Model Student Essays

A Collection of Essays Written Primarily in Introductory Level College Courses

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Preface

We learn about writing by studying models. Sometimes nothing helps the novice writer so much as the chance to observe the technique of a skilled one. But even the student who has been successful at writing in one mode may have trouble with another. One student may write exceptional literary analyses, but has not mastered sociology papers; the student who excels at a laboratory report may struggle with a paper assignment in an Art history class. In all these situations, model essays can perform great instructional service. The "eureka!" moment—"So that’s a specific thesis!" or “That’s how you use and explain supporting evidence!"—is often all it takes to help students begin to raise the quality of their own work.

Model Student Essays is intended for the entire Franklin and Marshall College community. Faculty may use it during an in-class workshop or an individual conference to illustrate a principle of effective writing. Writing Center tutors will find these essays helpful in coaching their tutees about the writing process. And, because faculty members have submitted these essays as examples of the best work they received during the past academic year, students can turn to this booklet to gain an understanding of the qualities of writing we value here at F&M.

The essay that closes this year's Model Student Essays is worthy of special mention. Stephanie Lautenbacher’s “Curioser and Curioser:” The Adventures of How Alice Came to Print was the winner of the 2003 William Uler Hensel English Prize.

My great appreciation goes to Stephanie Parent’04, a student writing assistant in the Writing Center, for her invaluable help in compiling and editing this booklet. Many thanks as well to Melissa Hansen ’03, a recently graduated writing assistant, for her work in selecting and editing some of the early submissions to this year’s edition.

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Gaseous Diffusion: A Historical Account of Isotope Separation

The race to create the world’s first atomic bomb was a huge project that involved the work of tens of thousands of people and billions of dollars. Most of these resources, however, did not go into the theory of designing a bomb, as design was a relatively small part of the budget; rather, the money and manpower were needed to produce weapons-grade plutonium and uranium. Gaseous diffusion was, at the time, the most efficient way of separating the $^{235}\text{U}$ and $^{238}\text{U}$ isotopes.¹

The question of why scientists entertained the idea of a uranium bomb at all is an intriguing one. Bohr had already demonstrated that uranium, when undergoing slow fission, gives off neutrons. When those neutrons strike impure $^{238}\text{U}$, a new element is produced: Neptunian. Neptunian, undergoing beta decay with a half-life of about 56 hours, produces plutonium—plutonium, like $^{235}\text{U}$, is fissionable.²

The process by which plutonium is produced is scientifically straightforward—a modern reactor with an output of 100 MW/day can produce enough plutonium for a bomb in about two months. Plutonium, therefore, was the logical fissionable material considered for an atomic weapon. However, a problem soon arose, as scientists realized that a chain reaction could not be initiated with plutonium in the same way as with uranium. Rather, the plutonium would have to

¹ http://www.childrenofthemanhattanproject.org/HISTORY/H-04b2.htm
be imploded.⁴ Although the implosion model worked theoretically, many scientists, including Enrico Fermi, harbored serious doubts about the practical implementation of a plutonium implosion. These doubts from his top scientists forced Oppenheimer to suggest that, to guarantee the success of the entire Manhattan project, both a plutonium and uranium bomb should be produced.

Oak Ridge, the home of the current United States National Laboratory, was first created in 1940 to produce the necessary raw materials needed for bomb construction. The facility at Oak Ridge eventually grew to include some fifty thousand people working around the clock to build the infrastructure necessary to separate \( \text{^{235}U} \) from \( \text{^{238}U} \). The rationale for investing so much energy and capital into separating the two isotopes was that only \( \text{^{235}U} \) is fissionable — the presence of \( \text{^{238}U} \) will absorb the majority of fast neutrons, thus preventing a fissionable bomb. It was calculated that the bomb would need to be approximately 90% pure \( \text{^{235}U} \)⁴ to provide a sustained chain reaction.

A second fact also indicated the need to separate uranium isotopes. The \( \text{^{235}U} \) isotope occurs naturally in a ratio of 7 \( \text{^{235}U} \) atoms to 993 \( \text{^{238}U} \) atoms, or about 0.7%. A nuclear reactor requires uranium that has been enriched to at least 5-7%. Thus, whether scientists intended to construct a uranium bomb or not, enriched uranium would still be required to power the reactor which created the plutonium.

An efficient process was therefore needed to separate uranium isotopes from one another. The best understood and most practical way to separate the isotopes of uranium is to convert raw uranium to uranium hexafluoride and diffuse this gas through a series of semi-permeable

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³ http://www.me.utexas.edu/~uer/manhattan/bomb-design.html
membranes. According to Graham’s Law, the heavier gas will diffuse more slowly, and thus, after a set number of diffusion cycles through a membrane, the lighter $^{235}_{92}\text{UF}_6$ will have diffused in a greater quantity than the $^{238}_{92}\text{UF}_6$.

However, tremendous technical obstacles still needed to be overcome if gas diffusion were to become a reality. The first and most daunting challenges arose due to the chemical nature of the compound uranium hexafluoride. Uranium hexafluoride is the only compound of uranium that can be converted to a gas at a reasonable temperature (about 64°C.)\(^5\) Unfortunately, uranium hexafluoride is also extremely corrosive. It will eat through any rubber gasket, reacts violently with most organic compounds, and corrodes most metals. Therefore, a special material was needed to create the semi-permeable membrane used in the diffusion chamber.

Tetrafluoroethylene, developed by Dupont under the trade name Teflon,\(^\text{™}\) provided an economical solution. The same Teflon\(^\text{™}\) used on “non-stick” cookware has amazing chemical properties, one of which is that it is one of the most unreactive and physically robust chemicals ever synthesized. When the tetrafluoroethylene was glazed onto an aluminum membrane, the scientists at Oak Ridge found the answer they had been looking for: uranium hexafluoride diffused through the membrane without corroding or plugging the membrane holes.\(^6\)

The last technical challenge arose because of the sheer numbers of diffusions required to separate the uranium isotopes. From Graham’s Law, the ratio of the rate of diffusion is dependent upon the square root of the mass ratio; in this case, the ratio of the uranium isotopes rate of diffusion is about 0.005866. When one considers the purity of the sample needed, about 93%, and the fact that the diffusion becomes slower exponentially, the task appears to be an

\(^5\) http://web.ead.anl.gov/uranium/guide/prodhand/sld026.cfm & see also, The Handbook of Chemistry and Physics, CRC Press
\(^6\) http://infomanage.com/nonproliferation/primer/nwfaq/Nfaq6.html
impossible one. However, the author has shown (see math appendix) that it took only about 1000 diffusions cycles to obtain a uranium purity of 93%, and only about 15 diffusion cycles were needed to create the uranium to power a nuclear reactor (about 5 to 7% pure $^{235}\text{U}$). Thus, the possibly of making a uranium bomb was a conceivable one.

The gas diffusion plant at Oak Ridge was built next to the K-25 steam power plant—the largest such power plant in the world. The energy produced at K-25 was used almost exclusively to power the gas diffusion facility which came online in 1943. During the war, Oak Ridge was only able to produce enough enriched uranium for one bomb. For this reason, and because physicists were sure the uranium bomb would fission, the uranium bomb was never tested before being dropped on Japan.

The legacy of gas diffusion continues to this day. The diffusion plants at Oak Ridge, TN, Paducah, KY, and Portsmouth, OH still diffuse huge quantities of uranium hexafluoride each year for use in nuclear power plants. In fact, the US Department of Energy reports that enough depleted uranium is contained within some 42,000 steel containment cylinders to fill a football field 15 feet high with pure uranium. With the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the US Department of Energy has scaled back its output of highly purified uranium through gaseous diffusion methods, and no weapons-grade uranium has been produced since 1993.\footnote{http://web.ead.anl.gov/uranium/guide/prodhand/sld026.cfm}

Since the introduction of gaseous diffusion, other methods have been developed for the separation of uranium isotopes. In 1962, government scientists perfected centrifugal separation, in which liquid uranium hexafluoride is spun very quickly in a centrifuge, causing the isotopes to settle out in different layers.\footnote{http://www.tpki.ru/Project_e/Appl Tech/at-3.pdf} The rotational speeds of about 50,000 RPM required by this procedure necessitated a tremendously powerful motor that was not practical to build during the
war. Finally, scientists have nearly perfected laser separation, in which a monochromatic laser of a specific frequency is able to excite $^{235}_{92}$U atoms but not $^{238}_{92}$U atoms. The electric field created as electrons change atomic energy levels is then pulled toward a powerful electromagnet, and the lighter $^{235}_{92}$U separates from the heavier $^{238}_{92}$U.

It can be expected that gas diffusion will remain a viable alternative for many years, as it is safe and fairly efficient, and the infrastructure for its execution is already in place. Diffusion may someday give way to newer techniques, but its legacy will remain as the source of uranium dropped on the first living targets and enriched uranium used for conversion to plutonium, for both the Gadget and Fat Man bombs.

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9 http://www.llnl.gov/str/Hargrove.html
Math Appendix:

Molecular Gas Theory:
For a derivation of Molecular Gas Theory, please see Steven Zumdahl, *Chemistry 3rd Ed*, Appendix C.

Graham’s Law \[ r = \sqrt{\frac{M_1}{M_2}} \]

Thus, we can set up the following differential equation knowing the masses of $^{235}_{92}$UF$_6$ and $^{238}_{92}$UF$_6$

\[
\frac{dy}{dx} = \left(1 - \frac{351.988}{348.988}\right)^y
\]

\[
\int \frac{dy}{y} = \left(1 - \frac{351.988}{348.988}\right) \int dx
\]

\[
\ln(y) = \left(1 - \frac{351.988}{348.988}\right)^x
\]

\[
y = Ke^{\left(1 - \frac{351.988}{348.988}\right)^x}
\]

\[
y = Ke^{-0.00586629}
\]

*In the last step, where the approximation was made, I used more precise numbers than the ones used above, thus the addition of more significant digits.*

It is known that $^{238}_{92}$U makes up approximately 99.2745% of all natural uranium; thus at $x=0$, $y=99.2745$; we can solve for the coefficient $K$.

\[
99.2745 = Ke^0
\]

\[
K = 99.2745
\]

The theoretical equation is therefore \[ y = 99.2745e^{-0.00586629x} \]

The Department of Energy, however, reports that there is 50% loss due to gaseous diffusion; thus the equation therefore becomes

\[
2\left(y = 99.2745e^{-0.00586629x}\right)
\]

Where $y =$ percentage of $^{238}_{92}$U.

Example: How many diffusions would it take to create a sample of uranium with 95% purity?

Percentage of $^{238}_{92}$U = 5%
Thus,

\[ 2S = 99.2745e^{-0.00586629x} \]
\[ 2e^{-0.00586629x} \approx 0.0050365 \]
\[ 2(\ln(e^{-0.00586629x}) = \ln(0.0050365)) \]
\[ 2(-0.00586629x \approx -2.988451) \]
\[ 2(x = 509.427) \]
\[ x \approx 1018.855 \]

It would take about 1000 diffusion cycles to achieve the needed purity.
Emerson: A Subjective Shade of Gray

The colors black and white are intensified when placed side by side, the absolute darkness highlighting the pure brightness, and vice versa. Similarly, when one compares Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Paine’s written works, the contrast between Edward’s extreme Calvinism and Paine’s hyper-rationalism becomes even more pronounced. In between these black and white viewpoints are various shades of gray, and Ralph Waldo Emerson presents a particular shade that expresses his personal religious beliefs and accepts subjectivity. While Emerson does share some thematic and rhetorical similarities with Paine and Edwards, he nonetheless clearly departs from their expository extremes. His views on the agency of man, combined with his tone, demonstrate how his subjective, empowering spirituality responds to the Paine-Edwards dichotomy.

Thematically, man’s agency is an issue on which Edwards and Paine strongly disagree. Edwards’ “carnal man” needs organized religion, because man is so evil and wretched (98) that without some guidance he certainly damned. Man must obey and repent (90), and even if he does so, it is God’s decision whether to grant his mercy and salvation. Paine, at the opposite extreme, rejects “all national institutions of churches,” for they “enslave mankind” (666). Instead, he relies on his personal relationship with God: “My own mind is my own church” (666). He says all men should be “mentally faithful to themselves” (666), and thus man has the power to choose his God and form of worship. Therefore, Paine gives man an agency for
independent action and worship that Edwards does not. Emerson similarly endorses
experiencing God on an individual basis: “go alone…refuse the good models… and dare to love
God without mediator or veil” (114). In so doing, he also gives man a great deal of agency for
action, which is similar to Paine but very different from Edwards.

However, Emerson takes this freedom beyond that of Paine’s man, exploring a new
territory apart from the Edwards-Paine binary. According to Emerson, any man can become the
“New Teacher” to enlighten the world and see the truth (117), while Paine discusses man’s
freedom in terms of personal worship. Emerson consequently gives man much more power and
potential based on his choice of worship. Moreover, Emerson sees divinity in man much more
than Paine and Edwards do: “That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God
out of me, makes me a wart and a wen” (108). With the power of God within man, along with
the ability to act truthfully to oneself (31), man’s possibility for genuine humanity and greatness
is extraordinary. Paine and Edwards offer two very distinct views on human potential, and while
Emerson’s thoughts agree more with Paine’s, Emerson offers a much more empowering and
exalted view of mankind.

Tone and technique create another critical distinction in the Paine-Edwards binary.
Edwards’ tone strives to stir the emotion of his listeners and instill fear. His use of repetition
will not let listeners escape the conclusion that wicked man should be very afraid of his angry
God. Moreover, Edwards uses figurative language and diction to stir up intense emotions. For
example, he compares man to a crushable worm (90, 98, 99), describes in detail the fires of hell
(92), and uses very absolute diction, such as “everlasting” and “utmost contempt”. Additionally,
Edwards makes the wretched state of man personal by addressing the congregation directly as
“you,” mentioning every age group (104). None of Edwards’ listeners are spared, and thus, after
all these described horrors, his path to salvation is welcomed. Therefore, a highly emotional tone and rhetoric serve his purpose well.

At the other extreme, Paine adopts a purely rational tone and argues through logic and evidence. He cites the Bible as “evidence” against itself (738), and he uses the words “evidence” and “prove” regularly to illustrate his objective logic. He describes what he will do and why that proves his point (736), and then lists the “evidence,” demonstrating that detached reason is his method of understanding. For example, Paine claims, “[The Bible] is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy” and then explains why: “for what can be greater blasphemy than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty” (747). Paine’s cool use of reason and logic contrasts sharply with Edwards’ fiery tone.

Emerson does not rely on either highly religious emotion or detached logic. Rather, his tone is intellectual, yet still contains feeling. First, logic and objective reason are not the foundations of his philosophy, as they are with Paine: in Emerson’s view, contradicting oneself is perfectly acceptable (24). However, Emerson does explain his points in detail and develops an intellectual theory, providing his voice with some authority. Also, breaking away from the expository mindset, he presents his position in a way to include the reader without forcing him or her to pick a side. Given the power and potential Emerson ascribes to man, the reader is more likely to willfully accept his view. While Emerson uses “you,” “I,” and “we” throughout his writing to include the reader, he does so in a different way than Edwards. Edwards uses this technique to frighten the listener into submission, while Emerson attempts to end man’s limited, conformist outlook and expose the broader possibilities of his being. Like Edwards, Emerson does use some imagery, but Emerson does so for the effect of glory and wonder: “The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes for the crimson dawn” (103). Through
such passages and his admiration for the essence of man, Emerson expresses passion for his subject. Overall, his tone can be characterized as intellectual, yet with a spirit of empowerment.

Emerson’s ideas and tone break from the binaries of strict religious dogma and rationalism because Emerson accepts subjectivity. Edwards and Paine present expository pieces in which they are right and others are wrong. For readers, disagreeing with Edwards means eternal damnation, while disagreeing with Paine means ignorance in the face of logic. Paine may seem subjective and relative, for he does profess that he supports “the Right of every Man to his own opinion” (665) and does not “condemn” those that believe differently (666). However, the way he describes Christianity as a “fable” (671), criticizes the historical lack of “proof” and “evidence” for it (670), says it has desecrated God (673), and detests it for “corrupt[ing] and brutaliz[ing] mankind” (677) leaves little doubt that he views this religion as false and even dangerous. A Christian who reads Paine will certainly find no acceptance of his or her faith. Therefore, Paine is not open to beliefs that “crumble” under his “weapon” of “Reason” (665). Neither Paine nor Edwards leaves room for those with religious beliefs different from their own.

In contrast, Emerson is more open to differences in opinion. Christians may have a similar reaction to Emerson’s advice to “refuse the good models” as they did to Paine, but Emerson does not say that Christianity is “wrong” or “evil.” Rather, he affirms the value of Christian virtue, because all virtue, whatever its source, leads to “religious sentiment”: “The expressions of this sentiment are sacred and permanent in proportion to their purity” (106). Emerson states that pure Christian expression, as exemplified in Jesus (106), is one of the many wonderful spiritual possibilities for man. Emerson offers a subjective viewpoint: every man decides for himself what is right, good, and pure, and as long as he acts according to that virtue,
then he experiences the great potential of man. All men are different, so Emerson must accept subjectivity, as every man decides for himself how to live and act and what to believe.

If one were to examine three unidentified pieces by Edwards, Paine, and Emerson, it would be clear which author wrote which piece. Edwards and Paine would stand in strong opposition to the other, both in ideas and tone. Edwards would insist on a powerful, angry God and wicked man, and he would describe this situation in a highly emotional, fearful tone. In contrast, Paine would give man the power to follow a religion of the mind, yet he would discount Christianity through logic and ‘evidence.’ Emerson, on the other hand, would not follow either extreme. Instead, he would allow a subjectivity to exist that provides man with a great deal of agency and potential for greatness. Moreover, he would present his case in an intellectual manner infused with a spirit of possibility. Through his ideas and his presentation of them, Emerson provides a shade of gray to the black and white binaries of Edwards and Thomas. In so doing, Emerson presents man with one option that is not an exclusive extreme.
Twelve-steppers are middle-aged people trying to stay sober. Or twenty-year-olds who
did too much smack and were court-ordered to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Twelve-
steppers are not fifteen-year-old students who get straight As. At least that's what I thought until
February of my sophomore year of high school, when I found myself in an Overeaters
Anonymous meeting. Two weeks earlier, I had attended a mandatory dorm meeting led by a pair
of skinny blonde women. They sat in the center of the Lovell Hall lounge and talked about their
experiences with Overeaters Anonymous, or OA. The blonder of the two, who introduced
herself as Shelly, told us she had been bulimic for more than eight years; bulimia ruined her
marriage, her fertility, and her gums. She had scars on her knuckles and looked too old for
twenty-eight. Then the less blonde and even skinnier woman took her turn. Caitlin suffered
from anorexia, which she first developed when she lived in Lovell Hall as a sophomore, about
fifteen years earlier. She didn't date for years because she was afraid any boyfriend she had
would try to change her diet—try to change her.

Shelly and Caitlin explained that OA was not just for people who overate—it was for
anyone who obsessed over food. Anyone whose life revolved around when they would eat next
(or how they would avoid eating) and counting calories. Sitting with the other fifty-four girls I
lived with, I tried to look uninterested as I pretended to read my book. But I was listening; and it
was disconcerting that two women with eating disorders could be recounting stories that seemed
like my own. At the end of their talk they announced they would come back soon to lead an OA meeting for anyone interested. I tried to assure myself I wouldn't go; I tried to assure myself I was healthy.

I was always tall and lanky. When I was younger I would fill my stomach with candy, grilled cheese, and ice cream. Women always told me how lucky I was because I could eat everything I wanted and still be skinny. As I neared twelve—which meant puberty—my sister began to warn me about my eating habits. We were in the kitchen one summer when I reached for my third bowl of strawberry ice cream. I didn't think I was doing anything wrong, but she felt differently. She said I needed to be careful or I would "blimp out" in a few years and never be able to lose the weight I'd gained. My mom encouraged me to eat healthier food because my moods were mercurial and I could never sleep. She frequently told me I would be happier and life would be easier if I changed the way I ate. But, like most kids, I chose to ignore my mother's advice—for the time being. Later, I realized she was right; I would be happier, life would be easier. I learned that skinny girls who were careful about what they ate were considered well behaved and lived happy, uncomplicated lives. If diet could control my happiness, and I could control my diet, then I had direct power over my moods.

When my brother and sister screwed up, I felt I had to behave better. I believed there was a finite amount of trouble my parents should have to deal with, and each mistake my siblings made was one less I was allowed. I couldn't control what they were doing, only my own behavior. So my mother wouldn't have to worry about me, I focused all my energy on self-improvement and staying out of trouble. Eventually my over compensation extended to my eating habits. For the first time in my life, I stopped asking if I could have another Oreo or glass
of soda, and instead reached for carrots and celery—if I reached for anything at all. My mom was proud, relieved I was taking responsibility for my eating.

As I grew older, I no longer had to focus on my siblings' problems, because I began to develop my own. Freshman year of high school was filled with afternoons when I would run to my room, close the blinds, switch the lights off and turn the music on. My mom would knock on my door and ask what she could do. I convinced her to let me go to boarding school in Pennsylvania with my brother. I had friends at Christendom Academy from summer camp, and my mom had family in the town. I thought things would be better there. But, of course, I did not leave my obsession with control and my self-deprecating mindset behind.

When sophomore year began with a roommate who never showered and a manic-depressive boyfriend five hours away, I knew I had my drawer full of Chex mix, peanut butter, and Oreos to comfort me. For the first few months, I took delight in the reassuring feeling of a full stomach when everything else left me hollow.

I knew I was gaining weight, but I wasn't ready to give up my ability to impress the guys with my burger-eating capabilities. To compensate, I spent evenings on the bathroom floor, listening for the sound of the door swinging open, hoping nobody would walk in until I'd given up on scraping my knuckles against my teeth. The back of my throat was scratched, and my pointer and middle fingers were permanently red, but I never succeeded in purging my stomach. When vomiting didn't work, I began to go to meals less often, telling my friends I ate at Aunt Amanda's or grabbed something at McDonald's. I stopped stocking my food drawer and started drinking Diet Coke. I reverted to the make-mom-proud diet of fruits and vegetables.
In November, I developed mono. The sores in my mouth and throat made it impossible for me to eat anything harsher than baby food, and even that was difficult to swallow. The twenty pounds I'd gained at school disappeared, along with another eight. My pants were loose. My stomach was flat. My family said I looked too thin, too sick. But I was finally becoming happy with my body.

When I returned to school in late January, people were shocked—which I read as impressed—by how much weight I'd lost. I rediscovered the thrill of control and the power of manipulating my body. I was finally able to push myself to be skinny again, knowing if I worked through the pain the rewards would come, and I would feel the natural high that had been missing for so long.

I never saw my relationship with food as an eating disorder. I didn't think I was anorexic because I ate at least an apple every day, and I wasn't bulimic because my attempts to throw up were never successful. But when Shelly and Caitlin gave their definition of an eating disorder at the dorm meeting, I knew I had to at least admit there was something unhealthy about my approach to food. About a week after Shelly and Caitlin's initial meeting in the Lovell Hall lounge, I decided to attend an OA meeting. Something was about to give—either my pride or what health I had left. Pride had to lose.

The meetings were held in the sorority lounge during study hall, giving us privacy so we could get help without being noticed; the location was intended to satisfy the "Anonymous" part of OA. The only people who did notice were the ones I really didn't want to: the housemothers, the RAs, the bitchy girls who always skipped study hall. These were the ones who would take
note of who was doing what and pass the information on to everyone else in the too-small church
town.

Nevertheless, one Monday evening, I pushed open the heavy Deka lounge doors. Or, to
be more accurate, I tried to push open the doors. They're always hard to open, getting stuck,
resistant to let me in. But one of the women saw me struggle and opened it for me. From the
inside.

She introduced herself as Caitlin while she motioned to a chair. It wasn't in the corner
and it was brightly colored, so there was no way for me to disappear into it. I shuffled over and
pulled myself into a ball between its cushioned arms as four other girls walked in. Caitlin passed
out OA Welcome Packets while Shelly began the introductions. Then she turned to me. I
whispered, "I don't think I'm supposed to be here. I don't overeat, but I do eat. At least, I don't
have an eating disorder. I don't want to waste your time, so I'll just go back to my room. Thanks
anyway, though." I was afraid I would be overexposed, like a photograph when the negative was
left in the enlarger with the light on for too long. If I said too much, I thought, no one would be
able to see me anymore. I would disappear and all they would see was the faint outline of a girl
who couldn't hold herself together.

Shelly asked me again to introduce myself and persuaded me to sit through the meeting,
promising I wouldn't have to return the next week. I waited through the twenty minutes of
introductions and guidelines before we were split up: anorexics with Caitlin, bulimics with
Shelly. When I didn't move, Caitlin signaled for me to come with her.

I listed the fat and calories in a dozen foods to prove I ate them. I explained that just
because I didn't have the perfect attitude about food did not mean I had an eating disorder. I
continued, realizing I was confirming my status as an OA regular rather than explaining why I
should be leaving. I went on to talk about my freshman year. As I told more details of my relationship with food and control my voice swelled and I borrowed the tone my mom used when she talked about my eating. I told Caitlin that I broke up with that boyfriend because he kept persuading me to eat, and I became used to the feeling of food in my stomach and felt like I was losing my power over my body. Food, and how it made me feel, was the only thing I knew I could control; I couldn't abandon that. Then I halted, suddenly aware not only that I had a sickness, but that I was explaining it out loud to a stranger. I was overexposed and about to disappear.

Caitlin didn't ask anything. Instead, she said more about her anorexia. She couldn't talk to her brother for a year because he knew about it and she was scared he would judge her; she couldn't carry a baby to term because she had destroyed many of her internal organs. I didn't know not eating could make someone infertile, and I thought I knew everything about food and how it affected someone's body. I realized I couldn't even have an eating disorder in what I thought was the right way. I went back the next week.

I didn't follow the entire OA program, but I found enough tools to help me triumph over my eating disorder. First and foremost, Caitlin explained, I needed a nutritionist. Because I needed my mom to help me find one and take me there, I had to reveal my participation in OA.

Mom knew I was fickle when it came to food, but, much as I used to feel, she didn't believe I satisfied the requirements of having an eating disorder. Even if I did, she thought "eating disorders are luxury problems of upper and middle-class girls who need to create drama for themselves." I didn't see why it mattered if I had created the problem for myself or not. After I heard the stories in OA and realized I had a problem that could be resolved, I knew I
needed, and wanted, help. I moved home and transferred back to my original high school. This way my mom could make sure I was eating and I had support from the school, instead of the criticism and gossiping I found at the Academy. Eventually my mother agreed to make an appointment with Dr. Pram, a nutritionist referred by our neighbor. I didn't follow the doctor's prescribed eating plan, nor did I take the supplements she sold us; after a few appointments with her, I didn't feel I needed to follow her careful instructions. Dr. Pram gave me something much more helpful, much more effective—she gave me validation.

After my mom saw a professional supporting me, she offered me comfort and understanding as well. For the first time, she listened when I tried to talk about food, when I told her how I became obsessed with it and felt I had no control anywhere else in my life. My mom agreed to be more understanding and less critical when she saw me eating something she didn't approve of. Rather than make me feel guilty for eating something full of sugar, she would give a slight encouraging smile, relieved I was eating anything at all.

As with any illness, I did not get better immediately. At times, I still fear I'm getting sick again. There are days when I notice something in my behavior and panic, because it might mean I'm returning to self-destructive patterns. But I'm learning to trust myself more. If I cut back on junk food to feel healthier, I have to trust that my intention stops there, and my behavior will not return to obsession. When things start to feel out of control again—if my grades slip, or my brother gets arrested, or I have an argument with a friend—I know I have to be even more cautious of my behavior. I cannot let myself transfer the little control I have to my food, manipulating my diet and my waistline in an attempt to reach unattainable satisfaction. I'm writing this so you understand, but I'm also reminding myself. I need to constantly reassure myself that I am healthy, I am capable of staying this way, and normal healthy eating involves
being conscious of—but not consumed by—what I eat. Being skinny will not make my mother less worried or me more happy and relaxed, but being healthy will.

One of the most influential things I learned in OA was the origin of twelve-step groups: to keep his mind off the bottle, an alcoholic needed something to occupy his time and make himself feel useful. He went to a local hospital to see if anyone had been admitted because of alcohol. He visited the patients' rooms and told them his story—not for their benefit, he emphasized, but to keep himself healthy.

A chance for me to stay healthy came during my senior year, when a friend asked me to speak to the peer-mentoring group in my high school. She said it would be helpful if girls could hear someone their own age who had overcome an eating disorder. I agreed without hesitation, then went home to put together a brief talk about my past few years.

I pulled a legal pad and index cards onto my bed, trying to figure out the most effective way to tell my story. I'd written one or two-page essays about it before, so I had a vague idea of what worked and what didn't, but I had never been asked to stand up and speak about my experience outside an OA meeting. I didn't know how many in the group were directly affected by eating disorders, or how those with no direct experience would react. I couldn't preach, because preaching never worked. And, despite my history, I didn't know any secrets about how to cure people with eating disorders. All I could do was tell people things they didn't already know; I would talk about my personal experience, and about the little-known existence of OA.

On Thursday night, I stood in front of my peers, note cards in hand, and began: "I know you're wondering why I'm standing up here instead of sitting there with you. You probably think the way I used to—twelve-steppers are middle-aged people trying to stay sober. Or twenty-year-
olds who did too much smack and were court-ordered to attend NA meetings. Twelve-steppers aren't fifteen-year-old students who get straight As. At least that's what I thought until February of my sophomore year, when I found myself in the corner of an Overeater's Anonymous meeting…"
Recipe for a Woman?

“What makes a woman?” At first glance, this question seems straightforward. Any second-grader versed in the cafeteria version of basic anatomy could give a sufficient definition, right? Natalie Angier begs to differ. In her book *Woman: An Intimate Geography*, Angier explores not only female anatomy and physiology, but also elements of the female psyche and evolutionary history of the female body, all in an attempt to illustrate the complexities of the question “what makes a woman?” As an award winning author and journalist for *The New York Times* with a strong background in biology, Angier approaches this question with a unique blend of art and science. This approach places her work in a category distinct from self-help guides to women’s health such as *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. A casual scan of the introduction confirms Angier writes to a different audience. Her colorful vocabulary, skillfully-applied literary devices, and clever puns – all based heavily in science – would be lost on readers lacking a solid background in biology. Through this bright language, the book’s overall organization, and the wealth of unbiased information, Angier provides information that is more satisfying and useful to her audience than a simple definition of female anatomy.

In her introduction, Angier describes the content of her book as moving from small to large. Her opening chapters focus on the indiscriminately small ovum, the X chromosome, and their roles in defining (or not defining) women. Next, she shifts her concentration to the multicellular level and traces the embryonic and evolutionary processes of becoming female. Having
“made woman,” Angier spends several chapters discussing the organs traditionally seen as distinguishing women from men. She dedicates chapters to the clitoris, uterus, breast, and ovary. In the following chapters, Angier expands from the structure and function of specific organs to the global effects of hormones and muscles on the entire female body. In the closing chapters, Angier completes the progression from the finite smallness of the egg to the unquantifiable vastness of human emotion. She explores the science of woman’s love and psychology in an attempt to put the final pieces of the female “puzzle” together.

Angier fills these chapters with a unique writing style, which enhances her illustration of the complexities of the female “ingredients.” Angier’s very distinctive diction reflects a genuine love of language: she shamelessly toys with definitions and twists clauses to artfully portray the desired image. For example, in her discussion of the prevalence of hysterectomies, Angier says, “A woman who makes it to menopause with her uterus in situ has a good chance of keeping it till death does its part.” This unique writing style allows Angier to present biological explanations essential to her arguments, while avoiding the drone of a biology textbook. One example is her description of the mistaken notion that menstruation is an inactive process. She says, “If nothing happens to keep anabolism alive, if conception and implantation do not happen and the lining is no longer needed to feed the baby, then activity ceases, the plug is pulled, and there goes the ruddy bathwater.” In another example of her illustrative diction, Angier explains why the clitoris doesn’t have a mechanism to become erect, like its homolog does. “Why should it?” she says, “It has no need to go spelunking or intromitting.” There is some vivid imagery.

Another aspect of Angier’s writing style, her highly personal presentation, also helps illuminate her themes. The book is filled with examples of how the processes she describes affect individual women, including herself. These real-life applications of the science she
describes help readers relate to the principles and possibly make connections within their own lives. For instance, in her discussion of fibroids, she mentions that at least one quarter of women over thirty have fibroids. She gives this figure life in her description of Hope Phillips’ experience in dealing with her fibroid. However, her most effective illustration of the pervasiveness of fibroids comes a chapter later, when she relates that she herself is a victim of these growths.

The book’s organization, operating on two levels, helps illustrate Angier’s theme of the complexity of defining what makes a woman. First, as her chapter themes progress from the typical physical definition of a woman (i.e., the female reproductive organs) to the less-explored metaphysical aspects of women, Angier shows that women are complex organisms defined by more than their genitals. The book’s organization goes farther in that all of Angier’s chapters are interconnected. Many of her points recur in different contexts throughout the book. For example, in Chapter Four, Angier hypothesizes that fertility is linked to sexual pleasure. At this point in the book, she presents this idea based on the physiology of orgasm: when a woman reaches climax, cervical contractions suction the sperm up into the uterus, ultimately facilitating fertilization. This hypothesis recurs in chapter ten. Angier again links sexual pleasure with fertility, but this time she puts it in the context of hormones. She asserts that the chemicals released as a result of sexual pleasure may hasten ovulation—the goal being to increase the likelihood of fertilization by sperm remaining from the pleasurable encounter of intercourse. Thus orgasm is related to fertility, which is related to hormones, which are related to the menstrual cycle. This interconnectedness underscores how female anatomy, physiology, and behavior interact to make a complete woman.
Finally, the equality with which Angier treats her themes aids her demonstration of female complexity. Angier presents unbiased arguments and addresses all aspects of an issue. She even goes so far as to entertain theories that may not seem plausible, simply to offer an alternative to her own perspective. For example, in searching for an explanation for the purpose of menses, Angier presents two theories. One theory holds that menses is a byproduct of the body’s practicality—the caloric cost of maintaining a body primed for pregnancy is too great. Thus, the body concentrates its energy on fertility for only a short part of the cycle, followed by an elimination of the costly tissue in the form of menstruation. The other option Angier offers is that menses is a protective mechanism designed to eliminate dangerous microbes carried into the uterus by germ-carrying sperm. Angier offers many criticisms of the latter hypothesis, but, nonetheless, she entertains the possibility of its validity.

The strength of these aspects of Angier’s writing—her writing style, organization, and impartial presentation—makes her highly effective in addressing the question “what makes a woman?” In my opinion, the real success of Angier’s discussion lies not in the convincing arguments she offers, but in her effort to avoid conclusions. She is not concerned with pounding out a logical recipe for a woman. Instead, she presents concepts, examples, and new perspectives, all of which are useful to women in defining their individual identities as females.

The knowledge Angier offers is certainly useful to any woman interested in exploring her own biology. However, Angier’s diction does assume both previous knowledge of biology and an extensive vocabulary—or a good dictionary. In my opinion, Angier’s themes are especially relevant to the adolescent age group. The awkward transition between childhood and maturity, which all humans must pass through, is a crucial point in our lives. This is the time period during which females will consciously or subconsciously define the way we view
ourselves as women. Having a comprehensive view of our anatomy, physiology, and emotions could potentially have a profound effect on the way we view ourselves the rest of our lives.

I know that I personally have benefited from this greater understanding Angier attempts to instill in her readers. Thus, in true Angier fashion, I will speak from my own experience to give an example of the usefulness of Angier’s words for my age group. Upon arriving at college, I joined the swim team. Having taking nine months off of training, I ended up with a stress-induced shoulder injury, which kept me on dry land for several months. I found myself on the cardiovascular machines every day, faced with the new temptation of judging a day’s success by the number of calories I burned. After reading Angier’s chapter “Cheap Meat: Learning to Make a Muscle,” I made the conscious decision to appreciate my efforts not for the weight I lost, but the strength I gained. This approach transformed a potentially depressing rehabilitation into an extremely satisfying process. In the weeks following this decision, as I watched my long-lost calf and quadricep muscles re-emerge, I felt an intense pride in myself. I am proud of the strength and independence these muscles give me. I am proud of the increased agility and comfort I feel. Most of all, I am proud of the future I am building for myself—a future free of osteoporosis, heart problems, diabetes, and hypertension. Though I, like the women Angier criticizes, may initially have balked at the newly muscular me, I have learned to appreciate the beauty of the strength I can create for myself. I have Natalie Angier to thank.
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RST 273  
Spring 2003  

The Role of Popular Religion in Traditional European Jewish Society: Opposition to and Integration of Kabbalah

In *Abyss of Despair*, Nathan Hanover claimed that “in Poland there was so much learning that no three people sat down to eat without words of Torah among them. Throughout the meal they would discuss *halakha*….”\(^{10}\) This statement is not untrue; Polish Jewry did indeed have great reverence for the Torah and its holy laws. However, Hanover failed to highlight an equally important part of Jewish life: popular religion. Although not strictly based upon the Torah, popular religion was just as important as *halakhic* observance in daily life, and it was ultimately structured so that it complemented traditional Judaism. Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, first became popularized by *ba’alei shem* (and to a lesser extent by *hasidim*) because it was made available to the masses for practical purposes. Self-proclaimed messiahs later used mysticism to legitimate their teachings, and Hasidism was ultimately born out of a fusion of *Kabbalah* and *halakha*. However, mystical popular religion met with resistance from those who believed absolutely in the sanctity of the Talmud.

According to Kabbalists, the Torah and its *halakha* were simply coverings for a hidden, “spiritual” Torah. Jacob Frank claimed that “the secret Torah is disguised in dress appropriate for this world,”\(^{11}\) that “dress” being the collection of stories and laws that scholars had studied...
for so long. Understanding of this deeper meaning enabled one to exert influence over the heavens and G-d himself.

“When this likeness [the ten sefirot created by Ein Sof, or G-d] is stirred through its activities, so the supernal likeness will be stirred toward it… Thus it has been demonstrated that through the arousal that is initiated below through our worship, the supernal matters will be aroused above.”

The earliest proponents of Kabbalah were the hasidim and the ba’alei shem. The hasidim was a group of elite men who formed mystical brotherhoods (kloiz) devoted to the study of Kabbalah. This group was extremely hesitant to share its knowledge, and focused its energy upon study and mystical rituals. The ba’alei shem, however, used its knowledge of mysticism in a more public—and more commercia—manner than the hasidim. Somewhat analogous to witch doctors or lay healers, members of this group employed “practical” Kabbalah (exorcisms, healings, amulets, etc.) and performed mystical services for those who could afford them.

One of the most renowned Kabbalist thinkers was Isaac Luria. Kabbalah, a largely abstract and speculative belief system, was made somewhat more concrete by Luria’s story about the creation of the universe. Luria maintained that an understanding of G-d, or Ein Sof, was above the capacity of human intellect. Ein Sof filled all existence with divine light, and to create a physical world, this entity contracted in all directions, leaving an empty space surrounded by light. Within this vacuum, creation was formed, and a single ray of light emanated from Ein Sof to illuminate the world. From this ray came particles of light that formed the sefirot, or ten spheres representing ten characteristics of G-d. All of the sefirot were supposed to contain the light, but only Keter was strong enough to withstand it, so the other sefirot shattered, spilling sparks of light to the Earth. Luria claimed that if Jews were very pious in fulfilling mitzvot and

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12 I. Horowitz, Shnei Luhot Ha-Brit
13 M. Rosman, Innovative Tradition, ed. David Biale, Cultures of the Jews (NY, 2002), 560
14 ibid, 550
15 H. Vital, Tsimtsum and Shevirah: Withdrawal and Shattering
prayed with the proper intention, the fallen shards of light would be lifted back to their proper place in the heavens, eventually resulting in the coming of the Messiah.

Lurianic *Kabbalah* was extremely convoluted and, therefore, very difficult to argue against. As a result, *Kabbalah* served as an effective means for self-purported Messiahs to legitimize their teachings. Shabbetai Zvi was one such self-declared prophet; he revealed himself to the world as the Messiah in 1665. Historical evidence suggests that Zvi suffered from bipolar disorder, alternating between extreme highs and lows of emotion. Using Lurianic *Kabbalah*, he cited these emotional extremes as evidence of his holiness: during his “low” times, he gathered fallen sparks, and during his emotional “highs,” he raised the sparks up to the heavens. Zvi applied the same reasoning to his support of antinomianism, or holiness in sin. He claimed that because he, the Messiah, had come, the *halakha* governing behavior no longer applied, for sin allowed one to descend and retrieve fallen sparks. The “sins” advocated by Shabbetai Zvi ranged from eating on fast days and calling women to the Torah to wife-swapping and orgies. Although Zvi did not enjoy a very large following, his message was an appealing one. Unquestionably, obeying *halakha* can be an arduous task, and the idea that holy law was no longer necessary was enticing.

Jacob Frank was another self-proclaimed messiah. Like Shabbetai Zvi, Frank used Lurianic *Kabbalah* to provide credibility for his teachings. He claimed that to cause change in the heavens, the *Shekhina* (the female element of the *sefirot*) must unite with the male element, *Tiferet*. As the actions of the *sefirot* can be influenced by the actions of people on Earth, Frank claimed that ritualized sex between men and women would cause a similar unification between

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17 ibid, 213
18 G. Dynner, Lecture Notes, RST273, 2/25/03
20 ibid, 220
the Shekhina and the Tiferet. Frank also believed that one could find holiness in sin, and he engaged in behaviors prohibited by halakha: opposing texts such as the Talmud, deifying women, and other “sins.” Like Shabbetai Zvi, Jacob Frank had relatively few followers—only 600 people accepted conversion to Christianity when Frank told them to do so.

Needless to say, despite the comparatively small number of Sabbatians and Frankists, the popularization of religion—and the concomitant belief that the Torah was simply a covering of the true, spiritual Torah—was not viewed favorably by staunch Talmudists. “All these hosts of destroying spirits were, in fact, created by the sinful deeds of the wicked [Kabbalists], as the sages of the Talmud declared: ‘He who violates one commandment has obtained for himself one accuser.’” The idea that the Torah, the very root of Judaism, was simply a covering for a truer Torah was extremely threatening. Therefore, the Council of Four Lands maligned both Shabbetai Zvi and Jacob Frank, because their activities fell outside the realm of traditional halakah and challenged the sanctity of the Torah. Between 1670 and 1672, at least one ban was placed upon “the transgressors and blunderers who believe in Shabbatai Zvi.” A similar ban was placed upon the followers of Jacob Frank in 1756, stating that the women were “whores and their children bastards,” and Frankists were effectively barred from the Jewish community.

Traditional halakhic observance and Kabbalistic mysticism were eventually combined in Hasidism (not the hasidism discussed earlier) by Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, also known as the Besht. Unlike other ba’alei shem, the Besht provided mystical services to the poor as well as to

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21 ibid, 243  
22 ibid, 243  
23 ibid, 256  
24 E. ben Avraham ha-kohen, Shevet Mussar, I. Zinberg, History of Jewish Literature  
26 ibid, 245
those who could pay him.\textsuperscript{27} This practice was highly unusual for a \textit{ba’al shem}, and the Besht quickly developed a reputation for his goodness and wisdom. He believed that in some cases, by praying with sincerity and achieving \textit{devekut} (communion with G-d), humans could influence G-d to act on their behalf. Like his predecessors, the Besht believed that fallen sparks existed in all things, and to retrieve them, one must sin and lower oneself, then raise the sparks. “The Besht…said the following:… it is like one who wishes to raise his friend out of the mud, to do so, he must first bend down to the level of the mud in order to pick him up.”\textsuperscript{28} However, the Besht did not advocate the antinomianism of Shabbetai Zvi and Jacob Frank. Instead, he embraced the principle of \textit{avodah ba-gashmiyut}, or worship in corporeality. He believed that G-d was in all things, stating “the whole earth is full of His glory” \textsuperscript{29}; therefore, even the most mundane acts, such as eating and drinking, could be holy. However, in the Besht’s philosophy of worship, the organized sin advocated by Shabbetai Zvi and Jacob Frank was strictly prohibited, and the Hasidim maintained halakhic observance.

The Besht also believed that service to G-d should be a joyful act, and he deemed the asceticism of the Talmudic scholars unnecessary. The Besht stated, “This is the way of melancholy and sadness, and the \textit{Shekinah} does not inspire through sadness but only through the happiness of doing mitzvot.”\textsuperscript{30} He declared that \textit{minor} abrogations, such as singing and dancing during services, served to raise the fallen sparks to heaven. In this way, the Besht attempted to reconcile mysticism with traditional \textit{halakha}.

The pivotal figure in Hasidic society was the \textit{Zaddik}, or leader. The \textit{Zaddik} was not deified, but through \textit{devekut}, he became united with G-d: “The zaddik attaches himself to [G-d]

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\textsuperscript{27} S. Dubnow, \textit{The Beginnings}, Essential Papers on Hasidism, ed. G. Hundert (NY, 1991), 32
\textsuperscript{28} L. Isaac of Berdyczew
\textsuperscript{29} Isaiah 6:3
\textsuperscript{30} tr. Ben Amos and Mintz, \textit{Shivei ha-Besht}, 65
\end{flushright}
and his life is thus connected to the absolute and eternal life of [G-d].”\textsuperscript{31} By obeying the Zaddik or asking him for help, an individual could join with G-d vicariously through him.\textsuperscript{32} Through this divine attachment, the Zaddik could purportedly absorb some of the power of G-d and perform miracles.

The Council of Four Lands had ceased to exist by the time Hasidism became a powerful presence in Jewish society, so bans leveled against Kabbalists no longer carried as much weight. However, the elimination of one of the great bodies of Jewish authority did not remove all opposition to Hasidism. The Vilna Gaon, a great Talmudic scholar and hasid (adherent to hasidism), was one such opponent. “When [supporters of Hasidism] began to implore [the Vilna Gaon] greatly, he left and went away… remaining there until our departure from the city.”\textsuperscript{33} The Vilna Gaon did not believe in the possibility of discrepancy between the outer, accessible Torah and the hidden, “spiritual” Torah. Therefore, he reasoned, any group that believed the hidden Torah somehow took precedent over the outer Torah did not truly understand the Torah.\textsuperscript{34} Furthermore, the Vilna Gaon did not agree with the Hasidic interpretation of the Zohar; the Hasidim claimed that its interpretation was based upon a revelation from the prophet Elijah, which the Vilna Gaon did not believe.\textsuperscript{35}

The Vilna Gaon was not the only opponent to Hasidism. The Mitnaggdim also viewed Hasidism as a threat to Jewish society, as it questioned the absolute validity of the Torah and the halakha. The Mitnaggdim was an extremely traditional group; however, it did not represent popular opinion with regard to Hasidism.\textsuperscript{36} As Hasidim gradually infiltrated Jewish society and

\textsuperscript{31} N. Elimelekh of Litzhensk, “Powers Of The Zaddik”
\textsuperscript{32} M. Rosman, \textit{Innovative Tradition}, ed. David Biale, Cultures of the Jews (NY, 2002), 563
\textsuperscript{33} R. Schneur Zalman of Liady
\textsuperscript{34} I. Etkev, \textit{The Gaon of Vilna} (California, 2002), 33
\textsuperscript{35} ibid, 83
\textsuperscript{36} G. Dynner, Lecture Notes, RST273, 3/11/03
assumed control of communal governments, the opposition of the *Mitnaggdim* became increasingly less effective.

Clearly, Jewish meta-religion based upon the *Kabbalah* was just as influential in Jewish daily life as halakhic observance was. The belief that the Torah contained a hidden meaning ultimately gave rise to the idea that, by elucidating this hidden meaning, one could somehow influence the decisions of G-d. Before mysticism was concretized by Isaac Luria, *ba’alei shem* made use of this idea by providing “practical” mystical services. Isaac Luria’s explanation of the creation of the universe later enabled a number of self-proclaimed messiahs to justify their antinomian teachings. These “prophets” attempted to use meta-religion to challenge the validity of the *halakha*, but they failed to do so because they represented a true break with Judaism. However, Hasidism enjoyed more success because it combined *halakha* and *Kabbalah*, rather than attempting to disregard *halakha*. Although not based entirely upon the “outer” Torah, Hasidism included observance of the *halakha*, and it represented a successful fusion of mysticism and tradition that was eventually accepted throughout Europe.
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Strange—today I’ve been writing about the loftiest summits of human history, the whole time I’ve been breathing the purest mountain air of thought… but inside there is something cloudy, something spidery, something cross-shaped like that four-pawed X. Or is it my own paws bothering me, the fact that they’ve been in front of my eyes so long, these shaggy paws? I don’t like talking about them. I don’t like them. They’re a holdover from the savage era. Can it really be true that I contain…

--“Record 5,” We

Zamyatin created, in We, a simple, elegant masterpiece to express his caveats concerning loss of identity in a communist state. We’s narrator, D-503, derides the twentieth century’s attempts to construct social order from “freedom,” a term he equates with chaos. But at the same time, the narrator’s thoughts linger on his own individuality; his creativity runs free, and as much as his day finds definition in the Table of Hours, he still finds (or creates) disorder in his life. The elegance of We lies in its use of first-person narrative, a device that describe the maddening fall from logic to chaos; the novel allows readers to experience first-hand not only the sensations of this fall, but also the doubts, beliefs, and omissions of a mind struggling to find clarity in a disarmingly unclear world. Through its use of first-person narrative, Biblical references, and expressive language, We creates not only a clever and important interpretation of a world without individuality, but a striking account of attaining this freedom and its costs.

The accounts in We come in the form of diary entries addressed to an audience of the INTEGRAL, intended to enlighten those on other planets of the success of the OneState. D-503, who, at the beginning, whole-heartedly believes in the tenets of the OneState, is trying to present
an image of the mind of a “Number” of the OneState in all its glory. But the journal quickly turns from propaganda to catharsis, an open forum for investigating doubts about the narrator’s own success in life, the meaning of his feelings and emotions, and even suspicions about the panacea-like claims of the OneState.

The passage I have chosen is one such example, the previous paragraph having consisted of a boasting explanation of the OneState’s elimination of envy. When D-503 continues his thoughts, he first chastises himself for writing such words when his own heart falters. He describes the uncertainties that plague his mind with three different adjectives: “cloudy,” “spidery,” and “cross-shaped.” The word “cloudy” suggests a degree of ambiguity, as though something obscures the truth, as though some force acted to cover up imperfections—of the OneState? Of D-530 himself? Perhaps this word is meant to signify a cloudiness the narrator feels about his own psyche and understanding of it. “Spidery” follows to describe this same effect on his mind: spidery, nebulous, gossamer—fragile and without body. This adjective seems to express something lacking veracity, something without substance to back it up—perhaps his own convictions, or those of the OneState? The third adjective, “cross-shaped,” harkens back to the religious imagery surrounding Adam, a perspective I will explore in greater detail in the following paragraph; for now, this reference infuses a certain element of persecution as well as fear. So, when put together, the doubts D-530 possesses concern some ambiguity, a chance of convictions lacking foundation, and a fear of what that means. Are these doubts towards the OneState or I-330? Already the narrator’s split personality has set in, one which pulls him like a wishbone, slippery so that neither side gets a firm grip; any outcome will result in a fissure, with one side receiving more than the other.
This excerpt also contains some religious imagery. Although no elements of the passage come across as direct Biblical allusions, the excerpt does refer to the strain of imagery at the heart of *We*. The most significant religious imagery concerns the parallel of D-503’s fall from logic with Adam’s fall from grace—the temptation, the exodus from Paradise, the knowledge. In this passage, however, is a reference to Christ. A latent strain of imagery, this connection to Christ is just as powerful as the imagery of Adam. The X of I-330’s face serves to depict the crux, the cross on which Christ died, as much as her smile-bite symbolizes the temptation. For, in the same way the fall from grace results in a freedom of choice between right and wrong, good and evil, the cross represents another sort of freedom. This freedom is that provided by Christ and questioned by the devil in the wilderness—the freedom to choose to believe, rather than to have circumstances force belief on humans. D-503 makes his choice: he chooses to explore his individuality, knowing that doing so could result in grave consequences. The cross-shaped “X” of I-330’s face serves to remind readers of the freedom afforded by Christ, as well as the price paid for such freedom. The symbol tells readers: it takes a lot of energy and risk to do what you know is right and true, and sometimes doing so has dangerous consequences.

At the end of this passage, D-503 ruminates on his disgust for his hands. These hands are another mark of his individuality, a mark that strikes alarm in another area of individuality, his vanity. D-503 despises his hairy hands; he describes them as though they are better suited to an ape than to the builder of the INTEGRAL. He links their hairiness to his ancestors: his hands’ appearance implies a flaw in his genetic makeup, a regression of evolution found only in him. When D-503 first meets the Mephi, this is one of the first thoughts that go through his mind—my hands are like theirs. Furthermore, D-503 suspects that I-330 finds him attractive because of his despicable, disgusting hands—if she ever finds him attractive at all. If D-503 were truly without
personality, his hands would not be any different from his fellow man’s, or at least, his hands would be viewed and treated in the same way as others’. But because he has personality, because he has individuality, he can despise them, hate them, and wish them gone.

This passage comes very early in *We*, and it is the groundwork for later, vaster doubts. The beauty of this novel is its pace and how it builds itself—slowly, but with direction. Already, less than twenty-five pages into the novel, the reader witnesses the first tiny seeds of uncertainty placed in the mind of the protagonist. Because of this slow, deliberate pace, Zamyatin deftly builds credibility for his message, developing a very realistic personality based on logic, causality and passion—the makings of individuality. In *We*, such individuality battles a formidable enemy: the tyranny of the OneState.
“Curioser and Curioser!”

The Adventures of How Alice Came to Print

What many of us know as Alice in Wonderland originally began as Alice’s Adventures Underground. In the “golden afternoon” of July 4, 1862, during a boating excursion up the Isis, this enduring tale originated as a simple story to amuse three little girls—one of whom was named Alice Liddell. The then ten-year-old Alice so loved the story that she begged its creator, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, to write it down. Finally persuaded to turn his tale into a manuscript, Dodgson completed his promised task by February of 1863. But still, he never had any intention of publishing the story. As he was unsatisfied with this first manuscript, it was “probably destroyed by Carroll in 1864” (Gardner v). In November of 1864, Alice Liddell was eventually presented with a copy of the tale she had asked for. Entitled Alice’s Adventures Underground, it became the predecessor to the much more widely acclaimed story known as Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. For, at this point, Dodgson had been encouraged to go to print, and the production was well underway. By the summer of the next year, children throughout England were able to enjoy the tale, as the first copy of Alice in Wonderland was published on July 4—a date chosen in commemoration of that first trip on the Isis. However, the story of how this book came to be is not quite so simple. In fact, it becomes “curiouser and curiouser” as the history of this book is examined.

37 Dodgson’s Diary entry for November 13, 1862 reads: “Began writing the fairy tale for Alice, which I told them July 4, going to Godstow – I hope to finish it by Christmas” (Diaries 188).
Perhaps the best way to begin this adventurous series of events is by considering how, in fact, Dodgson was persuaded to consider publication. As he himself says in the preface to the first published edition of *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, many years after the first printing of *Alice in Wonderland*: “There was no intention of publication in my mind when I wrote [Alice in Wonderland]: that was wholly an afterthought, pressed on me by the perhaps too partial friends” (vi). These “too partial friends” were a Mr. and Mrs. George Mac Donald, “friends whose taste and judgment he trusted” (Cohen 126). After the Mac Donald children responded quite favorably to the *Alice* story Dodgson had “lent them to read” (*Diaries* 196), he noted in his diary on May 9, 1863 that “they wish me to publish” (*Diaries* 196). At this point, Dodgson began to seriously contemplate publishing, but before he did so, he realized he would need to “flesh out the original with more chapters, incidents and characters” (Cohen 126). Among the creations that do not appear in *Alice’s Adventures Underground* are the chapters entitled “The Mad Tea Party” and “Pig and Pepper.” In addition, the account of “the knave of hearts who stole the tarts” increased from a few pages in *Alice’s Adventures Underground* to two chapters in the final version of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Other deviations from the text of the *Underground* manuscript, apparent when compared to *Alice in Wonderland*, are the mouse’s tale poem and the Caucus race. In *Alice in Wonderland*, the tail-shaped poem is comprised of a completely different story than the one recited by the mouse in *Alice’s Adventures Underground*. As for the Caucus race, the accepted reason for the replacement of a scene in which the Dodo leads the party of animals and Alice to a nearby cottage, where they dry off from the pool of tears, is that Dodgson thought this a comparatively boring choice—and certainly of less interest to his young readers—than if animals ran about in a

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38 As Martin Gardner notes in his *Annotated Alice* in the original manuscript, the tale is much more appropriate, given it “fulfills the mouse’s promise to explain why he dislikes cats and dogs, where as the tale as it appears [in *Alice in Wonderland*] contains no reference to cats” (page 50 footnote 4).
Caucus race to get dry. He was, perhaps, too aware of the origin of the cottage reference, an allusion to a trip he had made with the Liddell girls and his friend Duckworth in 1862. To appeal to a broader audience, Dodgson changed this overly personal frame of reference. All of these revisions, regardless of motivation, contributed to the lengthening of the original *Alice’s Adventures Underground* to the expanded *Alice in Wonderland*—when completed, the new version was “almost twice as long as it had been” (Gardner v).

Once satisfied with his modified *Alice*, Dodgson needed to find someone to print his tale, but “he had no experience with high-powered London publishers” (Cohen 126). However, Dodgson did have connections: his friend, Thomas Combe was a close associate of Alexander Macmillian, head of the London based Macmillan & Company. Combe was “an eminent Oxford figure, director of the Claredon Press and Printer to Oxford University” (Cohen and Gandolfo 2).

In 1863—the same year that his famous collaboration with Dodgson would begin—Macmillian “was appointed Publisher to the University of Oxford” (Cohen and Gandolfo 11). Through this role, Macmillian and Combe became well acquainted. So while it is unknown whether “Combe brought publisher and author together with something more than social affability in mind” (Cohen and Gandolfo 8), it was through this mutual friend that Dodgson and Macmillian met.

Dodgson noted in his diary entry for October 19, 1863 that he “went to Combe’s in the evening to meet the publisher Macmillian” (*Diaries* 206). As is apparently obvious, the meeting was a success: “Macmillian liked Charles’ story and agreed to publish it” (Cohen 127).

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39 An excerpt from Dodgson’s diary entry for June 17th reads: “Expedition to Neueham. Duckworth (of Trinity) and Ina, Alice and Edith came with us...About a mile above Neueham heavy rain came on, and after bearing it a short time I settled that we had better leave the boat and walk: three miles of this had drenched us all pretty well. I...took them to the only house I knew in Sand ford...to get their clothes dried.” (*Diaries* 178). As this entry was dated just a few weeks before the original telling of *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, this was clearly the reference made to the scene in which the Dodo (Dodgson. for he had a stutter that often made him say “Do-do-Dodgson” [Green 178]) says to the Duck (Duckworth), the Eaglet (Edith), the Lory (Lorina, aka Ina), and Alice that he knows “of a house near here where we could get the young lady and the rest of the party dried.” (*Alice’s Adventures Underground* 26).

40 Dodgson’s “original manuscript [was] lengthened from 18,000 to 35,000 words” (Engen 71).
The working relationship that developed between Dodgson and Macmillian has been considered one of perplexing proportions. Dodgson was fanatical and his “constant concern for detail during production” (Cohen and Gandolfo 15) caused, among other comparatively minor demands, the scrapping of the entire first edition of *Alice in Wonderland*. Such behavior is incredible, as “no publisher today would countenance such behavior even from his most treasured author, and ordinarily no Victorian publisher would have done either” (Cohen and Gandolfo 1). Yet, as unique as Macmillian’s tolerance might be, it is relatively understandable in the context of the parameters of Dodgson’s role in his book’s production. For, “in contracting with Dodgson, the publisher was taking less of a chance than the author” (Cohen and Gandolfo 14), as Dodgson “was to bear all the publishing costs, the cost of illustrating the book, and even of advertising it; Macmillian was simply to sell it – on commission” (Cohen and Gandolfo 14). In so doing, Dodgson set himself up to field the majority of losses or gains; however, by taking on such risk, he was able to legitimately dictate many of the “decisions that today belong to the publisher” (Cohen and Gandolfo 15).

An important consideration is that Dodgson was not a wealthy man, so his financing of the book was a considerable gamble to take. But apparently, as his “primary objective…was to give the public a book of quality at a reasonable price” (Cohen and Gandolfo 20), he realized the only way to “insure that engravers, printers, binders and publishers did the work” (Cohen and Gandolfo 18) he wanted done was to control their payment. Under such circumstances, “what we think of today as the conventional roles of publisher and author did not exist” (Cohen and Gandolfo 15). In fact, to cast a contemporary light on the part Dodgson played in the production

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41 One noted extreme of Dodgson’s obsessive nature was that “he supplied a diagram… showing how… the string on all his parcels must be knotted” (Cohen and Gandolfo, 23).
42 The commission agreements that governed the Dodgson-Macmillian enterprise were common enough through the later half of the nineteenth century: in 1890, a spokesman for the society of authors reported that “at least three quarters of modern fiction was published on commission” (Cohen and Gandolfo 15).
of *Alice in Wonderland*, he was responsible for “performing the jobs done today by copy editors, production editors, artist-designers, and numerous clerks, technicians and computers in publisher’s offices – a formidable undertaking” (Cohen and Gandolfo 19).

Needless to say, the correspondence between Dodgson and Macmillian is “demanding, some might say *commanding*” (Cohen and Gandolfo 17). As for Macmillian’s part, he “remained, at all times, advisory, calm, businesslike, unreprovling – and uncomplaining” (Cohen and Gandolfo 16). Macmillian’s attitude can be attributed to two factors: one is that “quality had always been an essential ingredient in Daniel and Alexander Macmillian’s formula” (Cohen and Gandolfo 14). The other explanation for Macmillian’s compliance with Dodgson’s “concern with the minutiae of book publishing” (Cohen and Gandolfo 17) is that Dodgson was never “rude or huffy” (Cohen and Gandolfo 17). Yet most notably, the fact that Dodgson could issue his concerns and quibbles and have them carried out to his liking “in the bustling offices of the London publisher says much about the character of both Dodgson and Macmillian, their relationship, and the state of publishing at the height of the Victorian age” (Cohen and Macmillian 1).

While the relationship between Dodgson and his publisher is quite interesting, perhaps even more engaging is the author’s collaboration with his illustrator, John Tenniel. In fact, many of Dodgson’s requests to Macmillian actually originated with Tenniel. After securing publication for *Alice in Wonderland*, Dodgson’s next step was to find an illustrator. Although Dodgson originally attempted the “laborious process” (Engen 68) of transferring his own drawings onto wood blocks, he concluded that he “had not enough talent to make it worth his while to devote much time” (Engen 68) to this undertaking. As Dodgson’s nephew notes in his compilation of his uncle’s life and letters: “Mr. Dodgson had not sufficient faith in his own
artistic powers to venture to allow his illustrations to appear, it was necessary to find some artist who would undertake the work” (Collingwood 97). As a result, Dodgson considered employing a professional who would share his “sharp, critical eye, his love of printing and illustration, and his fastidious nature” (Engen 68). Dodgson’s first thought was to employ John Tenniel. Tenniel’s work had long been admired by Dodgson, who “was an avid reader of Punch” (Engen 69), the satiric weekly for which Tenniel worked as a cartoonist. Tenniel’s work in this publication is often cited as the source of Dodgson’s interest, for, among other strong suits, Punch exhibited Tenniel’s “talent for drawing animals” (Engen 69)—an important skill, given animals’ frequent appearance in Alice. Additionally, Dodgson most likely realized that “the artist’s popularity would do his book no harm” (Cohen and Gandolfo 16).

In December of 1863, Dodgson wrote a letter to his friend Tom Taylor, the popular playwright and Punch journalist, asking if he knew John Tenniel well enough to put him “into communication with him” (Cohen 127). Taylor must have replied in the affirmative, for on January 25, 1864, Dodgson records in diary that he “saw Mr. Tom Taylor. He gave me a note of introduction (to whom he had before applied, for me, about pictures for Alice’s Adventures)” (Diaries 210). On that same day, Dodgson called on Tenniel, who “was very friendly, and seemed to think favourably of undertaking the pictures, but must see the book before deciding” (Diaries 210). Not until April 5 did Dodgson hear back from Tenniel, who consented to draw the pictures for what was then still referred to as Alice’s Adventures Underground. And so the production of Tenniel’s contribution to the Alice book began—or at least that is what Dodgson thought. However, as of June 20, Tenniel still had not started the pictures, as Dodgson

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43 As Engen notes, Dodgson “found the numerous animals in the Alice story a particular problem” (68) during the course of his own attempts to illustrate his manuscript.
44 Dodgson asked if Taylor thought Tenniel “could undertake such a thing as drawing a dozen woodcuts to illustrate a child’s book” (Cohen 127). The final number of illustrations that Tenniel would produce for Alice in Wonderland would be forty-two.
discovered after calling upon him that day (Diaries 216). But this was only the first in a series of disappointing showings of neglect on Tenniel’s part.

The next distressing blow fell on October 12, when Dodgson went to call on Tenniel. The diary entry reads, “[Tenniel] showed me one drawing in wood, the only thing he had, of Alice sitting by the pool of tears, and the rabbit hurrying away” (Diaries 222). Though this meeting was somewhat productive in that they “agreed on thirty-four pictures” (Diaries 222), it actually portended negative consequences for the production of Alice. Dodgson’s original goal was “to publish the book in time for Christmas 1864” (Hancher 100). But the lack of effort on Tenniel’s part proved to undermine Dodgson’s wish, combined with events that unfolded weeks ahead of this October meeting. Barely a month after meeting with Tenniel, Dodgson wrote to Macmillian, “I fear my little book Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland cannot appear this year. Mr. Tenniel writes that he is hopeless of completing the pictures by Xmas. The cause I do not know, but he writes in great trouble, having just lost his mother, and I have begged him to put the thing aside for present” (Cohen and Gandolfo 35). With this setback, a new publication date had to be determined, and on December 21, Dodgson’s diary records the meeting he had with Macmillian “to talk about the book. He likes my idea of publishing on the first of April, and says he would like to begin binding about the middle of March” (Diaries 225).

Yet that date too would be thwarted by Tenniel, who did not submit the last drawing until “18 June 1865” (Engen 73). However, in Tenniel’s defense, some of this delay was caused by the meticulous Dodgson himself: upon the completion of a drawing, Dodgson would often

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45 As Donald Rackin notes, “On 28 June Dodgson chooses the title Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, after toying with other titles like “Alice’s Hour in Elfland”” (xvi).
46 Tenniel had also lost his dear friend John Leech just days before his mother’s funeral, and lest it be forgotten, he also had the demands of weekly commitments to Punch to manage. On top of it all, his wife Julia had passed away just a few years before from tuberculosis, a tragedy Tenniel still had not come to terms with. As Engen points out: “he continued to use black edged mourning stationary and refused to mention her to his friends” (71-72). These two new losses “renewed bouts of morbid depression” (Engen 72).
“criticize and suggest alterations and expensive changes further to marry the illustrations to his text” (Engen 73). After all, the fact that Dodgson sought out a professional illustrator, particularly one of Tenniel’s status, is a reminder of how devoted Dodgson was to achieving the quality of “meticulous and carefully considered drawings” (Engen 73). Yet at the same time, Tenniel himself was just as fastidious “with engraved outline and tonal clarity” (Engen 75) as Dodgson was about the exact match of pictures with narrative moments. In fact, Dodgson sent Tenniel “a detailed list of all drawings required for Alice, with their exact dimensions and placement upon the page, carefully written in a mathematical code” (Engen 740).

Carroll scholars’ questions as to whether Tenniel saw Dodgson’s drawings “before he made his own sketches” (Gardner xi) are easily clarified with the aforementioned evidence. Although there is definitive proof that Tenniel saw the illustrations Carroll had drawn for the manuscript, there is even more compelling—and far more interesting—evidence for the argument that Tenniel was profoundly influenced by Carroll’s drawings: a large number of illustrations are almost identical in Alice’s Adventures Underground and Alice in Wonderland.

Of the thirty-eight illustrations that appear in the Alice’s Adventures Underground manuscript, eighteen of Tenniel’s illustrations depict the same moment in the story in almost identical fashion as Dodgson’s. As many Tenniel scholars would agree, “Tenniel did indeed see the [Dodgson] illustrations, and, furthermore, that they helped shape his drawings for the book” (Hancher, 27). However, Tenniel certainly infused his own style into his illustrative creations,

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47 The Dalziel Brothers was the firm Tenniel used for the engraving of his challenging illustrations, and he would often mark up the proofs that they sent him with minute changes: “the curl of a mouth, turn of an eyelash, twist of Alice’s hair – that only the most accomplished illustrator would have detected the weakness” (Engen 75).
48 As mentioned before, Tenniel requested to see Dodgson’s manuscript of Alice’s Adventures Underground before agreeing to take on the project on April 5. Even though all the illustrations were not completed until September 13, remember that Tenniel did not start the majority of his illustrations until after October 12.
49 This fact is important in that Dodgson drawings, however crude, “show, more accurately than Tenniel’s drawings, how [Dodgson] imagined his curious characters” (Gardner xi).
50 Another nine illustrated moments in the story are fairly close to ones that Tenniel illustrated. The remaining eleven are unique to the Underground manuscript (Hancher 28).
for “by and large Tenniel improved51, as he was supposed to do, upon the model presented by [Dodgson’s] illustrations for Alice’s Adventures Underground” (Hancher 39). Additionally, Tenniel also influenced a good portion of the text itself. Although it is presumed that Dodgson had the “major say in deciding which narrative moments to illustrate” (Hancher 27), Tenniel is thought to have made significant contributions as well. These include the creation of the characters Duchess and Cheshire Cat—both figures that do not appear at all in the Underground manuscript—and, most often sourced, the change of Alice’s croquet mallet from an ostrich in the original story to a flamingo52 in Wonderland.

Also worth noting, another depiction that Tenniel changed from Dodgson’s manuscript is the famous White Rabbit. In Dodgson’s drawing, the White Rabbit carries a nosegay, and in the story of Alice’s Adventures Underground, Alice shrinks when she smells these flowers. However, Tenniel chose to draw the Rabbit with a fan, and Dodgson modified the story’s text to incorporate the change in illustration. Dodgson certainly catered to his illustrator, but he did so because, aware of his primary reading audience of children who “are easily bored by scenic descriptions; [he] wisely let the pictures that he commissioned from Tenniel do much of his descriptive work for him” (Hancher 113). In fact, in two specific instances, Dodgson directs his reader to look at the illustrations. First, in reference to the gryphon, Dodgson says through his narrator: “If you don’t know what a gryphon is look at the picture.” The other reference to a specific illustration occurs when Dodgson has finished telling the reader that the king, who was also the judge, wore his crown over his wig in court. This description is followed by the

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51 One specific illustration that is greatly improved upon is the scene where Alice meets the caterpillar sitting on the mushroom. Tenniel’s picture is in exact keeping with the text that describes Alice as standing “stretched… up on tip toe.” Dodgson’s drawing comes nowhere close to the image the text describes: it shows Alice standing next to the mushroom on flat feet, almost at eye level with the famous insect.

52 As Hancher speculates, “ostriches grow up to eight feet tall and weight up to three hundred pounds—too much for a girl to hold in her arms. The revision is more realistic. If Carroll asked Tenniel to show Alice carrying an ostrich, Tenniel may have asked him to change the text to something more plausible” (28-29).
provocative phrase “look at the frontispiece if you want to see how he did it.” What becomes quite clear from these directives, then, is Dodgson’s confidence in—and reliance upon—the illustrations to create the complete reading experience as he imagined it. Dodgson’s faith in illustrations is underscored by Alice’s opening lines in both her *Adventures Underground* and in *Wonderland*: “What is the use of a book without pictures?”

For all the difficulties that Tenniel contributed to the production of the *Alice* books, Dodgson would never make any “major decisions about the printing or sale of the book without Tenniel’s approval” (Cohen and Gandolfo 17). When in the early phases of production, Macmillian “strongly advised” (*Diaries* 217) that they alter the page size for the book, Dodgson “called on Tenniel, who agreed to the change of page” (*Diaries* 217). Only after receiving consent from Tenniel did Dodgson also concede to Macmillian’s suggestion. What is somewhat baffling about this instance, yet representative of how Tenniel “commanded authority in the collaborative relationship” (Hancher 101), is that this exchange took place on June 21, 1863. On June 20th, Dodgson had found out that Tenniel had not started the drawings, over two months after he had agreed to do so. Dodgson’s behavior underscores his willingness “to be advised by Tenniel about details of book design even at this early stage of collaboration” (Hancher 100). Perhaps such concessions and deference on Dodgson’s part serve as ample explanation for what has been referred to as “the most famous incident in history of book publishing” (Hancher 100): namely, the complete suppressing of the entire first run of *Alice in Wonderland*, printed by the Claredon Press.

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53 While the suggestion to look at the gryphon appears in *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, there is no reference to look at a picture (there was no frontispiece) of the king-judge in the original manuscript. Such textual directives insure the promulgation of the painstaking illustrations included in *Alice in Wonderland* for future editions, although they also pose problems for new forms of publishing, such as electronic texts, which cannot always bow to such stipulations.

54 Dodgson had originally prepared “a specimen page of the book in quarto form, with double columns” (*Diaries* 217). The page size change suggested by Macmillian was to “make the book smaller, more suitable for children” (Engen 71).
After all the details had been settled between Macmillian and Dodgson, they agreed that the title on the front should appear:

**Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland**

written in “gold lettering” with “gold lines around the cat side as well as the other,” so as to have the ascetic “look equally ornamental.” They also specified that the general appearance should “be a table–book” with “edges evenly cut smooth.” The cloth covering was changed from the initial choice of bright green to “bright red” with “gilt edges,” and one volume was to be bound in “white vellum” (Cohen and Gandolfo 35-38). Additionally, a minor detail concerning a sentence on the title page of the book was resolved. In the sentence that finally read “With forty-two illustrations by John Tenniel,” “forty-two” substituted what had originally read as “numerous,” because Dodgson felt that this latter word suggested “20 or thereabouts” (Cohen and Gandolfo 39). All of these stipulations were taken into account, and the first 2000 copies printed by the Claredon Press went to Burn of 37-8 Kirby Street, London to be bound (Cohen and Gandolfo 37). Macmillian received the first copies on June 27, Alice Liddel was given her edition on July 4, and on July 15 Dodgson “went to Macmillian’s and, wrote in twenty or more copies of Alice to go as presents to various friends” (Diaries 233). Five days later, the course of lively events would fizzle to a glum stillness when Dodgson learned that Tenniel was “entirely

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55 The original choice of green seems to be dictated by the sole fact that the manuscript of Alice’s Adventures Underground, when presented to Alice Liddel, was bound in green. The choice of red appears to be Macmillian’s suggestion, and Dodgson writes in November that “bright red will be the best—not the best, perhaps, artistically, but the most attractive to childish eyes” (Cohen and Gandolfo 35).

56 The gilt edging seems to be one of those details of publishing that Dodgson was infamous for belaboring with Macmillian. The topic was discussed in several letters; the final decision was committed to in November of 1865, when Dodgson wrote, “I think you are right about the gilt edges, and, now that we have begun with them, I should like all copies to have them” (Cohen and Gandolfo, 39).

57 The white vellum copy was for Alice Liddel.
dissatisfied with the printing of the pictures58” (Diaries 234). From Tenniel’s point of view, “the careless press work…diminished the contrast between light and dark areas of a picture” (Hancher 100). After speaking with Macmillian, Dodgson, with a detectable tone of exasperation, wrote in his diary on July 20: “I suppose we shall have to do it all again” (Diaries 234). Not until August 2 was the issue resolved and the re-print of Alice agreed upon (Diaries 234).

The second attempt to publish the first edition was marked by the hiring if a new printer, Richard Clay59 of London (Cohen 129). On November 9, Dodgson wrote in his diary that he “received from Macmillian a copy of the new impression of Alice—very far superior to the old, and in fact a perfect piece of artistic printing” (Diaries 236). There is no real documentation of Tenniel’s satisfaction, but the lack of any objection indicates that he was pleased with the re-printing. Dodgson’s concession to “reconcile himself to the demands of an illustrator” (Cohen 129) is perhaps the “most telling example of Charles’ willingness” (Cohen 129) to be at “the mercy of Tenniel’s iron whim” (Cohen and Gandolfo 16). The first 2000 printings by the Claredon Press were originally to be sold as waste paper (Diaries 234), but in April of 1866, Macmillian received an offer from America “wanting to know what they would charge for ‘one or two thousand.’ He proposed sending out the Oxford impression” (Diaries 241). Of course, Dodgson had to consult Tenniel before giving his reply, but “Mr. Tenniel…gave his consent to the American sale60” (Diaries 241). On April 10, Dodgson “called on Mr. Macmillian and empowered him to sell the Oxford impression of Alice in America” (Diaries 242). In the end,  

58 “The defects of the first printing were subtle enough that [Dodgson], inexperienced in such matters, would not have objected if it weren’t for Tenniel” (Hancher 100).
59 “A more painstaking, conscientious printer never lived” than Richard Clay (1790-1878), according to the Bookseller (January 4, 1878, p. 7) (Cohen and Gandolfo 38).
60 The outrageous statement published in Engen’s book on Sir John Tenniel, stating it was Tenniel who “suggested selling them to America” (83), is unfounded and completely inaccurate.
almost all the copies from the defective printing “were outfitted and unloaded on the American Market” (Hancher 100).

Ironically, while Dodgson “hardly dared to hope that more than two thousand copies would be sold, and anticipated a considerable loss over the book” (Collingwood 104), an immediate and perennial readership rallied around his text. The success in Dodgson’s contemporary society can be attributed to the subject matter’s concurrence with the Romantic views of the Victorian period. Additionally, Dodgson “lived in an age when books were often extraordinarily beautiful” (Cohen and Gandolfo 28), and his finished product, with “the red binding, the gold lettering, the gilt edges, the sharp illustrations, the clear print” (Cohen and Gandolfo 29), was among the most well-produced and handsome volumes of the time. But the endurance of this text seems to call for a more timeless and universal explanation—one that can, perhaps, be no better accounted for than by the mere realization that “by giving so much to his publishing enterprises, [Dodgson] ensured that both his contemporaries and future generations would have the pleasure of reading his works and also the satisfaction of seeing objects of beauty, holding them, and owning them” (Cohen and Gandolfo 29). Alice knows that when she thinks of her adventures, she will always “find a pleasure in all their simple joys,” and any reader of Alice in Wonderland can understand exactly what she means.

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61 These American sales helped to make up for the expense of the new printing, which cost Dodgson “six hundred pounds to reprint the book” (Cohen 129).
62 A Pall Mall Gazette Poll conducted in 1898, with the inquiry of “the popularity of Children’s books” as its focus, placed Alice in Wonderland in the number one position. (Collingwood 107).
63 Alice “aimed at nurturing young reader’s precious innate creative imaginations” (Ranckin 10), a notable departure from the “didactic cautionary tales” (Ranckin 10) that had previously plagued children’s literature.
Works Cited


