quite well among Cape Verdeans the singer cries out, "Cape Verde, my small homeland, your blessings came from the heavens full of divine grace." In a similar one the singer cries, "All the pain, all the sorrow, all the suffering, and all the tears from your eyes are shed on the ocean." This is basically saying that the people who decided to emigrate left all of their tears on
the ocean [Atlantic], as they left Cape Verde. Since moma connotes a certain sense of nostalgia for the Cape Verdeans spread across the world and of the destiny of those who want to stay but must leave, it seemed to the best way that the new immigrants could be relieved of the sorrow they felt after leaving not only their homeland, but also their families and friends.

Music had a really strong impact on my culture at the time of immigration. Its effects were essentially ones of consolation and comfort for a people who had left their land and loved ones. Although some musicians continued to pursue the popular music of the time, in the 1950s many groups who played traditional music were also formed. For instance, one of the best-known Cape Verdean musicians of his day, tenor saxophonist, Paul Gonsalves (of Pawtucket, Rhode Island) played with Count Basie and Dizzy Gillespie and joined Duke Ellington's band in 1950. He remained in the band until his death and was the principle soloist for the last 25 years of the band's existence (Barboza 15).

Although over the years there have been some changes in the culture's music due to the American influence, the Cape Verdean descendants still clearly represent their ancestors' natural and unique sense of rhythm and creativity in producing music. Just as music provided comfort for the Cape Verdeans who first immigrated here, in a special way it has comforted me over the years. Not only has music helped me identify with my Cape Verdean heritage, but it has also kept me closer to my family. Sometimes when I sing, I feel as though I am singing to my ancestors - to comfort them, just as when they sang it had the same effect. When my sisters and I sing together it seems to create a stronger sense of bonding between us, in that we feel that we will always be there for one another, and we have created that feeling through music. Thus, my musical personality has reflected and still reflects today a symbiosis of both my family and culture's strong musical influences.
Olaudah Equiano's Views of Slavery in his "Narrative of the Life"

by Corie Dias

Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* tells the story of a young man who was captured and put into slavery at the age of eleven. Equiano's journey from slavery to freedom takes place over the next ten years, not just at a physical level, but at both an intellectual and religious level as well. Equiano is truly a man of conflict, and his feelings towards slavery are complex and sometimes paradoxical. But ultimately he decides against the "peculiar institution" and makes a plea for the end of slavery. His views are forged from his own personal journey as a slave, specifically in the areas of class, religion, and his sense of economics in the marketplace.

Equiano originally came from a small district of the Kingdom of Benin in Africa. In his village Essaku, his family was of the upper class, as seen from Equiano’s description of a certain mark that his father, who was a chief, bore. This “mark of grandeur” was only worn by certain men: “Most of the judges and senators were thus marked; my father had long borne it; I had seen it conferred on one of my brothers, and I also was destined to receive it by my
parents" (34). This mark would have identified Equiano as an Embrenche, or chief, in his village. He would have had the power to settle disputes and punish wrongdoings committed by the village people, had he not been taken from this society.

In his small village, Equiano had never seen or heard of either white people or the ocean. But he was well acquainted with the institution of slavery, as his upper-class family owned a large number of slaves. However, Equiano saw this slavery as completely different from what he saw when taken into captivity himself. Here, at least slaves were treated humanely, although they had their freedom taken away from them:

How different was their condition from that of the slaves in the West Indies! With us, they do no more work than other members of the community, even their master; their food, clothing, and lodging were nearly the same as theirs; and there was scarce any difference between them, than a superior degree of importance which the head of the family possesses in our state...Some of these slaves have even slaves under them as their own property, and for their own use (40-41).

From a young age, Equiano was familiar with the institution of slavery. As an upper class citizen, he was entitled to own slaves. Although a slave himself at one time, he looks back on his village’s use of slavery as decent, not detestable like what he sees in the West Indies. The slaves are treated almost like everyone else in his eyes, with equal types of food, clothing, and housing. In this way, both a sense of humanity and a sense of class order affected his early impression of slavery.

It is perhaps because of Equiano’s higher class distinction that he seemingly is not against all types of slavery at this point. There seem to be degrees of badness, and he continues to come down the hardest on what goes on in the West Indies. This is brought out by Felicity A. Nussbaum in her essay “Being a Man: Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho”, where she says that, “At times he even seems to disassociate England from the evils of slavery as when he vilifies the West Indies as a site of horror and inequity as distinct from the British Isles” (Nussbaum 59). Again, Equiano seems to separate slavery into different categories, even lessening his argument against slavery in England by comparing it with the West Indies. His antislavery views are not really formed until the end of the Narrative, as author Eileen Elrod points out in “Moses and the Egyptian: Religious Authority in Olaudah Equiano’s Interesting Narrative”:

He certainly opposes all kinds of physical abuse as he witnesses it, but it is only long after his return to England—and perhaps, as a result of his writing the Narrative— that he comes to an anti-slavery position that impels him to seek an appearance before Parliament (Elrod 2).

And even as he expresses strong arguments against slavery in general later on, Equiano never denounces what went on in his upper class family in his own childhood village, where class status is an excuse for slaveholding.

Equiano’s class views come into play again when he finds himself captive in the hands of other Africans. He is horrified by one particular group of people; he sees them as backwards and uncivilized. He comments that they “ate without washing their hands... and fought with their fists among themselves” (52). He also makes a direct comparison between these people and his own, saying, “Their women were not so modest as ours, for they ate, and drank, and slept with their men...In some of these places the people ornamented themselves with scars” (52). Equiano is disgusted by these people, seeing himself as belonging to a higher class, and concludes that he “would not suffer them; hoping that I might some time be among a people who did not thus disfig-
ure themselves, as I thought they did” (53).

When he is first confronted with a slave ship and white men, he thinks that these men with different complexions are evil spirits with bad intentions: “I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair” (54). White men may have seen these black natives as animals, but no more than Equiano saw them as horrible beasts, a life form lower than himself. Once on the slave ship, his aristocratic views continue, as he is crammed down below with many dead and dying Africans. With these horrible surroundings, Equiano’s worst suffering came from the “pestilential” smell (56).

Equiano’s fears eventually subsides somewhat, as he becomes aware that he will not be eaten. He is not afraid of working, and once landed in the new world even does a little side business to make money for himself. It is at this early time in his slavery that he begins to take an interest in education and religion. Equiano takes an interest in reading as he is traveling on board a ship with his master, thinking that if he talks into a book, it will talk back (64). He eventually learns to read, when two white women, the Miss Guerins, send him to school. He also begins to learn about religion and is told that unless he is baptized he will not go to heaven. He asks the Miss Guerins to let him be baptized, and she complies with this request.

Around this time, Equiano’s intellectual journey really begins. He starts to see himself as more of a European than an African, and expresses an interesting observation about his enslavers:

I not only felt myself quite easy with these new countrymen, but relished their society and manners. I no longer looked upon them as spirits, but as men superior to us; and therefore I had the stronger desire to resemble them, to imbibe their spirit, and imitate their manners. I therefore embraced every occasion of improvement, and every new thing that I observed I treasured up in my memory (72).

Equiano is truly a man of the Enlightenment, as he sees himself fully capable of personal growth. He now desires to imitate the people that hold him captive, seeing them as superior because of their seeming intelligence and good manners, and he strives to do this through his education, especially in the area of religion. His favorite companions are generally white educated people who help him in his understanding of the Bible.

Equiano’s understanding of the Bible becomes perhaps the strongest theme in the Narrative. Equiano sees this as the greatest force in his life, as his faith in God grows. His new-found religious views also seem to make him feel safer and more confident in his ability to change into someone loved by God. This can be seen especially when Equiano recounts an experience that took place during one of his sea voyages, where several people, including himself, fell from the upper deck of the ship. Miraculously, not one person was hurt, and Equiano gives God the credit for this:

In these, and in many more instances, I thought I could plainly trace the hand of God, without whose permission a sparrow cannot fall. I began to raise my fear from man to him alone, and to call daily on his holy name with fear and reverence. And I trust he heard my supplications, and graciously condescended to answer me according to his holy word, and to implant the seeds of piety in me, even one of the meanest of his creatures (80).

This strong faith in God becomes further apparent as the text progresses, as well as Equiano’s use of Scripture. He often quotes, as he does here, directly from the Bible.

Equiano’s new Christian views shape his negative view of slavery. One of the most outstanding areas of his argument is based on a Bible verse found in Matthew 7:12: “Key to his condemnation of slavery
(and to many other anti-slavery texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) is the Golden Rule...Equiano shames his readers for their refusal to ‘do unto others’, to exercise the most basic human compassion” (Elrod 3). The rule of doing to others what you would have them do to you obviously is not at all compatible with the institution of slavery. Whether a slaver is kind despite his dominion over his slaves or if he cruelly inflicts brutal punishments upon them, this is not in agreement with the Biblical principles that Equiano becomes acquainted with. Equiano believes that he is further enabled to be loved by God as he takes in more Bible knowledge and applies it in his life, and he encourages slave owners and traders to do the same.

There is some discrepancy, however, in the way Equiano relates his religious views to his enslavement. There is a clear distinction in the Narrative between pious Christians, such as himself, and the hypocritical Christians who enact violence on slaves. Yet the reader cannot be sure whether Equiano blames these hypocrites or whether he blames himself and God for his situation as a slave. At the end of chapter four, he is sold yet again to a different master, at which he grieves deeply. He does not blame his owner for this but says, “I must have done something to displease the Lord, that he thus punished me so severely... I thought God might perhaps have permitted this, in order to teach me wisdom and resignation” (86). This view that he is being punished by God when he is sold does not seem to agree with the opinion that slavery is an evil institution that goes against what the Bible says. Equiano then promises God that he will behave from then on, but in the very next paragraph begins to plan an escape. So he believes in a way that God is on the side of the slavers, yet “his radical submission to God does not hinder him from active rebellion against his master” (Elrod 9). His view here almost seems to support the slave owners’ view that the slaves are unworthy of God’s love and compassion, while at the same time he prays to God for just that. This area of the Narrative shows the Equiano is somewhat conflicted in his views as he attempts to make his religion and his views of slavery work together. But on the whole, this section of the Narrative does further his argument against the slave owners, as he does again plan to escape and then goes on to describe some of the cruelest slave treatment he has yet observed.

He speaks out again against these cruel men, saying, “Jesus tells us, the oppressor and the oppressed are both in his hands; and if these are not the poor, the broken hearted, the blind, the captive, the bruised, which our Saviour speaks of, who are they?” (108). In this instance, we see Equiano using the Scriptures both to emphasize the cruelty of the slave owners and also to show that the Bible tells a story of freedom from bondage. This bondage theme continues to develop, as Equiano compares the slaves to the oppressed of the Bible who were eventually freed. Once he gains his own freedom from bondage, he draws another parallel to the Bible, comparing his experience to that of the Biblical character Elijah:

Heavens! who could do justice to my feelings at this moment...My feet scarcely touched the ground, for they were winged with joy; and, like Elijah, as he rose to Heaven, they 'were as lightning sped as I went on.' Everyone I met I told of my happiness, and blazed about the virtue of my amiable master and captain (119).

With these words Equiano compares his becoming a free man to Elijah’s miraculous entrance into heaven. He shows his readers that liberation here on Earth can be compared to that of Heaven. This also makes a strong argument against the “line of argu-
ment so familiar to Christian slaves and their masters, that freedom would come 'by and by' in heaven for those who would wait for it" (Elrod 7). Rather than wait for his freedom in the next life, Equiano has used hard work and his faith in God to achieve that freedom here on Earth. His quotations and declarations of piety show how much he relied on the Bible during these times, and also that freedom could be achieved through faith in God. These parallels between Biblical figures and slaves show just how strongly religion influenced Equiano’s view of slavery.

Despite these religious findings against slavery throughout the text, the Narrative does contain another contradiction in Equiano’s views. Perhaps the most disturbing part of the text is that despite his speaking out against slavery, Equiano himself took part in the slave trade and benefited financially from it. Author Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds discusses this paradox in her essay “The Spirit of Trade: Olaudah Equiano’s Conversion, Legalism, and the Merchant’s Life”, where she comments that “the irony arises ostensibly opposing spiritual and economic components of Equiano’s identity: He may have worked to earn individual ‘freedom,’ but the work itself placed him squarely within the dehumanizing ideology of capitalism’s driving slave market” (Hinds 2).

Having been a participant in the slave trade in his own village years earlier, Equiano now finds that his place in the world of economics places him right in the middle of the market that was responsible for his own enslavement. He does not approve of slavery and is horrified by what he sees when in this position of trader, particularly the horrible treatment of female slaves. He discusses this in Chapter five, where he tells the reader that he often had cages full of slaves under his supervision, and it was a common occurrence for the white clerks there to rape the women. But, much to his sorrow, he was “obliged to submit at all times, being unable to help them” (93). He felt unable to retaliate against these men.

Equiano is aware of this brutality as he engages in the slave trade of the market for his own benefit. He unarguably has a good reason for wanting to earn money, as it is the only way of procuring his own freedom. Unfortunately, in trying to free himself from slavery, Equiano takes part in enforcing the slavery of others. This attempt at freedom may have come at the cost of his own spirituality for a time, as pointed out by Hinds:

The cost of freedom developed in his autobiography, for a time, comes at the cost of Equiano’s spiritual identity, for in entering ‘free trade,’ he operates within a system that denies him, as he is reproduced in the slaves transported on the ships he used to transport his own goods: As trader and slave at once, Equiano performs as an equivalence both to ‘Africa’ and to Africa’s slaveowners (Hinds 2).

It is interesting that during this portion of the Narrative, Equiano still cites the Scriptures and speaks out somewhat against the cruel treatment he observes, but he does not mention his own spirituality or piety. His involvement in the market now seems to become the main theme in his life, rather than his own spirituality. It seems almost that he has lost this part of himself during the time that he assists in the trading of his fellow people, as money and the goal of freedom take precedence in his life.

This contradiction is something that Equiano never comes out and rationalizes, but he does continue to express the wish that slavery be abolished, developing new reasons for such action to take place. He now begins to use economic arguments in addition to religious reasoning. This argument comes out particularly in the last chapter of the Narrative, where he begins an extensive argument that slavery should be abolished, not only because of the “tortures, murders,
and every other imaginable barbarity and iniquity” (194), but also because it would be good for the British economy:

Population, the bowels and surface of Africa, abound in valuable and useful returns; the hidden treasures of centuries will be brought to light and into circulation...In a word, it lays open an endless field of commerce to the British manufactures and merchant adventurer. The manufacturing interest and the general interests are synonymous. The abolition of slavery would be in reality [a] universal good (194).

With this argument, Equiano makes his appeal in terms of commerce, trying to convince the reader that this plan would be best for the British people economically. He offers up Africa as a land abounding in “hidden treasures,” an “endless field” for the adventurous British merchant.

Equiano then follows this persuasive argument with a list of the horrible cruelties that he has seen inflicted on his fellow slaves over the years. This leads into another plea that slavery be abolished, based on what he has put forth in the Narrative. It is interesting that he ends with an economic argument, rather than one based on his religious views. This may be a direct result of Equiano’s split between anti-slavery views and his participation in the slave trade. Although his religion was a huge influence on his life, it seems to take a lower spot towards the end of the Narrative, as his interest in finance climbs while his spirituality diminishes.

Nevertheless, Equiano’s move towards religious enlightenment played a very strong part in the formation of his views about slavery. Although his original views of slavery were based on his childhood and the class system that existed in his village, Christianity made a great impact on his life. Being baptized gave him a sense of equality with the white man that inspired him to become a more educated person. What he read in the Bible caused him to make his stand against the hypocritical Christians,

stating the need for the Golden Rule among all people. He also used his knowledge of the Scriptures to make parallels between Biblical figures in bondage to the slaves in his own day. Equiano then became involved in the marketplace slave trade himself, but he used what he saw in the marketplace to further shape arguments against slavery, this time of an economic nature. Although conflicted at times, Equiano did make a stand for what he believed in based on his own life as a slave. His text tells not just the story of one slave’s life, but how these experiences forged his views about the “peculiar institution” of slavery.

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Forging the Unborn Humor of My Race: Comic Patriarchy in *Ulysses* and *The Snapper*

by Rob Cannata

James Joyce’s *Ulysses* delves deeply into the father-son relationship, ruthlessly probing its political, religious, and social aspects. Fatherhood is often revered, but *Ulysses*, in its ever-undulating methodology, parodies the august, “majestic” position of the patriarch. Alongside poignant observations about the spirit of fatherhood in Irish culture, a keen mockery of this same spirit exists. In the trials of critical history, Joyce’s more serious musings have been dwelt upon, while the mine of humorous observation and mockery of fatherhood in *Ulysses* has been relatively unexplored. Thus, the seriocomic dualism of Irish fatherhood is often missed in Joyce, as well as in other Irish writers.

One such writer is Roddy Doyle, whose Jimmy Rabbitte Sr., father figure of *The Snapper*, is a walking parody and in some ways a contemporary version of Joyce’s Leopold Bloom. Unfortunately, much as Joyce criticism dwells too heavily on the serious and contemplative, Doyle criticism often focuses on the light-hearted and comic. Again, the seriocomic duality is missed. In Doyle’s case, the misjudgment of tone comes about because critics are too well acclimated to the “stage Irishman” stereotype, which Jimmy seems to mimic. A drunken, boisterous

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fellow with a witty tongue and a lack of personal responsibility, the stage Irishman is often employed as a farcical comic gag in English and American literature; examples range from the befuddled minor character Pat in Fanny Fern’s *Ruth Hall* to the manic, half-crazed Stephen in the movie *Braveheart*. In both Joyce and Doyle, however, there is a deeper element to the concept of the Irish father that is often overlooked.

There exists a duality in the Irish portrayal of the father figure in which he can be both a character of comedy and drama at the same time. This duality is often lost due to the stereotypical perception of the stage Irishman. While the stage Irishman is not necessarily a father figure, the image of a drunk, irresponsible Irish father is familiar enough in the common imagination that the stereotypes are often interchangeable. Both the roots of the Irish fatherhood stereotype—and the authors’ character development beyond it—is displayed in these two novels, providing a more sophisticated, more honest take on a laughable stereotype and its deeper function in Irish literature.

The stereotype of the stage Irishman is most overtly displayed in *The Snapper*, so we will begin here. Doyle relies heavily on dialogue in his novel, so we are more attuned to Jimmy Rabbitte’s words than his inner thoughts. A brazen, working-class plasterer living in the fictional Barrytown, Jimmy has a blunt, obscenity-peppered sense of family communication:

“Jimmy Jr came in, from work.
--Howyis, he said.
--Get stuffed, you, said Jimmy Sr.
--Manners! said Veronica.
--Listen here, you, said Jimmy Sr. --You’re not to be drinkin’ all the Coke in the mornin’, righ’. Buy your own.
--I put me money into the house, said Jimmy Jr.
--Is tha’ wha’ yeh call it? Yeh couldn’t wipe your arse with the amount you give your mother” (Doyle 163).

While authoritative in a loud, demanding sense, Rabbitte’s sense of humor makes the audience accept crudity as his defining trait, as well as the defining trait of his social class. Taken out of the context of the novel, Rabbitte seems to be a flat, though entertaining personality. Many readers take Jimmy at face value. One review of Doyle’s *The Snapper* reads, “Many have argued that the series portrayed the working-class Irish as foul-mouthed, illiterate alcoholics and fostered negative cultural stereotypes” (“Roddy Doyle 1958—”).

Doyle could have easily settled for an uproariously funny story with a character like Jimmy, but Jimmy’s deeper, quieter qualities gradually unfold through the course of the book. In many ways, Jimmy realizes that he is playing the role of a stubborn, irresponsible Irishman to his own family during a family in the novel. His daughter Sharon is as stubborn as he and refuses to acknowledge the stress she brings to the Rabbitte family when she becomes illegitimately pregnant. Sick of arguing, Jimmy gives her the childish, pouting, silent treatment. “Jimmy Sr knew he could snap out of it but he didn’t want to. He was doing it on purpose. He was protesting; that was how he described it to himself” (Doyle 280). Jimmy’s initial flatness now reveals a deeper level of self-awareness, but despite this he still refuses to act like a responsible father and address the situation.

Not only is this situation comic, but also serves as a pivot for the novel itself. Jimmy’s self-establishment as the wise-cracking, unmovable, rollicking pubber comes under fire because of the strain of his daughter’s pregnancy. In his review “Eating Jesus,” Andrew O’Hagan puts it well: “The real centre of *The Snapper* is the point where Jimmy has to decide which of two loyalties means most to him: loyalty to his daughter, who’s ‘up the pole’, or loyalty to his sense
of himself, to the old-fashioned kind of man he has been until now."

*The Snapper* now becomes a refutation of typical stage Irish fatherhood because Jimmy eventually breaks out of his comfortable, stereotypical shell and embraces the new reality his family faces: "He was a changed man, a new man. That trouble a while back with Sharon had given him an awful fright...There was more to life than drinking pints with your mates. There was Veronica, his wife, and his children" (Doyle 320). If Jimmy Rabbitte—the ultimate expression of stage Irish fatherhood—can be changed by experience, then the stage Irishman takes on a new complexity. Rabbitte is an object of ridicule for his stereotypical humor, but underneath is every bit as complex as the rest of the characters in the novel and fulfills a major dramatic purpose within the plot.

In *Ulysses*, unlike *The Snapper*, each major character plays several roles and takes on a variety of mindsets, archetypes, and self-conceptions. In this sea of personalities, the duality of the Irish father is also apparent. Joyce’s depiction differs, however, because the duality of Irish fatherhood is divided into two figures: Simon Dedalus—biological father of Stephen Dedalus—and Leopold Bloom, who acts as a spiritual father to Stephen later in the novel.

Simon Dedalus’s place in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artists as a Young Man* is somewhat serious, but in *Ulysses* he becomes much more of a comic character. Zack Bowen states in *Ulysses as a Comic Novel*, "(Simon’s) aphorisms, his clichés, his exaggerated and comic sense of his own tragic dilemmas, his bombastic railing at his in-laws, and his generally lackadaisical attitude regarding the financial...support of his family...make Simon a classic comic character" (8). Simon remains a fairly stereotypical stage Irishman. He mutters about his son’s folly, is curt with his family, and has the spark of storytelling and humor in him that becomes the envy of Leopold Bloom. Simon’s comic sense leaks through in the mannerisms of his son. Stephen Dedalus is fiercely independent of his father, but his father’s wit and droll sense of humor help him understand Irish culture on a deeper, more personable level. Also, Simon’s humor helps Stephen recognize the irregularity of life, or, as Bowen puts it “Fathers...it seems, provide a basis for coping with reality rather than spiritual dilemmas” (9).

Leopold Bloom becomes something of a spiritual father figure for Stephen. As Helmut Bonheim states in *Joyce’s Beneficitions: Perspectives in Criticism*, "Bloom expresses, in action as in imagination, a sympathy for others which Stephen rarely exercises, although Stephen sometimes feels such sympathy..." (18). Bloom becomes something of a reaction for Stephen against Simon’s irresponsible, flair-filled fatherhood. Bloom is patient, kind, and impotent in his ability to degrade, insult, or compete with Stephen as Simon does on numerous occasions. Thus, Stephen accepts him as a temporary surrogate, if only at arm’s length (Bonheim 24).

The problem with Bloom is that he seems nearly the opposite of the fiery, cuss-filled stage Irishman. With his gentle manner, thought-out actions, and complete lack of social prowess, he seems the opposite of the Irish stereotypes we have seen so far. How, then, does he contribute to a discussion about the dualities of an archetype if he doesn’t exhibit the archetype himself?

To understand the synchronicity between the two works and their complication of the stage Irish fatherhood, we need to see the novels in the light of fatherhood instead of the fathers themselves. Sharon Rabbitte seems to be under the hilarious tyranny of her father, until Jimmy’s style of parenting is altered. Thus, the style of fatherhood exhibited in *The Snapper* passes from trivial
to substantial, comic to seriocomic, with the passage of time. Likewise, as Bloom begins to take on a fathering role, Stephen has a similar progression, as his concept of what a father is (and can be) changes throughout the course of *Ulysses*. Simon is stuck in his ways, and his estrangement from Stephen makes any progress and reconciliation unlikely. Thus, Joyce refutes the typical fatherhood stereotype with Bloom, a character with a more humanitarian parenting approach. The duality of seriocomic Irish fatherhood is intact, simply broken into two equally comic voices.

While dark-clad, mousy Bloom doesn’t seem to be outwardly funny, our privileged glances into the inner quirkiness of his mind reveal a character that is arguably funnier than Simon. Take, for example, Bloom wondering on whether statues of Greek goddesses, who ate only ambrosia and nectar, need a working anus:

> Lovely forms of women sculpted Junoian. Immortal lovely. And we stuffing food in one hole and out behind: food, chyle, blood, dung, earth, food: have to feed it like stoking an engine. They have no. Never looked. I’ll look today. Keeper won’t see. Bend down let something drop. See if she (Joyce 145).

While Bloom’s peculiar views bring him into a line of strange reasoning, his consideration of the human frustration with the filth of our own bodies is instantly relatable and funny.

Bloom, though not outwardly a stage Irish father, does not escape the mockery often leveled at one. Bloom is endlessly mocked throughout the novel, much as Jimmy Rabbitte is mocked by his mates and family. Simon, who is usually doing the mocking, is still mocked by his daughter Boody: “Our father who art not in heaven.” (Joyce 186). Bloom bears the brunt of mockery *Ulysses* due to his reserved, eccentric nature, and his constant self-mockery and self-deprecation.

During the carriage ride in the “Hades” episode, Bloom’s inept verbal skills surface, opening him to mockery. He stumbles through the story of Reuben J. Dodd, a Dubliner whose son attempted suicide. A Liffey boatman fished Dodd’s son out of the water, and Reuben gave the man a florin tip for the trouble. Bloom’s awkward verbal manner ruins the story so badly that his friend Martin Cunningham feels obliged to take over half-way through to increase the pace and reach the comic effect expected. Even after this, Simon’s comment, “One and eightpence too much” (Joyce 78), dwarfs the funny story that Bloom had tried to initiate. Bloom’s awareness of his own ineptness, and his attempts to overcome it, provide a realm of mockery unique to his personality (Maddox 138). This is similar to Jimmy’s self-awareness of playing a specific role: both Bloom and Jimmy are playing a type of fool and know it, which opens them to change and complication.

The question arises: Why continue the comic trend? Would it not be easier to refute Simon with a directly compassionate figure, who, though less entertaining than bumbling Bloom, would better delineate the change from frivolous to meaningful? Bloom is necessary because the comic sense in *Ulysses* highlights a foundational tenet of the novel. As Zack Bowen states in *Ulysses as a Comic Novel*, “The comic universe is defined by senseless turns of events transformed by artistry into a sort of drollery, a world where the plights of the characters invite instant, everyday identification and where the crude and the sublime exist side by side” (10).

The chance meetings of the characters over the course of the day are just that—chance—and any congruity is the creation of the reader. Ironically, only the constant comic assertion that life is incongruous gives some congruity to the work. Inherent in comedy is the assumption of frustration—
that life is incongruous and will not give full bearing to mankind’s best-laid plans. Pure success just isn’t funny.

The stage Irish father, in the hands of Irish writers, becomes a powerful tool to show that behind the frivolity commonly associated with Irish culture, serious change can occur. The comedy and parody is a way of coping with the slippery nature of the world: a means for change, not an end. Considering the oppression suffered by the Irish in their centuries of British occupation, this coping mechanism became necessary to preserve some sense of fulfillment in dire times. This coping mechanism is not exclusive to Ireland. In my developing Honors Thesis, I will explore the use of humor and linguistic manipulation by southern “redneck” American and African-American cultures. Despite vast differences in history and culture, these societies share a common bond in that they were subjected to immersion of the English language—a language that reminded them of the British/Anglo-Saxon dominance in their past—and were misrepresented by derogatory stereotypes that they incorporated into their cultural identities.

In The Signifying Monkey, Henry Louis Gates Jr. discusses the concept of “Signifyin(g)” in African-American literature. The theory of Signifyin(g) will be part of the lens which frames my larger thesis. Signifyin(g) is a rhetorical practice in which African-Americans, under the linguistic immersion of English, transform common English phrases and words into a separate meaning. Slaves crafted phrases that would have one meaning to their white overseers, but would have an encoded, very different message among their fellow slaves. This “double-talk” allowed slaves to communicate—and cope—in exclusivity within the language of their oppressors. This extends to the Irish question because the Irish, like African slaves, had stopped common use of their indigenous language, and likewise had to “signify” English into their own set of meanings. Doyle makes the connection in his novel The Commitments, quipping, “The Irish are the niggers of Europe.” The literary transmogrification of the stage Irishman is one representative of this process, wherein an insulting, deprecating stereotype is turned into a source of power through humorous self-observation.

While Jimmy Rabbitte and Simon Dedalus seem at first to support the Irish fatherhood stereotype, it is the recognition and complication of the stereotype that helps Joyce and Doyle express the depth within it. By highlighting the tragic and comic in this originally negative archetype, the Irish undermine the power of the insult, and use it to strengthen their sense of cultural identity, turning the swords of their overseers into ploughshares of their own.

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A Tidy Spot
by Stacy Nistendirk

My first childhood home was an apartment on the left-hand side of a duplex in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts. There was a large evergreen out front that engulfed the entire living room window. We couldn’t see the street from the front window, so we pretended we lived in the woods. When my father would decorate the tree with Christmas lights, we never had to turn on any lights.

In the backyard, our neighbor kept huge white turkeys in a pen. They were loud and smelly and messy. Our entire backyard was constantly covered with white feathers that would blow around like giant dandelion seeds. I was terrified of those birds and used to have nightmares that they would escape and chase me down the road. In the dream, they would appear out of nowhere in a flurry of feathers and peck me to death.

Upstairs in the bedroom that I shared with my little sister was my fort, a masterful construction of two tablecloths and the pole inside the closet. It took me nearly one whole day and three falls off of a chair to get the cloths to match in length. I never let my sister enter the fort; she always had a jelly smile on her face and grape Popsicle stains on her fingers.
Inside, every stuffed animal I owned was crammed into rows according to gender: Kermit the Frog, Bert and Ernie, Raggedy Andy, Winnie the Pooh, Tigger, and Scooby Doo sat on one side of the fort, pinning down the Easter tablecloth while Miss Piggy, Prairie Dawn, Raggedy Ann, Kanga, Holly Hobby, and Dressy Betsy sat holding down the Christmas tablecloth on the opposite side.

My fort was always tidy, but that didn’t keep it from being stuffy and dusty like the rest of the house. My mother wasn’t a very good housekeeper; it was a pigsty. My fort was the neatest, most orderly spot in the house; it was the most perfect spot.

One night while I was organizing a tea party in my fort, my mother peered in and told me my dad would be going away. Annoyed by her intrusion, I paid no attention to what she told me. I kept on pouring tea. Her large head vanished, and only then did I cry. I used the Easter tablecloth to wipe my tears, tipping over my row of girl dolls: I cried some more.

I was about to turn nine at the time and start the fourth grade. My teacher was Mrs. Wolfeys. When my father left, I became very paranoid, and I grew convinced that Mrs. Wolfeys was hip to what was going on in my life. I was sure she had a secret child-of-divorce list. In fact, I thought everyone knew—and thought less of me for it. But I was also convinced that there were child murderers in the girls’ bathroom. Every time I went in there, I rushed to finish, dodging the paper towels strewn about the floor. I wouldn’t even stop, as much as I wanted to, to wipe down the splashes of water or crusty soap drips that streaked down the sides of the sinks. Sometimes, I would wait until someone else would go to the bathroom. In my nine-year-old opinion, two kids could definitely over-take a kid murderer-monster versus just me alone.

One day, in the fourth grade, I waited and waited for my mother to pick me up after school. She never showed. I waited so long for her that I missed the bus, and I had to walk home.

When I got there, I opened the door to see her packing all of our things. We were moving. I ran to my room to find my closet bare. My fort, my tidy spot, was gone. She had torn it down and tossed all of my belongings into one box.

My mother’s first boyfriend, after my father, lived at home with his parents. We moved into their second floor apartment. It was very small but clean. My mother slept on the couch. She never thought to fold her blanket or to find an indiscriminate spot to place her pillow when the sun was out, so I would put it behind the couch—everyday. She never caught on. My sister and I shared a bedroom located in the front of the house. I thought this was the perfect spot for keeping watch for the return of my father. From our bedroom, I could see up and down the entire street, and I would sit and stare intently out of the window, watching for my dad. One day, I was sure I had seen him walking up the street carrying two suitcases, yelling, “I’m back! I’m back!” But, it was just a Jehovah’s witness. A few months later, when my mother tired of her boyfriend, we moved to my grandmother’s. Her second boyfriend arrived shortly thereafter.

He was a tall man, an enormous man who thought he was Magnum PI. I actually thought he looked like the cartoon drawing of the man on the pizza box from Stelio’s restaurant. Louie drove an El Camino, which he thought was the coolest car ever made. He was abrupt, rude, obnoxious, and conceited. He always took my mother out, and we always stayed in. My mother decided that she would live mostly with him and less with us, which became fine with me. He always said I was fat, and, after my mother decided he should come along on my first bra-buying trip, I never wanted to see him
Life at Ma’s was different. We had more by way of security and cleanliness, but we had less by way of 20th century convenience. Ma was a widow who lived very simply. There was no running water upstairs, where the only tub was located. This meant lugging hot water up the stairs from the kitchen in a yellow bucket and emptying it into the tub, then racing back down stairs for another bucket so the water already in the tub wouldn’t cool too much. And there was no heat on the second floor, so that meant freezing your ass off in the wintertime.

Once, in the fifth grade, I entered the Science fair. I used my bedroom at Ma’s for my experiment. I froze water in my room and won second prize.

When my mother told me that she married Willie, the new love of her life, and that we would be moving once again, I didn’t quite know what to expect, but I was excited to have a real shower and hot running water and heat.

In order to coerce us into liking our new situation, my mother and Willie told us that at the new apartment that they would convert one of the living rooms into their bedroom so that my sister and I could have separate bedrooms upstairs. I would have my own space for the first time ever. I was thrilled. I knew exactly how I wanted my room—tidy and white. I painted the entire room white and hung the posters from my Teen Beat magazine on the crisp walls. (Johnny Depp, Rob Lowe, and Billy Hufsy)

I made a desk from plywood and two filing cabinets. I would be starting high school in the fall, and I wanted to be prepared.

My mother and Willie spent most of their time behind closed doors in their room doing drugs and getting high. When they did emerge, they would stumble by, mumble something, dirty a plate or two, and disappear behind the door once again. They had company over all of the time, mostly Willie’s friends. They would show up unannounced and stay for days, sleeping in the middle of the living room floor, and once I even found someone passed out just outside my bedroom. Despite my lovely white room, I soon missed Ma’s, running water or no.

I started school a few months later: my desk was ready. All that summer before, I would walk to the town drugstore. The first time I went I bought everything in the office supply aisle: five notebooks—one for each class—a box of black ink pens, highlighters, and a lock for my bedroom door.

One morning, while fishing through my mother’s filthy pocketbook for lunch money, I felt a painful prick on my thumb. At first, I jerked my hand out, but then I went back in. I widened the opening. The purse was filthy. Crumbs, scraps of paper, receipts, gum wrappers, and ponytail elastics with hair still on them were strewn about the bottom. And there, in the corner, was a dirty needle.

Later that day, not sure what to do, I went to the school nurse. She scheduled a visit with the town doctor, the same one who gave us booster shots and scoliosis tests. The summer after my freshman year in high school, while the rest of the kids at East Bridgewater High were taking trips to the Cape and Disney world, I was making trips to the doctor. One a month for the entire three months to receive Hepatitis vaccinations.

After nearly two years of living behind my locked door, my mother told me that she was leaving Willie, and we were moving again—back to Ma’s. I began to mourn my tidy spot before I even left it. I had become accustomed to my life of seclusion and cleanliness. Sometimes, I would pretend that I was a wealthy orphan renting a studio on the second floor of someone else’s house and that no one else in my family existed.

At Ma’s, I had to sleep in what we
named the middle room. It was a wide-open space located in the middle of the second floor. My spot upstairs had three doors, one leading to my mother’s room, one to my grandmother’s, and one to the bathroom. Really, I slept in the hall.

I spent my entire high school life at Ma’s, trapped in that wide-open space with three doors. I spent night after night, unable to sleep, without a locked door or a neat corner. When I turned eighteen, I took a job downtown. I had to walk to and from work, but it paid $8.00 an hour. One day, while I was walking up the street, I noticed that there was a strange blue truck in our driveway. I jogged the rest of the way, concerned for my belongings.

Inside the house sat my mother with her soon-to-be third husband--Bob. I couldn’t have been happier. When she told me that she would be moving in with Bob, I threw on two pairs of gloves and some snow boots, and I began to shovel out the mess that was her room. I had plans for that room: it would be tidy and white.

Bob married my mother, got her off drugs, and got her pregnant, twice. I never visited her much--she was still a poor housekeeper. I had only been to her house a couple dozen times before I saw her last, dead on the floor surrounded by toys, papers, wrappers, dust, and grime. An unhealthy past had finally caught up with her.

After a few days of organizing we held her service, she looked peaceful and freshly pressed. We buried her on a cold, wet day in February. Her burial spot was a messy mixture of mud and slush. But I went back to her spot a few months later to plant bulbs. I raked the grass in front of the stone, drew a line in the soil to make a perfect rectangle, carefully lifted out the sod, and inserted the bulbs. I covered them back over with the blanket of earth and watered them. I knew that they would grow. I rose, brushed the dirt off my hands and knees and stood to admire my work.
Author Edna O’Brien was inspired by James Joyce growing up, particularly by his work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, of which she once said, “Now here was ... a section of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which stunned me not only by the bewitchment of style but because [it was] so true to life, it [was] life” (Roth 108). O’Brien’s novel *The Country Girls* contains many parallels to *Portrait* and has actually been referred to as “a portrait of the artist as a young woman” (Salter 2). Both of these works are examples of bildungsroman, or coming of age stories. However, Edna O’Brien’s story deviates from Joyce’s work in that her main character is a female and therefore goes through a different kind of development in moving towards adulthood.

These stages of development are discussed by Carol Gilligan, in her essay “In A Different Voice: Women’s Conceptions of the Self and of Morality.” In this essay, Gilligan comments on the differing stereotypical views of adulthood in light of gender, which “[favor] the separate-ness of the individual self over its connection to others and [lean] more toward an autonomous life of work than toward the interdependence of love and care” (Gilligan 135).
Gilligan argues for a new perception of self which takes into account both the female and male views of development. Stephen Dedalus and Kate Brady each embody one of these stereotypical views, stages of adolescent growth that they must work through to become well-adjusted adults. Stephen defines himself through the separateness that he has from other people as an individual, while Kate defines herself based on the relationships that she has with other people.

One area in which this can be seen is in the characters' relationships with their parents. While he is still young, Stephen is fairly attached to his mother, who takes care of him and has a "nicer smell than his father" (Joyce 19). Once he is old enough to attend school, Stephen fails to understand why the other boys at Clongowes laugh at him for saying that he kisses his mother goodnight. He also relies on his father when he is young. Simon Dedalus is actually the source of Stephen's early literary experiences, as brought out by Suzette Henke in her essay "Stephen Dedalus and Women: A Feminist Reading of Portrait":

He perceives his father as a primordial storyteller who inaugurates the linguistic apprenticeship that inscribes the boy into the symbolic order of patriarchal authority...The male parent appeals to Stephen's imagination, awakening him to a sense of individual identity at the moment when language necessarily establishes a gap between subjective desire and self-representation (Henke 307).

Simon's early interaction with Stephen gives him both a sense of male authority and his first form of self-identification, as a very young Stephen thinks, "He was baby tuckoo...He sang that song. That was his song" (Joyce 19). Here Stephen expresses literary ownership over the stories he hears. He has a definite attachment to his parents and relies on them, but even at this age has a sense of self.

While at school, Stephen often thinks longingly for his parents and for home, as he is bullied by the other boys. However, as he gets older, he begins to realize that his parents, specifically his mother, are not able to protect him from all outside influences anymore. Upon one return to Clongowes after being home for the holidays, "he realizes that his peacemaking mother, a mollifying agent of social arbitration, has failed to offer a viable sanctuary from the male-dominated power structure that controls the outer world" (Henke 310). Stephen now knows that he must learn to protect himself from the aggressors in the male-dominated society that he finds himself in, whether they are other boys or cruel teachers.

He begins to push his parents and their influence over him away, as "he feels increasingly compelled to cast off the shackles of female influence" (Henke 309). Stephen grows away from his mother, distancing himself from her emotionally. He no longer looks to her for protection and comfort; in fact, he does not seem to talk to her anymore if he can help it. Mrs. Dedalus is rarely mentioned in the book again until book IV, where Stephen has her wash his face for him. She makes the comment that it is sad for a college student to have his mother wash for him, to which he sarcastically replies, "But it gives you pleasure" (Joyce 153). Stephen has come a long way from his earlier dreams of coming home to his mother; he now cannot even have a real conversation with her.

As he goes through his adolescent years, Stephen is also taking great steps in his intellectual growth. He is one of the best students in his school and feels that he is a great thinker. This is another way that he begins to separate himself from others. This comes into play in Stephen’s relationship with his father, as seen in one segment of the book where the two take a trip to Cork. Stephen is embarrassed by his father’s behavior, remarking that "one humiliation
had succeeded another” (90). Mr. Dedalus converses with many old friends in Cork, as he himself is an “old Corkonian” (Joyce 90). As Stephen observes one of these conversations, he thinks to himself:

An abyss of fortune or of temperament sundered him from them. His mind seemed older than theirs: it shone coldly on their strifes and happiness and regrets like a moon upon a younger earth. No life or youth stirred in him as it had stirred in them. He had known neither the pleasure of companionship with others nor the vigor of rude male health nor filial piety (Joyce 91).

Stephen can no longer relate to his own father. His life is not the same kind of life that his father has lived. He now feels that not only has he never known normal companionship, he has never known “filial piety” either. It is not just that Stephen feels a distance now, he feels that he has always been distanced from his father. Despite his father’s advanced years, Stephen perceives himself as having an older mind and more maturity, without the normal amounts of youth in his thinking. This kind of thinking drives the two further apart as the story goes on. This distance from his parents is a defining factor for Stephen, as he feels that he no longer needs them to protect him and that he is on a higher plane intellectually.

In *The Country Girls*, Kate Brady has a much different type of perception of herself and of her parents. While Stephen had grown apart from his mother by the time he was in his early teens, fourteen year old Kate has a very close relationship with her mother: “She was the best mama in the world. I told her so, and she held me very close for a minute as if she would never let me go. I was everything in the world to her, everything” (O’Brien 6). Every day as she leaves for school, Kate is afraid that her mother will not be alive when she comes home. This is mainly because of the fears that she has in regard to her drunken father, who gets abusive after he’s been out on a drinking bout.

Kate’s world revolves around both of these parents, and she identifies herself in terms of them. She has less of a sense of herself than of who her parents are and how they affect her. She is proud of her mother, thinking that she is the most beautiful woman in the village. And Kate is well aware of the reputation that her father has around the town. She is worried when he is not home, and she worries yet more when he is. Her father is always there in mind at least, and the resulting fear and distress is something that Kate always has to carry inside herself.

This internal distress is worsened, as her mother drowns one night when Kate is away from home. Kate’s response to her death is a wish to be with her mother; she wants this not to prove that she is indeed dead, but to get away from the other people, to “get out and find her dead body” (O’Brien 42). Kate’s world had revolved around her mother, and now that world is gone. As Kate remarks at the time, “It was the last day of childhood” (O’Brien 45). Kate knows, on some level, that her childhood life is over without the protection and guidance of her mother.

With the strongest force from her childhood now gone, Kate has to come to terms with her relationship with her father. Unlike Stephen, Kate does not actively try to distance herself intellectually. Rather, she distances herself physically when necessary, but this separation is never permanent. Even when living with her friend Baba’s family, Kate must deal with the occasional visit from her father and has to make requests from him for money. Once she is ready to leave home to go to a convent school, her father tries to display affection for her, but Kate only wants to get away: “Don’t forget your poor father,” he said. He put out his arm and tried to draw me over onto his knee, but I pretended not to know what he was
doing and ran off to the yard to call Hickey for his tea” (O’Brien 48). Kate draws away from her father’s attempts at being affectionate and tries to create a life separate from him, but is ultimately unable to do so. He is always lurking in the background, and is there ready and waiting when she and Baba are kicked out of the convent.

At this point, Mr. Brady is no longer even living in Kate’s childhood home as he was unable to keep up with the payments. Kate goes to the gatehouse where he is now living, hoping not to meet him there. Unfortunately she wakes him up, and has to face him yet again before leaving for Dublin:

‘Go on back to bed,’ I said. I was praying that he would...
‘They have the house lovely,’ I said, hoping that it would make him feel guilty.
‘The grandest house in the country,’ he said. ‘I don’t miss it at all,’ he said then.
And I thought of my mother at the bottom of the lake, and how enraged she’d be if she could only hear him (O’Brien 115).

Kate’s attempts at making her father feel guilty are futile, as are her attempts at escape. Mr. Brady is always going to be there, a part of her, just as Mrs. Brady is part of her identity. Even after her death, Kate thinks of what her mother would say, what her mother would think. Kate’s perception of herself is not of herself at all, but of her relationship with her parents, a dead mother and a father that she is afraid of. She does not have the same sense of independent self that Stephen Dedalus does, one that tries to be wholly separate from his parents emotionally and intellectually.

Stephen also has this kind of separation of self from those that he forms friendships with throughout A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Even his best friend at school, Heron, is someone that he cannot relate to and has had problems with in the past. Their friendship came about despite the fact that Heron and some of the other boys had bullied Stephen about a paper that he had written. Even after the boys become friends, Stephen does not understand and does not want to understand Heron, but again separates himself. His thoughts are reminiscent of the ones he had when in company with his father in Cork as he thinks about Heron’s behavior:

He mistrusted the turbulence and doubted the sincerity of such comradeship which seemed to him a sorry anticipation of manhood. While his mind had been pursuing its intangible phantoms and turning back in irresoluteness from such pursuit he had heard about him the constant voices of his father and of his masters, urging him to be a gentleman above all things and urging him to be a good catholic above all things (Joyce 82).

Stephen does not understand the kind of comradeship that Heron has to offer, and does not understand Heron’s pursuit of honor and manliness. Heron’s words remind him of his father and all of the masters he has had, urging him to do things that meant nothing to him. Their words were merely an interruption of the “intangible phantoms” of his mind. Again, Stephen is on a different intellectual plane from Heron, as well as his father and teachers, with different thoughts and feelings that he does not wish to share. Stephen reflects on himself, rather than others, and bases his behavior on what his own intelligence dictates, rather than perceiving his sense of self through his friendships.

Kate, on the other hand, defines herself and models her behavior based on her best friend Baba’s wishes and desires, rather than her own. Kate always excels in school, while Baba is “the school dunce” (O’Brien 19). This remains true when the two girls head off to the same convent school. Kate enjoys the positive attention she receives in the academic aspect of school life, while Baba hates classes and rebels against the nuns whenever possible. Baba comes up
with a plan to get the girls expelled, by leaving a dirty note about one of the nuns where someone will find it. Kate is horrified. She does not want to leave school, and is mortified just at the thought of Baba’s plan. Yet she goes through with it, as Baba wishes:

‘You write it,’ I said.
‘Our two names are going on it,’ she said as she knelt down. There on the lavatory seat she wrote it in block capitals. I was ashamed of it then, and I am ashamed of it now. I think it’s something you’d rather not hear. Anyhow, we both signed our names to it (O’Brien 104).

Kate is even more ashamed once the girls have been kicked out of the school and she must go home and face both her father and Baba’s parents, the Brennans. Kate tells Mr. Brennan, “We hated it, we hated it; we love home” (O’Brien 109). Kate did not hate school, but she lumps herself and Baba into one identity: “we hated it.” This kind of union continues throughout the novel, as Kate does only whatever it is that Baba wants her to do. There is really no “we” about it in most of what the girls do; it is all Baba. Unlike Stephen with Heron, Kate joins herself to Baba, giving herself an identity through the relationship she has with her manipulative best friend.

Stephen and Kate also define themselves differently in terms of love, or what they see as being in love through the eyes of adolescence. Stephen’s first love is a girl named Emma, who the other boys tease him about. Yet Stephen wishes to distance himself from this girl as well. Stephen longs for Emma, but at the same time wants to stay removed from her, “tasting the joy of loneliness.” Stephen represses his feelings, which seem to represent lust more than love, devoting himself entirely to his art rather than relationships with other people. Going back to Gilligan’s words, Stephen is defining himself through “an autonomous life of work” (Gilligan 135).

Joyce ends Portrait with a section of diary-like entries, where Stephen makes his last mention of Emma. He says on April fifteenth that he “liked her today. A little or much? Don’t know. I liked her and it seems a new feeling to me” (Joyce 217). Despite this new feeling of “liking” a girl, Stephen seems to have put all thoughts of Emma aside by the twenty-sixth, one of the last entries of the book. Here he discusses his thoughts on his journey to England, where he intends to “forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (Joyce 218). And off he goes to a different country, with no regrets as to the girl he left behind. To Stephen, his art, his creation, is far more important than any kind of interpersonal relationships. His sense of self comes from his lonely pursuit of art and an autonomous sense of self, not from anyone else.

For Kate, however, the major influence in her life comes from being in love. The source of Kate’s love is an older, refined man who is referred to throughout The Country Girls as “Mr. Gentleman.” As brought out by Mary Jo Salter in her essay “The Country Girls Trilogy”: “Townspeople call him Mr. Gentleman for his riches and refinement, but he is aptly named as Kate’s lover, too; never again will a man treat her so gallantly, nor will she love another man so much” (Salter 2). Kate has deep feelings for Mr. Gentleman, and thoughts of him seem to occupy every minute of her day, expressed by O’Brien in very adolescent clichés: “When he walked into the room I knew that I loved him more than life itself”
(O’Brien 87). When the two are driving through a snowstorm and Mr. Gentleman has to get out of the car to clear off the windshield wipers, Kate says that “even for the second he was away I was lonesome for him” (O’Brien 90). Yet Kate’s love is not the kind of lust that Stephen felt for Emma, as seen when Kate reminisces about the two of them going out rowing:

It was a happy time, and he often kissed my hand and said I was his freckle-faced daughter.

“Are you my father?” I asked wistfully, because it was nice playing make-believe with Mr. Gentleman.

“Yes, I’m your father,” he said as he kissed the length of my arm, and he promised that when I went to Dublin later on he would be a very attentive father (O’Brien 101).

Kate’s feelings for Mr. Gentleman do have something of a romantic love to them, but this exists alongside a very childish sort of love for a father figure. The combination of these two emotions create a kind of disturbing incestuous fantasy, as Mr. Gentleman calls Kate his “daughter” while attempting to seduce her.

This “very affectionate father” is one of several men who will come into Kate’s life and end up being a disappointment. The great pain that Kate suffers when this happens is in part because Kate focuses so much on the man that she forgets about her own sense of self outside of that context: “All that dreaming of men, and no thinking about her own plans regardless of them, will one day be Kate’s undoing” (Salters 2). Love interests make up the largest part of Kate’s being, much to her devastation when those same men disappear. The Country Girls ends with Mr. Gentleman sending a telegram saying that he must not see Kate anymore, and this is like a small death in her life (Salters 3). Once Kate reads the telegram that puts an end to their romantic/parental relationship, she feels like she can’t go on:

“I cried on the bed for a long time, until I began to feel very cold. Somehow one feels colder after hours of crying...I came out to the kitchen and took two aspirins with my tea. It was almost certain that I wouldn’t sleep that night” (O’Brien 175). As Gilligan puts it, the life that Kate is looking for and cannot seem to survive without is one of an “interdependence of love and care” (Gilligan 135). Kate does not know how to exist without the defining force of Mr. Gentleman in her life, and, unlike Stephen, she cannot put him out of mind in pursuit of art or fulfillment apart from other people.

Stephen Dedalus wishes to function autonomously, apart from the world with only his work as company. This can be seen in the relationships with parents, friends, and lovers throughout A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. However, this is not the thinking of a fully-formed adult, as brought out by Gilligan: “The concept of the separate self and of the moral principle uncompromised by the constraints of reality is an adolescent ideal, the elaborately wrought philosophy of a Stephen Dedalus, whose flight we know to be in jeopardy” (Gilligan 166). Stephen’s wish for total separation from others in his sense of self is not an intelligent and attainable desire, but an “adolescent ideal,” something that needs to be adjusted in his growth towards real adulthood.

Kate Brady, on the other hand, has no sense of self existing apart from the relationships that she has with others. The dependence that she has on the love interests in her life ultimately lead to her sadness and loneliness, as she does not have a feeling of self apart from these men. Gilligan discusses the kind of childish dependence we observe in Kate: “Childlike in the vulnerability of their dependence and consequent fear of abandonment, they claim to wish only to please but in return for their goodness they expect to be loved and cared for” (Gilligan
Kate is very vulnerable in her relationships, and when she does not receive this love and care, she feels abandoned and does not know how to function.

Stephen’s separation makes him unable to form any permanent or meaningful ties to the people he spends his day to day life with, while Kate’s dependence on others for a sense of identity keeps her from being able to function on her own. While O’Brien deviated from Joyce’s ideas in his bildungsroman in her own portrayal of growth centered around a female character, both of the characters’ developments are somewhat stereotypical of what is expected in men and women in the adolescent stage. As brought out by Carol Gilligan, these stages must be grown out of to develop and mature into well-adjusted adults. Whether or not Stephen and Kate make these necessary adjustments plays a part in the sequential stories, Joyce’s *Ulysses* and O’Brien’s *The Lonely Girl*, respectively.

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Investigating Fluctuating Asymmetry of the Larval Damselfly, *Calopteryx maculata* (Odonata: Calopterigidae)

by Edward Kelliher

ABSTRACT: Fluctuating asymmetry (FA), or subtle random deviations from perfect bilateral symmetry, has recently become a useful tool in allowing researchers to understand more about an organism's health, fitness, developmental stability and environmental stressors. Ultimately, FA studies can be used as an indirect measurement of the quality of an aquatic system over time. We measured and examined the femur segments of the larval damselfly, *Calopteryx maculata* from sites on the Town, Hockomock, and Salisbury Plain Rivers, of Plymouth County, Massachusetts to determine FA levels. After accounting for measurement error, preliminary results show that variations in symmetry are not correlated to individual trait size. Also, the Hockomock River site showed FA levels three times higher than the Salisbury Plain river, and twice that of the Town River. Finally, severe femur deformation of some individuals at all sites suggests that other, more serious developmental or environmental factors may be inhibiting normal development. Results from a simple two-way ANOVA of differences in right and left femur segments and a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality strongly suggest that the first femur of *C. maculata* is a useful trait for FA measurement.
This research was made possible by a grant from the Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP).

Introduction

Fluctuating asymmetry (FA), or subtle, random deviations from perfect bilateral symmetry (Van Valen, 1962) has become a useful tool in allowing researchers to understand more about an organism’s health, developmental stability (Palmer 1996) and genetic or environmental stressors (Leary and Allendorf, 1989; Graham et al. 1993) as well as the effects of hybridization and adaptation through inheritance (Hochwender and Fritz 1999). The idea of this measurement comes from the expected development of perfect symmetry of a bilateral character (Palmer and Strobeck 1986). Thus, measurement of deviations from perfect bilateral symmetry can be done to infer whether there are factors that affect the morphology of bilateral traits throughout the development of the organism. Ultimately, if one could develop methods that could rule out heritable components and genetic stressors, then fluctuating asymmetry can be used as a measure of how precisely development has occurred in terms of an organism’s environment (Palmer 1996).

Bilateral organisms undergoing development are highly homeostatic and capable of buffering for variation due to developmental noise. This is defined as small, completely random accidents or errors in development of a trait that are exclusively environmental in origin and that inhibit an organism’s pre-determined genetic path for development (Palmer 1996). Consequently, subtle differences between the left and right measures of a trait in a bilaterally symmetrical organism are the product of opposing forces: one that acts to disrupt development (developmental noise), and one that seeks to counteract the disruptive effects (developmental stability) (Fig. 1) (Palmer 1996).

When indices are calculated that express fluctuating asymmetry as a variance or an average absolute value of the difference between right and left measures of bilateral traits (Palmer and Strobeck 1986), the larger the (FA), the lower the developmental stability. Similarly, if (FA) measurement is low, it can be noted that the organism of interest has a high buffering capacity to minimize developmental variations or that there is little developmental noise at play (Fig. 1) (Fuller and Houle 2002; Rowe, et al. 1997).

There is evidence that FA has a heritable basis (Fuller and Houle 2002; Hochwender and Fritz 1998; Palmer and Strobeck 1986; Palmer 1996). Studies have shown that developmental stability was reduced (or FA increased) through increased homozygosity in hybrids between nominal species and others. Even so, environmental factors such as extreme physical conditions (water temperature), pollutants (heavy metals, nitrates, phosphates, metal salts) or declines in habitat quality will contribute directly to developmental noise (Palmer and Strobeck 1992).
and also play a crucial role in the overall condition of individuals and populations.

Therefore, is measurement of (FA) a tool for correlating environmental stressors, genetic stressors or a combination? The question has yet to be answered. The answer most likely is a combination of the two (Clarke, 1995; Fuller and Houle 2002), but to what degree? If fluctuating asymmetry is to be used accurately and effectively, one must somehow be able to measure organisms whose bilateral traits are "well behaved" enough so that underlying factors causing asymmetry are environmental by nature (developmental noise). Then, one must be able to distinguish these traits from "poorly behaved" characters that have asymmetry due to either direct genomic intervention (directional asymmetry, DA) or by factors that create other forms of asymmetry (antisymmetry, non-covariant asymmetry) (Palmer 1996).

Other controversies that surround this measurement for imperfection are measurement error and data interpretation. For bilateral variation in traits to be used as a tool for quantifying a real measure of developmental precision (defined as the accuracy by which genetic programs in the same individual produce the exact same structures) (Palmer 2001), three criteria must be met: 1) between sides variation must be significantly greater than measurement error, 2) variation due to measurement error must be factored out to insure credible measures of asymmetry; this being because FA measures are exceedingly small, close to 1% of the actual trait size 3) the measures taken must meet the statistical criteria for 'ideal' FA having a mean R-L of zero and being normally distributed (Fig. 2) (Palmer 1994). Without these steps, quantitative data for fluctuating asymmetry cannot be interpreted with much confidence (Palmer and Strobeck 1997). Care must also be taken when analyzing graphical interpretations of bilateral variation. With a frequency distribution, two other measures of asymmetry that cannot measure developmental precision or developmental noise can be revealed. Directional asymmetry (DA) defined as repeatable asymmetry with respect to side (Fig 3), and antisymmetry, or repeatable asymmetry that is random with respect to side (Fig. 4) (Palmer and Strobeck 1997) will have distinct qualitative patterns when plotted using a frequency distribution. Directionally asymmetrical graphs will exhibit normal distribution around a mean that is non-zero, as opposed to graphs with a normal distribution that is zero (Fig. 2). Directional asymmetry is often found in nature (the classic example is the larger claw found on fiddler crabs) and can be attributed to that organism's genetic response to its environment. Antisymmetrical graphs will appear as platykurtic or bimodal distributions around a mean of zero. Even though there are arguments that DA and antisymmetry can arise due to some form of developmental noise, not all forms of DA and antisymmetry are signs of reduced fitness (Palmer and Strobeck 1992). By factoring out directional asymmetry and antisymmetry, (that is, by determining normal distribution around mean zero) one can deduce whether FA is present in a population sample.

![Fig. 2. Example of fluctuating asymmetry (FA) distribution for bilateral organism (Palmer 1994). The majority of organisms measured for FA will appear to be close to zero; in other words, have nearly perfect symmetry.](https://example.com/figure2.png)
Materials and Methods

Sample collections. Three sites were chosen with various degrees of anthropogenic influence to compare levels of FA. They were also chosen because the habitat that supports C. maculata growth and development (muddy root-filled banks, overhanging vegetation, moderate current) can be found on these three rivers.

Thirty-three male and female C. maculata were collected on the south bank of the Town River (TWN029, N 41 degrees 02.321; W 070 degrees 58.676, Plymouth County, Bridgewater MA.) on June 8, and 9, 2003. Twenty-two C. maculata were collected on the banks of the Hockomock River (N 41 degrees, 00.560; W 070 degrees, 34.199, Plymouth County, Bridgewater MA.). Thirty-five C. maculata were collected on the banks of the Salisbury Plain River (SLP027: 42 degrees 03’.218N; 71 degrees 00.588W, Plymouth County, Brockton MA.) (fig. 5).

Nymph maturity was assessed in the field using size and wing pads. If wing venation was apparent through the wing pads, the last instar of maturity was inferred. Nymph maturity is important in that developmental processes have allowed for leg segment lengths to reach peak growth. All specimens were captured using aquatic kick nets and placed in sample jars of no more than 6 per jar. Within three hours of acquisition, samples were stored in 70% ETOH at 0 degrees C for 24 hours and then placed at room temperature until measured.

The focus of this research is to determine whether the bilateral traits of the larval damselfly, C. maculata, (specifically the femur segments of three bilateral appendages) exhibit fluctuating asymmetry.

There are four reasons why C. maculata is a good candidate for fluctuating asymmetry analysis: 1) it is abundant in the streams of S.E. Massachusetts (Westfall and May 1996), 2) it is the most easily identifiable damselfly larvae when collecting field samples a 3) it is a fairly large aquatic insect with many large bilateral characteristics (femur, tibia, antennae, wing pads) (Westfall and May 1996) and 4) C. maculata is a predacious animal that is close to the top of the food chain in its particular ecosystem (Westfall and May 1996) and may be a “sink” for heavy metals acquired through consumption. In this case, the term “sink” (bioaccumulation) refers to an organism that will acquire, over time, contaminants based on what it ingests for food and habitat location.
Measurement Preparation. Two-dimensional imaging of *C. maculata* was standardized using transparency film and clear microscope slides (fig. 6). Samples were laid ventrally and wholly intact, 8 individuals per transparency sheet (6 femur segments per individual, 48 femur segments per transparency set). Legs of each specimen were pinned flat underneath clear microscope slides that were taped onto the transparency. Seventy percent ethanol was applied to each specimen twice during preparation to ensure that body parts do not shorten due to dessication. ‘Wet’ specimens were used because resolution of leg sutures became more visible when scanned. Achieving two-dimensional imagery is important in accounting for measurement error when measurement software is used. Each set of specimens was scanned twice at a resolution of 600 dpi using a Hewlett Packard ScanJet 8200C flatbed scanner. At this resolution, all images produced have pixel dimensions of 0.05 x 0.05 mm. All measurements are presented in millimeters. After scanning, samples were catalogued and placed in individual vials of 70% EtOH and kept at room temperature.
Fig. 6. Scanned image of final instar nymph, *C. maculata*
Measurements.

Scanned images of *C. maculata* from each site were enlarged to 18 times the normal size on the computer screen and measured using a streaming data point-trace tool in Sigma Pro Scan 5.0 image analysis software. A 10mm x 10mm grid was scanned next to each specimen for calibration purposes. Calibration was done at the 2x dimension of Sigma Pro Scan and was set at 25.01996667 pixels/mm based on the average of three calibration measures. Three measurements of each femur segment (6 femur segments, 18 measurements per specimen) were made from the suture connecting the femur to the trochanter joint, to the tip of a hook or bump-like feature located just before the suture that connects femur to the tibia segment (Westfall and May, 1996).

Two measurements were traced following the bottom portion of the scanned image and one taken using the middle of the femur image (care was taken to ensure that the top and bottom of the two-dimensional femur image was kept equidistant while measuring). Sutures were marked with a yellow trace overlay at 27 times normal trait size to ensure accurate location within the image and kept as a permanent overlay. Measurements were taken in red overlay in random order and were erased after each measurement. All measurements were taken on the same image by the same person and exported to an Excel spreadsheet with 5 significant digits.

Two assessments were made to determine if the femur segments of *C. maculata* are suitable to undergo (FA) analysis: 1) determination of whether trait size correlates to deviation from ideal symmetry (mean zero) and 2) if the frequency of deviation around ideal symmetry is normally distributed. Each leg pair was given its own measurement category (R1-L1, R2-L2, R3-L3 respectively) and each pair was treated as an independent trait.

A two-way analysis of variance on femur length data at all sites was done using SPSS 11.5 general linear model; univariate. Femur length was considered the independent variable with sides being the fixed factor and the specimen (individual) treated as the random factor (Palmer 1993). This was done to test the significance of FA in relation to measurement error. Ultimately, if the interaction variance in the ANOVA is not significant, these tests indicate whether or not a trait can be used for FA studies (Palmer 1996). Outliers were removed following Palmer (2001) in order to use *C. maculata* as an organism whose traits are ‘well behaved.’

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also conducted to determine if the R-L data was normally distributed around a mean of zero and not DA or antisymmetry.

Results

Using the SPSS Explore utility tool for outlier analysis and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on R-L data, only the first femur pair can be used for FA analyses because it passes the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and the Simple two-way ANOVA test to determine if DA, antisymmetry or non-covariant asymmetry is present (other forms of subtle asymmetry that need to be partitioned out) (Table 1).
Table 1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality, two-way ANOVA and variance data sets for three traits of C. maculata on three rivers in Plymouth County, MA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Test of R-L pairs</th>
<th>two-way ANOVA of specimens' femur lengths</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TWNF1 R-L</td>
<td>0.067 87</td>
<td>df 0.2 Spec 0 Side 0.98 Side x Spec. 0</td>
<td>df 87 Var ***0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWNF2 R-L</td>
<td>0.085 92</td>
<td>df 0.104 Spec 0 Side 0.174 Side x Spec. **0.913</td>
<td>df 92 Var 0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWNF3 R-L</td>
<td>0.101 93</td>
<td>df *0.021 Spec 0 Side 0.705 Side x Spec. **0.913</td>
<td>df 93 Var 0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPF1 R-L</td>
<td>0.063 83</td>
<td>df 0.2 Spec 0 Side 0.365 Side x Spec. 0</td>
<td>df 83 Var ***0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPF2 R-L</td>
<td>0.065 71</td>
<td>df 0.2 Spec 0 Side 0.005 Side x Spec. **0.034</td>
<td>df 71 Var 0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPF3 R-L</td>
<td>0.126 73</td>
<td>df *0.006 Spec 0 Side 0.58 Side x Spec. 0</td>
<td>df 73 Var 0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMKF1 R-L</td>
<td>0.09 61</td>
<td>df 0.2 Spec 0 Side 0.288 Side x Spec. 0</td>
<td>df 61 Var ***0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMKF2 R-L</td>
<td>0.103 50</td>
<td>df 0.2 Spec 0 Side 0.174 Side x Spec. **0.907</td>
<td>df 50 Var 0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMKF3 R-L</td>
<td>0.156 56</td>
<td>df *0.002 Spec 0 Side 0.346 Side x Spec. 0</td>
<td>df 56 Var 0.032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

TWN - Town River
SLP - Salisbury Plain River
HMK - Hockomock River
F1, F2, F3 refer to femur pairs
df - Degrees of freedom
Var - Variance
R-L - right minus left
* Does not pass normality test (p<0.05)
** Failed interaction in two-way ANOVA
*** Indicates that this data can be used in FA studies

The second femur pair passed tests for normality at all three sites (Table 1) but failed to exhibit FA because it failed the ‘sides*specimen’ interaction from the ANOVA test. Third femur length data sets for all three sites pass the ANOVA test to eliminate DA, antisymmetry or skew, but fail the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality since they are significantly different from a normal distribution (Table 1).

The first femur segment is therefore the best-suited or best “behaved” trait to proceed onto a comparison of variances of the R-L data, since it passes the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and the ANOVA test (Table 1). Individual graphs depicting normal distribution are given for the right-left differences in first femur lengths (Figs. 7,8,9).

![Fig.7. Town River Femur 1 R-L, June 2003](image_url)
The FA index used is the variance of R-L (Palmer 1993, FA #4) because it is easily computed and is the most powerful test for the differences between two samples and is also better for estimating between sides variation. It is also a useful index in that it is not biased by directional asymmetry (Palmer 1993). The variances obtained with the simple two-way ANOVA using the first femur pair showed that the Town River sample to be the lowest (.013), the Salisbury Plain River to be higher (.023) and the Hockomock River sample showing the highest (.033) FA (Table 3).

Discussion

There appears to be a direct correlation to the particular femur mea-
sured and the type of phenomenon that is taking place. All three R-L analyses on the first femur segment had normal distributions and passed the ANOVA tests (Side, Side*Specimen and Specimen) and thus the resulting variances can be useful to FA tests (Palmer 1993). The other two traits measured are not useful to FA investigations, but each femur length R-L failed for similar reasons, (either in the K-S test for Normality or the two-way ANOVA).

The ‘Side*Specimen’ interaction conducted in the ANOVA test includes all forms of non-directional asymmetry, including FA, antisymmetry and normal-covariant asymmetry (Palmer 1993). If tests are significant for this part of the ANOVA, it indicates that asymmetry is present, but it cannot be deduced that it is fluctuating asymmetry and therefore cannot be used in this investigation. Both the Hockomock and Town river femur length 2 R-L data failed this test (indicated by significant P-values) (Table 2). The Salisbury Plain second femur lengths R-L indicate that the ‘Side’ interaction is significant, which correlates to directional asymmetry, DA (Palmer 1993).

The amount of fluctuating asymmetry displayed at each sample site is a measure of the variance of the R-L data (Palmer 1993). The results are interesting in the amount of variance displayed at each particular site. In this investigation, the Hockomock River sample site is our theoretical clean site. Since it is located in a state-designated environment critical area wetland, in was thought that the least amount of FA would be found. In contrast, the Salisbury Plain River is used in this investigation as the contaminated site due to its location downstream of the City of Brockton, known in the past for its large tanning factories for shoe manufacturing. However, the data indicates that the Hockomock River site contained C.maculata that displayed R-L variances that were higher than that of the Salisbury Plain River, contrary to initial thinking.

The search for traits that exhibit FA is the search for traits that respond inefficiently to developmental noise (and thus have poor developmental stability). The question that this investigation ultimately asks is whether femur length measurements of the C.maculata can generate meaningful representations of what is happening in the environment during development. More specifically, are the variances obtained at each sample site giving an accurate representation to the amount of environmental stress? Two questions arise: is the Salisbury Plain River cleaner than expected, or is the Hockomock River more stressed environmentally? Whatever the case may be, more research needs to be done to more accurately determine what is happening. Since aquatic environments are dynamic, so may be the levels of FA that can be measured over time.

There is some correlation to the time at which adult damselflies are caught and the amount of FA that is present. Rowe and Ludwig (1991) proposed that if fitness is correlated positively to size, FA levels should increase as emerging insects decrease in size as the emergence period progresses (Hardersen 2000). With this in mind, there may also be correlation to increased FA in levels in larval damselflies due to smaller sizes of late-maturing instars. Even so, there is only minimal evidence that suggests this phenomenon. The Hockomock samples were collected on June 15th and 19th, and the Town and Salisbury Plain Rivers were collected within three days of each other between June 3rd and the 6th. This being the case, the Salisbury Plain River sample exhibited almost twice the FA as in the Town River sample (Table 3). The importance of this stems from emergence times and the nature of reproductive habits of C.maculata. Through field observations and nymph collection tallies, most adults emerged between the first and
fourth week of June. This suggests that there is only a small window of time for growth variation due to maturity and egg deposition. Adults that emerge first will copulate first and thus will oviposit early in the summer. The eggs that are laid during the beginning of the summer will have a much longer time to develop than those eggs oviposited during late summer and into the fall. This point may help to explain the size differences observed in final instars of larvae among samples. The significance of the three FA measurements will remain unknown until a more intensive study is conducted in the summer of 2004, following measurement protocol and sample parameters from Palmer (1993) to see if there are changes over time.

From the data gathered, a vast majority of the deviation found in the sample population falls at or below this one percent trait size, but a few specimens from each site exhibited large deviations from perfect symmetry. Some portion of the outliers was obvious measurement error and was not used in any of the tests. Upon closer inspection of the individuals in question, the femur segments were severely underdeveloped or deformed. These asymmetries are by no means subtle, nor do they imply small perturbations that occur accidentally throughout development. They were treated as deformities and were not reported on the graph indicating the frequency distribution.

Whatever caused these deformities to occur is unknown. Severe deformity suggests severe stress and could possibly have both genetic and environmental factors that play into the severity. The question is, to what degree are the deformities genetic or environmental? Another hypothesis that could account for this limb deformation may be that *C. maculata*, in larval development, may be able to regenerate certain segments of its body (say, if the larvae was preyed upon) so that its metamorphosis into adult life as a predacious flying insect will not be compromised. A more thorough investigation into this phenomenon needs to occur in future studies.

There is some question as to whether populations of *C. maculata* between different rivers will mix together to form a heterogeneous population from various areas. This is very important in studies of FA in different populations. If there are different populations mixing together, there will be no way to correlate an FA index with a distinct environmental condition of that area. In this sense, FA measurements cannot be used with much confidence even if there is strong evidence that suggests otherwise. Thus, FA analysis of *C. maculata* will only be useful if they are contained within a well-defined territory (Hardersen 2000). We believe that the populations of *C. maculata* sampled in this study do not mix. Although it was not an observed phenomenon, in *C. maculata* populations, the New Zealand damselfly *X. zealandica* adults do not migrate far from the emergence site (Hardersen 2000). This brings up the question as to how far *C. maculata* travel from their natal origins and the implications it has to biomonitoring studies and FA analyses.

Conclusion

Measurement of the femur segments of *C. maculata* may be good indicators of developmental noise, as the first femur pair held up to a size dependency analysis, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and a simple two-way ANOVA. The first femur R-L data from all three rivers met all the criteria for a proper FA measurement and exhibited different amounts of FA. The other two femur pairs, although not normally distributed or exhibiting DA or some other form of asymmetry, may still be strong candidates for FA analysis if larger sample sizes per site are used. If more traits can be recognized as being "well behaved" traits
for FA measurement, then the larval damselfly *C. maculata* may be useful as a tool for future biomonitoring studies and may lead to investigations of the rivers that nurtured them.

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Mary Jones was an important figure in the labor movement in America. Unfortunately, her personal life was forever altered by tragedy. Without her traditional role in life, Jones was forced to confront an uncertain future. It was at this time that Mary Jones created the persona, "Mother" Jones, which made her indispensable to unions. Although the "Mother" Jones character often undermined the ideas Mary Jones held about women, the main focus of Mother Jones's work was always the preservation of family.

Mary Harris claimed she was born on May 1, 1830, in Cork, Ireland. Her parents were tenants on a rich man's estate. When her father, Robert, participated in a series of strikes against rich landlords, the family immigrated to the United States, then to Canada.

In order to support herself Jones worked as a tutor and then a teacher, eventually settling in Chicago and working as a dressmaker. "My first position was teaching in a convent in Monroe, Michigan. Later, I came to Chicago and opened a dress-making establishment. I preferred sewing to bossing little children" (Gorn 33). When it became clear that she could not make a decent living she
moved to Memphis to become a teacher and met her husband, George Jones. George Jones had been an iron molder, but by the time Mary had given birth to their fourth child, George had left the foundry to become a full time union organizer.

Unfortunately, George Jones and his four children were killed in the summer of 1867 in a yellow fever epidemic. In her own words:

In 1867, a yellow fever epidemic swept Memphis..... Across the street from me, ten persons lay dead from the plague. The dead surrounded us. They were buried at night quickly and without ceremony. All about my house I could hear weeping and the cries of delirium. One by one, my four little children sickened and died. I washed their little bodies and got them ready for burial. My husband caught the fever and died. I sat alone through nights of grief. No one came to me. No one could. Other homes were as stricken as mine. All day long, all night lone, I heard the grating of the wheels of the death cart (Gorn 40-41).

Alone, Mary moved back to Chicago and became a seamstress for the well-to-do. Although she managed to make a living, Mary was disturbed by the vast differences between the lives of the poor in her neighborhood and her rich clients. The Great Chicago fire, the second great tragedy of Mary’s life, destroyed her entire neighborhood and once again emphasized the discrepancies between the rich and the poor. “I belong to a class,” she later said, “I belong to a class which has been robbed, exploited, and plundered down through many long centuries. And because I belong to that class, I have an impulse to go and help break the chains” (Atkinson 15).

It was after this devastation that Mary became active in unions. She encountered a meeting of the Knights of Labor and became a member. At first she was satisfied with the work the union did, despite the fact that they avoided confrontation with management and disapproved of strikes. Eventually she became tired of their conservative approach. She broke ties with all unions for a while and worked on behalf of workers in any way she saw fit. She became particularly attached to the cause of miners in America, and joined the United Mine Workers of America. She also took up the cause of child laborers.

The loss of her family forced Jones to confront her role as a woman. For a woman who believed women’s primary obligations were to work at home and raise children, this must have been a stunning blow. Perhaps if she had had more time to grieve the loss of her husband and children, she might have remarried and created a new family. She was still young and obviously determined to survive. However, the Chicago Fire took away the new life she tried to create for herself. After being confronted with the injustice facing workers in America every day, she wouldn’t allow herself to dwell on the past. “Pray for the dead,” she would tell miners later, “but fight like hell for the living”(Nies 105). It seems likely that Mary saw the workers of America as a new family to nurture (Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History 1). “Friends said the tragedy of losing her husband and four children to yellow fever gave her to compassion to strive for others in dire straits” (Conlon 1).

These misfortunes gave Mary Jones the freedom to become Mother Jones. “A role that she and her followers made up as they went along” (Gorn 2). She began to exaggerate her age and emphasize her role as matriarch of the working class. She insisted on being called “Mother” and wore only antique black dresses in public.

If we look at Jones’s history, it shouldn’t seem odd at all that the cause she took up was that of the workers of America. Her father had been involved in activism as a worker in Ireland and before his death her husband had worked for a union full-time. The meeting with the Knights coincided with her outrage over the inability of the
poor to recover from the fire while the rich depended on their wealth and insurance to rebuild their lives. It also happened to be a time when Mary Jones truly had no ties. She was homeless, jobless and had no family. Many historians focus mainly on the differences Jones made in the lives of workers. She is known as the “Miner’s Angel” and praise is heaped on her memory. “Countless millions of American workers since owe their decent way of life and pay to the slip of a firebrand” (Conlon 1). By focusing only on her good works many historians and biographers neglect to explore Mary Jones’s character, and that of the persona she created, Mother Jones. They instead create a myth, and to a certain extent ignore the dichotomy that existed between Mary Jones and Mother Jones.

Mother Jones was the opposite of everything Mary Jones believed a woman should be. As a union activist and public speaker, she was feisty and outspoken in a time when women, especially elderly women, weren’t supposed to have opinions, and were certainly not expected to express them publicly. She spoke openly and also roughly, communicating with uneducated workers and making them her biggest fans. “The militant,” she said,” not the meek, shall inherit the earth” (Nies 123).

Although Mary Jones disapproved of women working outside the home, she no longer had a home to take care of. “My address is like my shoes. It travels with me wherever I go” (Gorn 2). When asked where she lived, she often replied, “Wherever there is a fight” (Encyclopedia of World Biography 1). Mother Jones often rallied female workers and joined their strikes. She also pressured women to support their husband’s strikes, and organized “mop and broom” strikes because, she said, “No strike has ever been won that didn’t have the support of women”(Nies 110). Women and often children armed with household tools such as mops and brooms prevented workers from crossing the picket lines. She told the women to, “hammer and howl and be ready to chase the scabs with your mops and brooms….Don’t be afraid of anyone” (Nies 109).

Although Mary Jones and Mother Jones seem to contradict each other, their main focus was the same: families. Mother Jones often stressed the importance of family. She fought on behalf of all workers who had low wages, long hours and dangerous conditions, but she especially worked to abolish child labor. She felt the middle class aimed to force women into the labor force and children into work or daycare. She abhorred rich women who hired maids and nannies to raise their children. “The rich woman who has a maid to raise her child can’t expect to get the right viewpoint of life. If they would raise their own babies, their hearts would open and their feelings would become human” (Kauffman 1). She felt that capitalism was a problem because it undermined the family by requiring women and children to work.

Mother Jones herself had contradictory opinions on suffrage. She sometimes claimed that middle class capitalists were trying to keep their wives busy with less important issues and distract them from the economic problems of America. “The plutocrats have organized their women. They keep them busy with suffrage and prohibition and charity. I don’t belong to the women’s club, I belong to the fighting army of the working class” (Kauffman 2). She believed that suffrage--and other causes like it--distracted women from their main and most consuming responsibility: that of raising children. As a woman without a say in political affairs, Mother Jones had still managed to make quite a difference in the lives of working class Americans. “You don’t need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice! I have never had a vote
and I have raised hell all over this country!” (Kauffman 2). She believed in the power of women even without a vote. “If the women of the country would only realize what they have in their hands there is no limit to what they could accomplish. The trouble is they let the capitalists make them believe they wouldn’t be ladylike” (Nies 122).

However, later in life she often stated that women would make much better decisions in politics than did men and women who did have the vote often wasted it. “What good is the ballot, if they don’t use it?” (Foner 25). For Jones, suffrage became an issue of family welfare. She didn’t believe women needed a vote to be equal to men, she believed that women were the backbone and voice of families, and that families were being ignored in politics. Women needed a voice in politics because families were suffering from a lack of representation. “…the champions of woman’s suffrage did not feature her statements that with women in government, society would be much improved and war abolished” (Foner 25).

At a time in her life when Mary Jones had nothing, the union gave her a cause to fight for and a reason to carry on. Jones had always held traditional ideas of women, and chosen feminine jobs when she needed to support herself. However in her fight for workers’ rights Jones seemed to give up some of her femininity, even while she created a family out of the workers of America and made herself their mother.

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Fathers, Be Good to Your Daughters

by Megan Mulligan

My friend Michelle used to drive me so crazy. She lived in the apartment above me and had a great head of long, shiny, straight brown hair. With a head of crazy curls, I was jealous. She was also the ultimate daddy’s girl and I wasn’t. To have straight hair was one thing. To have straight hair and a dad wrapped around your finger? That was cause for complaint. Her dad Frank, a bald, short and stocky man with a naked lady tattooed on his left arm was close to her. He also stole cable from my mom, but I didn’t care. As we barreled up the stairs after school, Frank was always sitting at their formica kitchen table, hands folded, waiting to listen. If she had a bad day or was upset or even excited about some boy in our class, Frank listened. But he was Michelle’s father, not mine. So I walked back down the stairs and into my own apartment and wondered why my dad wasn’t like Frank. I wanted to know why my father wouldn’t be sitting at my kitchen table, waiting to hear me spill the day’s events, my bad days and boy dramas. But my dad was my boy drama. I just didn’t know it.

It’s important to mention that my dad would never be sitting at a formica table, at least not his own. He’s a wood man all the way. It’s the only thing he could stand...
being around for more than an hour. Dad’s a carpenter. I never saw him in anything but a pair of old Levi’s with a measuring tape and pencil in the back pocket and a pair of dusty work boots. He’s built schools, office buildings, stores. Every time we drove past it, he pointed out the Grist Mill Restaurant in Seekonk as if he’s waving to his younger self. His tools are like extensions of his hands, each bang of the hammer a graceful tap. Over the years he’s refined his skill, attention to detail had become second nature, “you see that, the slot on the screw is vertical, that’s the sign of a real pro.” He could spot hair line cracks in a wall and other flaws in a building from a few feet away, without his glasses, and he could tell you how to do the repairs with the ease of someone who had the directions in front of them. He enjoys this, telling people how to fix things as if he had all the answers.

But for all of his skill and talent, the one structure my father’s had trouble building is his family. In his defense (and it’s not often I defend him), my father didn’t plan on being a father. I was, as they say, a happy accident. My mom was twenty-two, a junior at Southeastern Massachusetts University (UMass Dartmouth) and working at CVS. My father, twenty-six, was doing some construction work to the store. He was also just separated from his first wife and dating my mom’s manager. He asked my mom out, and she said yes, although when asked, she couldn’t tell me why. Maybe there was something about that mischievous little grin of his that hid underneath a thick black mustache and later hid underneath a salt and pepper one. Maybe not. But she said yes, an hour later they were having pizza, and two months later they were pregnant. A month after I was born, they married at the Fall River City Hall. If I hadn’t come along, they wouldn’t have married. My dad wasn’t the man of my mom’s dreams, but she loved him anyway, in that comfortable way people love each other. There were no fireworks, just familiarity.

The day I was born he brought my mother eight red roses and three white roses for the eight pound three ounce girl she delivered. He rubbed my feet every single night while he watched John Wayne or some other Western and then he picked me up and put me in bed. His hands were rough like sandpaper from working and the calluses on his hands tickled my feet. We were as normal a family as we could be. But my father was an alcoholic. An alcoholic in denial.

He was able to keep the drinking under control for three years. But after my sister was born, he started to drink heavily, fueling himself with alcohol like he was our Ford Escort and the little orange gas light was on. His alcoholism was so powerful that it was like a fifth member of the family, taking up all of the space in a room. One night we got one of those late night phone calls that send chills down your spine. The East Providence Police Department had stopped my father for drunk driving, and “could we please pick him up?”

He apologized the next morning, smiling through the splitting headache and alcohol induced nausea. But it wasn’t like he had broken a toy or yelled at me a little too loudly. He had committed a crime. Luckily he never had to go to jail. But to me the crime he committed was much worse. This man sitting at the table in my dad’s white undershirt, black sweatpants and tan boat shoes had stolen my father and was trying to pass off a second-rate version of the dad I knew. His head was in his hands and he wouldn’t look any of us in the eye. I was four and the man couldn’t look me in the eye.

My grandmother once said that her son could only hold it (his sobriety) together for so long before everything came crashing down around him.
She could’ve warned us a little earlier.

He never even saw my little body behind the door, craning my neck to see my mother in her white bathrobe, on the floor. She was slumped up against the cabinet, holding her mouth. It was the one and only time he hit her. It didn’t seem like it then, but life would have been entirely different if we had stayed. My mother, sister, and I would have acted out perfectly those roles health teachers talk about in class—the jokester, the over-achiever, the quiet and obedient one.

We left him that night but I became the quiet and obedient one anyway, the affects of his alcoholism so pervasive I could feel it breathing down my neck. I tried to please everyone, especially my father. If I told him what he wanted to hear he would stop drinking.

Wouldn’t he?

Maybe what I should have asked was why he was drinking in the first place. If I knew the answer to that then I’d be able to understand why my dad couldn’t be the dad I needed him to be. Did he feel like he needed to escape us? Was family life suffocating him or was it something else and we just got caught in the middle? My father’s never been one to unload his problems on someone else, instead choosing to deal with them on his own, “the only person you can depend on is yourself.” He’d say this with a hint of disappointment in his voice and sadness clouding his hazel eyes as if he were replaying a memory soaked in betrayal.

My Father was already in too deep long before he met my mother, long before he became my father. We weren’t suffocating him, he didn’t need to escape from us. I think he was scared. He didn’t let people in because he was scared of what may have come out of him. If he opened up and started being honest with us he’d have to be honest with himself. He’d have to face himself, his thoughts, his emotions, his demons and he wasn’t ready to do this. My father drank to escape this. He drank to escape from himself.

I visited my dad in rehab once. He was wearing this navy blue terry cloth robe that hid his shrinking frame. Alcohol had always made him look bloated and he had flattened out. His last drink was ten years ago. I was eleven years old. He would show my sister and me the chips he earned in Alcoholics Anonymous when we visited him at my grandmother’s hot, cramped apartment. He’d let me cook scrambled eggs, showing me how to crack the egg without getting bits of shell into the bowl. We’d sit down to eat, and he’d pull out his keys. He kept the chip on his key chain so he’d always know where it was. He’d rub it with his thumb and his index finger, making sure it was real, making sure his sobriety was real. He wasn’t drinking anymore but he was still trapped by the disease. But he always was. It shadowed his childhood because of his father and later when he became an alcoholic.

When he wasn’t drinking he was thinking about it. “I can’t promise you or anyone that I’ll never drink again,” the thought of drinking—the comfort and destruction just one sip could give him—was like a constant whisper in his ear.

Alcoholism was his disease, his prison. But it was my prison too. There’s a John Mayer song, “Daughters,” that said “Fathers, be good to your daughters, daughters will love like you do.” And I did love like him. I forgave my father a long time ago for what I saw as a child but when it came to love I had taken on his bad habits. He pushed me away. But I pushed him away too. I watched as he put up walls to protect himself, and I did the same thing. I remained the quiet one so I wouldn’t have to let people in, remaining on guard all the
time. I was too cautious with my heart when it came to boys and then men, especially my father, only giving it to him in pieces so he couldn’t trample the whole thing at once.

I had a photo of us in my bedroom, on top of my bookshelf. I put it in a small silver frame that had turquoise and black beads on it so the photo would stand out around my things. It was a black and white photo. I’d always been drawn in by black and white photos because there was no color to distract my eye, all that popped out was the expression and emotion behind the picture. My mom had gotten a black and white disposable camera for my sister’s prom and needed to use up the film so I asked her to take a picture of my dad and me. We were in the living room, talking about my sister and her date when my mother walked in, ready to take our picture. We stood next to each other, posing for the camera when my dad said “smile.” In the picture my dad had on his Levi’s, his work boots, and his mischievous smile. His arm was around my shoulders, and he was looking down at me. I was looking up at him and I had this real smile on my face, not one of those plastered on smiles that the people inside frames waiting to be sold had. My mother felt that this was the picture that needed to be taken, not the posed, planned shot. She told me she could see the expressions on our faces, those smiles, and knew they were real. When the photo was developed I could see it too, that’s what stood out. We weren’t Frank and Michelle but we didn’t have to be because in that photo, a 4x6 square, we both wore our hearts on our sleeves.

In that photo, it was just a girl and her dad, nothing in between.
Preacher or Actor: The Dramatic Role of Puritan Sermons in America

by Beth Robbins

The Puritans settled into Massachusetts Bay in 1630 under John Winthrop in response to religious restrictions presented to them in England. While they did not necessarily intend to break away from the Church of England, the distance between these New Englanders and their original church affiliations could reap no other result. They retained their Calvinist beliefs in the power of God to save the "elect" and eternally damn others, and they dedicated their lives to working towards achieving a state of grace with God. These founding settlers set the standard for future generations. John Winthrop described America as a "city upon a hill," since many people in England believed that the Puritans, and all those who fled England, would fail in America and were watching the new communities closely. Ever mindful of England's constantly scrutinizing eye, the Puritans would strive for nothing short of excellence. Conversion to Christianity and a life dedicated to proclaiming the works of God became the heart and soul of Puritan doctrine, and elaborating these principles throughout two generations were ministers such as Thomas Hooker, Increase Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. The words of these three men vibrated in the hearts of their congregations from...
the early seventeenth century and through
the better part of the eighteenth century, and
the terrifying dramatic presentation of these
exquisitely crafted sermons still provokes
questions of morality and faith in contem­
porary readers. These evangelical preachers
used their religious outlet of sermons to not
only preach the word of God, but also to
assert their own intellect, wit, and learning,
which have cemented their place in Ameri­
can sentimental literature.

Thomas Hooker was born in 1586 in
Leistershire, England. He was educated at
Queen’s College in Cambridge, and en­
tered the teaching profession as a minister.
However, despite his estimable reputation
as a minister, Hooker was forced into early
retirement for being “one of the most con­
spicuous leaders of Puritan sentiment in the
land” (Miller 290). In England, his strict
Puritan teachings posed a threat to the estab­
lished Anglican Church and, in effect, to the
government as well. So he took his Puritan
ideals to New England, where he proved
himself to be one of Connecticut’s most
eloquent preachers (Miller 290). Though
his style and theories were not embraced by
the Anglican Church, Hooker was able to
express his arguments to the more accepting
New England congregations as the Puritan
movement waved across the New World.

At the conclusion of Hooker’s career,
more and more ministers of the Puritan
world were grasping the opportunity to use
their place at the pulpit to move the hearts
and minds of congregations. Increase Mather
was one such minister. A second generation
New Englander and minister, Mather had
humbler beginnings than his British-born
predecessors. Mather received a free edu­
cation in Boston and attended Harvard in
1651. He managed to travel to England to
study and practice the ministry from 1656
to 1661, but he returned to America to teach
at Second Church. Even though Mather’s
ministry was met with opposing policies and
previously misled citizens, he persevered in
gaining both political and religious influence
by strictly directing the daily routines of his
followers in the ways of Puritan founders.
His commanding presence and confident
preaching earned him the trust of the com­
community, thus reinforcing his authority.

As the Great Awakening dawned at
the turn of the century, conventional preach­
ers were replaced with scientific theorists
and Enlightenment ideals. One of the last
attempts at a Puritan contingency came from
Jonathan Edwards. Edwards was born in
1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut, the only
male child of eleven. He was a third gen­
eration minister, the grandson of Solomon
Stoddard, one of the most influential and in­
dependent Puritan ministers of Northampton
(Baym 464). Edwards studied at home and
at Yale College, where he focused his stud­
ies on theology. He discovered a deep love
of religious theories, and longed to share
his recognition of the importance of reli­
gious commitment with the public. Edwards
“managed to tend to his duties as pastor or
a growing congregation and deliver brilliant
sermons, to write some of his most impor­
tant books...and watch his eleven children
grown up” (Baym 465). While skillfully
balancing his home life and religious career,
he was also able to adapt to the changing
needs of his congregation. With the dawn of
the Great Awakening, Edwards was finally
able to fully proclaim the need of the people
to return to the conventional authority of the
church. Ironically, however, his preaching
methods were far from conventional. While
he believed the church was the complete
authority in a community, he used non-tra­
ditional, dictating styles of preaching to
deliver this message.

Hooker, Mather, and Edwards both
embody and contrast the Puritan beliefs.
While their words and messages are con­
tacted directly from the Bible, their actions
and deliverances are less than pure. These
men were undoubtedly well-educated and devout Christians. They believed in the word of God so strongly they could think of nothing else. However, conventional methods of conveying this unprecedented faith were not the most effective. The sermonists’ compulsion to enforce conversion is what led to the creation of their religious literature. Their resulting sermons were a combination of literary genius, manipulative tact, dramatic effect, Scriptural references, and fanatical Christian beliefs. They were terrifyingly effective not only in their own time, but long after Puritanism had receded in America.

The sermons overflow with the authors’ emotional struggles to influence the masses of the truth, and this emotion removes the sermons from purely religious texts and places them instead into sentimental American literature.

Though the Puritan beliefs were increasingly questioned, “the transformative impulse within Puritanism had its clearest manifestation in the pulpit, for the printed Word erupted through the existing social order only when given voice by Puritan ministers” (Gustafson 15). All three sermonists depict the practices and religious movements of their respective times. Their importance as ministers of the word of God was manifested almost entirely in their abilities to interpret that word for their congregations. They share certain fundamental stylistic elements in their sermons that remain stable regardless of changing times and attitudes. One of these elements is the authoritative dominating figure each preacher presented himself to be. The sermonists, while they lived among their congregations, were not entirely humbled by their own messages. They were well-educated in prime English and American schools and universities, and they were well aware of the influence such a luxury had. By asserting the word of God in a dominating and dictating manner, these men created nearly infallible positions of authority for themselves in their communities. They considered themselves successful by the size and response of their following rather than the convictions in the hearts of the people. So, while they claimed to preach the word of God in such a way as to benefit the people, the material remuneration of a position of authority were also no less appealing to these Christian men than to any other community leader.

In an attempt to prove the validity of his beliefs to his congregation, Thomas Hooker preached in a powerful and dominating manner. Thus, he was considered a “virtual dictator” during his time in Connecticut. In his sermon “Meditation,” Hooker maintains that Christians must devote all thought to sinful acts they have committed and to the greatness of God, so that they can fully experience the truth in salvation. He describes the way to Providence “by serious meditation” and he instructs his constituents to “look back to the lineage and pedigree of our lusts, and track the abominations of our lives, step by step, until we come to the very nest where they are hatched and bred” (Hooker 303). In this way, he constantly reminds his congregation of the way to salvation.

Increase Mather also used a physically dominating style of preaching to enforce his authority in the community. He was considered to be a “commanding figure” (Miller 335). He held his position in the ministry in the highest esteem, and enforced this in his sermons by constantly reaffirming his own authority in the church. In his “Sleeping at Sermons,” Mather exerts the importance of listening to what he offers during his sermons: “As for sleeping at sermons, some look upon it as no sins; others account it a peccadillo, a sin not worth taking notice of, or of troubling themselves about. By my text shewest that danger and death is in it” (Mather 349). Mather reminds his followers that without his guidance and explanation of
the truth, they will often underestimate the magnitude of their actions and thus expose themselves to the severity of God. His sermons reflect his deep emotional attachment to the word of God, and his extreme need to bring his congregation to the same understanding he had discovered.

Most likely the most terrifying example of the true authoritative fashion is Jonathan Edwards. The most prominent example of his dominating preaching style is his renowned “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Edwards was very concerned with guiding his congregation down the right path: “Focusing attention on his precisely articulated word; Edwards invested his oral performances with textual authority” (Gustafson 62). He emphasizes that without completely recognizing God’s authority, “every unconverted man properly belongs to hell” (Edwards 500). In this way he portrays himself as the most knowledgeable of the way to salvation and therefore the only model authority for his congregation to follow.

In addition to asserting authority through physical domination of the pulpit, preachers relied heavily on Scriptural references to validate their messages and their power in society. Audiences were familiar with the Bible and were more apt to relate to the preacher’s words and understand his message if it originated in the Bible. Thomas Hooker “granted the pulpit orator greater authority with his congregation and greater control over Scripture” (Gustafson 23) with an outward display of Scriptural knowledge. Within just a few sentences of “Meditation,” Hooker quotes Josiah: “thou shalt not suffer the word to depart out of thy mind, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night” (Hooker 301). For each point he makes, Hooker is sure to follow with at least two direct Scriptural quotes. In this way, he is able to connect the intangible concept of complete dedication of the mind to a familiar, physical, and public entity: the Bible. Puritan ministers believed that as orators they were simply allowing the Lord to work through them, but this “extemporaneous ideal required the speaker to inhabit Scripture fully and personally experience its meaning...creating an authenticity effect of divine inspiration through voice, gesture, emotional display, and spontaneous interactions with the audience” (Gustafson 47). In other words, Puritans believed that the written word of God could not be fully grasped and understood without the interpretive preaching of an ordained minister. This belief was extremely advantageous for sermonists of that time, as they were seen as the sole connection between God and the public, thus to question them was to question the Lord.

Increase Mather took on the role of spiritual medium as well. His plain and solid style was coated with Scriptural references to remind his congregation that his ideas were not independently generated, but were rather grounded in the word of God. Mather was thus able to maintain credibility and authority beyond public doubt because of the community’s intense reliance on and belief in the Bible. As he describes the dangers of taking small sins for granted, he states, “We have solemn instances in the Scripture, concerning those that have lost their lives, because they have been guilty of such miscarriages, as carnal reason will say are but little sins” (Mather 349). He then follows this with multiple explicit biblical references. Similarly, Edwards bases the topic of his entire sermon on a biblical passage: “Their foot shall slide in due time” (Dt. 32.35), and then he proceeds to cite not only supporting passages from the Bible, but also from the history of the church. By supporting their sermons with constant references to the written word, Hooker, Mather, and Edwards emphasize the belief that they are only tools through which the spirit of God works. As such “tools,” preachers eliminated
the accusations of personal gain in their high society positions. They were seen as appointed by God, similar to the prophets, and thus as truly working for the overall good of the people, not ever for their own personal advancements.

However, even multiple biblical references were not necessarily plain and coherent enough for full congregational understanding. Since many preachers’ audiences lacked in education, similes, metaphors, and illustrations from their daily routines were often used to enhance the intended message. In this way, “Puritans sought to move their listeners beyond passive acceptance of orthodox dogma to active engagement with the meaning of Scripture” (Breymer 3). Edwards is a prime example of this: he wanted his congregation to not just understand the doctrine, but to be spiritually moved by what they believe in. For Edwards, in order to aid this experience, he needed to break down his original theme into its most basic elements, listing the consequences of not recognizing God’s miracles, the validity of God’s omniscient power, and the application of this teaching to one’s daily life. Edwards addresses his entire sermon directly at his congregation, accusing them outright of denying God’s power in order to bring his concept into a very real and personal light. In his “Application” of his sermon, he condemns their ignorance: “You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but you do not see the hand of God in it” (Edwards 503). He then describes the consequences of this ignorance in a way they can relate to and visualize: “The bow of God’s wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on a string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the pleasure of God, and that of an angry God...that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood” (Edwards 504). The image of a bow and arrow constantly pointed at one’s heart is one that Edwards’ congregations could easily visualize. Francis Breymer states, “It was not enough to simply recall Christ’s sacrificial drama; it had to be visualized, witnessed over again, even in its goriest details” (Breymer 5). Over and over, list by list, Edwards repeats the notions of the wrath of an eternal and angry God until the image of man dangling over the fiery pit of hell is emblazoned on the hearts and minds of his listeners. Edwards uses eloquence and descriptive language to establish himself as a credible source of God’s words. He establishes himself as merely a tool of the Scripture, thus his credibility as a leader remains untouched. He is able to maintain the authority because people are afraid to question the possibility that he may be wrong. In their eyes, such an act would be considered blasphemous: an act against God.

Hooker and Mather also use similes and repetition in their sermons in order to provide clarity for their congregations. Hooker chooses similes to avoid any possibilities of misunderstanding in his congregation. He compares meditation to the life of a goldsmith, to the absorbed water of a root which “loosens the weeds and thorns, which they may be plucked up easily” (Hooker 304). In this short sermon, Hooker states and restates the importance of his message in many ways. However, this not only aids his congregation’s understanding, it also gives him an increased air of authority. He has earned such an understanding for himself as to offer so many variations on a single theme for others. Mather’s approach is observed as somewhat more worldly, as he does not just accuse those sitting (and sleeping) before him, but also the general nature of man. He does not use Edwards’ style of accusation, nor does he flower his message with similes and metaphors. Instead, he lectures on a topic of familiar to most parishioners and uses its universality to open the eyes of his listeners to the dangers
surrounding them. He almost justifies their sinful actions to put his congregation at ease: “We may here take notice that the nature of man is woefully corrupted and depraved, else they would not be so apt to sleep when the precious Truths of God are dispensed” (Mather 348). Then Mather reminds them that it is their responsibility to recognize this fault, and avoid its consequences at all costs. He gives his congregation enough hope to change their ways, but also enough fear of God to listen to and completely trust his words.

Regardless of what the preacher’s message or original intent was, their delivery of this message was a completely separate entity: “There is no doubt that the preachers adopted a plain style, but the designation referred to content, not delivery” (Breymer 3). In this way, Puritan ministers often used non-traditional styles and elements in order to awaken their parishioners to a sense of righteousness and obedience. Since “ministers could verify the truth of their interpretation only in its effect on their congregation, its success in converting listeners” (Gustafson 19), preachers were often pushed to extreme dramatic attempts to ensure that success. For Hooker, the sermon performance threatened their congregations. These threats were aimed directly at listeners in consequence for their actions or lack thereof. “The Puritan minister could console the saint with the message of Christ’s love or he could provide the strong psychic of terror needed for the corrupt heart” (Breymer 5). Most prominent in threatening sermons is Edwards’ “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Not only does he attack and accuse his parishioners, he tells them they deserve at any moment to be cast into the pits of hell:

Edwards speaks of an angry God who “abhors” men whose “eternal wrath” is “inconceivable” and “terrible.” Key words and gestures such as these were meant to frighten and terrify congregations into conversion and complete dedication of the soul. “If creating the verbal effect was part of Edwards’ rhetorical skill, equally important was his ability to stir powerful emotions in his audiences” (Gustafson 65). The emotional response of congregations was the gauge of a successful sermon, and Edwards and his predecessors were master manipulators of this tool.

Ironically, as powerful and authoritative as these preachers and their sermons were due to their dramatic style, Puritans avidly opposed drama and theater. The “Puritan reputation for a so-called ‘plain style’ of preaching, their public condemnation of the theatre, and the allegedly subdued nature of their demeanor in general” (Breymer 5) posed a confusing contradiction with Puritan sermon style. Based on the written records of the actual texts and reports of witnesses of such behavior, it has been proven that dramatic style was an imperative element in Puritan preaching. Hooker explained his performances of “fire in the pulpit” as “a reflection of the fire of faith in the preacher” (Breymer 5). In other words, the justification for any dramatic outbursts by ministers was the supposed divine intervention of God which guided the sermons. This style was effective for a limited time in America. Each minister had a unique style that was embodied and imitated by others, but each faded away as the interests of the audiences changed. Hooker was forced into early retirement in England for his conspicuous
preaching habits, but he was welcomed with enthusiasm in early seventeenth century America. He was a sternly orthodox preacher until his death in 1647, and while his sermons were dominating and commanded authority, Hooker did not lose his enthusiastic audience during his lifetime.

Increase Mather entered the ministry in the mid to late seventeenth century, and was highly esteemed until his return from England at the turn of the century. Though he was never overthrown as a minister, his power did lose momentum towards the end of his career. However, “he remained a commanding figure...maintaining the principles of the founders to the last ditch, and yet moving with the times on at least some important questions” (Miller 335). Jonathan Edwards, on the other hand, lost much credibility when he increased his radical style in order to restore the church’s authority. He began his career at a prime time, in the early eighteenth century, and for about fifteen years the public response was in his favor. But in his later years his people were “tired of religious controversy and the hysterical behavior of a few fanatics turned them against the spirit of revivalism” (Baym 465). For Edwards, the religious resurgence had come to an end, and his fanatical enthusiasm for the power of the church overstayed its welcome and eventually lost the support of the people. So, in essence, the effect of Edwards’ sermons meant to inspire lost momentum as he increased the dramatics. Breymer remarks, “It was when the drama of the performance directed the audience to the truth of the message that God worked his will on the souls of those he had chosen” (Breymer 5), and for Edwards, God was no longer intervening in his favor.

One question remains to be explored in conclusion to the investigation of the true intentions and stylistic modes of the Puritan sermons: Why have they survived the test of time, and why do they still cause readers to shudder and even, on some level, question their own virtues and faith? The answer to that question lies in part in the inspiration of the original fervor of the ministers, but more so in the basic elements of the sermons themselves. The Bible has changed very little since it has come into existence, and for many Christians it is the physical core and foundation of faith and religion. For this reason, biblical references used as explanations in the sermons have become the pillars which support the validity of these sermons. As much as scholars can study the intentions of the ministers and dissect the dramatic exaggerations of their orations, readers are still left with the original intended message which begs for personal ownership, understanding, and acceptance. In this way, Thomas Hooker, Increase Mather, and Jonathan Edwards were successful in their endeavors to force their audiences, throughout time, to look at themselves through the critical eyes of God and reevaluate their virtues and morality under this new light. The emotional undertones of the sermons are what draw the line between purely religious sermons and sentimental literature. Since the sermons have become a source of study for generations and are still as effective as when they were originally delivered, they have also become classics in the literary world. Their unique combination of influential writing and dramatic effect has left little room for creative interpretation of a message; it is clear for all readers. However, the combination of both literature and drama are necessary for the full emphasis intended to be portrayed. In this way, Hooker, Mather, and Edwards not only broke down traditional barriers as religious fanatics, but were literary pioneers as well.

Works Cited


Getting a I Job

by Emily Simonds
Her husband John found a mouse struggling in the yard and brought it in. He figured it had a broken leg and that a little nursing would have it scurrying again. Danae quietly watched as he set up a cardboard box with a soft washcloth blanket, a bottle cap water dish, and a few crumbles of cheese. The mouse shivered in the corner of the box. Her heart hurt a little watching it all. She hoped it would turn out okay. She sighed, and she hoped.

John had always wanted a llama, for as long as she had known him, and longer. When he was a child, he had read an article about how the frosted-blonde movie star Kim Novak had imported them from Chile. He was fascinated. He started reading all about them, about llamas and about Novak. He collected pictures. The llama and the star seemed to swirl into each other until the two together represented one dizzying helix of mystery: the mystery of intimacy. He felt a connection, an attraction, not sensual but magnetic. The llama, to him, became a symbol of what he so yearned for: the ability to connect. They had clicked long ago, when he was a child, and the connection was electric and organic.

John first met a llama at a small, shabby petting
zoo. He stood for hours gripping the splintery wood of the llama pen, transfixed by the animal’s curious stare. It stood about six feet from him and stared, it seemed, right at him. He stared back and knew the llama liked him. He felt a current of energy between them. It was the type of connectedness that he had always longed for, the type that he had never had with other people. But with the llama he knew how to be. He wanted to hug the shaggy animal and kiss its soft nose, but up close, he found himself a bit frightened by the llama’s size so he just nodded at it, smiling. He vowed that he would someday have a llama of his own.

Danae remembered when they had first started dating, and John lost his job. He was twenty-four and worked at a harborside restaurant. The owners sometimes squeezed in a morning wedding before opening for the regular dinner rush to increase profits. In September, the summer swell had ended and the seasonal workers had all gone back to school. This made for long, exhausting days for the limited wait staff.

John was a good waiter. His customers always seemed to like the quiet way about him and his dimpled smile. On that day, the wedding had run late, and the staff had to scramble to ready the restaurant for dinner. As he rushed into the kitchen to fix a salad he had forgotten, he collided with the head chef, who had just emerged from the walk-in cooler with a tray full of chicken breasts. As the poultry toppled to the floor, each piece landing with a fleshy splat, John clenched his eyes shut. He stood there, eyes closed, for about five seconds. He opened them to gasps and murmurs and finally, a hushed silence. The chef approached quickly, backed John up against the wall, and barked at him in Portuguese. He gripped a boning knife tightly, and the point just poked through her husband’s starched uniform shirt and pricked his stomach. John looked into the chef’s eyes and saw a blurriness that scared him. He reached out and placed his hand lightly on the chef’s shoulder. At first, this leaning caused the knife to jab into him a bit more, but when he spoke gently to the chef, the knife shook a little and then fell away. The chef’s eyes cleared.

John lost that job. The management said that someone had to be fired after such a violent incident or the rest of the staff wouldn’t feel safe coming to work. The chef was too integral to the success of the restaurant to part with. Her husband accepted this quietly. He didn’t make a scene, he didn’t storm out, and he didn’t threaten to sue. He did stop at two restaurants on his way home to submit applications. He was hired by one the next day.

She watched him check on the mouse over and over again— every half-hour or so at first, and then more often. It seems happy to be in a warm house, he said. He thought it was getting better. Really, it was slowing down. She could see it slowing down, but when she asked her husband about it, he said that it was probably just grateful to have the chance to rest a bit. Mice spend their lives evading predators.

Just about a year before the mouse appeared, John’s father died. He was an old man. He was forty when John was born and had fathered two other children after that. He was too old to be a new father, even then. He had particular routines for everything in his life, and he thought the children interfered with all of them. In truth, John had never been much of an interference to anyone. He was quiet and mostly avoided his father. Consequently, his father always thought of him as strange. It never occurred to the old man that he simply didn’t know his son or that his son felt that ideas, thoughts, and words, unless exceptionally brilliant, were better off kept to oneself.
they lived separately even when they lived together, and when John grew up and moved away, he felt no real difference in his life other than that silence was suddenly comfortable rather than strained. At the time of his father’s death, John realized that he had not spoken to him in almost a year. This wasn’t the result of any specific incident or disagreement. Actually, it was more of an agreement. It was their normal way of doing things. The pancreatic cancer had done its work fast, and three weeks after John learned of the diagnosis from his sister, his father died. On every day of those three weeks, he had been sure that he would call his father. He kept waiting to find himself picking up the receiver and dialing. He thought that even though he had never really spoken to his father, words of wisdom and solace would suddenly pour forth when the lines connected. But he never made the call. It was his sister, again, who called him to say that their father had died at about seven o’clock in the morning in a putrid smelling hospital room with just a nurse at his side. Neither knew what to say, and both just hung up quietly after the news was delivered. Danae remembered how he just looked at her, lost.

She hadn’t thought of that day in a long time, but she felt a glimmer of it as she watched John bend over the cardboard box, tending to the mouse. Things hadn’t worked out for his friend. Of the two of them, Dominick married first but never seemed to evolve into the person he needed to be to become a husband. He thought it would happen automatically, he had told John. He thought he would just start to feel like someone’s husband and that it would change him. But it didn’t change him. Not in the right way, anyway. Things got worse when the couple had a child. In the little boy’s eyes, Dominick saw his own eyes as they were in his youth, before cocaine had blotted them out and destroyed his soul. He told John this. But this self-awareness wasn’t enough to heal Dominick. He knew he was getting more and more lost, but he no longer cared about getting found.

When finally his wife banned him from the house her parents had given to them as a wedding gift and cut off his access to their child, Dominick gave up. He doused himself and his car with gasoline, got in, and lit a match. He burned up with spectators watching. Those who had seen him set the fire (it happened so fast) were so sickened with horror that they were frozen. Those passersby who thought it was an accident couldn’t get close enough to help due to the fierceness of the flames. A dark parking lot was made daylight by the death of a very sad man, and people just stood and watched.

Danae had answered the phone when the wife called. It was early in the morning, earlier than they usually got up, but they were awakened that morning by the constant ringing of the telephone. John watched her, saw the phone pressed to her ear and saw the filtered morning light dance on her face, but he couldn’t hear what was being said. Danae just kept saying “what? what?” in what sounded like disbelief, and then she handed
the phone to her husband. She couldn’t tell him about Dominick. She made the wife relay the awful details a second time because she couldn’t tell him herself.

John slowly rose as he listened. Danae heard him say “oh, god” a couple of times, but mostly he just stood leaning against the sliding glass door, shaking his head. She sat on the bed and tried not to throw up.

For the rest of that day, until dusk, they sat in their living room quietly thinking of death. She made a few attempts to console him, but her heart didn’t feel in it. The words died on her lips as she looked at his unfocused eyes. So they sat. She on the couch and he in the chair, not touching but sharing the sickening experience like they shared the leaden air of the room.

The mouse was barely moving. Danae looked at her husband a couple of times as if to say, ‘he’s gone,’ but then every few minutes the mouse twitched, and John insisted that it was just sleeping. Because mice sleep too. Especially mice with busted legs that have been heroically rescued and given safe havens from the perils of vast, grassy yards. She sighed and stared down at her feet. John didn’t look at her. He just gazed into the box at the tiny gray fuzzy thing and stroked it with his pinkie finger. She kissed the back of his neck and shuffled off to the sanctuary of bed. She couldn’t see it through. She was too exhausted, too spent. She crawled into bed and felt, for a moment, relief. Then she thought of her husband, still in the living room, the same room in which he had endured so much death. He was alone. In her mind, she saw him still bent over that cardboard box, unable to move away from it. She knew he wouldn’t just walk away from it. He had put himself in a position where he had to witness death firsthand. She knew that every cell of him was breathing that mouse’s breath and feeling its tiny mouse feelings. He couldn’t save it, but he couldn’t abandon it either. He was trying to take the pain from it. He was so much bigger than the mouse. He was two thousand times as big. He was willing the mouse to give him its pain. Pain that would kill a mouse wouldn’t hurt a man. Her heart ached for him, but she couldn’t go to him. She rolled over in the big, half empty bed, cried, and fell asleep.

When Danae woke up the next morning, he was asleep beside her. The skin around his eyes looked tender and sallow, and she kissed his eyelids before slipping soundlessly out of bed. She slid down the hall, wanting to go straight to the kitchen as always to make some tea but instead veering off at the doorway to the living room. The box was still there. It sat it the corner, the site of her husband’s long vigil. She felt nervous. She didn’t want to cross the room, but she did anyway and peered into the box. Empty. She pressed her lips together. She thought of what a lonely task it must have been for him. To first take out the mouse gently, so gently. To carry it somewhere where it would stay forever, to choose that spot, and to lay it down gingerly, as if to not hurt it. To then fold up the blanket that was really just an old washcloth, toss the bottle cap that had been a life source, and shake the crumbled cheese into the trash. She thought of him doing all of this, wordlessly and alone. She gazed out onto their carefully manicured lawn and pictured a splintered wooden llama pen there. He had eased the mouse’s pain, and the mouse, from the ground and through divine grace, would give him something in thanks.
Abstract: In this study larval skins of dragonflies were collected, counted, and studied in order to find peaks and patterns of emergence and correlate with environmental factors. One of the most important stages of the life of a dragonfly is the time when it changes from a larval aquatic insect into a flying adult. This stage takes place when the dragonfly emerges out of its skin called the exuvia. Exuvia were collected from two sites at Carver Pond, Bridgewater, Massachusetts to determine differences in species emergence patterns from May 26, 2003 to July 18, 2003 and correlated with environmental conditions. Peak emergence occurred during July 7-11, which also correlated with a distinct rise in water temperature for the study period. Dominant species were *Pachydiplax longipennis* and *Epitheca cynosura*. *Leucorrhina intacta*, *Leucorrhina frigida*, *Leucorrhina proxima*, *Erythemis simplicicollis*, and *Dorocordulia lepida* also are species found emerging during the study. Different patterns of emergence were found for different species. Most fell into two patterns of spring or summer species.
Introduction

Dragonflies have very unique and interesting life history. They start out their life when the adult female drops her eggs in a body of water. They then hatch into swimming aquatic insects for their early nymph stages where they go through many periods or “instars” where they outgrow and shed their skin. Finally they crawl out of the water and shed their skin for the last time to become adults with wings. They leave behind an exuvia identical to the larvae only it is hollow. New England has a very short summer, which leaves a short amount of time to study dragonflies. For this reason it is crucial to be aware of the behavior and emergence patterns to be able to study them as much as possible in this short period of time.

The best technique for determining patterns of emergence is to collect (exuvia) and count larval skins in a defined time period. Dragonflies are flying adults and are generally hard to catch. Instead of trying to catch every adult that hatches everyday, it is much easier to collect the exuvia that is left behind (Foster and Soluk 2003). Catching flying adults consists of a lot of time spent out in the field that may not be available in such a time sensitive study. Also, when you catch flying adults you can never be sure if they actually emerge from your study area because dragonfly adults are very capable of migrating to habitats different from the ones they emerge from. Collecting the exuviae from a certain habitat is the only way to positively know if the dragonfly had spent its life cycle there (Foster and Soluk 2003). Another good reason to use exuvia for a study like this is at their last larval instar they are easier to identify each species, which is what you always have with an exuvia (Foster and Soluk 2003).

There are four different patterns of emergence for aquatic insects that are described by Corbet (1964). These patterns are continuous, rhythmic, sporadic and seasonal. One pertaining specifically to dragonflies is seasonal emergence. This is when the dragonflies emerge at a certain time of year due to changing conditions that become more favorable for the dragonfly. This seasonal emergence is typically dependent on precipitation and temperature (Corbet 1964). Emergence starts in the spring in the New England area when the temperature gets warmer and tapers off in the fall when it gets cold again. Dragonfly emergence depends on warmer water temperatures that are favored by the larvae. The emergence each season won’t start until water temperatures are high enough (Willey 1974).

There are two typical emergence patterns found during seasonal emergence. Some species stop development in their last instars over the winter allowing them to all emerge within the same very short time period in the spring. This is called the “spring species.” Larvae called “summer species” are slowed down by the winter at different instars and emerge later in the summer at different times (Corbet 1954). This was also found to be true by Suhling (1995) when he studied river species and he found Anax imperator to be a spring species and by Benke et al. (1975) who studied a pond and worked with species similar to this study in South Carolina studying life histories of dragonflies. They found a dragonfly of the genus Epitheca to be a spring species and Pachydiplax longipennis to be a summer species. Competition should not affect this phenomenon because there is little correlation of competition between spring and summer species (Johnson et al 1985). Johnson did a study with Epitheca cynosura and another spring species and even though they had similar overlap in diet and were placed in experimental close quarters the two species had no affect on each other as far as competition.
In this project chronological patterns of emergence were studied in order to find which species emerge overtime from two sites on Carver Pond. Emergence data were compared with weather data for the two different sites to see if and how temperature and rainfall correlated with the timing of the emergence of the dragonflies.

Materials and Methods

Emergence was studied over a period from May 26 to July 18 at two sites on Carver Pond Bridgewater, Massachusetts (Fig 1). The two sites were classified as North Shore Beach and Pine Point. They were chosen because of their difference in location on the pond leading to different environmental factors and because of the accessibility of the water from the shore. The North Shore site is in the northwestern part of Carver Pond near the pond overflow and Pine Point is on the northeastern side. Though the North Shore was more open, Pine Point had more tree cover from deciduous shrubs and mixed deciduous trees and white pines Pinus strobus. This allowed for more sun throughout the day on North Shore while Pine Point was shaded most of the morning. One to four collectors waded 30-35 meters of shoreline of each site randomly collecting all the exuvia found in the area on trees, shrubs and emergent aquatic vegetation. All the exuvia found were consolidated into a jar that was labeled with the site and date. Adult dragonflies were collected with a net for a separate project, but these also were used to confirm the identification of the exuviae and determination of the species.
Data analysis in the lab consisted of identification of the exuvia to species. First exuvia in the jars of each day and site were sorted by naked eye. Using differences in major physical features, these were put into piles by characteristics of what could be seen without the microscope. Using the dissecting microscope, each exuvia was keyed to species using Needam, Westfall, and May (2000). All the specimens found were placed into containers separated by day, site and species. The exuvia numbers were counted for every day and grouped together in five-day intervals. Each five-day interval was a Monday-Friday five-day interval. This was used because collecting only occurred Monday-Friday and on different days each week but usually on Monday and Wednesday. To account for this, exuvia from each five-day interval were grouped into one number to represent exuvia collected that had emerged in that week.

Data gathered for water temperature, air temperature, and precipitation was compared with the emergence patterns. To track water temperature, Onset Hobo computer water temperature recorders were placed at each site in the water. These were tied to a brick and placed in the water so they were submerged 15-20 cm below the surface. They were placed in the pond on May 20 and were removed July 18. The temperature recorder logged water temperature continuously every two hours of every day. Data on air temperature, precipitation amounts, and wind speed direction were taken from the Bridgewater State College Weather Data Base (2003). This contained air temperature and precipitation amounts for every hour of every day. Water quality data was collected on July 9 and July 21 over a 24-hour period for mean maximum and minimum temperature, DO and pH using a Hydro Lab Minisonde Multiprobe suspended 15 cm below the surface at each site.

Results

Total amount of exuvia collected from both sites was 558 (345 North Shore Beach, and 212 Pine Point). The peak timing of total emergence was the week of July 7-11 for both sites. The North Shore had more dragonflies emerging almost every week. When Pine Point had more the numbers at both sites were very close (Fig. 2).

Out of the collected exuvia, seven species were found and one single exuvia was considered unknown because it was too crushed to be identified. The most abundant species collected was *Pachydiplax longipennis* (Fig 2&3). The first occurrence of *Pachydiplax longipennis* was the week of June 16-20 and was found every week until collecting was stopped (Fig. 3&4). The second most abundant species found frequently was *Epitheca (Tetragoneuria) cynosura*, which was the first species, found when collecting started the week of May 26-30. The emergence of *Epitheca cynosura* slowed down as emergence of *Pachydiplax longipennis* started to rise (Fig 2&3). The other 5 species consisted of 3 species of *Leucorrhinia* (intacta, proxima, and frigida) along with *Erythemis simplicicollis* and *Dorocordulia lepida*. All of their emergence timing coincided with either *Pachydiplax longipennis* or *Epitheca cynosura* for the most part (Fig 2&3). During the weeks *Epitheca cynosura* was emerging, another spring species *Leucorrhinia intacta* also emerged. The weeks when *Pachydiplax longipennis* was emerging the other five species emerged in that same timeframe.
Fig 2. Total Exuviae Counts at Carver Pond
Summer 2003

![Graph showing total exuviae counts at Carver Pond.]

Fig 4. Total Exuviae Counts By Species for Pine Point Site at Carver Pond Summer 2003

![Graph showing total exuviae counts by species for Pine Point Site.]

- E. longipennis
- E. (tetragoneural) cynosura
- L. intacta
- L. proxima
- E. simplicicollis

5 Day Intervals
Weather data had very interesting patterns when compared with the emergence data. Air temperature and water temperature fluctuated together. When air temperature changed for a period of time water temperature would rise or fall a day or two late (Fig 5, 6). Exuvia counts correlated well with water temperature (Fig 2, 5). When water temperature was at its highest (31°C) on the week of July 7-11, exuvia counts were also at their highest (185 for North Shore Beach) (Fig 2, 5, 6). Water temperature at peak emergence for Epitheca cyanosura was only 18°C and for Pachydiplax longipennis it was 31°C. On the weeks of June 16 and June 23 precipitation peaked at 30mm and consequently water temperature dropped from 22-23°C to 17°C (Fig 5&7). This was followed by almost no emergence in the following weeks (Fig 2).

Fig 5. Peak Water Temperature at Carver Pond Summer 2003
Fig 6. Peak Air Temperature at Carver Pond
Summer 2003

Fig 7. Peak Rainfall at Carver Pond Summer 2003
Water quality data for the 24-hour periods of July 9 and July 21 showed variance in temperature, dissolved oxygen and pH (table 1). The mean water temperatures were higher on July 21 than on July 7. The mean dissolved oxygen was also greater on July 21. The mean pH which was greater at North Shore varied between sites.

(Table 1) Water Quality Data for Carver Pond July 9, 2003 and July 21, 2003

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Temp. (°C)</th>
<th>pH</th>
<th>DO mg/l</th>
<th>%DO</th>
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<td>5.94</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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</table>

Pine Point site had more wind blowing in its direction out of the protection of trees. The North Shore Beach site had the wind blowing at its back being blocked by trees.
Fig 8. Peak Wind Speed at Carver Pond Summer 2003

![Bar graph showing peak wind speed at Carver Pond Summer 2003. The x-axis represents calendar days from May 20 to July 15, 2003, and the y-axis represents wind speed in m/s. The graph displays the variation in wind speed across different calendar days.]

Fig 9. Wind Direction Carver Pond Summer 2003

![Bar graph showing wind direction at Carver Pond Summer 2003. The x-axis represents calendar days from May 20 to July 15, 2003, and the y-axis represents wind direction in degrees. The graph displays the variation in wind direction across different calendar days.]
Discussion

Sunlight is a very important factor to take into consideration. The tree cover on Pine Point was denser than at North Shore Beach. This allowed for more sun throughout the day on North Shore Beach. In effect Pine Point was not directly exposed to sunlight until after mid-day.

Larvae need some type of vegetation or structure to crawl up out of the water so they can then emerge. The vegetation that was the most common for the dragonflies to emerge was the water willow (*Justicia americana*) a leafy aquatic plant and soft-stem bulrush (*Schoenoplectus tabernae-montani*). The water willow and the spike rush *Scirpus americanus* were only found on the North Shore Beach. Rush, tall aquatic grass (*Sparganium americanum*) and trees were favorable to emerging dragonflies also but not to the degree of *Justicia americana*. There was always more wind from the Northwest towards Pine Point (Fig. 8&9). North Shore Beach was also in more of a protected bay type area. A possible reason for not finding as many exuvia at Pine Point could be because they were blown off the vegetation (Fig 9).

Two distinct seasonal emergence patterns of dragonflies were found in this study. Warm weather from late spring too early fall is the condition needed for dragonfly emergence. In New England with only a limited amount of warm weather, the dragonflies have to emerge in the summer season. Corbet (1954) described the two different types as spring and summer species. *Epitheca cynosura* and *Leucorrhinia intacta* are considered spring species. These species emerge early in the season over a short period of time and are synchronous. Corbet (1954) believes this is when they are halted at their last instars during winter because they reach the last instars when conditions for emerging are not favorable. Then once the conditions are good in the spring they all emerge at once. The other five species are considered summer species because they emerge asynchronously to each other over the longer period of the summer. A study that was done by Lutz (1974) with *Epitheca cynosura* showed similar results as in this study relating water temperature to emergence in this particular species. Another important factor that Lutz (1974) looked at was day lengths that each was subject to. Lutz (1974) believes that the autumnal equinox plays a big role in the development of *Epitheca cynosura*. He set up an experiment to control both day length and temperature and found that with the increase of each, the final instar was completed in December opposed to June. This means that with longer days and optimal temperatures *Epitheca cynosura* could emerge in one third of the time.

Temperature and rainfall are correlated with seasonal emergence. The results of this study show interesting correlations between the two. Temperature patterns were very much as expected. Cool spring temperatures can shift the emergence pattern dates although the patterns will stay generally the same every year (Wissinger 1988). This summer had a late start with cooler temperatures than usual. As soon as the temperatures started to rise to about 20°C at the end of May, so did the amount of dragonflies emerging (Fig 1, 5). The numbers show that a few days after the week of June 24 when the temperature reached about 31°C (the hottest temperatures of the summer) the biggest numbers of emerging dragonflies were found (180 exuviae). The week of June 23 had unusually high amounts of rain the weekend before which peaked at a total of 43mm. That week only one exuviae was found. This demonstrates that large amounts of rain fall could affect emergence patterns or exuvia. Most exuvia throughout the study were found on vegetation that was right in the water and when it rained a lot of the exuv-
via might have been washed off which made it hard to get absolutely accurate counts all the time.

One of the temperature recorders used during the study on North Shore Beach malfunctioned. The water temperature data from the Onset Hobo temperature recorders was used to see if fluctuating patterns of the temperature could be correlated to the fluctuating exuvia counts. This is because it was only necessary to see how the dragonflies reacted to temperature change. The Pine Point temperature recorder data was used for everything except comparing the two sites. The differences in the Hydrolab water quality data between the two sites shows water temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen is something to study further in the future. This is because all of these vary from site to site and at different periods of the summer (Table 1). This could possibly help explain differences in emergence between the two sites because the dissolved oxygen is so low it could be more stressful for the larvae to have so little oxygen. Numbers of emerging dragonflies due too these conditions are something that could be investigated further. DO could be studied because the less DO, the worse the conditions might be which would possibly drive the larvae to emerge quicker. Bell (1971) explains that the lower the pH of the water the lower the emergence number of aquatic insects because it is more acidic. He describes dragonflies as "moderately tolerant" but as a general rule a pH of greater than 5.5 will have at least 50% successful emergence. The pH values at both sites for both dates ranged from 5.75-6.05 which would not be stressful.

Numbers of exuvia found varied between each site through the project but at the end total numbers found were a lot higher on the North Shore Beach than on Pine Point. There could be many reasons for the difference in numbers of emergence but some more obvious than others. This study of dragonfly emergence gives us information about which species of dragonflies emerge when and under what conditions. Many other questions can be answered with our data. Now that we have collected our exuviae we can use the specimens to determine population size of dragonflies at Carver Pond, behavior of different species, competition between species, and also sex ratios (Foster and Soluk 2003).

Works Cited


Truth Be Told

by Lauren Carter

I don’t know what it’s like to be born blind. I don’t know if you can be aware that there’s such a thing as sight when you don’t have it. I don’t know if you see blackness in front of you, or nothing at all, and think that this is what everyone experiences. But I do know what it’s like to be born without a father. I didn’t know what a father was, and I didn’t know that I didn’t have one. I knew that I had a mother, and aunts and uncles, and cousins, and grandparents who loved me very much, but I didn’t know that someone, something, was missing. My father’s absence was unnoticed, maybe even welcomed. He was like a well-kept secret within my family, something mentioned in whispers behind cupped hands, in quiet phone calls behind shut doors, but never out in the open, and never to me. Somewhere between the ages of two and three, I began to visit my father, infrequently, and usually under my mother’s supervision. I never quite understood what was happening when I went to see this large, unfamiliar man. I wondered who he was.

I don’t remember any one of my visits with him distinctly. I vaguely recall the look of his apartment, the shape of the rooms, the smell of the air inside, and not...
much more. Some of the images come back to me, a greenish-yellow couch and an orange rug, heavy wooden doors with brass knobs, but I can’t really remember how my father looked, or what it felt like to be with him.

What I do remember very clearly is the moment I found out that my father was dead. It was 1982, and I was four years old. My mother and I were in the kitchen in our first home, a small ranch on a dead-end street. I was sitting on the table with my legs dangling over the edge, and she was standing in front of me, over me, changing the band-aid on my forehead from a tumble I had taken earlier that week. I remember exactly what she said to me, and I remember that as she said it, she was ripping off the old band-aid in order to apply a new one.

“Lauren,” she said, “you know, your father’s dead.” She said this matter-of-factly, as if I should know that my father was dead, but all I knew was that my forehead stung and I didn’t know how to respond.

“Dead?” I asked, repeating the word, feeling its weight, a weight that was even heavier in my mouth than in my ears. I wasn’t quite sure what “father” meant to me, but I was pretty sure I knew what “dead” meant. It meant that he was gone, and that his leaving was permanent. “What, what happened to him?” I asked.

“He was very sick, honey. But it doesn’t matter,” she said. “He never bothered with you anyway.” She dabbed my cut with a cotton ball drenched in rubbing alcohol and I winced, my forehead tender and burning now.

My father didn’t bother with me. That was something I didn’t know. I thought we just didn’t see each other much. But he didn’t want to see me. He didn’t care about me. So his death, whatever death truly meant, shouldn’t matter.

“It’s ok now,” she said, rubbing a warm antibiotic cream on my skin, removing a fresh band-aid from its package, pulling the smooth, white protective strips off, then leaning forward. “Almost done,” she said, placing one side of the band-aid on my forehead, pressing down with her thumb and pushing lightly across it, as if she was sealing an envelope. Her touch was even, steady. I exhaled. “See? All better,” she said. Yes, that did feel better. The burning was almost gone.

I slid down from the table’s edge, turned to my left and walked into the parlor. I stopped momentarily by the dining room table, looking out the window, then ambled over to my Sit n’ Spin, where I spun in a tight circle, watching the world rush by in a chaos of shape and color, watching the room melting around me, bleeding like paint on a wet canvas, hoping that if I spun fast enough, I would make it all disappear.

Well, I didn’t make the room disappear. I merely got dizzy, and then I got tired, and then I dragged myself into my bedroom and drifted into a sound sleep that put the news of my father’s death in the past, and separated my past from my future.

When I awoke, I would only vaguely remember what I had learned, and I would feel nothing, because it didn’t matter, just as my mother had said. That sentence was like a warm, comfortable sweater, protecting me from the coldness of death, and when I tried it on, it fit nicely. It was easier that way, not to care, it meant that I could nod and smile when his relatives told me that I looked more like my father every day, that I could gaze at pictures of him with the indifference I might afford an abstract painting in a museum, that I could live each day of my life without his presence, and never feel a hint of his absence at all.

It was too easy.

The problem was, when I received the news of my father’s death, my father wasn’t actually dead. In fact, he had two more years to live. But it was only as a teen-
ager that I would put it all together, that I would do the math and realize that my father died when I was six, but my mother told me he had died when I was four. And it was then that I began to wonder what else I didn’t know, what else I had been wrong about. I began to wonder who my father actually was, and why I never really knew him. It wasn’t until age seventeen that I would find out, find out where my father had been, and why it was nowhere near me.

On that day, thirteen years later, in the midst of a thick, humid July, I found myself once again in a kitchen, with my mother, hearing news about my father I didn’t know how to respond to. But this time we weren’t in a ranch on a dead end street and I wasn’t a four year old sitting on the table. This time we were in a duplex on a cul-de-sac and I was a seventeen year old getting ready to go off to college.

What did she say? I thought. What is my mother saying to me? I heard the word, but I knew I must have heard her wrong.

"Prison, Laur. Your father was in prison."

Prison. The word registers in my mind. A shift inside. Like a click. Fast, unmistakable. Then everything changes. My stomach begins to burn. I feel something spreading, slow, like a warm liquid, out to my shoulders, then down my arms, and finally to my fingertips, making them tingle. I look at my fingertips. They’re sitting gingerly on the creamy white counter in our kitchen.

I look at the placemats. Wild pinks with flashes of green, a tropical scene, even though we’re in New England. Two napkins that will never be used for anything but show sit on top of them. They match the placemats and are held in perfect arrangement by two thick wooden bands, dark brown in color, that make me think of Hawaii, or Indonesia. Maybe that’s where they were made. Or maybe that’s just where the company who makes them wants you to think they were made, when really they came out of a factory in Albany. They have pictures carved in them. Of what, I can’t tell. I slide one band off the napkin, and set the napkin down on the placemat, disheveled. I hold the brown band in my hand, move it back and forth in my fingers, inspect it. My mother straightens the napkin, prepares it to be re-sheathed.

I don’t know what to say. I think there should be a right way to react, but I don’t know what it is. What am I feeling inside? Shock, surprise. Anger, for being lied to, for so many years. Relief, because there is finally an explanation, there is a reason that my dad wasn’t around, and it has nothing to do with the fact that he didn’t care about me. And a strange kind of happiness that I can’t fully explain. I am sure the feeling doesn’t make sense.

I set the brown ring down on the table and look at my mother. She looks different to me now. Just slightly. Like I’m not sure that what is and what appears to be are the same thing anymore.

An invisible line in my mind extends through my past, all the way back to a warm spring day in the first house I ever lived in, sitting on a table in the kitchen, getting my band aid changed while I learn that my father died.

And now I understand the happiness. Because finally I can feel something.

That day in the duplex, I was 17 years old. And I learned that when my father was 17 years old, he wasn’t working at Burger King like I was, or preparing for his first year of college, like I was, or falling in love for the first time, like I was, but going to the state’s only maximum security prison to serve a life sentence for second degree murder.

Allegedly, he had killed a man. In
a barroom brawl. He had been hanging out with an older crew, and drinking too much at a local bar. There was a verbal fight between my father’s group of friends and another man. It turned violent, deadly. The man was stabbed to death. My father hid the knife in his room, and when the police came looking for it a week later, they found it. My father’s friends unanimously claimed that he had murdered that man, whose name I don’t know. My father’s family was hardworking, but poor, and couldn’t afford a good defense lawyer. According to my relatives, the lawyer that was appointed to represent my father fell asleep during the trial. Several times. At age 17, my father was tried as an adult and sentenced to life in the state’s most brutal prison.

My mother told me one more thing. That my father had maintained, until the day he died, that he couldn’t remember committing the crime. That he had drank too much, and blacked out. That he never knew whether or not he committed murder that night.

After that conversation with my mother, I thought I had the facts. Or that I had some of the facts. But the more I thought about what I had learned, the more I felt as though I knew nothing about my father at all.

Because even the truth about him wasn’t true anymore; there were bits and pieces of the lie inside of it. The fact that your dad doesn’t come around much, that’s true. But the truth of that fact changes when you realize he can’t come around because he’s locked up in prison.

So I became interested, in my father, and in prisons. I did an internship at MCI-Walpole, writing a script for a documentary of the prison’s history. I sifted through reports and read through newspaper articles about the prison. I analyzed daily events and turned them into a kind of story. I toured the prison, walked through its hallways and into its cellblocks, full of prisoners, and into its former death chamber, dark and empty. I thought I was becoming an expert on the prison’s 49 year history; really, I knew very little. I knew so little that it was only after I had been working on the documentary for six months that I found out, from my mother, after some very persistent questioning, that my father had been incarcerated there. That I had been reading about inmates at Walpole as if they were complete strangers, and my own father had been one of them.

Eventually that internship ended, but through my contacts at the prison I learned that I could access my father’s prison folder, that it had become a matter of public record once he died. So that’s what I did.

I read his prison folder carefully, diligently. I learned that my father spent a year in the Departmental Segregation Unit, a place I visited about a year ago, during my internship, before I knew that my father had spent time there, a place where the worst, most incorrigible inmates are kept, a place where those inmates spend 23 hours a day in their cells, and spend the 24th hour showering, and pacing back and forth inside of an outdoor, fenced-in cage.

I learned that he earned his GED in prison, because he had gone there before completing high school. I learned that he assaulted two correction officers and three inmates, and spent the majority of his first 8 years either in 24-hour isolation, or being transferred from prison to prison. I learned that he changed his name in the early 1970’s, becoming Lawrence X. But this didn’t last long. He was back to Lawrence Burnett by 1977. I learned that courses he took and activities he became involved in amounted to good time, time taken off of his sentence. Adopting a religion meant obtaining an earlier release. I understood the name change. And I learned that my father wrote his “L’s” the same way that I do, grandly sloping, unnecessarily elaborate.

I read comments from correc-
tions officers, teachers and prison officials. “Lawrence is an intelligent individual who expresses both ideas and emotions clearly.” “He is reliable and commendable in personal appearance.” “Lawrence always came to class fully prepared. As a tutor, he helped me to conduct the class meetings.” “Lawrence had great difficulty making the adjustment.”

I read his comments. I am mentioned once, in a letter he wrote, an appeal to the superintendent for placement in a prison without walls. “I have a good job waiting for me,” he wrote in the letter, “a loving woman and a thirteen month old daughter, and my own automobile.”

I notice that I am placed after the woman and before the car.

And I looked at the pictures. There were three sets of them, with two pictures in each set, one taken from the front, the other taken from the side. In each of the pictures a black, rectangular board with white lettering hangs from his neck. The letters spell out his name, his inmate number, and the date, so I can see that the pictures span across almost 20 years. In the first picture my father looks young, innocent. His hair is cropped close to his head, and his eyes are closed. In the second picture, his face has filled out and he looks casual, yet tough. He is wearing a red track suit and his afro is large and bushy. In the final picture, he is skinny. His face and shirt are wrinkled and he looks haggard, as if he is ill.

So I read through the folder, and I wonder what he might have been. If the night of that murder was just a coincidence, an anomaly, without which the rest of his life might have played out like the lives of his siblings, successful, full of meaningful work, large families, and lots of love. Or if he was already on a path of destruction, driven by some internal demon his siblings didn’t share, and would have ended up where he was eventually, one way or the other.

And while I think about all of these things, about his past and mine, about my future, I think about the future that the court says he took away. While I drive to work sometimes, on windy back streets with tall grass and large houses and sprawling farms, streets where cars seldom pass and the speed limit sign reads “35 – strictly enforced” but no one ever goes 35 and there’s no one ever there to enforce it, not even loosely, I wonder about the victim. All this time spent thinking about my father, but what about his victim? Who did he kill? Or who did he take the rap for killing? Did that man have a daughter? I think that maybe I could find out, if I really wanted to, and visit that person’s gravesite, and lay a flower there, and maybe even speak to his relatives. But I stop myself. That must be absurd. Contacting his relatives would be wrong. Maybe even visiting his gravesite wouldn’t be right. Maybe even if I could find out who his victim was, I shouldn’t. But still I think about the victim, and I don’t quite know what is fair. I think that there’s no easily solution, no mathematical formula that can give back to one side what murder has taken away on the other. But still I wonder what should be done.

The statistics say that the national recidivism rate is between 40 and 50%. But I can’t speak for the statistics; I only know about my father. And after being paroled in 1980, he returned to prison in 1984 for aggravated assault. At 37 years old, he was sentenced to 40 to 50 years. He died 282 days after his sentencing, of colon cancer, a disease that does not run in his family. At the end of a document called a “movement history,” which records an inmate’s movements within the prison system, it simply reads “Released by Death.” I see now, as he must have seen then, that death was his only way out.
I am not done with my research. I plan to keep searching for answers, because whatever he wasn’t, Lawrence Burnett was my father, even if only briefly, and biologically. And I’ve made a promise to myself to find out who my father was, and not just what he became.