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## EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Rebekah Bonaparte  
Kristina Fleuty

## JOURNAL MANAGER

Maxwell Stevenson

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## EDITORIAL

We are pleased to welcome you to the second edition of ESTRO for this academic year. In recognition of the multi-disciplinary nature of the journal, we would like to share the connections we have made between articles in this issue. Each article in some way explores the theme of morality, either of the individual or of a society, and how the views of the collective and the individual can change dominant societal perceptions. For your reading pleasure, this issue includes an interesting mix of articles from across the four faculties.

A question to consider when reading the articles is, to what extent does the individual have a responsibility to uphold moral principles and consider others, either locally or globally, whilst asserting themselves in the quest for personal and career-orientated success? The articles contained in this issue reflect how morality can be found in many aspects of academic writing about life, global economic systems and the individual's consideration of art and literature. The first three articles, from Maximilien Von Berg, Marko Grudev and David A. Church, show awareness of the desire for capitalist success, versus the moral obligation of individuals, countries and companies to the global society. Lucy Cook's article examines morality within a literary context, looking at societal issues of race, gender and class in the writing of William Faulkner. The next two articles, from Antoinette Hewitt and Virginia Cain, examine the work of individuals who observe the world around them; Hewitt and Cain consider how individuals can challenge the dominant and often traditional views of society, in order to form modern creative perspectives. The next article, from Ellyn Coe, relates to Cain's, as both consider ways in which beauty can be realised through our subjective views. The next article, from Katie Groves, considers how individuals relate to others in an emotional capacity. The final article is Ralph Barker's exploration of the impact an individual can have on cultural movements and is a passionate expression of the author's personal feelings on how art should be interpreted.

The first article is written by Maximilien Von Berg and titled "Why is it often said that natural resources are a curse?" Von Berg explores the political and economic implications for countries rich in natural resources. He assesses the correlation between countries that are resource-rich, but also poor and undemocratic, asserting that natural resources can have a positive or negative impact on society. As part of his analysis, Von Berg challenges the Resource Curse Theory, and considers political and economic ramifications on the people of a country rich in natural resources.

Following Von Berg's article, the next explores the political and economic ramifications of another global issue. Marko Grudev's article, "Pogge and Singer: differences in their accounts of the duties of citizens in affluent societies to the global poor", also shows awareness of issues connected to the global economy. He examines the relationship

between global capitalism and poverty in developing countries. Through his assessment of Pogge and Singer, Grudev questions whether developed countries are morally obliged to deal with issues of global poverty.

On a similar note, David A. Church's article, titled "Committing white-collar crime: what organisational mechanisms exist to ensure accountability? Can this profession still be relied on to regulate itself?", challenges practices underpinning capitalist financial systems, which are integral to the global economy. Church examines the relationship between the field of accountancy and white-collar crime, exploring issues such as corporate wrongdoing, ineffectual organisational structures and poor public awareness. He questions the moral obligations and responsibilities of individuals working within the profession, a number of which have been exposed committing criminal acts, for example embezzling money. He argues that it is possible for the profession to strive for greater accountability.

The subjective notions of accountability can be applied to the moral framework of a society. The dominant beliefs of society can dictate an individual's beliefs, and if these are immoral who can regulate the injustices that exist in society? Lucy Cook analyses William Faulkner's, *The Sound and the Fury* in her article titled, "Born below Mason and Dixon: the role of Quentin Compson and the interaction of racial, gender and class codes of the south in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*" and explores his engagement with the social codes of the American South and the effect on the individual. Cook focuses on the narrative of Quentin Compson, primarily in the section of the novel titled, "June Second 1910". The author presents a stimulating assessment of issues such as incest, whilst exploring how such actions are perceived by Quentin, because of the moral codes he has grown up with in the South. It is possible to draw parallels between Compson and ourselves in that some of our actions as individuals and a society may be deemed moral according to the dominant moral code yet it does not necessarily mean that it is right. Issues of war, and prejudices based on class, race and gender are still present today and whether or not these can be changed by the individual alone is a question that Cook's article provokes thought about.

Antoinette Hewitt's article explores Gauguin and Van Gogh's expression of subjective meaning as part of the symbolist movement. The article titled, "The Symbolist Movement portrayed in the art of Gauguin and Van Gogh", draws on the techniques, materials and inspirations the artists used to create their work. Hewitt provides an analysis of each artist's own life, considering how their experiences and the religious and spiritual narratives of the time were reflected in their work. The article gives an insightful explanation of the artwork and shows how creative minds are influenced by the world around them. This can be seen in the example of Van Gogh's preoccupation with the scriptures at a time when the religious rhetoric influenced cultural movements. The article demonstrates how one can interpret the trends of the time and the artist feelings

about these trends. If we are to look at contemporary art what conclusions could we draw about our society today?

Virginia Cain's article reflects on how individual perceptions can change those of society despite the dominant beliefs of the time. "Beautiful Experiments: Newton's Decomposition of Sunlight" discusses why Newton's decomposition of sunlight with a prism experiment was considered to be beautiful by physicists. The article outlines how Newton, in doing the experiment, challenged religious views of the time using the individual perspective he had developed. Cain demonstrates why Newton decided to carry out the experiment, explores how he did so through tricks of light and observation, and explains his colourful results. The article provides a new concept of success in the scientific experiments as it defines not only how science experiments can be viewed as something that requires objectivity but as an art form in which the scientists' subjective viewpoint makes science beautiful in its own right.

Just as individual perspectives allow for beauty to be revealed in experiments, Ellyn Coe reveals the beauty of human interaction between two people, in "Smoking Kills". In this descriptive piece of creative writing the reader can identify with the nameless characters and develop their own perceptions of them. Coe allows the reader to gain a sense of the old couple's connection through their daily rituals, despite there being no dialogue between them. Moreover, you can read into the more overt messages of the piece, for example, the irony of life. It is easy to miss the beauty in our everyday lives and Coe demonstrates how beauty is held in a person's perception as is detailed in her work.

To understand how the individual behaves in various social contexts, it is necessary to understand how the individual themselves operates. Katie Groves takes a psychological approach to the study of emotion within human beings. In her article "Empathy and judging other's pain; an fMRI study of Alexithymia.' A critical review," Groves evaluates an experimental paper on emotional states in people, specifically empathy and the condition of Alexithymia. Groves discusses the outcomes of experiments used to underpin the theoretical approach of the paper and explores how patients with Alexithymia express emotion and relate to the emotional states of others.

The final article again demonstrates the impact of an individual movement within a society. Ralph Barker's article titled, "Universalism" explores the concept of art as everything whilst experimenting with the conventional form and style of the manifesto. The piece is both a discussion and celebration of art that seeks to bring about action that disrupts the way in which we view art. It is a potentially divisive piece of writing which comments on the seven Dada manifestos in order to inspire progressive thoughts about art today. Barker rejects commercial art and enforces the importance of creation to every man; the intention is to evoke a reaction in the reader and in the tradition of artistic manifestos takes a life stance in relation to the view of art.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the journal and finding your own connections between articles. Hopefully this issue has inspired you to gain a fresh perspective on topics both familiar and unfamiliar, question how your subjectivity is affected by the world around you and consider why you see the world the way you do. We encourage you to draw your own conclusions from the articles; whether you agree with each author's viewpoints or not, this issue will certainly get you thinking!

Finally we would like to thank all those who contributed to this issue, authors and reviewers in particular, who make ESTRO an exciting journal to read and assemble. We look forward to receiving new submissions so we can continue to provide you with a sample of the intellectual talent at the University of Essex.

*Rebekah Bonaparte and Kristina Fleuty*

## Why is it often said that Natural Resources are a Curse?

Maximilien Von Berg

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### ABSTRACT

The resource curse theory is one of the long-standing pillars in political economy associating resources and democratic development. Though it is well established that many resource-rich countries are poor and undemocratic, this paper seeks to reassess the resource curse literature in light of more recent publications and developments. This paper claims the causal link made between resources and the lack of democratic and economic development is simplistic and incomplete. Using a variety of case-studies and fresh scholarly literature, this paper challenges the resource curse theory and suggests that resources may sustain autocracy as they may fuel development – the main determinants being regime type and political leadership. This paper suggests that, on the whole, natural resources can be a blessing or a curse.

### Introduction

Political scientists and economists have tried to identify the factors that generate economic growth and political reform, as well as those that hinder democratisation and development. An important theoretical framework presented for the persistence authoritarianism in the developing world is that of the “resource curse” theory. This article attempts to present a balanced view of this concept. After analysing *why* it is often said resources are a curse, I shall discuss whether a *resource curse* exists. I begin by looking at the assumptions underlying the resource curse theory and illustrate them with empirical evidence. I then seek to challenge the idea of a resource curse by deconstructing the causal link between natural resources and authoritarianism. In light of past and present literature, I propose an alternative understanding of the effect of natural resources on politics. It is, however, implausible to try and give an exhaustive account of the effects of natural resources on political regimes in such a brief synthesis.

Many scholars have studied the impact of natural resources on governments. The general view is that countries home to large mineral resources – oil, gas, diamonds, gold and copper – harness the progress of democracy. In the Middle East, this is conceptualised by Michael Ross’s “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” (Ross, 2001) His theory draws from a classic political science paradigm identified by Hussein Mahdavy in the 1970’s: “the rentier state thesis” (cited in Huntington, 1996). In “The Clash of Civilizations” (cited in Huntington, 1991), Samuel Huntington reverses the American motto by claiming there is “no representation without taxation” (Ibid.). The belief

in the resource curse and its implications as *the rule* for explaining authoritarianism in resource-rich developing nations is supported by the majority of the scholarly literature. Nevertheless, another school has recently come up with rival findings.

### The Political Economy of the Resource Curse

To this day many regions where minerals are found in abundance remain in turmoil. These countries are plagued by corruption, slow growth, instability, wars, poverty and the absence of human rights. The existence of mineral resources keeps autocrats in place and populations in disarray.

### The Rentier State

Mahdavy contends that oil serves as a direct source of revenue for Middle Eastern governments (cited in Huntington, 1996). Oil allows the rulers to refrain from levying taxes on the population. The regimes use this inflow of “easy money”<sup>1</sup> to build strong security apparatuses and to repress dissenters. The Gulf monarchies are textbook cases, with their tendency to co-opt and buy off the population by distributing patronage. Such states solve issues with bribes, often block privatisation, and delay necessary structural changes to stay in power and capitalise on oil and gas revenues (cited in Huntington, 1996).

The mechanism is refined in Morrison’s work (2009): Non-tax revenues tend to increase the stability of regimes because they provide external inflows of cash that can be spent at the incumbent government's discretion (Ibid.). In addition, this syndrome appears not only with resource rents, but also with foreign aid. Hence, the very nature of non-tax revenues seems irrelevant because the consequence for governments is the same (Ibid.). Another important aspect is that resource-rich states tend to over-spend and “live beyond their means” (Karl, 1999). Politicians focus on short term gains and fail to predict the consequences if commodity prices fall (Ibid.). Dominant and single-party regimes – the most resilient form of authoritarianism – are able to maintain power when they can “politicize public resources” (Greene, 2010). Incumbent authoritarian parties that control resources are able to outspend their rivals easily.

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that oil-price increases are negatively correlated with freedom in petro-states (Friedman, 2006). One path to reform may thus require a decrease in oil prices to force these governments to become more sensitive to public opinion, by having to respond with policies and concessions rather than distributing patronage and co-opting challengers to the resilient oil-states (Ibid.).

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<sup>1</sup> Money earned without having to work for it.



## The Dutch Disease

Investigating the resource curse cannot avoid the economic aspects imbedded in its logic. The presence of a mineral resource can hinder the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors.<sup>2</sup> Over-reliance on resource exports triggers a convergence of the units of production and the labour force towards the extraction of minerals. The phrase “the Dutch disease” was coined by *The Economist* magazine in reference to the Netherlands and the negative effect of the discovery of large natural gas reserves on their economy (The Economist, 1977).

Sachs and Wagner found that “great natural resource wealth” meant significantly slower growth than in resource-poor counterparts (Frankel, 2010). The macroeconomics of the Dutch disease lead to a currency appreciation, an increase in government spending, the rise of non-traded goods, and a shift of labour toward the production of the commodity. People abandon their traditional activity in favour of one offering higher returns – in the short run. This phenomenon is known as “de-industrialisation”.

In this case the Dutch monarchy endured the shrinkage of its manufacture in spite of its democratic system and strong institutions, although the democratic nature of the Netherlands was never altered or threatened. If natural resources have a negative effect on the development of democracy, this example suggests their discovery does not challenge a regime that was democratic prior to the discovery of natural resources, in this case gas.

## Case Studies: Countries and Minerals

Nigeria’s case exemplifies the effect of sudden resource-rent increases. Nigeria is now the fifth largest producer in OPEC and tenth in the world with approximately 80% of budgetary revenues extracted from oil (CIA World Factbook). Nigeria is also one of the poorest countries in the world and has only enjoyed ten years of civilian rule since its independence in 1960.<sup>3</sup> Nigeria’s case suggests the discovery of oil in 1956 - and near simultaneous independence - produces neither democracy, growth or welfare (Walker, 1999). Nigeria’s failure to capitalise on the considerable resources it owns and the country’s stagnation – if not downfall – as an indirect consequence of its resources, is a case-in-point for the resource curse theory.

More specifically, oil prices can be understood as a determining factor in democracy (Friedman, 2006). Friedman uses charts to demonstrate a recrudescence of authoritarianism in Nigeria and Iran during oil booms. In both cases there was a negative correlation between the price of oil and

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<sup>2</sup> Industry and Services.

<sup>3</sup> Annual GDP per capita of just \$2500 in 2010 ranks Nigeria 177<sup>th</sup> out of 227 world countries (CIA World Factbook).

freedom in Iran, and between the number of independent newspapers and elections in Nigeria (Ibid.).

Though one could imagine foreign international organisations and corporations helping developing countries use resources to fuel development, the role of international corporations seems dubious. The private sector does not seem to exert a positive influence *on the ground* and a country like Nigeria experiences frequent domestic oil shortages. More specifically, Shell's activities in the Niger Delta have been criticised for harming democratic and economic progress in Nigeria (Bronwen, 1999). Bronwen decries the collusion between Shell and the Nigerian authorities to put down unrest (Bronwen, 1999, p.284). With regards to non-governmental organisations, Nigeria struck a debt-restructuring deal with the IMF and received a \$1 billion credit in exchange for promised economic and social reforms in 2000 (CIA World Factbook). Nothing came of this and Nigeria pulled out of the IMF in 2002.

The US has been criticised for its relations with the absolutist regime of Saudi Arabia through Aramco. It has been largely documented that the Saudis export their oil in exchange of arms from the United States (Yamani, 2009). Interestingly, Juan Pablo Perez of Venezuela, a founding father of OPEC,<sup>4</sup> said, referring to oil, that in the following decades the world would be “drowning in the devil's excrement” (Cited in Karl, 1999). In the 1970's, oil price hikes led to nationalisations and expropriations of businesses in petro-states. These were reversed when the oil frenzy came to an end, causing rents to decrease substantially.

Consistent with Ross, during the oil booms real GDP<sup>5</sup> and GDP *per capita* fell compared to prior years in Venezuela, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Iran and Algeria (Karl, 1999, p.38). Booms and busts are generally harmful to freedom and development, though periods of low oil prices are more prone for reform (Karl, 1999, p.47).

The rational short term power-maximizing choice for authoritarian governments is to use revenues of exports to increase their personal and entourage wealth as a means to remain in power. The result is that the political economy of natural resources incurs the resilience of authoritarianism.

### The Myth of the Resource Curse

I shall now pay tribute to rival interpretations that challenge the general validity of the resource curse theory. There is evidence for numerous successful developments, both economic and political, in spite of the existence of natural resources –Australia, Brazil, Botswana, Chile,

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<sup>4</sup> Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

<sup>5</sup> Gross Domestic Product.

Norway, Peru, the United States and Venezuela. The simplistic theory that natural resources hinder democracy has been amended by more recent research. Though we seek to develop probabilistic theories, which can never bar us from finding exceptions, the theory that resources hinder democracy is affected by a number of caveats; scholars have contributed to better understanding of the mechanisms that may lead to autocracy or prevent democracy in the presence of natural resources. Returning to the case of the Netherlands, the Dutch disease did not affect the country's entrenched democracy by any means and Norway's oil reliance does not lessen its status as one of the most advanced democracies.

First of all, natural resource exports need to be studied relatively to other exports. Some countries have export-led economies yet they may not be resource reliant. It is important to specify the terms we use and to be rigorous in assessing the classification of the countries investigated. Secondly, the reliance on resources is based on political, cultural and legal institutions (Haber and Menaldo, 2009). Weak states are more likely to focus on resource extraction and authoritarianism is inherent to most regimes before raw materials are discovered (Ibid.). One hypothesis could be that democracies devolve less effort than autocracies in searching for natural resources because the former seek to develop all sectors of the economy - however this remains to be tested in future research. A possible intuition could be that political elites in non-democratic politics will focus on searching for minerals, as this is one of the most lucrative sources of revenue. Thirdly, the time frame considered in assessing the impact of natural resources is crucial in correctly identifying their long-term effect.

#### **Foreign Rents and Resource Reliance in Perspective**

Much of the research is mistaken in considering the share of exports as a percentage of GDP instead of the share of resource exports as a percentage of exports. The difference creates biases that lead to classifying Singapore as resource abundant when in actual fact it is not. In effect, Singapore is a re-exporter of natural resource-intensive commodities, not a resource dependent state (Lederman and Maloney, 2007, p.4). Instead, Haber and Minaldo propose Leamer's net exports of natural resource-intensive commodities per-worker measure (Ibid.). There is a difference between rentierism and resource dependency. The former compounds the share of exports as part of the government's revenue, whereas the latter deals with the share of resource rents as part of total exports as a percentage of GDP. In other words, the latter is a more accurate estimate of the real importance of resources in the economy (Herb, 2005, p.298).

Furthermore, we have to rewind back to the 1970's when the price of commodities skyrocketed. The main exporters were accumulating foreign debt at the same time as they were focusing exclusively on exports, which signaled trouble when prices dropped (Lederman and Maloney, 2007, p.5). The cause was the inappropriate macroeconomic policy issued by the intelligentsia (Ibid.). Politicians' inability to identify the risks pertaining to a shift towards a more resource-

dependent economy led to the Dutch disease and hard economic downturns when the price of commodities dropped. What I seek to emphasize is that the negative effect of being dependent on resource rents was only made possible by governments at the time. Therefore, the negative impact of natural resource dependency was conditional to having inept governments in power.

### **Institutions and Development**

The formal institutional setting and political system in a particular country appear to take precedence over financial interests. Subramanian and Trebbi use the rule of law and the respect of property rights as indicators of institutional effectiveness and others add the variable of expropriation risk.<sup>6</sup> Their finding is that “cursed” states lacked institutions before they enjoyed a resource boom.

One can find strong evidence that oil may hurt democracy; but one also finds very significant evidence of the positive influence of oil (Herb, 2005, p.297). Herb differentiates “richer” oil states from others suggesting that they allocate resources in a way that benefits the middle class, increases GDP *per capita*, and improves welfare (Ibid.). Higher rent boosts growth and brings economic development. There is abundant literature linking economic development to political development.

### **Time and the Order of Things**

Applying time-series on longer historical periods have shown variations in results. A long run approach achieves a clearer vision of the effect of natural reserves on policy. Herb finds that the direct and short-run effect is to reinforce authoritarianism, but that GDP growth ultimately benefits the population in the long run (Ibid.).

During the US's pre-war industrialisation, in half a century of democracy in Venezuela, in Australia since the 1960's, in Norway post-1969, in Chile since 1983, and in Peru and Brazil more recently, governments have used natural resources to purport growth in their nation (Czelusta and Wright, 2004, pp.4-7). This suggests that the time frame considered is unmistakably important; more democratic countries use the natural resources to improve the nation as a whole, whereas autocratic ones resort to enriching small elites.

Venezuela would seem a controversial case if one looks at Chavez's regime. It seems oil revenue is the main asset the Venezuelan president is using to fulfill his totalitarian aspirations. However, looking at Venezuela's history since a democratic government was elected in 1959, the evidence is

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<sup>6</sup> Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi (2003) use the rule of law and protection of property rights (taken from Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton, 2002) and Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2001) use a measure of expropriation risk to investors.

different. The country used oil and gas resources to promote democracy and resisted coups that overthrew many South American regimes in the 1970's (Dunning, 2008, p.3).

Chaudhry and Vandewalle argue that if the oil boom occurs before an institutional building process, then the latter is blocked. Instead, if an oil boom takes place afterwards, the spoils of oil will be better allocated (Anderson, 1999, p.353).

### Resourceful Success Stories

Ross's resource reliance dataset presents Botswana, Bahrain and Chile as respectively first, third, and fourth in non-oil mineral reliance<sup>7</sup> (Ross, 2001, p.327). Yet Botswana is the most stable, democratically elected regime in Africa and has been democratic for half a century (CIA World Factbook). Bahrain, though not democratic, is the most liberal Gulf monarchy and Chile is a prominent South American success story. Botswana is four times more reliant on resource exports than Chad (Jensen, 2004, p.837) – where National Assembly elections have been withheld since 2002.

Luciani sets the threshold of rentierism at 40% of GDP (Herb, 2005, p.299). Over the period from 1972 to 1999, the average rentierism rate of Bahrain was 59% and Saudi Arabia – the most conservative monarchy – was 80%. This appears to support the idea that heavy reliance on resource export equates to less freedom. However, Yemen is only reliant on resources for 46% of GDP – barely a rentier – and is doing far worse in terms of democracy, stability and growth than its neighbours. Furthermore, whilst Kuwait's commodity exports represent 88% of GDP, it is considered a relatively liberal monarchy, as are those of Jordan - no oil - and Bahrain, the latter's economy gradually shifting to banking and services as the result of diminishing oil reserves. All three hold elections for parliament (Brooker, 2009, p.62), whereas no elections have taken place in Yemen since 2003 (CIA World Factbook).

Dunning and Haber and Menaldo's combined findings respectively demonstrate statistically significant links between natural resources and democracy in Ecuador, Chile and Bolivia (Dunning, 2008, p.4), and between freedom and resource-reliance during boom periods in Norway, Ecuador, Venezuela and Mexico (Haber and Menaldo, 2009, p.10).

Malaysia gradually managed a transition towards a diversified economy by decreasing its oil reliance since the 1970's, under governmental impulse (CIA World Factbook). The economy remains healthy and under close scrutiny of an effective central bank (Ibid.). Malaysia is in fact more reliant on oil exports than its neighbour, Indonesia, which is faring worse democratically

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<sup>7</sup> Resource exports/GDP.

with similar quantities of oil and gas.<sup>8</sup> Chile bears heavy reliance on export of commodities combined with sustained growth. Wise economic policies began under dictator Pinochet but bloomed after the 1990 democratic elections. The fluctuations of commodity prices have not affected the stability of the government. Strict constitutional regulations on government spending and an independent Chilean central bank have helped Chile step into a virtuous circle (CIA World Factbook).

The most powerful determinant of democracy remains the political system and its leadership. Rents can only have an accelerator effect towards autocracy if no institutions check on the government; but resources cannot be highlighted as a cause of autocracy. The negative effect of natural resources on democracy is conditional; it can only kick in if a corrupt, incompetent or greedy political class is in place *ex ante*. Emphasizing this point, the Dutch disease did not impact the quality of Holland's democracy in the same way that the discovery of oil in Nigeria did not fuel democracy in such a resolutely corrupt country.

### **Resources: A Blessing?**

Few have hypothesised the positive repercussions of resources on democracy and development. Noland found that oil is “not a robust factor behind [the] lack of democracy” in the Middle East (Noland, 2007, p.20). Dunning tested the likelihood of oil hindering democracy in Latin America and found oil and democracy were positively correlated (Frankel, 2010, p.21) – even though this observation was not systematic. Resource booms can increase or decrease attractiveness of democracy (Frankel, 2012, p.11). On one hand, elites might have incentives to control production to receive higher yields of resource revenues. On the other hand, they might also want to reinforce democracy to insure the redistribution of income and to protect private capital. Crunching the evidence, it appears that neither are natural resources a curse, nor are they a blessing.

### **Conclusion**

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did not see the eradication of authoritarianism. This article sought to demonstrate that resources can both protect and threaten democracy. Ironically, some of the most gifted countries, in terms of natural resource abundance, are some of the less well-off. The effects of minerals on democracy encompass many shades of grey. Time frame, institutional development and nature of leadership have an important role in determining whether resources are used to hinder or enable economic, social and political developments.

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<sup>8</sup> Currently at 40% of GDP.

Why then, are natural resources said to be a curse? The short answer is because this observation fails to address the context. The undemocratic features associated with rentier states can also be found in non-rentier authoritarian neighbours (Ibid.). Turning the observation around, could oil states be as undemocratic without oil? Possibly; but supposing oil were suddenly to be found in democratic regions, it is unlikely that the same outcome would occur. My understanding is that a resource curse is caused by the political system in place. Governments have the opportunity to choose the path to reform or to repression, the responsibility to choose wise policies, and a duty to serve their citizens. The gifts of nature can only doom a state if the government is incompetent. In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe's recent reckless economic decisions simply remind us that, at the risk of sounding dull, "democracy is the worse form of government except all those other forms of government that have been tried from time to time" (Churchill, 1947), especially in resource rich countries.

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## **Pogge and Singer: differences in their accounts of the duties of citizens in affluent societies to the global poor.**

Marko Grudev

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### **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays we live in an age that reflects the incredible achievements of mankind. Developments such as air travel, computers, the enormous quantity of information available on the Internet, and even space travel, which seemed impossible just 100 years ago, are now the norm. There is, however, another development of the modern, global society that is distressing - poverty. Every day thousands of people die as a result of living in poverty, the reality of which is a life of hunger and susceptibility to preventable diseases. Moreover, we are more aware of these problems now – in our everyday lives and as part of academic discussions - due to widespread media and Internet influence. Two of the most influential philosophers of our time, namely Thomas Pogge and Peter Singer, made the problems of global poverty the central issue of their academic careers. This article will firstly outline Singer's account of how the citizens of developed countries could and moreover are morally obliged to deal with issues of global poverty. The article will also explore some critiques of Singer's work. The article will then critically assess Pogge's account on the problems of global poverty. I will argue that Pogge's ideas seem more applicable and are more persuasive. Finally, the article will argue that namely the problem of global poverty could be seen as being caused by structural features of the global capitalist society we are part of in the developed world.

### **Singer's account of the duties of the rich towards the global poor**

In his book "Famine, Affluence and Morality" (1972), Peter Singer proposes it is the duty of people living in affluent societies to regard global poverty as a central issue. In order to illustrate this, the Australian thinker gives us the famous pond example – if we are walking around the edge of a pond and see a child drowning in the water, we are morally obliged to save the child, regardless of the fact that this will ruin our new and expensive shoes. This metaphor suggests that common morality prioritizes, or at least should prioritize, human life over all material possessions, even the expensive ones. From here Singer makes the point that there is no difference if a child is drowning in a pond near us or starving in Africa. Moreover, he argues that as every mentally sane individual is morally obliged to save the child in the pond, he or she also has a moral obligation to save a child if it is starving, ill or dying from preventable causes in the Third World.

We must also acknowledge that the pond example in the work of Singer is a clear example of 'positive duties', or the duty 'to assist' (Singer, 1972).

Furthermore Peter Singer stresses a further action every person living in a developed country should be obliged to take, which is to donate everything beyond his or her physical survival to the salvation of the global poor. This, of course, seems a very radical measure, especially for someone whose life is dominated by spending money and resources on things he or she does not actually need in order to survive. Again, the pond example shows us why we should do this – moral priority. As the human life is more valuable than any material possessions, according to common morality we should sacrifice our material-orientated lifestyle in order to save human lives. Moreover, we must do this not out of charity caused by a moment of compassion but out of a strict moral obligation towards other human beings whose lives we could save (Singer, 1972).

### **Criticism of Singer's account**

Although Singer's account - on the duties of the citizens of developed societies towards the global poor - seems accurate and morally justified it meets some very heavy criticism that this article will seek to evaluate. The first of these critiques is the so-called 'distance objection' – both physical and moral. The physical distance objection basically states that we do not have obligation to the global poor, simply because they are too geographically distant from us in contrast with the child in the pond, who is right in front of our eyes. This objection, however, does not seem too persuasive because common morality does not determine that someone standing one metre from the hypothetical pond is more obliged to help than someone who is 100 metres away for example, although the physical distance in the case of global poverty could be 100 times greater. Moreover, to take this idea to extremes, even if you go to the Moon, there will still be the child drowning in the pond or dying in Africa and you being at the Moon, or in some other country would not change this fact, nor your moral obligation to the person in need; because we are all human beings of equal intrinsic value, living in an interdependent global society, we are obliged to help each other (Singer, 1972).

Furthermore, the moral distance objection also seems rather naïve. It implies that our obligation to help other human beings only extends towards people who are close to us, for example friends, relatives, members of the same nation or society. From an emotional or psychoanalytic point of view this may seem persuasive, as we indeed have an obligation towards people who are emotionally close to us. But emotional closeness is not necessarily moral closeness; the two should not be confused. In fact a person could as easily have emotional detachment to objects and people that are irrationally distant from the self. And morality has to do with reason not with irrational emotions. Therefore one

may argue that as we all live on one planet, in one global economic structure, in a situation of constant and increasing change of information and culture, we are all members of the same interconnected society. Therefore, we all have moral and rational obligation to every other human being, regardless of how one feels towards members of their immediate society (Arthur, 1974).

Another applicable critique is that the situation of the global poor could be seen as a bottomless and unaccountable barrel, which could easily lose all the resources we invest in it due to things such as underdeveloped social structures, corrupted governments and poor economic systems. This, however, does not mean that our obligation towards the global poor is diminished or even weakened, but rather the approach of donating everything we have is clearly wrong and ineffective (Arthur, 1974).

Furthermore, I find another critique of Singer's account much more persuasive. If, hypothetically, we donate everything beyond our survival to the global poor would not this mean an end of things that we cherish, which are beyond our physical survival, such as art, music and culture in general? Are we ready to live like animals, satisfying just our physical needs, regardless of the need to express ourselves through art and culture? What is even more important here is that our understanding of moral obligations to other people, one could argue, has developed exactly because of the cultural and humanist development of our societies. Secondly, these high levels of moral consciousness have been achieved using resources that are considered to be 'unnecessary' (according to Singer's account) spent on culture and education. Moreover, one could also argue that from an economic point of view this seems dangerous, as it could spurn enormous turmoil in the developed world, which may result in developed countries ending up at the same economic level as the countries initially needing help.

I also find another critique of Singer's view important, which is strictly philosophic and is the issue of who determines what the common morality is. If we assume that common morality is covered by the philosophers and they are the people who are to say what is "good" and respectively "bad", then Singer is clearly right and this critique is irrelevant. However, if we are to assume that morality is more a product of people or social structure - a system of beliefs and practices repeated over time - then I say Singer is merely exploiting a contradiction in common morality through his pond example. Moreover, following this line of thought, as the people, not philosophers, determine what common morality is, one may say that Singer is clearly wrong in his view. However, I personally think that common morality is indeed determined by the people, but none could deny the role of the philosophers in outlining to us the state of our morality, but never having to determine it for themselves. Furthermore, as people are proven to be irrational beings, ruled by emotions more than rational thinking, it is absolutely possible that contradictions such as the pond example are to be found.

The final, and in my opinion, most valid critique I would like to draw attention to, in response to Singer's account, is that it does not provide a solution to real-life problems, such as bad government, corrupt politics, economic underdevelopment. For every rational human being it is clear that nobody, or at least not the vast majority of people, is going to sacrifice their lifestyle for the sake of the global poor. Probably, it could be possible that the citizens of affluent societies are capable of donating much and therefore they are to a certain extent (determined by themselves) morally obliged to help the global poor, but in no case obliged to donate everything. Consequently, Singer's idea is applicable only in a theoretical world populated not by people - rather some species of highly moral beings - incapable of resolving real-life problems such as global poverty.

### **Pogge's argument about the global poverty**

A much more persuasive account for understanding global poverty and what is more important – a realistic, applicable idea of how to deal with the issue – is to be found in the work of Thomas Pogge. The first thing, according to Pogge, is that what we, as citizens of affluent societies, should compensate Third World countries that to a great extent were harmed and impoverished by the colonial rule that ended not so long ago; many parts of Africa but also the Asian subcontinent, the Middle East as well as South-West Asia, for a large part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, suffered economic exploitation, foreign intervention, massacres, famine caused by the redirection of resources within the colonial systems they were part of. Moreover, the subsequent drawing of political borders, regardless of ethnic and linguistic realities, also enforced by the former colonial powers, still have a tremendous negative effect on the political development of these countries. It is clear that under colonial rule developed countries violated their duties not to harm those who already lived in poverty. Furthermore, here we must also acknowledge that before the era of colonialism - which effectively began in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries - most of the Western powers were themselves quite poor. Moreover, by acknowledging that the Industrial Revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century was fueled by slave labor and cheap resources from the colonies, we could conclude that the main reason why the West has developed is because of colonial exploitation. A particular example of this is the 'Atlantic triangular trade' where people from Africa were brought to the New World as slaves in order to produce cheap raw materials. These raw materials were subsequently brought to Europe's newly established factories and used to produce the West's wealth. Finally, it is also important to mention here that the relations of exploitation between the colonial powers and the subjugated colonies have contributed to the cultural and ideological division between the 'West', which is often perceived as intrinsically rational, prosperous and developed, and the 'East' as irrational, violent and underdeveloped. Moreover, this bilateral relationship further harms the developing world and its prospects of a better future (Pogge, 2004).

The second proposition of Pogge, in order to battle global poverty, is against the harmful trade restrictions of the World Trade Organization. The World Trade Organization made it much cheaper to trade between two developed countries than between a rich and poor country. Here, rightfully, Pogge recognizes this as a straight violation of the negative duties not to harm any country's economic development. His solution is straight forward – by removing these trade restrictions the developing countries will undoubtedly be much more economically competitive and consequently able to develop their economic wellbeing (Pogge, 2004).

Pogge recognizes another significant violation of the negative duties towards the global poor. The international community, dominated by the richest people, recognizes any government who manages to secure its position, regardless of how it has obtained this power. It does not matter if the government is democratically elected, legitimate or not. Furthermore, most of the undemocratic governments, as well as all that do not secure their legitimacy, endure consequences for the people they represent. This practice of recognising internationally who is in power must be ceased according to Pogge (Pogge, 2004).

### **Critiques of Pogge's view**

There are, of course, critiques on Pogge's view, which this article must outline. The first of them is that it simply does not take into account domestic factors such as social structure, culture, specific economic situations and politics. The second line of critique is an empirical one, namely that the rich may in fact not be rich enough to pay for the development of the poor (Jaggar, 2010).

I find another critique on Pogge's work also very vivid; colonialism was a problem for most of the developing world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now, when the colonial system has been largely dismantled, some of its legacy, such as the artificial drawing of borders, could be overcome if former colonies were determined. This is not the case because their internal social, economic and political features, at least directly, have nothing to do with colonial rule. Second of all, the restrictions of the World Trade Organization are there for some economic reason such as the fact that developing countries, with their economic instability and internal pressure, are much less reliable trade partners even if they have something to trade. I am eager to assert that this is as much a problem of the profit-seeking capitalist mode of production that we are part of, as it is that the international community recognizes whoever is in power in a given country, prioritizing profit over morality.

However, there is another side of this argument. Some authors such as Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that although the traditional form of colonial rule ended, most of the former colonies still experience

what is called neo-colonialism. This is a rather new form of economic exploitation where multinational companies, mostly originating from the old colonial powers, use the social and political instability of the former colonies in order to maximize their profit. In fact almost all of the countries in Africa, despite being rich in natural resources, are exploited through their internal instability and corruption by large Western mining and oil companies. The main point of the two authors here is that through these multinational companies the exploitative influence of the western powers in their former colonies is in effect continued. Moreover, this 'new world order' could be seen as completely different from the colonial system as economic exploitation is maintained by institutions like the IMF or the World Bank. In this new system the Third World is incorporated, without direct political rule, into a sovereign global political order established by the developed world.

### **Comparing Singer and Pogge's accounts**

In order to compare the accounts of the two philosophers from a normative point of view it is of considerable importance to compare the philosophical cores of their claims, namely the distinction between negative and positive duties. Pogge places emphasis mainly on the so-called 'negative duties' – in this case the moral duty of the developed countries not to harm the Third World. In contrast, Singer argues about what is called 'positive duties', in this case the duty to assist the global poor. In terms of comparing the two thinkers, in order to determine whose argument is more persuasive, the first thing to do is pay attention to how common morality refers to the negative and positive duties. For example, every one of us undoubtedly has a moral duty not to kill other human beings, not to steal and not to lie. The important thing in this example is that we have our negative duties every day, every hour, every second – they are virtually an inseparable part of our existence. Moreover, they refer to each and every one of us – rich, poor, clever, stupid, male and female. Positive duties, on the other hand, do not enjoy constant usage – if we help someone we are helping them here and now and not necessarily again tomorrow. Moreover, what seems more problematic about positive duties is that it is not very clear who they refer to. For example, Singer says all citizens of affluent societies are morally obliged to donate everything beyond their physical survival to the global poor. This leads to the question of what physical survival is. For example, for someone in a certain society a Rolls-Royce may be deemed a necessity of life; it is clear, from a moral point of view, that in order to help the global poor we should, not exclusively, but for the most part, refer to the negative duties, a good example of which is to be found in the work of Pogge.

So far the article has outlined many normative comparisons between Pogge and Singer. However, here I want to draw a very basic but still vivid distinction between their views on the problems of global poverty. To do this I must first of all state what the very point of philosophy - in this case

specifically political philosophy - is. If we assume that philosophy relates to us stories about high morality - about angelic moral creatures called people - it is clear that Singer's view is more persuasive. But if we are to look at the real, material world, with persistent problems of famine, misery and diseases, nobody could deny that Pogge provides us with a more accurate account of how to tackle these problems.

## Conclusion

This article critically examined the differences between the accounts of global poverty from Peter Singer and Thomas Pogge. The article concluded that as Pogge's account is under much less significant critique it is more persuasive. What has proved to be even more important is that Singer's account is applicable only in the minds of philosophers. In contrast, Pogge's account is much more realistic and problem-orientated and as such is more applicable to the physical world. Consequently, it is more likely to contribute to the solving of real problems and eradicate the main causes of global poverty.

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## Committing White-collar Crime: What Organisational Mechanisms Exist to Ensure Accountability? Can this Profession still be relied on to Regulate Itself?

David A. Church

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### ABSTRACT

This article studies the relationship between the intangible qualities of *accountability* and the hidden nature of *white-collar criminality* in the accounting profession. I will argue that the lack of definable *accountability* mechanisms and the poor public awareness of *white-collar crime* directly affect the transparency and likelihood of corporate wrongdoing. As the ambiguities of *accountability* traits rely on the complexities of organisational structures and cultures, crimes can often be concealed. In a modern context the connection between individual and collective rights and responsibilities is important due to the growing interdependence of globalised economies. I will argue that *accountability* often fails to deliver on such demands, revealing possible discrepancies in the time-line of historical accounting treatments and discovery of criminal activity. This study will begin by tracing the origin of key terminologies and follow theoretical reasoning as to why the current issue of professionalism is important. Furthermore, an examination will be made of past, current and future remedies that can establish reliable *accountability* measures and rebuild trust in accountancy. I will conclude by suggesting how the profession can strive for greater *accountability*.

### Origins

Accountancy is a well-established and ever-changing profession within society (Littleton, 1954) and so strict attention should be given to moral duties within its trusted practices. The term *accountability* originated in Britain as early as the eleventh century (Bovens, 2007) and was later used in reference to individual acts and collective duties (Dealy and Thomas, 2007). Even in its historical context the notion delivers a sense of control and purpose, an inherent desire of human beings to stand out as leaders for a common goal. This implies that people respond to portrayals of power in order to classify and justify their own roles in society. *Accountability* goes beyond mere *responsibility* because of the intangible qualities of human emotion in the expectation of trust, loyalty and moral behaviour.



Furthermore, *professional accountability* encompasses the expectations placed upon people of the upper classes who have the ability to affect society from both the private and public sectors (Sinclair, 1995). Such a term provides specific respect and demand to a group of people distinguishable by qualifications and experiences in their field of work. Accountants are exposed to this *accountability* because society relies on them for their expertise and judgements. Ultimately, accountancy is a profession that collects and records financial data for decision-making purposes within an information system bound by subjective errors (Christensen, 2010). The need for *accountability* in the accountancy profession has grown considerably in modern times, not least of all through public pressure (Bovens, 2007) and because of abuses of accounting procedures (Briloff, 2003) concerning subjectivity.

We need to establish the link between the emergence and continuation of *white-collar crime*, and the effectiveness of *accountability* mechanisms to expose such actions, which must be present if the accountancy profession is to be implicated in such wrongdoing. Tyler (2009) stereotypes *white-collar criminals* as highly educated men who commit non-aggressive acts in order to obtain monetary rewards beyond what is legally theirs to gain. However, further examination of *white-collar crime* cannot be without the inclusion of Edwin H. Sutherland's research, an influential leader in recognising key sociological characteristics (Geis, 2007). His work throughout the mid-twentieth century opened up debate on the crimes associated with professionals and the company mechanisms that combat them (Sutherland, 1940; Sutherland, 1945). The success of Sutherland's academic studies relies heavily upon the transparency and attention that the media afforded him, implying that today's focus is instead on large-scale scandals (Geis, 2007).<sup>9</sup> I will argue next that cases of *white-collar crime* represent a lack of full ethicality and consideration within the accounting profession.

### Motives of White-Collar Crime

Overall, Shover and Hochstetler (2006) place most importance on the rationality of crime as a choice and one from which people of high status and importance can realistically reap financial benefits. The egoistic philosophy summarises the motivation of *white-collar crime* by explaining that every individual institution or person acts in accordance with their own welfare to ensure their own ambitions are fulfilled (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2004).

Furthermore, Brightman and Howard (2009) stress that the prominence of *white-collar crime* in recent decades has further links with other more life-threatening crimes such as terrorism and organised criminality. This highlights the issue that regardless of the ethics of trading opportunities, traders will seek to exploit personal gains they believe will not be discovered

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<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Robb (1992) argues that the Industrial Revolution, which occurred during Victorian times, was the catalyst for *white-collar crime*.

within the dominant environment of modern capitalism. Some of the features of these crimes are useful to explain such a phenomenon, including the relative ease for manipulation of authority by senior managers, the culture that facilitates risky behaviours and the major challenges to full transparency of information.

Tillman and Indergaard (2005) argue that major US accountancy firms have frequently broken corporate rules and failed to meet stakeholder needs because of the greater freedom they have. This affords more scope to commit fraud, especially through professional bodies like the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, as well as corporate regulations introduced since the turn of the twentieth century (Tillman and Indergaard, 2005). Consequently, the self-governing nature of the profession allowed accountants to create a culture of manipulation, in order for senior management to obtain their desired corporate rewards whilst providing misleading information. These illegal actions highlight the negative effect that reduced liability and *accountability* of accountants, along with inadequate checks of conduct, will have on the legitimacy of the profession.

Furthermore, major accountancy firms were implicated in savings and loans crimes throughout America during the latter part of the twentieth century, with many certified public accountants found guilty (Calavita, Pontell and Tillman, 1997). The companies were forced to pay huge fines to the government without having the blame exposed, undermining the profession (Calavita, Pontell and Tillman, 1997). This encourages rule-breaking without harsh enough treatment to prevent future occurrences, creating systematic habits of risk-taking.

Window-dressing and aggressive accounting are misleading accounting techniques that deliberately misinform users of the accounts. Comer (2000) explains *window-dressing* as a fraudulent practice through the falsifying of key financial indicators and excluding policy changes in finance and auditing personnel. The reasoning behind such non-disclosure is often due to a conflict of interest and inflation of company value. Elliot and Schroth (2002) distinguish this from aggressive accounting; exploitation of technicalities in accounting frameworks made within the confines of accounting standards whilst ignoring the strong recommendations of auditors. This indicates there are very few incentives to prevent accounting forgeries.

Although misrepresentations are symptomatic of certain discrepancies, unless regular and scrutinised checks are made, the practicality of such exposures can easily be hidden, allowing the growth of *white-collar crime*. As companies and professional accountants are experts, their skills can be used as a challenging mechanism for standard setters. Also if Elliot and Schroth's (2002) argument that no immediate correcting system currently exists to either safeguard shareholders or expose the wrongdoing, then this criminality is further exemplified as a motive. Enron's then Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow, the auditors at Arthur Andersen (Rapoport, Van Niel

and Dharan, 2009) and WorldCom's Chief Financial Officer and accountant Scott Sullivan (Jeter, 2003) are among the major known people to have abused such methods. Dodge (2009) further concedes that women have also played an important role within the study of criminology in the workplace, contradicting the notion that only men perpetrate these crimes. There have been notable female white-collar criminal accountants, including Lea Fastow, Enron's Director and Assistant Treasurer of Corporate Finance, and Betty Vinson, WorldCom's Director of Corporate Reporting, who committed numerous frauds and conspiracies that were revealed as the companies collapsed (Dodge, 2009). An issue of traditional societal assumptions and disproportionate media exposures concerning women's roles and motives in the profession highlights the historical reduction in *accountability* afforded to such persons.

Although the motives behind *white-collar crime* can vary between individuals, the practical notion of an industry built upon a monetary system must rely heavily on the rationale of individual utilitarianism. This leads to Fisher and Lovell's (2009) cost-benefit analysis where the financial rewards taken without repercussions must exceed the financial costs if discovered and punished. The evidence of such failures could lie in the lack of large enough incentives to prevent fraud in the first instance and the huge impact that such scandals eventually have; a symptom of improper self-regulation.

### **Professional Self-Regulation**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the role of internal auditors was more that of management educator, promoting ethical practices and independence (Benson, 1992). Elliot and Schroth's (2002) prescription of the audit process as the means by which a company's accounting can be checked, by specialist forensic auditors, can show an extension of such professionalism. This still causes issues regarding objectivity and *accountability*, which questions whether financial statements can be completely accurate and true if the checkers themselves cannot be checked. Therefore, success of the system still relies on the assumption that the ethics and practices of top professionals are sound in quality.

Tyler (2009) examines self-regulation as the moral ethics and professional expectations derived from the legitimacy of rules and principles. Professionalism can therefore be identified as a philosophy of internal monitoring and culture. Firstly, the ethical code outlined by the International Federation of Accountants details the core principles that professional accountants should adhere to in order to support the profession; integrity, objectivity, competence, confidentiality and professional behaviour (IFAC, 2010). However, Robb (1992) suggests accountants have become very effective at evading the professional systems, giving greater emphasis on the need for standards. Moreover, towards the end of the twentieth century the US National Association of Accountants set out reinforced general guidelines for accountants, which

included the same key values. The principles helped accountants align their practices against objective factors, which were connected to the public interest and trust in the profession, along with continued documentation and transparent reasoning (Shaub and Brown, jr., 1994). A thorough process of continuous checking alongside a set of idealistic criteria can in part achieve a more consciously aware behavioural environment in corporations, shaping managers and other employees within an accounting context.

Secondly, the act of whistle blowing relates the exposure to outside private corporate information that is misleading for society (Fisher and Lovell, 2009). However, Davis (1996) criticises whistle blowing because it is an allegiance to a corporation and so is a free choice, with wrongdoing expected to be exposed at some point in time regardless. Also, Fisher and Lovell (2009) recognise that whistle blowing, although arising from good intentions, will likely damage both the individuals and the corporations implicated. The internal self-regulatory mechanisms are therefore set-up to ease such tensions, usually through corporate governance procedures and confidentiality laws (Fisher and Lovell, 2009). Furthermore, within a European context, both silent accounting – information exposed from inside a corporation – and shadow accounting – information exposed from outside a corporation – reveal a gap in the current accounting profession, and provide new perceptions of *accountability* mechanisms (Dey, 2007).

Thirdly, contrary to the suggestion that *white-collar crimes* can evade the law indefinitely, Vinten (1994) observes that the disclosure of such unscrupulous corporate acts has risen in its commonality and reaches to a greater number of stakeholders. This does not imply that the wrongdoing in this context has itself become less prevalent, for it may instead show that people have become more conscious of the widespread impact of immoral operations. Vinten (1994) reiterates that the separation of ethical persons from unethical entities dates back to the eighth century and was only accorded significance from the mid-twentieth century. Such an exploration is summarised by Shaub and Brown, jr. (1994) who argue that during the latter part of the twentieth century the accounting profession went through significant ethical accounting standards as a reaction to accounting frailties. Thus acceptance of time and experience, not least through scholarly research, can provide accountants with valuable lessons in order to create a wider framework of professionalism.

Furthermore, Moore (1992) argues that the *accountability* of corporations and employees is not equivalent and so corporate crime is not always the result of individual choice. This implies that both accounting firms and accountants themselves must ascertain *accountability*; explained in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (Geis, 2007). Bryce (2003) argues that the US financial system took its biggest shock in history after Enron's unethical derivatives trading operations. Finally, Pickett and Pickett (2002) question the authority of accountants' work if evidence of techniques and past company actions is not available or accurately formed. Accountants are subjected to the

corporate context in which they work, so a larger scope of regulation is needed to rectify the problem of *white-collar crime*.

### Ethics and Solutions of White-collar Crime

To reduce the severity and likelihood of *white-collar crime* a number of policies could be employed in the corporate world. Specifically, a greater awareness of the conflict between perception and reality of *white-collar crime* should be sought, an improved set of professional mechanisms should be implemented, and a more transparent system of accounting should be imposed. The command-and-control convention is most appropriate for *white-collar crime* because it reintroduces the fear of excessive punishment if such activities are undertaken.

Firstly, Brightman and Howard (2009) advocate for social policies that bring *white-collar crime* to the forefront of public attention and scholarly research. To tackle any social problem society must not only appreciate the issue as important, but also understand it comprehensively. The widespread perception that *white-collar crimes* do occur and have a major impact on the economy is therefore paramount for any future success in eradicating the crimes. However Brightman and Howard (2009) argue further that an endemic problem of *white-collar crime* lies in the constant conflict of interest between corporations and governments. This argument reveals that a common human trait is conversing with other institutions to aid growth, competitiveness and freedom of operations. In order to include society as a more prominent stakeholder, redefined job roles and expectations for accountants could be introduced, resulting in negative consequences to society connected with financial punishments. If accountants are the financial key makers then more exposure and justification of their *accountability* is needed through reports.

Secondly, the introduction of professionalism through certified exams gives accredited worth to members of accounting bodies whilst promoting skills and knowledge relevant to ethical *accountability* (Robb, 1992). Professional accounting bodies, such as the International Accounting Standards Board (Deloitte, 2011), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA, 2011) and the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA, 2004), aim to harmonise practices in order to benefit all the users of accounting.

Moreover Bryce (2003) calls for companies to employ a cost-accounting system alongside the misleading mark-to-market method, so that users of accounts can identify the valuations companies apply to their balance sheets. Also Bryce (2003) instigates that by empowering the Securities Exchange Commission with money and personnel the auditing and consulting services from the same accounting firm can soon be eradicated. Alternatively Dealy and Thomas (2007) stress that a combination of a numerical performance scorecard system and a workplace environment, which measures what is spoken and what is acted on, will yield the best results for

personal *accountability* to be used in the professional environment; developed over time. There could therefore be merit in the creation of a quantitative *accountability* model, whereby a system of numbering would allocate the traits and roles of individual accountants attached to the larger public interest. This would quantify relevant links, allowing checks to be made to tighten up accounting practices. The implausibility of such a model creates a huge difficulty without extensive research undertaken.

Thirdly, Tyler (2009) examines the command-and-control convention of reducing *white-collar crime* in a company context, which restricts conduct via external sources equipped with penalties. Shover and Hochstetler (2006) argue that as *white-collar crime* damages Western economies culturally and financially, with little acknowledgement of victims, the promotion of government powers to use prison sentences should rebalance the issue. Also, Calavita, Pontell and Tillman (1997) identify that the capitalist system of financial instruments needs to be further controlled and researched in order to affect the facilitation of future *white-collar crime*. Such suggestions recognise the trade-off between the control of *white-collar crime* and corporate autonomy, as well as society's protection and individual choice, implying that spot checks in corporate affairs should be made (Grabosky and Sutton, 1989). An idealist solution in the context of Australia has proposed that a complex and strict analytical approach to accountancy *accountability* could be introduced to any improper behaviour (Grabosky and Sutton, 1989).

Felson (1998) understands that the main principle in eradicating *white-collar crime* is to provide more difficulties for perpetrators to achieve their aims, creating a more complete accounting checking process that includes more people. This approach does not deal with the core of the issue although it does deal with the practical aspects. Whereas Tupy (1927) offers the long-term sustainability solution, stressing that the teaching of accountancy should remain rooted in the moral ethics that protect society's interests. The issue is still relevant today, with the emphasis on teaching the negative consequences of poor *accountability* mechanisms and appropriate ethical business models in the hope of producing more 'accountable accountants', leading to fewer chances of future scandals (Frank, Ofobike and Gradisher, 2010; Williams and Elson, 2010). Unerman, Bebbington and O'Dwyer (2007) also help provide more of the resource material relevant for university courses.

## Conclusion

This study has revealed that as the notion of *accountability* has its characteristics firmly rooted in subjective interpretation (Mulgan, 2000) there is great difficulty in regulating it through objective means. As a result *white-collar crime* is an ambiguous area of criminology to expose. Even if *white-collar criminals* are identified through one of the means explored in this study, the damage in many cases has already been done. Accountants have been given a great deal more

*responsibility* over the course of history, allowing them larger influence on the financial world. This has been the case because of their important role in society, providing the expertise of professionals with specialist knowledge and experience, along with the appearance of class and respectability.

The occurrence of *white-collar crime* can be seen as a failure of regulatory bodies within the profession and outside, but the future prospective mechanisms must seek a more active approach if progress is to be made. It would also be impractical to believe that throughout the corporate world the adherence of rules and ethical principles is not paramount to sustainable success for *accountable* accountants. However, a common trait of human beings is rule-breaking and erroneous behaviour, so a major shift in personal values may be the starting point at which to begin ingraining objective morals in the accounting culture.

This study aimed to understand the issue of *white-collar crime* and its *accountability*, but continued extensive research is needed for more statistical verification as to which method(s) would be most effective in tackling the problem. In summary accountants are *accountable* to the legal system, their overseeing bodies and fellow professionals, corporations, the wider society and themselves through their professional and ethical conduct. Unsurprisingly there needs to be far more work on the subject if such an ideal state of affairs is to encompass the entire profession.

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## **'Born below Mason and Dixon': The role of Quentin Compson and the interaction of the racial, gender and class codes of the South in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*.**

Lucy Cook

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### ABSTRACT

Many critics have investigated Southern social codes within William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. However, often the focus is on either race, gender or class and this can lead to a situation in which much is missed. It is the interaction of all three of these social codes that lies at the core of this text and to concentrate solely on one without equal consideration for each is to oversimplify the text and the wider social issues of the South. With this in mind, this paper strives to investigate the interaction of the Southern social codes of race, gender and class within *The Sound and the Fury* and express how these codes are inextricably linked and dependent upon one another. Moreover, this paper explores how these interconnect to inform the text while reflecting, commenting upon and maintaining a complex and often tense relationship with the wider social milieu of the Southern states of the USA. This is investigated through the character of Quentin Compson who, in many ways, represents the clash of the 'old' and 'new' South, which in turn expresses the interaction of historical class, gender and racial codes and their move into the 'new' world of the changing South. As Myra Jehlen (1976, p. 43) states, 'Faulkner...is driven to pierce...the myths which he is coming...to realize have distorted Southern reality' and it is this desire to enlighten reality through literature which is considered within this paper. This reflection and questioning of Southern social codes marks why *The Sound and the Fury* has such endurance, whilst simultaneously highlighting the importance of the axis of race, class and gender within the text.

*The Sound and the Fury*...transforms...personal anxieties into a fiction with profound cultural implications.

John Earl Bassett (1981, p.2)

History and time are of great importance to the works of William Faulkner and, as Richard Godden (1993, p.113) states, '[o]nce history can be seen as the activity of revision...the contours of the past are unfixed'. This partially explains the impact of Faulkner's style and, as Myra Jehlen (1976, p.42) states, 'Faulkner...is driven to pierce...the myths which he is coming...to realize

have distorted Southern reality.’ This realisation of history as myth exposes how, for Faulkner, Southern social codes maintain a knotty interaction with history. Due to the slave economy, upon which these myths were created, race, gender and class within *The Sound and the Fury* are not only entangled but dependent upon one another. Therefore, the depiction of the disintegration of the Compson family is also a questioning of the mythologised history, which places race, gender and class at its centre.

Many critics have considered *The Sound and the Fury* to have a basis in gender, race and class, but often only focus on one or two of these issues within the text. Therefore, many critics neglect the importance that each plays in the realisation of the others. For example, Jehlen’s (1976, p.42) focus is on class and he states ‘of course Yoknapatawphans are race conscious. But...the most important distinction...in their social structure is class’. While it is true that the subject of class is both important and often overlooked, Jehlen (1976, p.10) also suggests the relative absence of race ignores race in the text; that this is ‘a white man’s tale’. Although accurate, Jehlen’s statement overlooks the importance that marginalisation has in the exploration of race, for it is often that which is not said that highlights the lack of voice within a text and a wider society. The decentralisation of African-American characters within *The Sound and the Fury* demonstrates this lack of voice, particularly when considered in conjunction with the white character’s perception of race. Jehlen overlooks the importance of the dialogue between African-American and white characters and how this contributes to the mythologizing and breaking down of Southern social codes. The same is true of gender. Godden states that ‘Faulkner’s plots lie in the Southern politics of race and gender’ and yet the power of class codes do not register with Godden (1993, p.105) as integral. However, it is only when this triad of myth and social power are considered in conjunction that the essence of this text can be discovered. Therefore, this paper will explore Faulkner’s engagement with race, gender and class within *The Sound and the Fury*, paying attention to their connection and interaction to the point of interdependence and how they form the basis for the predominant mythology of the south. Moreover, this paper will consider how Faulkner’s engagement with the past is integral to these themes. Due to constraints of space, this work will focus on one section of the text, June Second 1910. This section is the narrative of Quentin Compson, the eldest child of the ill-fated Compson family. Although this section is often discussed, its complexity exemplifies the complicated interaction of the chosen themes and as such has much to offer in this exploration.

The longest and most introspective section of the text, June Second 1910, narrated by Quentin Compson, exemplifies the tragedy of the inability to relinquish the past. Quentin is embroiled in the gender, race and class codes of the South and it is his inability to move into a new southern future that leads to his demise. Due to this Quentin exemplifies the interaction of class, race, gender and history within the text. Quentin’s preoccupation with class surfaces through his obsession with his sister’s virginity and this is where Quentin exemplifies the interaction between

gender and class. However, it is not only Quentin who interacts with the class codes of the south, Quentin's Harvard College friend, Gerald Bland, and Gerald's mother both represent new money and an unwavering belief in class hierarchy. Quentin's interaction with the Blands is revealing; he appears torn between the desire for class status and an inability to relinquish the Southern social codes, which result in his historical stasis while he is simultaneously disgusted by those same codes exposed through the behaviour of the Blands. As John Earl Bassett (1981, p. 8) states, 'Gerald is an ironic wish fulfilment. When he went off to Harvard, his mother came along' this demonstrates Quentin's desires for the past, as witnessed through Faulkner's formal choice of stream of consciousness. For example, the scenes with Mrs Bland and Gerald are often interspersed with memories of Caddy's wedding or affair with Dalton Ames and this demonstrates how the two are comparable for Quentin. Caddy is a mother figure for Quentin, as are Mrs Bland and Quentin's actual mother, and he loses all of them to rival males; Mrs Bland to Gerald, Caddy to her lovers and his mother to her selfishness and favouritism for his brother Jason. Moreover, Mrs Bland approves of Quentin, leading to his hope of a renewed mother figure, but her approval is based on her interaction with Southern class codes. She clings to the ideals of the South, which is demonstrated through her approval of Quentin because, 'I at least revealed a blundering sense of noblesse oblige by getting myself born below Mason and Dixon' (Faulkner, 1995, p.76). This statement expresses the arbitrary and accidental nature of Southern social codes as they are dependent upon fluke of birth.

However, the myth of the Southern gentleman is undermined throughout the text. For example, the ridiculousness of the Blands satirises the class codes they revere. Furthermore, Quentin's roommate Shreve states, 'god I'm glad I'm not a gentleman' (Faulkner, 1995, p.85) acting as a voice of dissension. Moreover, Mrs Bland disapproves of Shreve and yet economically he and Quentin are matched; it is the myth of 'gentile Southerners' that motivates her judgement. The presence of the Blands highlights the northern environment of Harvard and parodies the milieu in which Quentin was raised. For Quentin to be able to afford to attend Harvard the Compsons sell a pasture which belongs to his vulnerable brother Benjy. Thus, Harvard is the reason for the sale of Benjy's pasture, which emphasizes the desire for class status as rife and is a contributing factor to the dissolution of familial ties for the Compsons. The removal of Quentin from his southern environment sparks a new dialogue with his southern culture, something which is highlighted further in Faulkner's other work *Absalom, Absalom*, within which the character of Quentin Compson is reprised and plays a key role.

However, Mrs Bland's assumption of Quentin's 'gentility' is based upon his southern accent. If she had probed further she would be aware of the Compson's decline. This is revealing as Quentin's accent is not universally associated with white, upper middle-class landowners, as noted by the boys that Quentin encounters while walking in the country, 'He talks like they do in minstrel shows...you said he talks like a coloured man' (Faulkner, 1995, pp.110-1). This

conflation of African-American people and the minstrel show demonstrates the segregated nature of society and the vile parody that was considered both an acceptable and accurate portrayal of African-Americans. Moreover, the idea that African-Americans speak with a southern accent highlights the migration north of emancipated slaves and the inescapable truth that the economy of the south was built on slave labour. This small comment exposes the role that the emancipation of slaves played in the disintegration of the Compson family and plantation families in general, which exposes the basis of such 'gentility' as exploitation. This demonstrates how class and race are linked within the text and how this is constructed through the lens of the past. This demonstrates how race and class are intertwined through the dependence these myths have upon a system based on racial inequality. It also evidences how an accent considered high class by the Blands results from their familiarity and acceptance of the myth of 'southern gentility' and therefore exposes its constructed nature. Moreover, Mrs Bland tells the story of 'how Gerald throws his nigger downstairs' (Faulkner, 1995, p.89), demonstrating how the Blands ape the southern myths to which they aspire and here they are exposing the southern racial code. Yet Quentin is disquieted by this exposition of his southern ideals. When transposed to a new space they start to be questioned through characters such as Quentin's room-mate Shreve, the fishing boys he meets while walking, the little Italian girl who follows him, and his interaction with her family. As Jehlen (1976, p.46) states, 'have [the Blands] debased his heritage or only exposed it?' It would be fair to state that they have done both, they have exposed the ridiculous and arbitrary nature of these codes while they have mimicked what is only the most vile and degraded parts of Southern culture.

One of the major preoccupations of Quentin's moral code is that of gender, which is entangled with class. This is expressed through the narrative time slippage between the 'present' interactions of Quentin and the Blands, and the memories of Caddy that these interactions seem to spark in Quentin's thoughts; most notably when Quentin attacks Gerald, which happens when Gerald seems to have become synonymous in Quentin's mind with Caddy's lover Dalton Ames. Quentin's obsession with Caddy's virginity exemplifies his obsession with the social codes of the south, its history, and his own demise. Many argue that Caddy Compson is central to *The Sound and the Fury* and, despite her lack of narrative voice, her familial relationships often drive the narrative. However, as Faulkner states, this text is 'a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter' and this muddies the notion of Caddy as central in every aspect, as her daughter, Quentin, can also be considered central (Stein, 1958, p.130). This is not to argue that Caddy's role is not pivotal as she affects all three brothers immeasurably: Quentin through his inability to accept her sexuality; Jason and his abiding hatred and blame of Caddy for losing his job opportunity when she divorced; Benjy, as his only human comfort. Caddy is an absent centre of the novel, witnessed only through the perspective of others. This creates an interesting position for the reader as she is never truly known, which formally reflects the enigma Caddy represents for her brothers. Caddy's truth is never found but is created through the joint perception of the

author, the characters and the reader. As Norman N Holland (1976, p.816) states, ‘we interact with the work, making it part of our own psychic economy and making ourselves part of the literary work,’ therefore, Caddy creates a locus of interpretation that reflects through the reader.

One of the most interesting representations of Caddy is through the eyes of her brother Quentin. His interpretation of Caddy and his fixation on mythologised Southern edicts of behaviour result in his suicide. Many critics have pondered the incest theme of the text, both the undercurrent of sexuality within the interactions between Caddy and Quentin, and the false confession that Quentin makes to his father in an effort to save Caddy’s reputation, claiming that he is the father of Caddy’s child. There are many viewpoints on the incest theme and its function, such as Doreen Fowler’s psychoanalytical reading of Caddy as mother figure. According to Fowler, it is this role as mother figure which leads to the incestuous suggestion within scenes such as the pseudo-suicide attempt of Quentin and Caddy, which is laden with sexual language. Fowler states that, ‘Quentin’s incestuous feelings for Caddy suggest...a desire to merge once again with the identifiatory imago’ (Baum, 1976, pp39-40) and Richard Godden (1993, p.100) states, ‘[Quentin] appears to believe that incest might serve to heal the hymen [or] at least to involve the incestuous pair in a shame so great as to “isolate” them from “the loud world.”’ Although both critics make valid points, they relate solely to gender and Quentin’s desire to capture the past. However, it is only with the introduction of class that the theme of incest is satisfactorily highlighted. As Flannery O’Connor (1988) stated, ‘Anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic’ and in many ways this is the same for Faulkner. It is only through the contextualising of the South that the theme of incest moves from a representation of gender to a representation of class and gender and how they are interlinked. Quentin’s confession of incest is motivated by his need to preserve his sister’s virginity and when he confesses to his father it is expressed as:

you wanted to sublimate a piece of natural human folly into a horror and then exorcize it with truth and it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been and he did you try to make her do it and i was afraid to i was afraid (Faulkner, 1995, p.150).

This confession, which Godden (1993, p.112) states ‘never happened, but is instead an imagined dialogue’ has an unreal quality, which suggests both memory and imagination and is most likely a combination of both. Nevertheless, when considering the confession of wanting to commit incest ‘i was afraid to i was afraid’ (Faulkner, 1995, p.150) the idea that this is Quentin’s imagination causes more ambiguity within such a confession, however, this sentence carries a tone of regret. In his staunch belief in Southern mythology, he has read his father’s question of ‘did you try to make her do it’ (Faulkner, 1995, p.150) as a rebuff for not protecting his sister’s

reputation and that of the family. Instead of sensing the fear that is inherent in his father's question, Quentin is so embroiled in his beliefs that he misreads the question. For Quentin the idea of incest is motivated by a need to preserve Caddy's role in the white, southern myth of femininity. In his world of Southern ideals, Quentin reads something that is aberrant to the outside world as a preservation of their class and blood lines. As Godden (1993, p.110) states 'in the South, the very idea of incest involves a form of cultural heroism – raising the standard of the virgin – in the North, Quentin's return to that idea is deemed child-molestation'. This depiction of the Northern view on Southern ideals of class and gender produces an image that exposes their perverse nature; any system that would lead a young man to believe that incest is a preferable situation to unmarried sexual relations is highlighted as aberrant. Moreover, this incident links race, class and gender. For example, the judge originally fines Quentin a dollar and then asks the question:

“How far'd you run him, Anse?”

“Two miles, at least. It was about two hours before we caught him.”

“H'm,” the squire said. He mused a while... “six dollars.” (Faulkner, 1995, pp.121-2)

This amendment to the fine suggests that the judge suspects a more serious crime and yet, in this light, the little girl is still only worth a six dollar fine. Her 'honour' is negligible due to her class, race and gender. As a female in this society she is at the mercy of the men that surround her; as an immigrant she experiences prejudice, as demonstrated through the assumptions of the baker who instantly assumes she is stealing because she is an immigrant. Moreover, as a working class child, the richer 'perpetrator' of the 'crime' has more power and status and is only fined.

As this incident demonstrates, race is integral to the conception of gender under the southern milieu. The rape of female slaves and the vile stereotype of the African-American male rapist led to a conflation of race and sexuality within Southern mythology. On several occasions throughout the text women are denigrated on the basis of gender and sexuality. For example, when disgusted with Caddy for her promiscuity, Quentin states, 'Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods' (Faulkner, 1995, p.77). These stereotypes were used to control African-Americans but in turn were also used to control white women. The myth of white Southern femininity led white women to be untouchable and placed undue importance on white female virginity. As such, the comment about Caddy and her sexuality contains the locus of gender, race and class prejudices. After all, as their father states, 'Woman are never virgins. Purity is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature' (Faulkner, 1995, p.97). The misogynist overtone aside, this demonstrates virginity is a manmade concept, highlighting Quentin's obsession as the product of an unnatural system.



Godden further relates gender, class and race via sexuality stating that each brother has incestuous desires and that these desires are conflated with the stereotypes of African-Americans found within the Southern social code. For example, Benjy is called a Bluegum by Versh. A Bluegum is an African-American conjuror who can impregnate through sight and it is this comparison which has led Godden to argue that the adoring looks at Caddy become incestuous desire (Godden, 1993, p. 101). Jason constantly refers to himself as a slave, and Quentin terms Caddy's lovers as 'blackguards' and equates her sexuality with African-American women. Although Godden's argument has its limitations, for example, the suggestion that Benjy wishes to have impregnated Caddy through his look is somewhat stretched. There is a distinct meshing of the idea of sexuality and race within *The Sound and the Fury*. Moreover, as the sexuality contained within the text is incestuous, it is fair to assume that, in this context, the conflation of African-Americans with sexual desire is also to consider a comparison within the text between incest as a deviant behaviour and the suggestion that mixed race relationships are also perceived as deviant within this milieu. The racial hierarchy of Southern mythology is expressed through the conflict in the language of the text, for example, when Caddy's daughter Quentin pushes away Dilsey's comforting hand with the comment 'you damn old nigger' (Faulkner, 1995, p.158). Caddy's action combined with her words are contradictory, as Thadious M. Davis states, 'simultaneously, the white girl reaches out for Dilsey as a mother substitute and rejects "the nigger" who could never be her mother...her rebuke reflects the stratification of the world she lives in' (Davis, 1983, p.93). However, this stratification is not just that of the racist society: as an African-American woman, Dilsey exemplifies the meeting of all these class codes. It is this triple prejudice which results in Dilsey being treated in this manner by a teenager, who in turn suffers no consequences for her disrespect. This represents the continuing legacy of the slave economy of the south which was structured rigidly around hierarchical codes of race, gender and class, all three of which are inextricably linked.

Faulkner's engagement with the social codes of the south are the backbone of his work and it is the interaction of class, race and gender as seen through the prism of history, which highlights the ambiguity and complexities of Southern society. It is the inheritance of such a history, and the need to mythologise the past in order to provide a more bearable present for both victim and perpetrator of the antebellum South, which is the underpinning of Southern mythology, *The Sound and the Fury*, and the tragedy of the Compson family. As John Earl Bassett (1981, p.2) argued, '*The Sound and the Fury*...transforms...personal anxieties into a fiction with profound cultural implications'. And it is the complexity of these personal anxieties that creates an ambiguity, and this ambiguity echoes the dizzying and knotty mess that is the mythologizing of class, race and gender within the South. It is the representation of this myth combined with its subtle unpicking which creates the complexity of *The Sound and the Fury*, and it is the interaction between the codes of race, gender and class exemplified through the subjective perspectives of the text which exemplify the insidious nature of the prejudices inherent in the

Southern myth. The exploration of these codes and their historical basis raises new questions with each reading and through the text retains relevance and endurance; a true mark of the importance and indelible nature of Faulkner's work.

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## The Symbolist Movement Portrayed in the Art of Gauguin and Van Gogh.

Antoinette Hewitt

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### ABSTRACT

The use of symbols in art has been popular for centuries. It is a way for artists to convey their messages to the viewer. This article clarifies the main differences between how symbols were used during the Renaissance and how Symbolist artists, specifically Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh, employed symbols in their work. I shall focus on what Symbolism is, the key features of the movement and the different ways Gauguin and Van Gogh utilise colour, form and motifs to explore individual meaning. Artworks of both artists will be closely analysed to determine how, and why, the artists have chosen certain characteristics of Symbolism. Knowledge of the artists' intentions helps the viewer read the painting and also elucidates the artwork.

To understand the diverse art of Gauguin and Van Gogh in terms of the Symbolist movement it is essential to have a concept of what the main characteristics of this movement are. An explanation of the key features of this movement and how it can be related to the work of these artists will be necessary. The subjectivity of Gauguin and Van Gogh, and the way each of them employ their imagination to establish their ideas, needs to be addressed. Particular artworks will be studied, these will be: *The Spirit of the Dead Watches* (1892) and *Vision after the Sermon: Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* (1888) by Gauguin with *The Sower* (1888) and *Starry Night* (1889) by Van Gogh. Each will be analysed carefully to determine how the artists convey their individual messages to the viewer.

The use of symbols to convey meaning is not a new idea. Renaissance artists would use attributes to signify the saints and motifs in order to clarify doctrine (Lucie-Smith, 1972). Lucie-Smith feels these qualities 'fascinate[d] the Symbolist painters and sculptors of the nineteenth century' (Lucie-Smith, 1972, p.7). However he continues that the relationship of, 'one-for-one equivalence between the symbol used and the meaning intended' changed (Lucie-Smith, 1972, p.8). Instead of each motif having a specific meaning, understood by the majority, the symbol develops into something which is personal for the individual artist. Each artist employs their own imagination to depict their message in the way they wish and through their chosen emblems. These symbols did not have to be universally known and were often esoteric, bringing the subjectivity of the artist and the viewer to the fore.

The Symbolist movement arose in the late nineteenth century as a response to the generally accepted standards of the bourgeois (Little, 2004). Beginning in France, it is seen as a counteraction to Realism, a reaction to Impressionism and an extension of the mystical side of Romanticism. Some of the main themes explored by the artists are 'spiritualism, anarchy, perversity and the uncanny' (Little, 2004, p.92). However, the themes of anarchy and perversity, while they appear in many Symbolist paintings, do not feature in the artwork which will be discussed. Therefore, it will be the spiritual, or religious, and the uncanny, or that which is beyond the power of explanation or understanding that will be explored, as they are most prevalent.

The intellect becomes unimportant and takes second place to the emotional response that arises in artist and viewer. The feelings the artist wants to portray and those he wants to evoke in the viewer become paramount. Therefore, it is not just a pictorial symbolism that is illustrated but an emotional and spiritual one. Furthermore, the reality of an object, landscape or person is not the over-riding element for the artist. The essential aspect is the artist's idea of the representation of it. Little argues 'the artist must paint on the basis of his intuition and imagination rather than observation and description' (Little, 2004, p.92). Along with this, the art relates to another reality; one of 'dreams, nightmares and altered states of mind' (Little, 2004, p.92). To clarify these points it is essential to look at the artwork of Gauguin and Van Gogh to see how they both made use of these ideas in their paintings.

The first painting to be discussed is *The Spirit of the Dead Watches*. Gauguin painted this after a night away from his young Tahitian wife, Teha'amana. On returning he found her scared and afraid because of the 'tupapaus' [spirits of the dead] (Dorra, 2007, p.217) which she felt were in her room. Gauguin says, she 'lay motionless' (cited by Dorra, 2007, p.217). This can be seen in the pictures as the figure of the girl is prostrate on the bed. Her body is straight and her lower legs and feet are protruding off the end. She is not relaxed but is stiff and in an awkward pose as if caught in the moment of distress. Along with this, she has her hands up near her face in a gesture of fright.

Moreover, Gauguin states 'her eyes [were] wide with fear' whilst she retold the story to him (cited in Dorra, 2007, p.217). In the picture, when the event is depicted as taking place, her eyes are half closed as she looks out to the viewer. Gauguin's suggestion that the young girl is too scared to look implies how terrified she is. She peers apprehensively through fractionally opened eyes, adding to the sense of distress. This juxtaposition with Teha'amana's eyes almost shut in the picture, but wide open when telling Gauguin, shows how scared she feels not just at the time of the incident, when she cannot bear to look, but also when reliving it and retelling the story to Gauguin. Furthermore, the young girl has her legs crossed at her feet as she lays face down, as if to protect herself, and her head is turned away from the impending danger.

At the foot of the bed is a figure clothed in black. This contrasts with the bright bed covering, the pink pillow and the white flowers on the wall to give him a menacing aura. His face peers out towards her and his one white eye pierces the picture. As he rests his back against the post his arm lays on the covers of the bed. The connection between him and the girl is shown as a physical one – they are both attached to the material – but the correlation is also a mental and emotional one, through Teha'amana's vision or dream. To her it is a real event and Gauguin has depicted it as such.

It is evident here that Gauguin is exploring the supernatural, the unspeakable and what could be termed as another reality. This is his interpretation of her nightmare as he envisions the uncanny episode. He has explored the uncanny nature and illustrated it with the strange and eerie atmosphere present. Instances of this kind often happened in the dark, at night or in a bedroom environment. The subjectivity of the artist, his ideas of how things should be represented, is apparent as he depicts the spirits as flowers on the wall from his own imagination. However, he chooses to portray the main spirit as a human to coincide with Teha'amana beliefs and customs (Spence, 2003). This juxtaposition of ideas shows the diversity of meaning that can be deciphered from one small aspect of the picture. Gauguin clarifies complex ideas of imagination in other works.

In Gauguin's painting *The Vision after the Sermon: Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* it is again another's dream or apparition that is the subject matter he is translating. This time the experience is not threatening or menacing but rather uplifting and edifying. The account is a biblical one, which was uncommon for artists at this time (Buser, 1968). However, Silverman (2000) suggests that Gauguin's selection of topic was not a coincidence but rather a reflection of the heightened religious activity at that time when people were thought to be experiencing visions and apparitions. This would then become a topic of interest for the viewer as one they may have witnessed themselves or been familiar with.

Gauguin has used the biblical text in Genesis and merged it with the ideas of the day. Instead of depicting the encounter between Jacob and the angel on its own he chooses to show the Breton women partaking of the experience along with them. Many are on their knees with their hands clasped and heads bowed in the attitude of prayer. They are creating a semi-circle around the action. The viewer sees from a strange angle, standing behind and above the women, which serves to draw them in so they partake in the vision along with the women. Furthermore, it can be suggested that Gauguin has more contemporary ideas here. Delouche contends it was not uncommon to see Breton boys wrestling in fields as the figures in the painting are doing and Gauguin himself had painted this many times before (cited in Dorra, 2007, p.112). He has taken things from nature and used his imagination to construct something new and original.

Gauguin wanted to express not only the external truth of things but a deeper, internal and personal truth, as this was a major concern for the symbolists. His own interpretation is reflected onto the scene. Individual meaning was very important for Gauguin. For example, he used the colour red to show that what was happening was a vision, as he felt that red was the colour of the imagination. The action is separated by the large tree trunk positioned diagonally across the painting. This signifies the division between the real worlds of the women from the separate reality of their illusion (Dorra, 2007).

Another characteristic of Symbolism was the artist's employment of colour and form. Paint was used straight from the tube, in its pure form, and unmixed (Little, 2004). This gives a strong contrast especially with light and dark colours. The white of the women's bonnets, against their black dresses and the deep, red background illuminates that brightness of the white and clarifies the darker colours. The same thing happens with the orange angel's wings, outlined in black, next to the red space of the action. Both these colours become sharper, deeper and more defined.

The simplistic form of the people, their features and clothing, are traits of Gauguin's. Dorra states that the 'peasants and the wrestlers are both distorted because their forms are depicted in a synthetic manner' (2007, p.112). This coherence of form makes the two halves unified. For Gauguin a true representation of events was not what he sought but a 'rustic simplicity' along with his personal truth (Dorra, 2007). By elucidating the colours and shapes Gauguin has put more emphasis on the emotional response and the feelings he wants to evoke from the painting, rather than the action taking place (Sund, 1988). Consequently, placing a religious episode in a modern setting draws the viewer in and helps them connect more fully.

Gauguin was not the only artist with the idea of portraying religious and spiritual narratives in a contemporary setting; Van Gogh was also preoccupied with the notion of individual interpretation of the scriptures stories. He was a very religious man who had tried to forge a career as a clergyman and in his letters to his brother, Theo, he said 'a sower of the word' as I hope to become' (1887). As he was unable to become a preacher, Van Gogh communicated his message to the people through his art. Sund remarks 'Van Gogh's pad of paper became the pulpit denied him' (Sund 1988, p.663). Hearing the parable of the sower 'made a deep impression' on him and the way, 'Jesus went through the corn fields' inspired him to create art (Gogh). This is significant for Van Gogh as 'his aim was to communicate meaning within mundane contexts' (Sund 1988, p.660). Just as Jesus taught his people the things he would have them know with stories of their everyday activities, so Van Gogh wanted to illustrate a deeper spiritual meaning within familiar, everyday life.

Furthermore, Druick suggests that Van Gogh was expressing a personal desire to ‘follow in the footsteps’ of Millet’ (Druick, 2001, p.116). Van Gogh’s inspiration for his subject matter of *The Sower* comes from Millet and is a direct reference to the latter’s work of the same name. Van Gogh felt that Millet lacked vibrancy and energy with his drab browns and greys, used to emphasise the rough terrain and hard work of the sower. Instead Van Gogh infused his picture with bright colours, which changes it completely. The yellow sun, as it beats down over the corn and the sower, shines so brightly that its rays cover the whole horizon. There are tinges of complementary colours, orange and blue, which serve to make the rays stand out and penetrate the whole composition. He has accentuated the struggle of the sower’s toil with the blazing rays and the viewer can sense the heat and burning from the sun beating upon his back.

Millet’s sower has an expressive face which shows the hard work undertaken. Van Gogh has chosen to express the labour with the ground, making it undulating. This gives a sense that the soil is hard to till and navigate. Furthermore, the placement of the sower, with his head just above the horizon line, contains the figure within the land. This makes him at one with it, with no distinction between the importance of the earth and the people; every aspect of the painting has equal significance.

Colour was so crucial to Van Gogh that he wrote about it in his letters often. He says that ‘the breaking of the colours’ (1885) was important, red with green, blue with orange and yellow with violet. Using these colours together concentrates and animates them. This can be seen in the foreground where blue, orange and tinges of white have been worked together to give a sense of movement. Furthermore the way they are applied creates action. The brushstrokes are obvious and the viewer can visualise the ground changing as the sower walks and plants his seeds with the sun’s rays pulsating across the sky. The blue of the foliage on the right above the wheat and house pull the picture together and unify it. The three colours stand out against one another and the clash that could occur does not. Furthermore, the black shadows of the sower and the crows, although small, give a heightened, structural density to the piece. Van Gogh’s subjectivity in colour is apparent here. His ideas, which connect strongly with the symbolists’ theory of the bold colours and simplistic form, are evident.

Van Gogh painted many versions of *The Sower*, always looking to improve and never feeling he had quite captured and conveyed the authenticity he wanted. This desire to create a perfect rendition of a scene, even if was just his version or concept of that perfection, is manifest with his representation of a starry night. Soth states that two artworks, *The Cafe Terrace at Night* and *Starry night Over the Rhone* (1888), were Van Gogh’s first attempts at this venture but that neither ‘match[ed] the conception in his imagination’ (L.Soth, 1986, p.302). Moreover, it is Van Gogh’s search for spiritual meaning and his need for religious paintings that drives him to strive for his perfect concept - ‘an imaginative work, not a descriptive one’ (L.Soth, 1986, p.302).



The painting *Starry Night* is not explicitly religious. It is not based on a biblical narrative or on a spiritual leader nor guide. Instead it is a landscape, a view from near the hospital he stayed at, in the town of St-Remy (L.Soth, 1986). However, towards the bottom of the painting is a church, set almost in the middle of the picture. It is light blue, tinged with white so it stands out against the background. The spire is long and thin and points straight up past the mountains, towards heaven to puncture the sky. Apart from this one building there is nothing else religious, but many have argued that it has a deeper devotional meaning (L.Soth, 1986).

Soth feels that citron-yellow had a spiritual association for Van Gogh. Furthermore, she feels that it was Van Gogh's mission in life to 'give comfort...and to console his fellow men' (L.Soth, 1986, p.308). She says that this consolation comes as the result of 'being in tune with the deeper forces of nature' (L.Soth, 1986, p.308). This is evident in the painting. The stars in the sky illuminate past their natural capacity. The swirling brushstrokes are reminiscent of the wind blowing the clouds in the heavens. The rolling hills on the landscape narrate the action of creation. The cypress tree which bends slightly to the left, outlines that nature is a strong force as it punctuates the picture and looms large in the corner. This would be a formidable image if it was not for the yellow and blue of the sky softening the effect. The crescent moon is the brightest object and this is significant as it would have been the brightest object in the night sky that people would have seen.

Van Gogh's subjectivity is completely exposed. The night sky would not look this way in reality. For him the stars signified his need for religion and the crescent moon is a symbol of faith (cited in L.Soth, 1986). It is symbolic and mystical, or supernatural, with an intrinsic meaning known only to Van Gogh. He uses the ideas from nature and depicts another reality, one which is personal to him and his audience. Soth feels 'he exalts nature' and makes it 'more serene and pure than reality' (Soth, 1986, p.307). Van Gogh did not draw or paint according to classical tradition as he was deliberately deskillling himself to create something different and something new.

Gauguin and Van Gogh were preoccupied with the themes and ideas of the Symbolist movement. The spiritual and mystical are clearly shown, along with the artists' subjectivity when displaying religious concepts. The use of colour to symbolise moods and feelings is evident. Their original portrayal of another reality – one of the mind – is expressed forcefully. Both paint what they see in their consciousness not what is actually before them in the natural world. They employ their intuition and imagination to give a new and intrinsic meaning to their artwork, one which is personal to them and the viewer.

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## Beautiful Experiments: Newton's Decomposition of Sunlight.

Virginia Cain

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### ABSTRACT

Robert P. Crease, a member of the philosophy department at the State University of New York, at Stony Brook and the historian at Brookhaven National Laboratory, recently asked physicists to nominate the most beautiful experiment of all time (2002). I have chosen to write about Newton's decomposition of sunlight with a prism because it is one I find inspiring and interesting. There is meaning attached to the experiment, and one's definition of beautiful can be applied in different ways. In this article I will be describing the design of this particular experiment as carried out by Newton, as well as discussing the results, and what can be inferred or deduced from them.

Newton thought of this experiment whilst he was at home. He was isolated by the plague and consequently had a lot of time in which to hypothesise and think freely. To begin his experiment, Sir Isaac Newton required only a prism, a blacked out room, a wall and a single ray of sunlight. These few simple things would work together to create an experiment that defied the common view of light and how it worked that was held at the time. This would subsequently lead to many more complicated experiments. Newton's first task was to black out a room in his home by closing the window shutters and moving objects out of the way of the beam of sunlight, which was to enter the room, by cutting a small hole in one of the shutters. This allowed the light to enter into the room, but in a way that was perfect for studying refraction, as there was no confusion as to which rays were being refracted, or what they were being refracted off of. Newton then placed the prism in front of the sunlight in a position that would make it refract onto the opposite wall.

Newton saw that once the white sunlight had passed through the prism and had been refracted, it not only changed direction to shine onto the opposite wall, it also separated into a rainbow effect. He found that refracted white light turns into a spectrum of colours; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. This had only before been seen in a rainbow, which in those days was not regarded as scientific, but as a beautiful anomaly. Being that there existed a very religious culture at the time, many still believed the rainbow to be a sign from God as a promise that he would never again flood the earth (The Bible). Newton, in being able to create an "artificial" rainbow, immediately undermined the superstitious interpretation of rainbows.

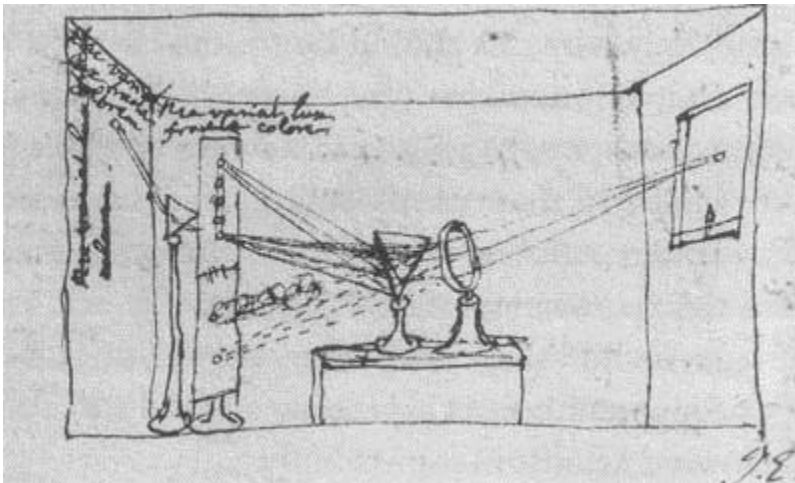
Once Newton had discovered this spectrum he moved the prism from one side to the other, and as he did so he noticed that when the prism moved one way he would get red light, and as he rotated it to the other side, it would travel through the colours to reach violet. He then moved the experiment forward by placing a second prism in front of one of the refracted beams; for example, red. He found however that the second prism would refract the direction of the light but it would not change its colour or create a new spectrum. This discovery made him move the experiment another step further to get into the details of why this was and if it were absolute; was there a circumstance in which the red light would change? Newton tried such things as refracting the coloured light with more prisms, reflecting it off of things that in normal light were a different colour; for example, blue or yellow. He continued to try additional, more complicated methods of changing the colour and yet could not. He concluded that once refracted into a single colour, light could not then change into any other colour.

This led to the conclusion that while white light is a composition of several different colours, each of those colours was indivisible. The most amazing part of this discovery was not the fact that white light separated per second, it was what could be inferred from it. From looking at all the results from this experiment it was concluded that it is the combination of all of the very different colours in the light spectrum that combine to become pure white light. Therefore Newton found that white light was only formed by the composition of all of the colours in the light spectrum. This was a very controversial discovery; for as it stood the belief about white light was that it was the purest form (from Aristotle). If this was the case then logically coloured light had to have been changed in some way. Therefore when Newton suggested that white light was merely a mержence of coloured light, there was uproar, particularly from the German poet J. W. Goethe whom then resorted to verbally attacking Newton.

Merely describing the experiment as Newton carried it out does not necessarily bring us any closer to answering the question, why is this a beautiful experiment? In order to answer this we must first look at what Newton did during this experiment and why he did those things. One may question; why did he choose a particular type of prism and not a sphere or a cube? Or what lead him to think about the refraction of light during his time in voluntary isolation? Before Newton even began to think about the composition of white light, he was interested in the behaviour of light. Newton noticed, as many others did, that light would reflect off of a shiny surface. He also saw that when travelling through bodies of differing densities light would refract. These two observations made Newton wonder what light was ‘made’ of. His theory was that light behaved as though it was composed of particles or tiny masses. He believed that they behaved in the same way as snooker balls or planets.

In the case of reflection, his particle theory would easily explain that when a particle hits a shiny surface it ‘bounces’ off like a snooker ball would do. However, his particle theory on refraction

gets a bit more complicated. With regards to refraction, Newton believed that the particles behaved in a way that resembled planets. By this he meant that when light travels from air into water, the particles are attracted towards the water, which then speeds them up. This would explain why we see light or even an object skew out of shape when it passes through water. There was however a contradictory theory of the behaviour of light, which stood that light in fact behaved like a wave. This was initially proposed by Robert Hooke and later by Christian Huygens. Although this theory was around at the same time as Newton's was, he did not consider it to have any basis. He was adamant that light was composed of particles. He further tried to prove this theory by using his decomposition of light experiment. He stated that the reason the prism gave off this spectrum of colours was that each particle was a different mass depending on its colour. He said that a red particle had a greater mass than a violet particle, which explained the separation of colours. A possible reason that Newton chose to do this experiment with a prism may have been that as he followed the work of Descartes he could have taken his original experiment for decomposing light and simplified it.



*Figure 1- Descartes prism experiment method.*

It is clear that there are definite similarities between Descartes' and Newton's methods; such as the prisms and the single ray of light. However there appear to be other forms of obstacles that alter the experiment. It is highly likely that Descartes' original theory of the decomposition of light and his experiment influenced Newton's own theory (A.Sabra, 1981, p.13).

We have looked at what Newton did for the experiment, what his results were and what could be inferred from them, and how and why he originally came to do this experiment. From here we can begin to look at the possibilities for why Newton's decomposition of light with a prism experiment is considered to be beautiful.

The term 'beautiful' is defined as: "adj. 1. Possessing beauty; aesthetically pleasing. 2. Highly enjoyable; very pleasant" (1987). This definition is merely the general, descriptive, objective way of assigning meaning to the word. However, beauty is a relative concept, rather than an absolute and consequently it is only possible to answer the question - what makes this a beautiful experiment? - by perceiving it subjectively. The reason for this is because when speaking of beauty, it cannot be understood uniformly and universally. People draw upon many elements to decide what is beautiful and why, such as; culture, peers, role models and personal preference. This makes the question of beautiful experiments a very difficult one to answer, because by definition an experiment is objective; it begins with a hypothesis but does not mould depending on the preference of the scientist. An experiment is scientific; it has a clear reasonable method and depends upon minimal outside influences in order to gain reliability and accuracy. Whereas using the word beautiful to describe something implies it can be looked at subjectively, using opinions formed from all possible influences in a person's life. How is it therefore possible to bring these two concepts together in a coherent and sensible manner?

It is firstly essential to look at what beauty could mean to those who were involved in the poll; scientists (or more precisely, physicists). Although beauty may not be a scientific term, it must be certain that many scientists find beauty in their work and the work of others, because beauty can be seen in anything. For example a mathematician could see beauty in symmetry or in the way that maths is a universal language, or in the way various equations work. A biologist may find beauty in the way everything in the human body works in a specific way, so that biological systems communicate and together keep the body functioning; for example the way blood is transported around the body so that oxygenated and deoxygenated blood do not mix. A physicist may find beauty in such things as using simplicity to explain the complex, or perhaps beauty is being proven wrong. This can be seen in Young's light-interference experiment, in which he shows that light must be a wave as it has interference patterns. Or for something to be simply unexplainable, like the extremely complex theory of quantum mechanics, which even some of the greatest minds still cannot truly understand and master.

So what is it about Newton's decomposition of light experiment that made physicists vote it as the fourth most beautiful experiment? It could be these scientists decided that part of what makes an experiment beautiful is what repercussions it has on the scientific field it is part of. For perhaps an experiment with no consequence is one without meaning and perhaps meaning is a form of beauty. This would make Newton's experiment beautiful because it completely turned the concept of white light on its head, not only in science; it also had an impact on religion at the time as well. Newton had discovered that white light could only be if it was a compound of the light spectrum. For science this was the complete opposite to previous notions that white light was pure and coloured light must have been changed. In a religious context it meant that Newton was claiming rainbows that are seen in the sky are not simply a miracle, a sign from

God. He had in fact made them scientific and taken God out of them, which would have been an almost blasphemous thing to do. Therefore by causing people to think over what they merely believed to be true, because they had been told so, or had no better explanation, Newton's experiment was considered beautiful.

Another reason why Newton's experiment could be considered beautiful is the mere simplicity of it. He needed very few pieces of apparatus, no specialised equipment and no need for a laboratory, or any elaborate or expensive planning. By simply placing a glass prism in front of sunlight he had practically completed the experiment, all he needed to do then was explain his results. But from such a simple experiment he managed to alter the thinking on light from the original theory over to his with proof. This leads to another possible reason for the beauty of this experiment, in a way Newton not only turned the theory regarding light upside-down, but he also changed scientific method.

From what we can tell, Newton was originally studying refraction with a prism, not the decomposition of light, and he managed to stumble onto an experiment within an experiment. Once he had performed the refraction experiment and noticed that the white light decomposed into the colours of a rainbow, he did follow-up experiments and developed a conclusion. The beauty of this experiment however is that he managed to come up with an experiment and conclusion without a hypothesis. This completely goes against scientific method, yet it worked, and his findings and conclusions cannot to this day be contradicted, showing that the strict scientific way is not always the best way.

It could be argued that not only physicists would find this experiment to be beautiful. It is possible for people such as philosophers (who may or may not study science), or those who are religious, to find his experiment beautiful on a symbolic level. It could be seen that many different, maybe even imperfect, things come together to become a single perfect entity. It could also be considered that it is beautiful to be able to explain everyday phenomena; for this to be understandable at many different levels and to hold within itself truths, which to this day are still being explored.

The final way in which Newton's experiment could be considered beautiful is simple and obvious, yet it may not have been considered even by physicists, it is simply aesthetics. Whether you are a scientist or not, you cannot help but find beauty in the image of a simple, clean, white beam of light travelling through the darkness, through a gleaming, transparent, glass prism and then dispersing through the other side in a spectrum of all the colours of the rainbow. Although this may not be scientifically or abstractly beautiful, it is in fact beautiful in the simplest form of the word.



In conclusion, Newton's decomposition of light with a prism could be considered to be a beautiful experiment because of the fact that it is so simple and yet created a far more complicated way of looking at light and its properties. Within its simplicity it managed to do a very rare thing indeed, which was to completely contradict both science and religion simultaneously, encourage people to observe light and rainbows from both sides, and think more closely. This experiment also managed to inadvertently contradict the scientific method of developing a hypothesis, performing an experiment and coming to a conclusion which confirms or denies your hypothesis. He did this by setting up different experiments and discovering a new one in the process without the need for a second hypothesis. This was contradictory because logically, there would be no reason for an experiment without a hypothesis to test. Then of course Newton's experiment is physically and aesthetically beautiful, and from the point of view of philosophy or religion, beauty can be found within its symbolism.

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## Smoking Kills

Ellyn Coe

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With the habitual ease of fifty-seven years of doing so, they sat together in the familiar comfort of well-worn cushioned seats, moulded to the shape of their wizened backsides.

A couple, well into the winter of their lives. Both with pale blue toned skin, silvery hair and shaking, shivering bodies that seemed to be battling the frosts and coldness of their age. The old man reached into a tweed pocket with a trembling grip to draw out a smooth wooden pipe and a silver tobacco tin. The tin was speckled with brown tarnish, matching the liver spots on the hand that held it. The pipe was filled with a surprising deftness, lit with a long chef's match, and the first puff taken. A fit of coughing and gasping breaths cut through the musk of smoke that drifted upwards.

His companion gave a start at the noise and dropped her embroidery needle, which was soon lost to the floral blizzard of her skirted lap. She tutted and clucked in disapproval like a mother hen disturbed in her nest, shifting in her seat to find the needle and lean away from the wisps of smoke. The old man snatched clumsily at a heavy scotch bottle from underneath his chair and fumbled with the cap. His attempt to take a gulp was unsuccessful as his coughs sprayed the liquor back out of his leathery lips, down across his front and onto his velour slippers.

The woman rose unsteadily from her seat and clapped him on the back. Her frail hand gave a light but well practiced strike, banging out a last crackle of a cough. The pair then sunk back into their respective armchairs, quite exhausted. They looked at each other with watery, aged eyes. Her pink and wrinkled lips pursed in disapproval as he once again sucked noisily on the pipe. He raised his woolly caterpillar eyebrows in apology and wafted the smoke cloud towards the small window that was cracked open. Placated, she smiled as much as her heavy drooped cheeks would let her and returned to her embroidery.

Again they sat together. The silence of the room only interrupted by a small squeak of painful surprise when the lost needle was found again, piercing the thin skin of her thigh. The air in their small living room was heavy with the perfume of pipe smoke, liquor and cooking meat. The couple dozed in this heady air, their wheezing snores in rhythm with the tick of the brass mantle clock.

A short trill from a kitchen timer roused the woman, but not the man. Once again rising unsteadily, she got up to close the window and right her husband's glass tumbler. It had tilted in his sleeping hand and dribbled more scotch down his front. She shook her head as she patted his. She spoke softly to him: "My dear, they are your closest comforts but I'm afraid your pipe and scotch will be the death of you." She dabbed at his clothing with a handkerchief and left him sleeping.

Once she had made her way to the kitchen, the woman lifted the lid of a heavy pan that was bubbling on the stovetop. It was her husband's favourite dish. Strips of liver and bacon swam in thick brown gravy with onions and carrots. It was cooked through nicely so she turned the gas knob underneath to the faded off position, where it wobbled and tilted back towards the high marking, as it always did. There was no use in getting a new oven, not at their age. The oven was very similar to the couple, slightly faltering, but all in all, still working. She replaced the lid and began to tidy the used utensils and vegetable peelings that littered the kitchen counter.

As she tidied, the woman's nostrils were filled with the smells of sharp lemony kitchen cleaner, pungent garlic and vegetable scraps, and of course, the freshly cooked stew. The scent of gas was masked by the other odours filling the kitchen. The switch on the ancient oven had taken all the strain of years of twisting and pulling and finally given up.

The woman gathered up the vegetable scraps and stepped into large rubber boots that stood to attention at the back door. She closed the door firmly behind her to keep the warmth in and the cold out. Shuffling along the garden path, the old woman shook her woolly head at the weeds that were sprouting up and strangling her beloved flowers. She made her way to the compost bin that had provided the fertilizer that had grown the vegetables that had fed them for many years. In the house the gas spread, invading the other rooms, an invisible cloud mixing with the pipe smoke shrouding the sleeping old man.

The man stirred and awoke from his nap and automatically flexed his bony fingers, which cracked and popped with the movement, then reached for his pipe and matches.

Outside, his wife closed the lid of the compost bin. She struggled with the weight of it, but a tender smile was on her worn face as she thought back to when her husband had made it for her. Inside the man drew out a match and turned the box on its side so that the honeycomb patterned strip faced upwards. At the strike of the match the house bellowed out a hot and forceful gust, throwing the old woman into the flowerbeds, newly widowed.

## **‘Empathy and Judging Other’s Pain; an fMRI study of Alexithymia.’ A Critical Review.**

Katie Groves

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### ABSTRACT

This essay shall critically review the experimental paper ‘Empathy and Judging Other’s Pain; an fMRI study of Alexithymia,’ written by Y. Moriguchi, J. Decety, T. Ohnishi, M. Maeda, T. Mori, K. Nemoto, H. Matsuda and G. Komaki (2007). It is of primary importance to acknowledge that this review shall discuss Alexithymia (ALEX) and empathy in accordance with the definitions given by Moriguchi et al. (2007). ALEX can thus be understood as a: ‘difficulty in identifying and expressing one’s own emotional states,’ whilst empathy can be understood as, ‘a naturally occurring subjective experience [referring to] the ability to identify with and vicariously share the thoughts and feelings of others’ (Moriguchi et al., 2007, p.2223).

Moriguchi et al. propose that the problems with emotional processing experienced in ALEX are suggestive of a possible impairment in empathic skills, as the ability to identify one’s own emotional states is widely accepted as a prerequisite for identifying emotional states in others (Decety & Jackson, 2004). To test this hypothesis two groups of participants were recruited for comparison; an ALEX group (n=16) and a non-alexithymia (non-ALEX) group (n=14). Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was used with all participants, to observe and compare the brain’s regional hemodynamic responses to the visual perception of pain, after witnessing images of human hands and feet in painful situations. Additionally, participants were asked to assign a subjective pain-rating to each image, which alongside empathy-related scores were then compared between groups and against the fMRI data as assessment for empathic ability. It was found that areas of the brain traditionally associated with pain recognition and empathy showed normal levels of activation in the non-ALEX group but abnormally low levels of activation in the ALEX group. This was found to concur with data from the rating tasks as the ALEX group rated the pictures as less painful than the non-ALEX group, whilst obtaining lower scores on measures of mature empathy. Accordingly, Moriguchi et al. concluded that ALEX individuals experience cognitive impairments in emotional processing of other’s pain, indicative of the importance of self-awareness in empathic ability (Moriguchi et al, 2007).

This essay shall review the paper presented by Moriguchi et al., critically considering the methodologies, results, conclusions and any unresolved issues with consideration of the literature presented. It is, however, important to note that there are many possible avenues for discussion

within each of those named areas, but given the scope of this essay only the issues considered to be imperative shall be attended to. Furthermore it must be identified that this research focuses on the characteristics of a particular deficit, therefore a discussion of alternative behavioural experiments with healthy subjects shall not be addressed, because healthy subjects do not express the characteristics of ALEX. The critique shall progress chronologically in accordance with the issues presented in the original paper.

First and foremost, Moriguchi et al. present an overview of relevant literature highlighting the context, significance and rationale of their research. They discuss theoretical propositions for a model of empathy whereby the perception of emotion is said to activate the same neurological mechanisms as the experience of emotion (Preston & de Waal, 2002). In support, they offer an overview of findings from several fMRI studies demonstrating shared neurological mechanisms for empathy and subjective experience (Singer, Seymour, O’Doherty, Kaube, Dolan and Frith, 2004). Alongside a lack of research into empathic ability in ALEX this discussion therefore explains the motivation for their research.

However, the presentation of literature in relation to the present understanding of ALEX implicitly suggests that empathic ability is dependent on an initial development of self awareness. This is perhaps a simplistic framework for a complex phenomenon as some theorists propose that infants learn about their own emotions from identifying emotional states in others (Keenan, 2002). Such theory implies a counter-directional explanation of the relationship between empathy and emotion that is not acknowledged by Moriguchi et al. As a result, a more holistic discussion of empathy with an emphasis on the mutual dependence between empathy and self-awareness would have given a stronger rationale for the research and added significance to these findings that other research may lack.

Nevertheless, the literature presented identifies the neural networks thought to underpin the experience of empathy, which provides an explanation for the use of fMRI. In order to assess empathic ability in ALEX, it could have been possible to conduct this study using either fMRI or a stand-alone comparison of the ratings and psychological scores. However, using both fMRI and subjective rating data allowed for a physiological observation of the extent of empathic ability, as well as a measurement of the conscious awareness of empathy. Thus, the combination of the objective and subjective methodologies subserve each other to provide a comprehensive explanation of the extent of empathic ability in ALEX.

Nonetheless, fMRI can only identify blood flow to the brain, which, although indicative of brain activity, does not provide information about neuronal functioning (Watson, 2011). Therefore, the Moriguchi et al. paper suggests that ALEX individuals have reduced activity in the areas of the brain associated with recognising pain and empathy, but does not comment on the specifics

of this activity at a neuronal level. Additionally, it seems that Moriguchi et al. have not considered all possible explanations for the symptoms of ALEX.

In 'The chameleon effect' - whereby empathic, in comparison to less empathic, individuals display a nonconscious mimicry of posture - facial expression and gestures of others has initiated discussion to suggest that inner imitation of actions may underpin the emergence of empathic abilities (Carr, Iacoboni, Dubeau, Mazziotta and Lenzi, 2003). Furthermore, Meltzoff & Moore (1997) offer an 'active intermodal mapping theory' of imitation that suggests there is an innate, domain specific mechanism for imitating humans, allowing infants to begin learning about their environment from birth. Therefore, perhaps recognising one's own emotions develops from the ability to identify characteristic traits of emotional states in others and integrate them into a unified understanding of different sets of emotions. If this system is deficient from birth, a variety of difficulties with emotional and social understanding could develop, including those experienced in ALEX.

Recent research has suggested that mirror neuron activity underpins a variety of social skills within humans, inclusive of imitation and empathic ability, as it is proposed that a physiological observation/execution system may facilitate social understanding (Oberman, Pineda and Ramachandran, 2007). As frequency (8-13Hz) over the sensorimotor cortex is thought to reflect mirror neuron activity (Oberman, Hubbard, McCleery, Altschuler, Ramachandran and Pineda, 2005), EEG recordings of a neonates response to actual and observed movement in comparison to a non-observed stimulus, could offer evidence for or against early imitation mechanisms depending on the prevalence of mirror neuron activity. If this is found, the causal relationship between difficulties in recognising one's own emotions, and the empathic difficulties apparently prevalent in ALEX, would be less readily assumable.

Moriguchi et al. overlook the role of deficient mirror neuron activity as a potential explanation for the empathic impairments experienced in ALEX, with no reference to this possibility and no acknowledgement to the importance of mirror neurons in empathic skills. Consequently, their study offers a rudimentary explanation of the neurological systems accountable for the possible empathic impairments observed in ALEX.

Mirror neurons have been studied using transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a non-invasive method of observing specific neuronal activity (Maeda, Mazziotta and Iacoboni, 2002). Consequently, TMS could be a possible alternative method for further investigation into whether ALEX individuals experience a difference in empathy-related mirror neuron activity compared to non-ALEX individuals.

Additionally, electrical activity in the sensorimotor cortex has been linked to the mirror neuron system. Therefore electroencephalogram (EEG) recordings of the sensorimotor cortex have been

used to investigate the possibility of deficient mirror neuron activity in populations who express difficulty in understanding the behaviour of others (Oberman et al., 2005). Consequently, in comparison to using fMRI, perhaps a combined EEG and TMS study could more adequately assess the empathic abilities in ALEX, allowing for observation before and after direct manipulation of the cortical regions associated with empathy.

The pictures of human hands and feet in painful situations may also be a weak methodological tool for assessing empathic abilities in ALEX. Whilst Moriguchi et al. acknowledge that these images may not account for the entire construct of empathy they neglect the extent of this and the possible impact on their findings.

In the introduction Moriguchi et al. outline three components of empathy; affective, cognitive and regulatory. In line with this, the definition of empathy they offer is relative to the emotions and cognitions of other humans. The pictures presented as a stimulus for empathy however did not relate to any emotional pain such as social rejection or bereavement and offered limited capacity for cognitive pain due to a lack of perspective-taking opportunity in the weak representation of human suffering. It could be argued that the cognitive inference of physical pain into thoughts and feelings accounts for the assessment of empathy but ultimately, by presenting isolated limbs the images were dehumanised, whilst the depictions of these limbs were poor in accounting for the entire construct of empathy. Inferentially, these measures for empathy do not explicitly concur with the definition of empathy given. Thus, it could be possible that the images measured an understanding of pain levels and not empathic ability. The evaluations may be confounded further by the individual's subjective pain threshold, as mentioned briefly in the discussion. Subsequently, perhaps ALEX individuals in this study had impairments in pain judgement rather than empathy.

Considering this, it may be of methodological significance to offer a more multi-dimensional representation of pain through the use of video or story telling techniques where the participant's witness human plight first hand. Moreover, adding an explicit emotional component to the empathy stimuli such as forlorn facial expressions or crying, may better represent an opportunity for empathy.

Nevertheless, results derived from this study appear to be accurate as they are supported by findings from other studies. For example, a meta-analysis of research regarding the neural networks of pain and empathy found that common brain structures involved in subjective pain and empathy included the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), the dorsal pons, the cerebellum, and the left caudal anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) (Lamm, Decety and Singer, 2010). In concordance, Moriguchi et al.'s fMRI data revealed that non-ALEX individuals showed expected levels of functioning in these areas whilst ALEX individuals showed

hypofunction. Tables and images were provided to enhance understanding of the written explanation of results, including an outline of appropriate statistical measures used (Worsley, Liao, Aston, Petre, Duncan, Morales and Evans, 2002), which was very useful. Nevertheless, a pictorial demonstration of the comparison of pain ratings between the groups would have been more easily accessible than the table format presented.

Overall, Moriguchi et al. concluded that ALEX individuals have impairments in empathic ability which emphasises the importance of self-awareness in the identification of emotional states in others. One of their main justifications for this claim is the observation of hypofunction in the ACC, which is considered to be important in emotional awareness (Moriguchi et al., 2007). However, as ALEX individuals report emotional processing difficulties rather than an emotional processing deficit, it could be possible that even with low activation of the ACC there may be some preserved empathic ability, perhaps predominantly driven by the existence of more primitive, unconscious empathic pathways.

It has been proposed that the ACC is a relatively new structure of the cortex in terms of evolution as it contains neuronal formations specific to humans and apes (Allman, Hakeem, Erwin, Nimchinsky and Hof, 2002). If this is true, alongside the ACC being integral for empathy, then it should be expected that only humans and apes will show signs of empathic behaviour. However, evidence for empathic ability in other animals has been implied from the observation of behaviours such as flocking, mobbing and schooling (Allot, 1992). Furthermore, it is suggested that empathic signalling between members of a species allows for survival related behaviours to transpire (Ibid.). Therefore, animals appear to empathise with each other on a more basic level in order to increase their evolutionary fitness. This suggests that there are other possible neuronal pathways, perhaps dependant on emotional processing in the amygdala, which account for empathy without it transpiring as a conscious phenomenon. As a result, it may be possible that ALEX individuals possess an ability to empathise but only on a primitive, unconscious level, indicating that self-awareness is possibly not as integral to the empathic process as Moriguchi et al. suggest. Additionally, this may imply that the ability to empathise precedes the development of self awareness, as self-awareness in animals is yet to be defined (Ibid.).

In order to test this, fMRI and behavioural observations would have to be conducted to assess if ALEX individuals can interact using empathic judgement, whilst monitoring the neurological mechanisms underlying the behaviour. For example, very simplistically, two objects (A and B) that are completely identical in nature could be presented. The ALEX individual would observe someone giving a pain response after touching object A and then has to decide which object to take for themselves. If after rating the stimuli as neutral they opt for object B, it could be inferred that they have made a choice based on primitive empathy. Nevertheless, these suggestions are



speculative, with no empirical research supporting them. Given the vast amount of literature concurring with Moriguchi et al. it is possible to say that the fundamentals of their conclusions are largely convincing.

This essay has critically reviewed the experimental paper by Moriguchi et al. (2007), considering the methodologies, results and conclusions in relation to the literature presented as well as other research. Overall, it can be said that the study drew upon relevant literature in favour of the research but somewhat lacked any insight that may have countered their position. Even so, it appears that the methodologies used, despite some possible alternatives, were accurately selected and the results drawn were carefully analysed whilst on the whole, appropriately depicted. As a result, the conclusions drawn were at most convincing, although there is room for speculation and avenues for further research. Thus, holistically the paper does provide a good basis for the understanding of ALEX characteristics and offers new, significant findings to suggest that ALEX individuals have an impairment of conscious empathic ability.

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To whom it may concern,

These manifestos are intended as a semi-ironic comment on the Seven Dada Manifestos produced as part of the cultural movement developed in the late 1910s/early 1920s by Tristan Tzara and Jean Arp (among others). I have deliberately experimented with form and style whilst attempting to create something truly original. What I have written is meant as an expression of that originality and does not follow conventional structure or pattern. My experimentation with form, as well as the content of the manifestos themselves seek to subvert the principles of nihilism and destruction found in Dada thought. The Dada negation of art is here subject to perversion; where Dada promotes itself as nothing but “anti-art”, Universalism takes the stance that art is *everything*.

Universalism is a reflection of some of my own beliefs as to what art is and what should be seen as creatively notable. My only intention is to establish a radically new way of thinking about art as a concept, and write a piece that questions what it means to “create” in the broadest sense of the word.

Art should be about the reaction that it gets, and I hope to show here how a series of manifestos, as pieces of pure creativity, can evoke a reaction as powerful as a work of art.

Never give in. Always create. Be free and beautiful, then fall down and die.

We will catch you.

Ralph Barker

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**SIX**

**Universalist**

**Manifestos**

## UNIVERSALISM :

### Art as Life

Art is everything.

Art is people.

Art is not for the eye but for the mind.

Objectivity is dead. Subjectivity is God.

*I* decide, not *we* the community, *we* the critics, *we* the “right”. *I* decide. I *am* art. “This” is art. “Nothing” is not a real thing as “nothing” does not exist. Everything was created, everything is *in* creation. Creation is *something*, so “nothing” is *nothing*. “Nothing” cannot metaphysically exist because there is no space for it. Even the mind is a creation.

The question is: did we create our mind or do our natural mental abilities define us? Do we perceive our reality through our individual subjective experience, or through the bars of the social cage we have been born inside? These questions are crucial to the understanding of “art”. How can we experience art if we see through the preconceived vision that we have been taught to respect? Art critics are no more in control of what true art is than a slug on the pavement or a tuna mayonnaise sandwich. They have the same metaphysical substance and hold an equal standing in the universal creation of “existence” but appear to us as wiser because of their status. No authority is real authority. We are free men and cannot be controlled by a higher power other than the energy we possess. Even a murderer who kills us on a whim cannot completely destroy us; our *energy* remains and continues to exist in the realm of creation. This is true art. *Life* is true art.

Love life.

Love art.

Be free to live and live to create.

These are the principles of Universalism.

Our combined energy is the energy of the artist, the creator, the god. It is not enough anymore for us to seek higher truth; we are the truth. We are the God that we searched for in dusty books and stuffy churches. God is art and art will always be god. We the subjective hold the key to understanding that all around us is art and that art is the answer. Creation myths are still creation, but pure creation is not a myth. What uses have we for unattainable beauty, when life itself is a beautiful canvas which we paint with our subjective experiences? No canvas is the same. We care not for the creation of others. Inspiration may come from the *creativity* of others but pure creation is a natural state of self that is born within us.

What have I shown here?

Nothing.

Everything.

Blah, Blah, Blah.

Words.

Art.

My word is creation. My creation is art.

Life, time and space co-exist on this page.

You bear witness to pure creation.

Pure art.

### Universalism:

#### **A journey into the mind of man**

Artists are the world's finest soldiers. More than anything they hold one of the greatest weapons that man has ever been given; the power to project their innermost being on to an external object. They become their creations. Even death cannot touch them as they are already immortal. Art is beyond death, beyond space and time. It exists in the collective subjective realm. When an artist talks of his work, it is not to persuade others of its merit, merely to show them how he has hunted down and tracked art, capturing its essence to display to others. His kill is not the same as others, it is his own doing. It exists because he is alive and is nourished by his experience. His display may not please others, but there is no denying him the creativity he has achieved. The journey the artist has taken is shown in his creation. This is not the death of art. One does not, *cannot*, destroy art. A man merely grasps art for long enough to cut off the pieces he requires to create with. Art will always be free. Art is the universe's great procreator. It is self sustaining and eternal. Art inseminates itself and multiplies. Art begets art.

Everyone is an artist in the sense that everyone creates, even if they create unintentionally, but if everyone were to realise their potential as an artistic life force and simultaneously create with the outcome of an artistic reflection of self, art would still not be exhausted. Art looks into the great yawning darkness of the universe and sees only its own reflection. Nothing else exists for art, as art needs nothing other than itself to survive. The realisation of this is man's greatest moment. There is no turning back for the enlightened artist as there is no alternative other than what he has seen. Art has no use for man, but man's life is so intrinsically linked to art that we cannot help but embrace it. Art is pure creation. The universe is responsible for art, but without creation there would be no universe. There is still an "everything" in "nothing". Man knows this and tries

to find meaning in creation, but creation is its own meaning. It creates for the sake of creation and it thrives on the creative energy it emits. Art is the only truth in the universe, the only constant. The eternal god.

Universalism is how we live. It describes the lives we lead. It transcends time and space. It is both nothing and everything. It doesn't have a life but everything lives inside it. We cannot live without creation. Life is creation. Creation is art. Art is life. This is the progress we have made; thousands of years spent searching for an "other", only to find ourselves alone with art. Without even knowing it, we create. We are born, we live, we die; we create. Art is no more about form or substance. Art is not aesthetically pleasing, nor is it about meaning and culture. Art is art. No more need be said. Art is the product of a creation. Mother Nature is an artist as much as a painter. The wind may blow a seed from a tree and drop it in the earth and it will be as beautiful and as meaningful as Moreau's *Salome Dancing Before Herod*.

The most beautiful creations are those that occur unseen. The finest art is that which has yet to come into being, existing only in the darkest recesses of a forgotten memory. True Art needs no audience, no spectator and no judge. Who could be qualified to judge such an abstract concept? God? Maybe. But who judges God? Universalists believe in no such being, we know better.

We know that art is the finest truth and the highest power. CREATION.

We know that only through art can we live and thrive. CREATION.

We know that we exist *as* art and that we breathe artistic energy. CREATION.

We give birth to and nourish art. CREATION.

We are her mothers and her fathers and her sons and her daughters. CREATION.

We live and create and die and create and rot and create and surrender ourselves to creation and are created.

Our energy is eternal.

We are born from art and return to art. We are the recycled creative energy of the universe. We are people, plants, animals.

Materials. Materials.

Materials for creation and creation for art. Art for life and life for death and death for materials. Materials for creation and creation for art.

Universalism:

**Commercial art: *Why Tony the Tiger must be killed.***

Commercial art is masturbation. The great pretender. Universalists are against art as a formal commercialism designed for commodity and profit. This art is lifeless and does not please us. Its sole purpose is to distract. To distract us from the vibrant whirlwind of energy that true art expels. To distract us from life and stop our creative energy from shining through. It dulls us. It is our enemy and *WE WILL NOT BE DEFEATED.*

Universalists will *not* be defeated.

UNIVERSALISM WILL NOT BE DEFEATED.

Art has no arms so we must arm her. Art has no legs so we must carry her. Art is lighter than air and stronger than diamond. Art is carried into battle by those who are willing to die for her. Universalists are ready to die for art. We would gladly walk into the mine field of the art critics and be obliterated so that art could live and thrive.

There is still merit in commercial art. We do not say here that advertising is anything less than a creative colossus; where would Warhol be without soup and soap pads? Creation is intangibly linked to art and the process of creation is still present as an artistic driving force behind what is deemed to be “art”. Universalists do not deny the creativity of commercial art, but loathe its “production for profit” attitude.

Every time I walk past a colourful product with a gaily drawn cartoon animal promising the best puffed rice or frosted cardboard or other “delicious” product, I am repulsed by the ridiculous and inane use of creative energy used to create such a character. Why must art suffer for an ailing company’s loss of profit or fatten a greedy plutocrat who craves double cream whilst he already has single?

Art is not cat nip to stuff the pockets of the wealthy.

I say NO MORE.

No more whoring of art.

It is not right that art is used to entice small children to buy a sugary product or expensive toy, unaware that their desire is the by-product of a commercial artist’s wet dream. Commercial art is fallacious and lurid. We say death to the twisted advertisers who have harnessed creation and whore it out for a price. Art cannot be tamed and paraded around for the amusement of others. We must respect art as the output of a creative energy far beyond our understanding.



**Universalism:**

**Art and the Unconscious (1):** Lying, dying, and fucking.

Art exists in relation to the human unconscious. A wild force that transforms the reality of life into an “other” by its output. Art balances our inner emotional forces and is absorbed by us. An unconscious is a dangerously complicated force.

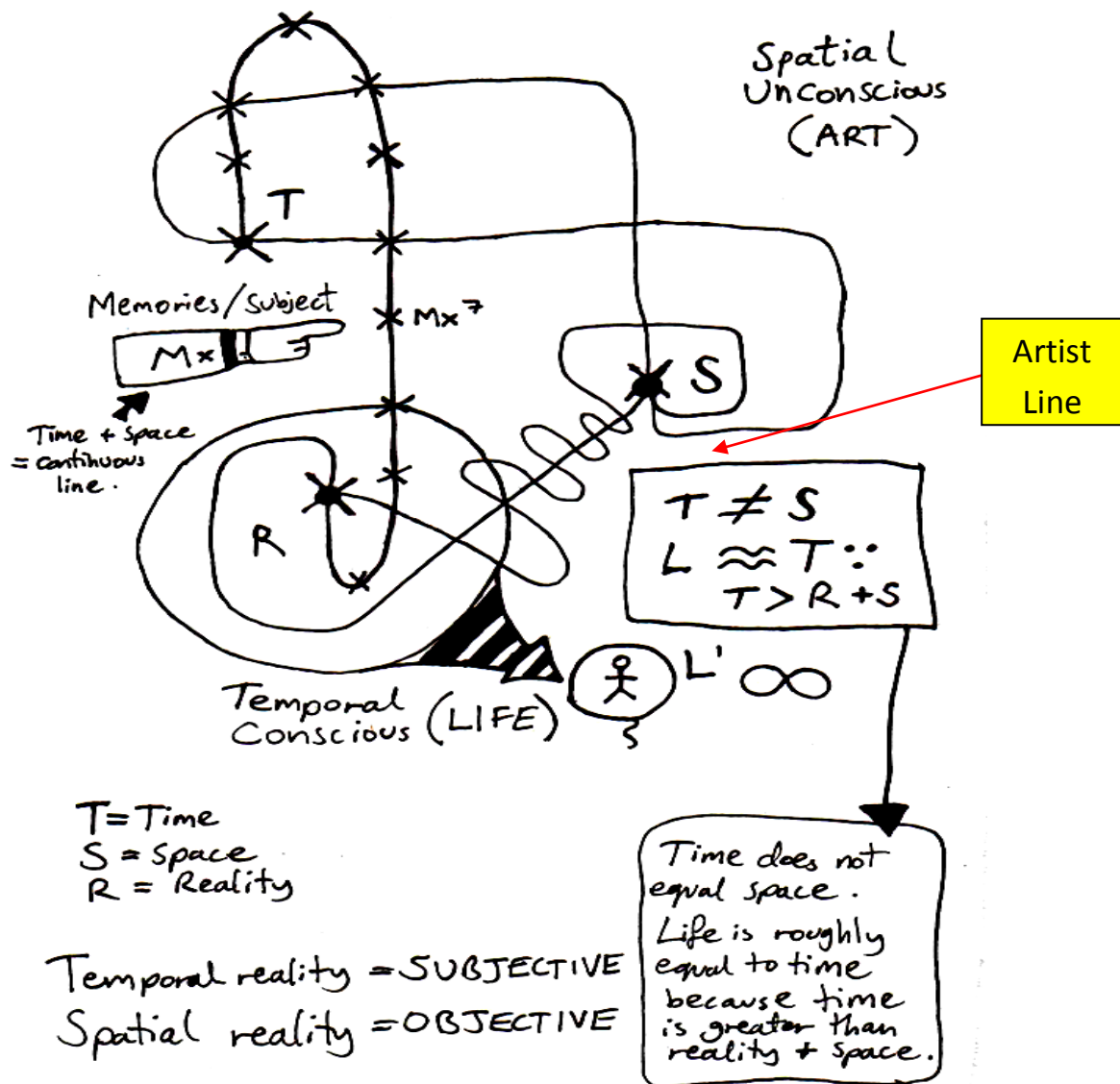
The human is wild and violent in design, but man is balanced by art. Art is both violent and gentle, as the human learns to be. The wantonness of art is often softened by an artist’s mellow disposition, and other times the artist is freed by the whirlwind of creation that emanates from a “work of art”.

Sometimes the wildness of a human requires a corresponding neatness in art; and sometimes the neatness of a human requires a corresponding wildness. But, in the end, there is no such thing as an unwild creation.

Lying, dying, and fucking. These are the vile foundations humanity has been raised on. Necessary and brutal. Why should art be any different? Why not paint the brutality of life and depict the despair which surrounds you? Surely there is still a beauty in that. A painting or a picture of a dying soldier evokes a reaction in the viewer. Art asks no more than this. The only necessity for art is to gain a reaction, good or bad.

The artist stands alone at a crossroads, and weeps openly for art to take him. Begs for the beauty of the universe to engulf his being and give him life. He needs art to live; without art there is nothing. Art is its own absolute. The artist feels himself to be sustained by divine inspiration and is driven by art alone. Art is his mistress and his muse; he needs no light other than that which she provides him.

Art and the Unconscious (2): Art as the Spatial Unconscious:



The above diagram shows how we live as humans and where we exist in relation to the universal order of time and space.

Our lives exist within the circle of our own temporal consciousness. We witness reality from inside our individual subjective realm. This is what we know as finite beings; time and space are contained in our circle as our own existential experience of how we perceive time and space, through human consciousness. But, although we have a loose grip on time and space according to our human understanding of what they are, they are outside of what we can perceive, situated in an objective spatial reality, the spatial unconscious. Space and time are shown to be a continuous line joined in the unconscious reality, linked to our own reality through the line of memories that a subject experiences in their life time. Our reality crosses the line of space as we live our lives; or rather experience what we perceive to be our “life”.

The spatial unconscious is where we find art, lurking in the darkness of the universe beyond time, space and reality. Art as creation encapsulates these three and nourishes them. Without art,

the universe would collapse under the weight of itself. Art is the great mother of the universe. The artist is able to have a relationship with art in that he is able to break free from his own temporal reality and venture into the unconscious reality of the spatial universe. The spatial universe has four dimensions: depth, width and breadth are the dimensions of space, and time which is outside of space. When I say “space” as a construct, I am including the three dimensions associated with it. I propose that, along the lines of the quantum mechanics’ superstring theory which suggests the universe has an extra six dimensions, art as creation is the god of all dimensions. To put it a little more simply, without creation, there would be no universe. Whether the universe was created from the Big Bang or God matters little here, the important thing to take into account is that a creative process of some sort is responsible for things happening. Without creation, nothing would happen. This is an undeniable truth. Taking this into account, it remains fairly safe to say that creation is at the pinnacle of existence as a spatial reality, regardless of whether we as humans can witness it.

In the diagram above, the artist travels outside the circle of his temporal reality via the twisting line linking reality to space (shown with the red arrow). The artist is able to harness the power of creativity in order to produce a piece of “art”. This act of grasping the unattainable makes him a god. The artist is able to detach himself from the temporal reality of his human consciousness and travel beyond theoretical space-time to the realm of art, where he carves out a piece of his soul to rest in the immortal realm that art occupies. The artist transcends himself through his creations.

## Universalism:

### **Art – the truth in lies**

Art provides us with a vision of the reality beyond our lives. It allows us to experience something more than what we see, and at the same time, holds up a mirror to our soul and shows us the deepest parts of ourselves we had hidden away.

Art reflects reality. Layers and layers of truth, despair, questioning. The universe is opaque. We can only imagine what is beyond our reach, but art gives us a way of accessing the imaginative power we keep locked down inside ourselves, and bringing it forward for us to examine. We are left with inspiration to create art for ourselves. Art is about the ‘big picture’. Art shows us that we can achieve something beyond our self, and that we can reach far higher than we thought. The universe can be likened to art.

We cannot see what lies under the Mona Lisa’s face, the soft lines that make up her smile. These brushstrokes are lost. Is this not an accurate way to describe time? Is this not an accurate way to describe *the universe*? We cannot see the past, only where it has occurred. We can only see where places and people have been, but not the events themselves. Reality is a painting. Layer upon layer of events and realities that make up what we see as truth. Just as the artist wields his materials, so we perceive and create our own reality. We ‘paint’ our own experiences, design our own fate and change our canvas as we change our path in life. Art is a tool. Nothing more. A

tool. A way of perceiving our world and living in our creation. But it is the only tool. The only truth. Creation.

Universalism.

### **Universalism:**

#### **How to become a Universalist**

Start off by looking in a mirror.

Look at yourself until you no longer recognise who you are. You are not your body. The mind is the only real player in this game.

You are nothing.

Nothing.

Now that you realise what you mean in the universal scheme of things, you are free.

You are free to create and invent. To create is to live. You have been reborn a Universalist.

You will achieve everything you set your heart upon, and you'll do it, despite the greatest odds and the harshest climates, you will do it. Isolation is the truest gift. You will get there and it will be glorious. The nights will burn with the fire of your flaming soul as you ride life to eternal glory.

## Aims

The journal is dedicated to the publication of high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate writing and is committed to creating accessible and engaging content for a non-specialist student readership. Estro encourages and celebrates student research by providing students with valuable early experience of academic publishing and the peer review process. The journal is a multi-disciplinary journal, run by and for Essex students.

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Submissions should include:

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4. References in both the text and end notes should follow the Harvard style\*.
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