



athena's web

the journal of the college of arts and sciences

summer 2013

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ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY

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News and Announcements

Submissions are currently open for the Fall 2013 issue and for the Fall 2013 Cover Design Contest. Submissions received after the deadlines listed below will be considered for the Spring 2014 issue.

July 29

Release date for Summer 2013 issue (online version)

August 6

Tentative release date for Summer 2013 issue limited print run.

November 8

Deadline for the Fall 2013 Cover Design Contest

November 8

Submission deadline for the Fall 2013 issue

Note that the above dates can be changed at the discretion of the Editor and the Editor-in-Chief. Changes will be announced on the News and Announcements section of the journal's website.

Poetry

Penelope

Jonathan Tyler



HA! And ha, again.

Oh my lord always knew how to make a speech to a group of men!

Yes, I too would have preferred adventure on the high seas,

The sun in my face and the wind in my hair

Than having to sit at home behind my loom with men, more like beasts,

Gathered on the floor below, awaiting my hand- and my son's doom.

For twenty years I waited for you Ulysses.

For twenty years I kept your kingdom.

For TWENTY years I guarded your store!

For TWENTY YEARS I slept alone and cried myself to sleep!

For twenty years I loved your name and never gave up hope you would
come home to me.

Through all that time I knew no comfort —though I hear you had
comforters, two—

Save the hope that if you died... my heart would know.

Then— Oh how glorious was that day!

You came home to Ithaca in disguise, typical you.

You vanquished the foes in every competition I could devise,

And then sent those dogs and their wenches down to Hell— why?

The long journey, despair, blood and death....

Did you not say it was all out of love for me?

And our first night together again—

By Aphrodite I think we shook the pillars of the Earth!

And do you honestly think that after all the hell I've been through

That I would just step aside and watch you go, again?

That because I am an "old wife" I will let my husband, my heart,

Leave me alone to go gallivanting off with his men?

NO! By every god that the Greeks and others can invent NO!

I waited too long, and I loved you too much and too hard,

To just watch you go and leave me behind forever.

The next great journey we take my love we take as close together as
possible.

Now then, supper is finished and on the table.

Jonathan Tyler

Penelope

Dismiss the men and come take your place at the head of the house.

And don't fret too much dear.

Tonight we'll have such an adventure that even old fish face couldn't shake
his trident at it.

Pickwick

Robyn Locke





Poetry

Fierce Determination

Destiny Fowler

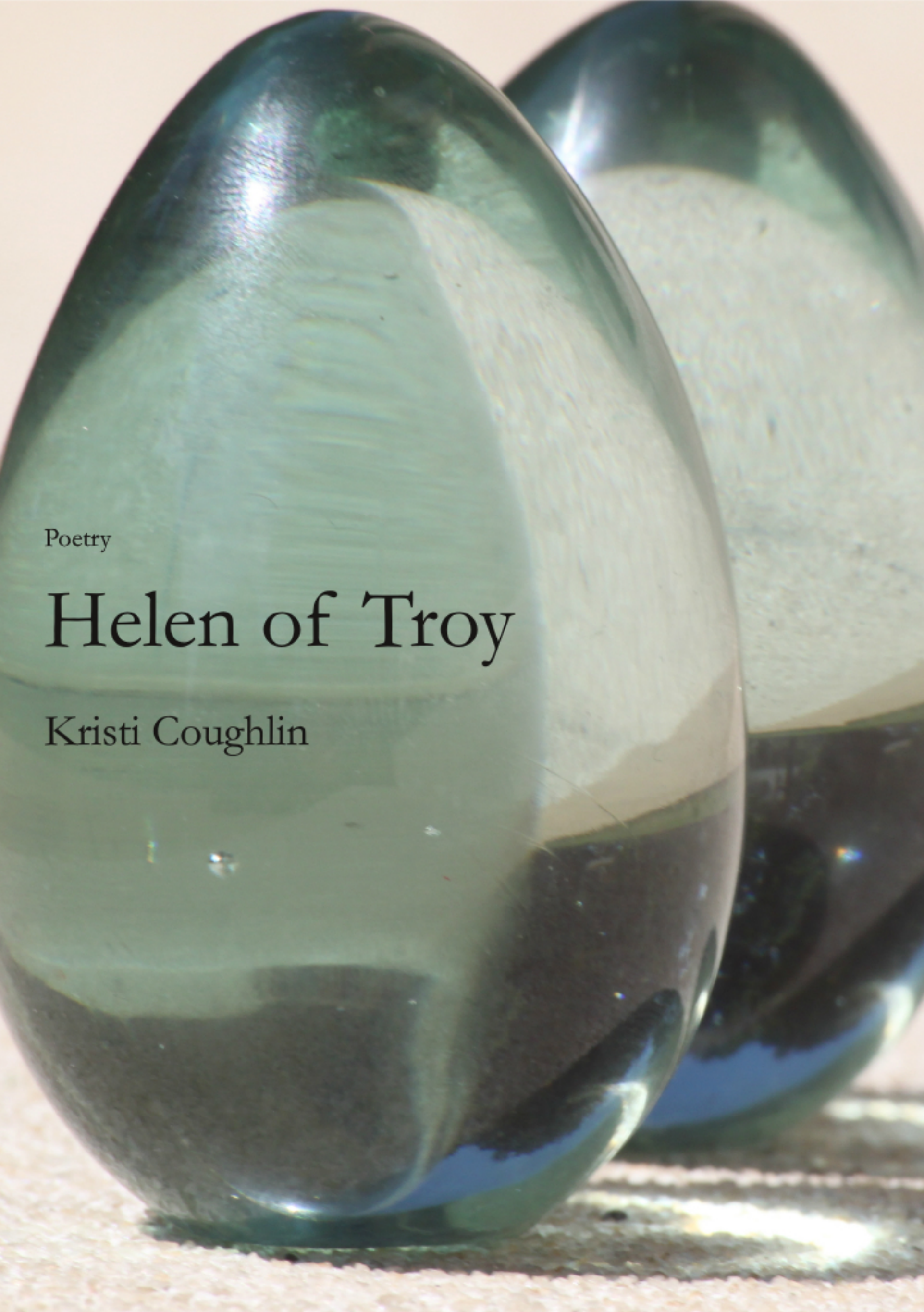
Eight hours,
The clock ticks to me.
It has been eight hours
Since I left my bed
To come to this place
So they can fill my head.
Telling of Columbus,
Commas, periods, colons,
The equation for a rhombus,
Why chlorophyll makes plants green,
How to find percentages,
And what the colors in stories really mean.
But I, I care for none of this.
Such irrelevant knowledge
(As my cocky mind calls it)
Because someone with my future,
Well, they don't need it.
The Battle of Gettysburg,
Earth's shifting plates,
And quadrilaterals,
None of that will help me
As I snip at hair in my mother's salon.
For some of us, most of us,
Well, we weren't born to be doctors or lawyers.
We will die without an impact,
Living on tips and hourly wages,
Only average nobodies
That refill your drinks and paint your nails.
This is the world of my family,
My friends,
And they have settled for mediocrity,
But I am not allowed.
The zip of a backpack pulls me from my thoughts.

I glance at the clock,
It has landed on three.
My test remains in front of me,
Half-finished,
But what catches my eye
Is my teacher.
She looks up from her desk
And she gives me that look,
The look I always get
When she knows I want to give up.
That look of determination
That has unsettled me all year.
She says I am too *smart*,
Too *gifted*,
Too *quick*
to settle for a simple life.
That I am too *witty*,
Too *creative*,
Too *intelligent*
To follow in my mother's footsteps.
She stays late to tutor me in math,
Always asks to proofread my essays,
Volunteers me to read aloud,
Never stops pushing me.
Every day,
Be it my entrance,
Be it my exit,
She always gives me that look.
The fierce look of determination,
That leads even me to believe.

High Sky

Robyn Locke



The image features two smooth, dark green, teardrop-shaped stones, possibly obsidian or a similar volcanic glass, resting on a light-colored, textured surface. The stones are highly reflective, showing bright highlights and deep shadows that emphasize their smooth, polished texture. The stone in the foreground is larger and more prominent, while the second stone is slightly behind and to the right, partially obscured. The background is a plain, light beige color, which makes the dark green stones stand out.

Poetry

Helen of Troy

Kristi Coughlin

You are my spirit twin,
autumn's savory wind sailed your
ship in my harbor--
I want to breathe you in,
To wrap myself in your auburn satin
and memorize the waves of your
hair.

You crossed into my world
like a blaze of light,
your violent path unyielding.
I close my eyes against the fiery rays
but stained upon my lids.
Still, I see your face.

I try to climb my way back
to a place on the mountain,
to erase the aboriginal sin,
to cleanse my primordial skin,
to forget you,
to go back,
to return to ignorance.
To sink back into oblivion.

To take my place.

Soul binder, clock winder,
did the mystics show you
the way to sew your heart shut?
Did they tell you
to leave me standing here,
alone and awestruck?
Take me back to my place
where I can rest beneath the celestial

skies
with the impervious rock.
I will not stargaze at your orbit,
Unmindful of your passing by.

Fiction/Personal Essay/Photo Essay

A Sudden, Uncontrollable Descent (Excerpts)

Travis Sharp



1. Post-Introductory

My name is an image in a photo album, a baby in a blue blanket in the hospital nursery with a matching onesie and a hat and a future mapped out, a map stained and smudged when my mouth opens and I speak.

I prefer no name. I prefer myself.

I must wonder if I speak as myself.

I must wonder as I tell you how I feel, that I feel for you and that I am selfishly happy to know that I am capable of this feeling, of being more human than has been previously assumed.

Stop talking like a dictionary, you say, and I realize that you are right. I am a dictionary. I give words on command. I open and shut as you wish.

2. Running

It was Sister's idea to take the blanket and my idea to take the bread to make sandwiches, but we forgot the bologna and the cheese and the fake mayo. We clipped the blanket to the top with clothespins, the final panel of the sheet tent in the backyard.

We were running away. Sister was fed up.

I'm fed up, she said, and she said it with a flourish of tone that made her sound like our father. When I asked her what had happened she threw her arms up in the air and said, Everything! And I could see it. I could see everything hovering around her like gnats in August.

I'm running away, she said, and I nodded and followed her steps in solidarity against Everything. Everything tried to stop us but we kept on. We gathered supplies. She grabbed the sheets and I grabbed the Barbies and she grabbed the blanket and I forgot the bologna. We packed for the Barbies as well—clothes and suitcases and boyfriends, travel size. I asked Sister if she wanted a boyfriend and she said she had two, one for school and one for church. They're okay with it, she said, and started to undress the brunette. I asked her if I could have one of her boyfriends but she said no.

But you have an extra, I said, which she ignored.

We didn't say anything else, not even when Dad came home and found us in the backyard and our runaway was over. Your mother's

cooking dinner, he said, and I hated how he said dinner instead of supper but went inside anyway, Sister and Barbies following behind, a solemn procession, abandoning sheets and blanket and bread for ants and memories and the dew.

3. 2070A

I think of home and go back to 1999, the year Sister became an artist. She was in 4th grade. She color penciled a pastel rendition of home—or, being a child, perhaps the idea of the home, like the idea of a tree, a reverse-parenthesized trunk and a cloud of leaves. But instead, the home is a cloud itself, and rays of sun and a bit of rain.

Draw home, the teacher said. This is the same teacher who said, Draw love. This teacher drew love before the class to provide an example. Love was a picket fence and an overflowing mailbox and untrimmed bushes hiding the front porch. Sister drew clouds for home but saw that all the other students were still drawing, so Sister colored the clouds gray. Then she added a swingset and Dad and herself with Binx the cat and me, an



afterthought in the backyard. Then she had to draw Mother so she drew the house.

This is home, the teacher said, and she put it on the wall.

I think of home and I think of the drawing, of Mother in the house and Binx large as a hound in the foreground, stalking something. Sister and I playing games in our bedroom. Animals coming and going, relative-tenants coming and going, events going.

The backyard collected pet corpses like stamps or postcards. It conspires to get more. I dreamed of the earth rising up and tangling the dog chains into a precarious knot, close to their throats. I woke and looked out of the window and there were the bodies, limp and covered in dew.

The front yard collects injuries. Dad's hand consumed a nail. Mother drove over a neighbor's foot. Sister fell off the porch. I took a baseball bat to the head. Suddenly there is nothing but a woman in water and I put my arms in front of me, a zombie moving towards her.



Years later, the house is nothing but a haze, a collection of images capturing something, but certainly not capturing the essence, the soul. We pass by and I can see myself, ten years younger, running in the yard, fleeing a June bug, eating cat food on the front porch. We pass by and see ghosts.

4. Died 1867

The graveyard was the biggest business in town. Neighborhood dogs with nylabones give everyone a fright. The sight of one has the keeper chasing them down, just to be sure.

Sister and Teena and I go there on a bet. Josh of 6th grade bet Teena that she couldn't do it and Josh was right, Teena couldn't. But Sister told her that breaking a bet was a sin, and so she went anyway.

Don't step on the graves, Teena said. They'll come back and haunt you.

There are no paths and barely any markers, so we zigzag and sidestep around imagined subsumed bodies. Until Sister starts to step in a bit, just to mess with her, and Teena screams.

We should play a game, I said.

I dare you—Sister began.

I dare you to kiss a tombstone, I said, and Sister did it.

I dare you to lie down and play dead, Sister said, and I did it.

No, on the grave spot, Sister said. Pretend you're buried there.

And I assumed the position and spread my legs and put my hands on my chest, like in a movie.

Perfect. Just perfect, Sister said, and she put a weed flower in my hands and admired my pose.

This one is for a baby, Teena said.

Maybe we should've put you in front of the baby one, Sister said, nudging me with her foot. But I did not move. Move, Sister might say, but I wouldn't do it, not even if she said it. She and Teena would leave and leave me there by myself to be consumed by the earth and still I would not move. I died 1867.

5. Teena, Girl of the Sheets

Teena used to eat bugs. Any bugs—ants, beetles, dead bees—she pulled the stinger off first. Sister and I would eat only things from cans—tuna, sardines, potted meat, cat food just the once. Teena was wild, and she ate wild things.

Sister met Teena when they both ran away in school.

Teena said, My name is Teena.

Hello Tina, Sister said.

No, it's Teena, like Teeeeeeeeena, Teena said, drawing it out so as to fit the entire world inside her name.

They were in the girls' bathroom. Sister had been covering for me as I tried to steal some of the cake from the teachers' lounge.

It was Sister's idea.

Do you want some? Sister asked as she pulled out the spoils, a dense clump of cake and chocolate icing with rainbow and lint sprinkles.

Would I, Teena said because she was wild.

She was wild one day in May. Teena and Sister and I were at the creek behind the trees behind the backyard. Mint Creek we called it because of the color. Mint Creek was full of fish and insects that walk on water and tadpoles—vicious tadpoles. Ravenous things. Things so ravenous they remind you of yourself.

Teena grabbed one of the tadpoles and ate it.

Gross, Sister said.

Teena continued, eating one of everything. Back home, I told Mother about it—that maybe Teena wasn't being fed at home, that's why she did it.

Wild like her mother, Mother said, as if she could know Teena's mother.

Sister first brought Teena home a few weeks after they shared cake. Teena said Mother's glasses were ugly so Mother called Teena ugly and Teena ran home crying.

You ruin everything, Sister said.

When Sister went missing, Dad gathered Mother and me into the car: the search party. Dad drove while Mother made phone calls while I sat in the back, staring out of the window. This is the only way I know how to ride in a car—in the back seat, leaning, staring out at what passes by, making no sound.

Dad said dammit, and we both looked at him.

Is she with Teena? I asked.

She's not with that girl of the sheets, Dad said as he ran the red light, the only one in town. It must've been the horn that startled him and made him slip up—the horn from the car we almost rammed into.

You mean streets. Girl of the streets, Mother said.

Same difference, Dad said, turning right onto Madison.

6. Recollection

And then we'd kiss, Sister said. She puckered her lips like she was really going to do it, like he was right there and not just in her head.

Her husband's name was Dave. My husband's name was Steven.

Steven, like Steven from church? Sister asked.

Yeah. Yes, I said.

Dave and Steven used to know one another from work, but now they know one another from high school. Sister was just telling me about their anniversary. One-upping me, she went to the Bahamas.

Where Mom went on her cruise, Sister said.

She took a picture she found in a magazine and taped it to the headboard.

It was a beautiful trip, Sister said, and she was right. I couldn't even bring myself to point out that the picture said Dominica, not Bahamas, that she must've boarded the wrong ship. Your honeymoon was a lie. But I couldn't even tell her that. That's how perfect it was.

Did you get a picture like Mom's?

Yes, she said. Because Sister was an artist, she didn't have to imagine the picture, instead drawing it herself, she standing on a staircase and Dave behind her, smiling.

The picture would eventually come to rest in a tote. Had Sister known this, if she were a psychic or a prognosticator, she would have noted how fitting an end to their marriage, the marriage and all its paraphernalia gathering dust in a back room.

Mine would have been in the basement.

For now, the marriages are in our beds, dual twins surrounded by mountains of yard sale haggings. Over there, her dining room. And over there, my foyer. Here is the kitchen we fight over, fought over, will always fight over, the kitchen that ruins afternoons, our claims as stubborn as the final leaves in fall.

Suddenly, Sister looked at the door, knowing.

They're on their way home, Sister said. They'll be here any minute.

No, they won't be here for another thirty minutes, I said, trying to buy time for something, though I didn't know what. I felt (feel) compelled to slow things down, to take life in slowly, one molecule of oxygen at a time.

Yes, they will be, Sister said. Saying it, it became true. They were on their way home. Our husbands would be arriving and we have yet to even make the beds.

It's filthy, I said.

I know.

Is there enough time?

I don't know.

How do you not know?

No, there's no time.

Will they be angry? Will they hate us?

No, Sister said. They won't be angry. They won't hate us.





7. The Fall from the Bald Spot

Let her down easy, he said.

This coming from Uncle J. He and Dad and J's son, the cousin we don't speak of, were lifting a junked car with their hands, and their arms and shoulders and everything else. It took everything to move it.

She's a beauty, Uncle J said. You could tell by the way he touched the car that he meant it. He thought the car was beautiful. His wife, Aunt K, would be jealous because her own husband, the man she married, won't call her beautiful. He calls the cars beautiful. He caresses the interior and exterior, all of it, coating the dashboard with baby oil (Look at you shine, baby), washing the wheels. More like massaging the wheels after a long day's work as the car rests in the garage, taking up space nobody has. Aunt K will go behind him with dark thoughts, thinking the car a cheap whore, a homewrecker living in her garage.

We brought you a goldfish, I said. Dad kept fish like widows keep cats. Gingerly he gave them food, cleaned the tank, shopped in pet shops for value fish tank items.

Aunt K took the fish and put her in a bowl in the living room, a plain bowl with no pump, like the ones you see in nice restaurants on TV.

Have you seen my son? Uncle J has entered from the kitchen from the garage and grabbed plump green grapes, sucking them dry before he spat them into his hand where they soaked up sweat.

Aunt K: Not since he left for the Bald Spot.

He went to the Bald Spot to watch the hang gliders, the cousin we don't speak of.

Can he breathe? I ask, thinking of the fish.

He'll be fine, Aunt K said.

I found a straw in the kitchen and blew air into the water, just to be sure.

Later that night, as we prepared for home, Uncle J finally found his son, that unspeakable son. He held his son in his arms, his son out of it.

Is he dead?

Of course he's not. He'll be fine.

Uncle J lays his son on the kitchen table and props up his legs with a picnic basket.

He fell.

Off the Bald Spot?

Yes. Found him laying up against a tree. Long ways down.

Did he mean to do it? I asked.

What is wrong with you? Of course he didn't mean to do it.

That was rude, Dad said.

I stepped back and took them all in. They stood around the body, not sure what to do next, as if moving could make it true.



Poetry

Onto Deaf Ears

Joseph Hipps

Too many times to count,
words get twisted out of shape.
You can't figure what it's about--
with interpretation you rape.

In an obscene culture
that persecutes those who stray
from the norm,
the dreams a foreclosure,
every day is sunny and warm.

As long as they stay in the dark,
and sleep in the alleys and gutters,
you can have a walk in the park,
without the worry or troubles of
others.

Everything's peachy in America's
dream,
nobody bothers to hear the scream.

Pap

Tammy Tanner



Dave's

Mark Moebes



Cover Design Contest Winner

Summer 2013



A Park in Summer by Samantha Godsey

Behavioral Science

The Effects of Family Support on Early Depression:

A Research Proposal

Marilyn Sanchez

Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the views and observations of the early stages of depression from the perspective of family members and examine the effects of early family intervention on depression over the course of 12 weeks. A sample of 207 adult participants will be drawn from depression treatment centers in the North-Central Alabama region. Family members of the patients meeting criteria will be invited to participate as supporters and will report their at-home observations starting at baseline and thereafter at 3, 6, 9, and 12 weeks follow-ups. Depressed patients will be measured for level of depression also at baseline and at 3, 6, 9, and 12 weeks follow-ups. A between-subjects research design will be used to analyze the effects of family support and a coding system has been developed to measure level of family's support. The rate of recovery from depression is expected to be higher in patients with a strong family support system, and stronger family ties are expected to have a significant effect on that recovery.

Keywords: early depression, family support, early intervention, home-setting

Author's Note

This proposal was originally prepared for Experimental Psychology 380, taught by Professor Owen. To conform to the page limit for submission to *Athena's Web*, appendices were omitted but will be available upon request.

“Depression is one of the most common and expensive mental disorders, costing the United States an estimated \$66 billion per year” (National Alliance on Mental Illness) not only in treatment and morbidity costs but also mortality, productivity, and absenteeism (Ainsworth, 2000; Klein & Wender, 1993). Although it is one of the easiest mental disorders to treat, it is also the most underdiagnosed because it is one of the most ignored conditions in our society. The stigmas that accompany this serious mental disorder not only cause sufferers to avoid seeking help but also turn them away when they resolve to do so. This is a result of the lack of knowledge about this condition in terms of what it is, how it affects people, and how to help.

In the United States alone, 807 deaths per year are related to depression and 13, 341 deaths per year worldwide (WolframAlpha.com). Depression is a serious condition that does not discriminate according to race, gender, age, creed, religion, social status, nor nationality. It is a mind intruder that strips people of their life's meaning and leaves them in the shadows of despair, feeling hope-

less, helpless, and worthless. The symptoms range from moderate to severe and vary in type from person to person. Although studies have found evidence of familial predisposition, depression can be caused by many environmental, biological, and psychological factors (Ainsworth, 2000). Yet, despite its causes, the resulting mental state is a disabling illness that puts people in an emotional coma.

There are several treatments for depression, and they are applied according to the severity of the condition. For example, psychotherapy is a clinical approach that focuses on helping the patients develop an understanding of their problems and assess their beliefs and behaviors in order to adjust them successfully into more productive patterns (Ainsworth, 2000). This includes interpersonal, cognitive, and behavioral therapies (Ainsworth, 2000; Klein & Wender, 1993), and is generally used with patients with a mild to moderate form of depression. Biological treatment, usually but not always, accompanied by some form of psychotherapy, treats moderate to severe cases (Ainsworth, 2000). It includes

some form of antidepressant that alters key chemicals in the brain, such as serotonin, which is known as “the happy hormone,” in order to improve the overall mood of the patient. In addition, Klein and Wender (1993) say that electroshock (better known as electroconvulsive therapy or ECT), although controversial, is currently the most effective way to treat the most severe cases of depression that involve psychosis (hallucinations, delusional thinking, and high suicidal risk). Other types of treatment are less conventional yet very popular and have the least risk of side effects. They include meditation, self-help literature, physical exercise, and support groups (Wells, Sturn, Sherbourne, & Meredith, 1996; Luciani, 2007; Otto & Smiths, 2011). These treatments can be helpful in the “pre-depression” stage which is the focus of this proposal in association with family support.

Generally, support groups refer to the range of interpersonal relationships that depressed people turn to when seeking help. However, this application focuses on family networks because family members have the most immediate proximity to the depressed individual, placing them first in line

to notice any indicators of depression in the pre-depression stage and thus give support. This pre-depression stage, for the purpose of this proposal, refers to the so very critical period when people begin to show the most obvious signs of depression such as withdrawing, oversleeping, and irritability. This period is critical because early detection and intervention can not only avoid all the related expenses of more severe forms of depression, but most importantly, it can save lives. In fact, research that studied the impact of family and community violence on children’s depression concluded that family support (in this study family support referred to warm mothers) was key to the declined levels of depression in the children (Kennedy et al., 2010). This buffering effect is important because children who are exposed to violence pose a greater risk of becoming violent themselves as adults (Kennedy et al., 2010), abusing alcohol and illegal substances, and becoming suicidal in adolescence, possibly as a result of untreated depression, if early intervention is not available.

Early intervention is important in every aspect “because

depression engulfs the person's day-to-day living making it difficult to function in all areas of life" (Sanchez, 2012). For instance, as part of a social assistance program, a research study in Norway investigated the effects of family group conferences on social support and mental health for public assistance recipients. This study found that family support not only decreased mental distress but also increased the recipient's life satisfaction (Malmberg-Heimonen, 2010). This is relevant because the findings of this study emphasize the potential that these family group conferences have to improve the lives of low-income families as part of early intervention of social assistance programs (Malmberg-Heimonen, 2010).

However, a significant concern is that many families do not have the solid structure or the interpersonal dynamics to target depression when the first warning signs begin to manifest. For instance, an investigation on social support and antenatal depression found that low quality relationships had a negative impact on the expecting mothers' depression (Senturk et al., 2011). This implicates that depression may not only go untreated if support

is not available, but worse yet, it can go unnoticed when family ties are not strong. By contrast, a longitudinal research study by Kamen, Cosgrove, McKellar, Cronkite, and Moos demonstrated that strong family bonds have an important impact on the speed of recovery from depression whereas family dysfunction and lack of support can predispose a person to depression (2011). However, seeking family support is not risk exempt (Griffiths, et al., 2011). Research that focused on the advantages and disadvantages of seeking help for depression from family and friends found that, among the several disadvantages, stigmas were the most significant. This finding highlights the lack of knowledge among the populace about what depression is, how it affects people, and how to deal with this serious condition.

Notwithstanding, there is no known study that has analyzed the views and observations of family members or investigated the effects of family support on depression from the perspective of the family members. This is relevant because "The ability to recognize depressive illness...may be a matter of life and death" (Klein, D. F. & Wender, P. H.,

1993). Family members can give insight into not only the first observed signs of depression but also propose effective approaches to buffer the tribulation. In essence, family members can give us a snap-shot of the threshold between pre-depression and the more severe forms of the mental disorder since they are in direct proximity to the depressed. Because the results of previous studies have been based only on self-reports by the depressed participants, this proposed study seeks to investigate a) the views and observations of the family members about depression in that so critical pre-depression stage and b) the effects of early intervention by family members on the recovery of early depression. From these two concerns, the following hypotheses were formulated: If family members get involved immediately upon noticing the first signs of depression on their kindred, i) the more severe forms of depression will be avoided and ii) stronger interpersonal relationships will emerge.

Method

Participants

A sample of adult (18 and above)

participants will be randomly drawn from 6 depression treatment centers in the North-Central Alabama region (Limestone, Madison, and Morgan Counties): three community mental health care centers (one per county), a health maintenance organization, a community hospital, and a Government Medical Center. To recruit the participants, surveys (AppendixA) will be given randomly as part of the appointment in-processing procedure. Two hundred seven participants will be drawn to participate as the final sample from the depression care centers. Informed consent (AppendixB) forms will then be signed and, participants will then be systematically placed in experimental and control groups. Participants in both groups will be assessed at baseline and at 3-week follow-up intervals from the initial assessment for a time period of 12 weeks and 5 assessments total. As part of the study, family members of experimental group, chosen by the participants, will be invited to participate. Because this study is concerned with the views and observations of the family members, they will then be invited to receive information about the study, sign informed

consent (Appendix C) forms, and receive instructions on their participation in the study. They will also take part in a later meeting where the patient will be present and goals will be discussed.

The Intervention Process

The main purpose of this study is to invite family members to participate in the recovery of the patients with depression and analyze the views and observations of the family members in support of designing more effective treatments that involve family networks in the home setting while educating family members to recognize the early signs of depression. Based on previous research, the importance of family involvement has been established. However, our society continues to have stigmas that frequently isolate people and make them avoid talking about depression. Taking into consideration those stigmas, this study is designed to work through them and involve family members in becoming aware of the symptoms of depression and thus becoming effective interventionists of this paralyzing mental disorder. This study models an intervention

study conducted in Norway which evaluated the effects of conducting family group conferences on social support and mental health as part of a social assistance program (Malmberg-Heimonen, 2011). Modifications were made to suit the purpose of this study.

The Main Principles and Steps of the Intervention Process

- 1) *The main concern is focused on the mental well being of the depressed participant, thus it is the depressed participant who will decide who will be invited to take part as supporter in the intervention program.*
- 2) *The participant will be assisted by a facilitator (not employed by the clinic) to arrange the meeting between the family member and the researcher. The facilitator will look after the practicalities of the meeting and will have no previous knowledge of the history of the participant or knowledge of their relationship with their family member.*
- 3) *The family network of the participant will be invited. This principle emphasizes on mobilizing the participant's network into learning*

about depression and discussing effective intervention skills. Instructions will be given to the family members on how to report their observations. The patient will have no knowledge of this meeting and thus will not participate. This is important because patient's knowledge of the reports by the supporter is likely to alter behavior and thus compromise the results of the study. However, another meeting will be arranged for all parties to participate which will be focused on the patient's feelings and goals. It will be the task and responsibility of the supporter to report any observations concerning changes in the behavior of the patient. An information sheet about depression will be given to the family members (Appendix D).

4) *Family network's observations.* In the second phase of this study, family members will be asked to report their views and observations about their loved one's depression at baseline and every 3 weeks thereafter for 12 weeks. Because being observed can alter a person's behavior, and thus compromise the results of the study, the patient will have no knowledge that the reports will be

happening.

5) *Family network and patient meet.* This meeting will focus on patients' goals. An action plan will be discussed by the patient and the family member to carry out in the home setting. Questions raised by the family member will be dealt with by the patient such as, "How can I help you?" and "What can I do to make you feel better?" Likewise, patients' questions and concerns will also be addressed.

6) *With every report, changes in behavior, if any, will be addressed as needed.* Positive behaviors will be positively reinforced with positive feedback, such as "I am proud of you." Negative behaviors will be dealt with by the family network, such as asking, "How can I help you feel better?" Reminding the depressed of their positive qualities and planning activities together will also form part of the set of discussed skills to deal with the negative aspects of depression by the family network. Any questions or concerns will be consulted among the facility's counselor, the patient, and the researcher as they arise and will be addressed through the proper channel as

needed throughout the length of the study.

about the situation, and examine how they dealt with each situation.

Measures

Procedures

At baseline, the Beck Depression Inventory II (BDI-II) – Appendix E – will be administered to the depressed patients. This scale is a multiple-choice self-report inventory that measures level of depression. At the 3-week follow-up intervals, a 4-item mood/depression scale (Appendix F) will be administered, and at the final follow-up, both the BDI-II and the mood/depression questionnaire will be administered to analyze progress. For the family members, a self-report design questionnaire and support scale (Appendix G) was developed to measure level of support given to their family member. A family report (Appendix H) was also developed for the family members to record the at-home observations of the patients' behaviors from their perspective as supporters. This tool will be used at each follow-up meeting (every three weeks) with the family members. It will be used to analyze changes in the behavior patterns of the depressed members, examine how supporters felt

This randomized controlled study aims to evaluate the effects of family support on depressed patients and to analyze the views and observations of family members about the depressed in the home context. It is important to note that the term "home" refers to any place outside the treatment facility where the family member has the opportunity to interact with the patient on a regular basis. "Family member" refers to any relative that lives with the patient or has a minimum weekly direct contact with the patient of 3 days per week. In addition, the patient must feel comfortable inviting his/her family member as part of their treatment and thus this study. The study will be comprised of 3 phases.

Phase I: The first phase will focus on recruiting the participants through surveys that will form part of the in-processing procedure at the participating mental facilities, signing informed consent forms, receiving written information about the study, and

systematically assigning them into either the experimental or control group. Additionally, a meeting will be scheduled for the experimental group to invite their family members. Family members will also sign separate informed consent forms and will receive information on depression. This phase will last 6 weeks.

Phase II: This phase will focus on the intervention process from the time informed consent forms are signed. Participants will be administered the BDI-II depression test at baseline (T1) and the mood/depression questionnaires at follow-ups (T2) to assess progress every 3 weeks. Intervention will also include inviting family members to participate as home-interventionists and meet with a facilitator and the researcher. A family questionnaire and support scale will be administered to measure their support inclination at baseline (Q1). A family questionnaire will be filled out and delivered by the family member at three week intervals (Q2) in order to analyze the views and observations of the supporter. They will be instructed on how to make their observation reports and how to deliver them at three week

intervals. Failure to deliver the reports will constitute voluntary withdrawal from the study. A debriefing final meeting will be scheduled with the facilitator, the family member, and the depressed patient. The intervention phase will be 12 weeks.

Phase III: This phase will concentrate on data analysis for the remaining 6 weeks. The study will thus have a total duration of 6 months.

Analysis Plan

To analyze the effects of family support on depression, a between-subjects research design will be used. The independent variable will be family support, and the dependent variable will be the level of depression. The independent variable will have two levels, family support and no family support. Two independent t-tests will be used to analyze the difference between baseline (T1 and Q1) and follow-up (T2 and Q2) questionnaires. Adjusted mean differences will then be analyzed in a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to estimate for the effects of family support using relationship, age, gender,

level of education, and previous experience with depression of the family members as covariates. A separate ANOVA will analyze the effects of physical activity of the patient, diet, and medication.

Results

The duration of the family support intervention process will be on average, twelve weeks, namely from the day that the Q1 questionnaire is completed and submitted to the day the final meeting takes place. Close family members, such as spouses, siblings, parents, and children (over the age of 18) are expected to participate as well as distant relatives such as cousins, aunts, in-laws, and co-habitants. The results of the paired sample t-tests are expected to be positive in favor of family support. To examine the demographic variables of relationship, age, gender, level of education, and previous experience with depression, a one-way ANOVA will test for real effects of the covariates. A second ANOVA will examine the effects of the depressed patients' physical activity, diet, and medication. Mean scores will be calculated on a one-tail t-test. It is

expected that this test will show that family support plays an important role in the recovery of individuals from depression. Correlations will also be analyzed using the Pearson r test. If the views of the family members about depression are optimistic, the correlation between family support and recovery will be positive. The speed of recovery is expected to be faster in the experimental group in support of the hypothesis that family involvement will avoid more severe forms of depression. Family intervention is expected to have a stronger effect if the relationship is supportive from the beginning. However, the information sheet that will be given to the family members is expected to educate those with a negative attitude about depression and thus have a positive effect on recovery while strengthening family ties. This will corroborate the hypothesis that family involvement will strengthen interpersonal relationships.

Discussion

This study seeks to investigate the views and observations of depressed patients' family members

and to evaluate the effects of family support on recovery. There is no known research that has focused on the perspectives of family members about depression. It is important to analyze this perspective because family members are the immediate support network for people who suffer from this mental disorder. Unfortunately, lack of involvement often leads to tragic consequences, and understanding the family's perspective on depression can help close the gaps that exist in some family relationships.

By applying intervention measures intended to strengthen both the level of family involvement and the quality of that involvement based on education regarding depression and raising awareness of the consequences of not getting involved, this study seeks to increase the level of effectiveness provided by family support. In addition, the researcher seeks to provide a foundation upon which future research can be conducted in this largely neglected area.

However, some limitations to this study must be considered. Significant concern lies in the willingness of depressed patients to invite a family member, espe-

cially if family ties are weak. Due to the stigmas attached to depression, people are often apprehensive about discussing it even with a close family member. Helping the patient understand that seeking family support may be beneficial to them and may strengthen family bonds will perhaps motivate them to participate. Additionally, the honesty and biases of the family member's responses may yield false results in favor of family support. The existing circumstances at the time of the study in the relationships may influence the answers and willingness to respond truthfully. It is also possible that perspectives may be influenced by the mood of the person doing the reports.

Based on these limitations, it is imperative that analysis of the data recognizes potential areas that are vulnerable to confounding variables that may erroneously seem to prove or disprove the hypothesis. In addition, the researcher suggests that additional research seeking to replicate this study follow described methods as closely as possible in order to credibly build the body of research on this subject.

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COPEL



Post-Colonialism/Poetry Analysis

Building Bridges with Words: The Writings of Naomi Shihab Nye

Tracy Szappan

Because men with hard faces do violent things, because fanaticism seizes and shrinks minds, is no reason for the rest of us to abandon our songs.

Maybe we need to sing them louder.

— Nye, “This Is Not Who We Are”

There is a school of critical thought, described by Shaobo Xie, that finds the term “post-colonial” inaccurate in its implication that colonialism has ended, rejecting it as a descriptor for the modern world. These critics point out that the term “conceals the fact that global hegemony persists in forms other than overt colonial rule” (8), citing a new form of colonialism: neocolonialism, in which powerful nations colonize through cultural ideals, technology, economy, and media rather than through military might. According to Xie, Western culture is permeating “precapitalist spaces . . . creating new, unforeseen sociopolitical chaos and unrest” (11) throughout the developing world.

This theory, however, does not account for the fact that there are still places in the world in which colonization is occurring by means of military aggression. According to Samina Najmi, the concept referred to as “the military sublime,” or the ideals that

give military acts aesthetic justification or even pleasure, has only shifted from a religious ideal of saving souls to more secular ideals of “freedom” and “democracy” (156). These are the new ideals that allow the populace of the dominating country to not only condone but sanction the defeat of the enemy by military means, and which are easily found repeated throughout the political rhetoric of the past few decades in discussion of military forays into the Middle East.

As the current American wars in the Middle East wind down, the region is again left with the chaos of reconciling their old cultural identity with a new one created by occupation (as well as the ongoing neocolonial issue of cultural hegemony), internal and external tensions that are resulting in additional political, sometimes violent, conflict, and uncertainty with regard to how much peace the future can hold. A new generation of displaced people

mingles with the children of the previous generation of exiles, many of whom struggle to reconcile dual, conflicting identities. This is the world from which Naomi Shihab Nye, the daughter of a Palestinian father and an American mother, writes (Elmusa, Nye, and Unknown 107).

According to Edward Said, one of the major contributions to the current age of imperialism is a “quantum leap in the reach of central authority, thanks in large measure to unprecedented growth in the apparatus of the diffusion and control of information” (Culture and Imperialism 291). However, as Said traces the history of Orientalism, following the transition from British and French dominators to American and witnessing the growth of media and information technologies, he notes that, just as “the Orient was therefore not Europe’s interlocutor, but its silent Other” (“Orientalism Reconsidered” 93), in more modern times the subaltern is still not often given a voice in today’s media. In discussing U.S. policy in the first Gulf War, “rarely in the debate was there mention of the Arabs as having something to do with the war, as its victims, for instance, or . . . its

instigators” (293). It was handled almost as though it was an entirely American affair that Americans would deal with.

In her writing, Naomi Shihab Nye addresses the lack of the subaltern voice in Western media using what Najmi refers to as “the aesthetic of smallness” (152). By stressing the small and ordinary, Nye is able to emphasize the human connection in the conflict and bring something personal to the broad, generalized rhetoric used to describe the military conflict. In her poem, “For Mohammed Zeid of Gaza, Age 15,” Nye addresses the death of a young boy, known only by his name and that he was killed by a stray bullet. She objects to the use of the word “stray,” as though the bullet were a cat or a thought, because it minimizes the bullet’s deadly seriousness and the fact that it was, indeed, created to kill. Nye “shrinks the vast and vague enormities of the military sublime” by making the events of the war personal, but at the same time, she “exposes the enormity of what is falsely rendered diminutive” in order to maintain the illusion of justness of action (Najmi 165). The collateral casualties of war are “regrettable” and

“tragic,” but they are no less a part of a choice to go to war than death is a part of the choice to fire a bullet. By contrasting the small and personal with “what newspaper and television reporters do and do not say about the war in the Middle East, Shihab Nye points out that the war is personal, that it affects real people, and that too often the news reports miss the context of what is actually happening” (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 124).

Najmi also suggests that “Nye’s insistence on the small suggests a politically defiant posture” (158). This is evident in the poem, “Making a Fist,” where a small child with a stomachache asks her mother, “How do you know if you are going to die?” (6) The mother answers, “When you can no longer make a fist” (10), implying that she will never die as long as she can keep fighting. Nye uses this simple conversation between a mother and child to express a defiance that the child will carry with her.

Another example of Nye’s use of the small to emphasize the

personal is in her poem “Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting,” in which she starts out describing details of the projects worked on by three women seated on a plane. She expands outward to an image of the women, and the speaker explains that the moment took place “in the old days, / when you could carry scissors and knives” (27-28).

“How do you know if you are going to die?... When you can no longer make a fist.” - Naomi Shihab Nye

By showing readers this small pre-9/11 moment, and contrasting it with a “grave separateness [that] has invaded the world” (37-38), Nye is calling to mind a larger, but still personal, impression of how the world has changed (Najmi 159).

The news media is joined by entertainment media in portraying a one-dimensional, unrelatable, and even frightening Middle East. As Said says, “for at least a decade movies about American commandos pitted a hulking Rambo or technically whiz-like Delta Force against Arab /Muslim terrorist desperados” (Culture and Imperialism 294). The dominant-dominated relationship between the West and the East has created a kind of “Ori-

ental myth” for westerners who lack knowledge about the East, but are either prejudiced against or curious about the region (Ning 58). This media portrayal, along with economic, political, and military power, produces “out-of-scale trans-national images that are now reorienting international and social discourse and process” (Culture and Imperialism 309). For Nye, this means talking about identity. In “Blood,” the speaker describes an occurrence in which “Years before, a girl knocked, / wanted to see the Arab. / I said we didn't have one. / After that, my father told me who he was” (8-11). Through this poem, Nye explores a child's discovery that she is somehow different and “other,” and the reactions of others to the classification that they have given her.

Nye uses her writing to address the labels and stereotypes that the media has helped assign, in part, by trying to show the world that not all Arabs are “terrorists” - a word that she says, in her essay “To Any Would-Be Terrorists,” she hates. In this letter, she laments that the work of these men has rebounded onto their own people by feeding the image of Arabs as “terrorists.” She at-

tempts to counter this image by showing that “Arabs have always been famous for their generosity” (para. 6) and pointing out their other good qualities, as well as encouraging sympathy for her young cousins who now “have this heavy word to carry in their backpacks” (para. 7) as they go to school. According to Gómez-Vega and her co-writer, for Nye, “writing about being an Arab in American serves the dual purpose of disassociating herself from the men who commit acts of violence and of explaining to other Americans, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, that blaming all Arabs for the behavior of the few is unfair” (132).

Like Mona Fayad, who wrote:

when I tell my students that I grew up in Syria, she materializes suddenly as the inevitable question comes up: “Did you wear a veil?” That is when she appears in all her glory: the Faceless Veiled Woman, silent, passive, helpless, in need of rescue by the west. But there's also that other version of her, exotic and seductive, that follows me in the form of the Belly Dancer, (423)

Nye sees the stereotyping of Arabs and Arab-Americans as a restrictive force that uses ethnicity to encapsulate and trap, rather than as a difference to celebrate. She combats this with familiarity by using her family and experiences to create human connections to the reader, removing the perceived distance between the cultures. She does this, as we have seen, in her essay, "To The Would-Be Terrorists," with the image of her small cousins who must bear the burden of terrorism simply because they are "beautiful little brown boys" (para. 7), born to an Arabic family in America (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 113). She also does this in her poem, "Blood," by "juxtaposing her gentle Arab father, who captures flies instead of swatting them, against the 'little Palestinian' who 'dangles a truck on the front page'" (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 115). Nye shows the reader the contrast between the news image of the Arab as a vicious killer after a bombing in Lebanon with her own image of her loving Arabic father.

"Blood" addresses not only the Arabic point of view, but also the issue of hybridity. In the

lines, "It is too much for him / neither of his two languages can reach it" (23-24), Nye is pointing out the difficulties of her father, a man who has two homes that are at war with each other, asking "Which flag can we wave?" (19). According to Ibis Gómez-Vega and her collaborator, Nye "is specifically referring to the fact that Arab Americans suffered a double blow on that day. . . . They suffer a double pain" (115).

In another poem, "Arabic," Nye seems to address her own hybridity through a speaker who laments the difficulties of learning to speak Arabic. A man tells her, "Until you speak Arabic, / you will not understand the pain" (2-3). The speaker later says, "I have no gift. / The sound, but not the sense" (22-23). She knows that, having not truly experienced Arabic, she may understand the words, but she lacks a sense of all of the connotations they imply. Likewise, a person who sees the issues from one side can sympathize with those across the divide, but can never truly understand things they have not experienced. Through much of her poetry, Nye tries to give readers personal experiences so that they can gain a better understanding of the Arab-

American point of view.

Nye's father is not just a hybrid, though. He is also in exile, having been displaced from his homeland. In "Brushing Lives," Nye writes about her father's "longing for home, and how this longing connects him to displaced Palestinians everywhere" (Gómez-Vega and Unknown) as she watches his encounter with an unknown Palestinian man with whom he shares a common pain.

Her father's search for a sense of home is addressed again in "My Father and the Fig Tree," in which a six-year-old speaker cannot understand the meaning the fruit has for her father. To him, the fig is a memory of his home and his childhood and is a symbol of what he has lost. The poem ends as her parents move into a new house and her father joyfully discovers a fig tree in the new backyard, "plucking his fruits like ripe tokens, / emblems, assurance / of a world that was always his own" (38-40). For her father, this tree represents not only a connection with his past but also a reconciliation of the past with the present. According to Gómez-Vega, this poem represents both Nye's concern about her father's exile, but also her shortcomings as

she finds herself unable to share this part of her father's heritage (248). Her own hybridity is different from his, and this means that she can never fully be a part of her father's culture.

Nye herself has never experienced displacement in the way that her father has, but according to Gómez-Vega and her co-writer, after spending a year visiting family in the West Bank, "her sense of home is . . . forever altered by the time spent with the Palestinian side of the family" (121). Like the little girl in "Blood" who asked if they had an Arab, Nye's trip gave her a new understanding of her hybridity and what it means to be an Arab in America. It also gave her a greater sense of the violence faced by her family and an understanding of both why people chose to stay, as the violence became the norm and the unknown held greater fear (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 118) and the challenges faced by the exile who chose to leave behind his home. She understands that "the displaced Arabs who long for home are an integral part of the Arab story, the Arab-American story. Like the poet's father, they carry home in their hearts; they do not forget" (Gómez-Vega and

Unknown 111).

Despite all of the violence and sadness of her subject matter, Nye's writing remains optimistic. In her essay, "This Is Not Who We Are," she describes a childhood home in which there was "always a thrumming underchord, a hovering hopeful note: Things had been bad, but they would get better. Our dad had lost his home, but he would make another one. People suffered everywhere, but life would improve. I refuse to let that hope go" (para. 8). Nye's work shows a constant thread of human connections, from the displaced finding comfort with those who share their memories to the community of a group of women sitting and chatting together on a plane. These human connections represent hope for a better future.

Part of Nye's optimism may come from her belief that words have power. Just as her little cousins must carry the burden of negativity created by broad application of the word "terrorist" (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 114), "Nye believes that words

Nye's work shows a constant thread of human connections... These human connections represent hope for a better future.

can transform people" (113). Her poetry creates a bridge between cultures, helping to create a shared experience and understanding that Nye hopes will foster peace. She says, "We must keep reading poetry with renewed vigor, for courage and hope. Poetry, the most intimate form of expression, gives us a deeper sense of reality than headlines and news stories ever could" (qtd in Najmi 152).

In "To Any Would-Be Terrorists," Nye tries to use words to explain the harm that is being caused for Arabic people. She shares stories about Americans who sympathize with the problems faced by Arabs and Arab-Americans and about her Palestinian grandmother who would not want these violent acts to represent her, and also speaks against the glorification of violence. To indicate that Americans are not uncaring about Middle Eastern culture, she points out that one of the best-selling volumes of poetry in America was a translation of Rumi, a 13th century Sufi poet. This is noteworthy

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to her because words are important, and that Americans find the words of Rumi important is a statement that Westerners are trying to bridge the distance between themselves and Arabic culture (Gómez-Vega and Unknown 113). In this essay, Nye says that, “We believe in the power of the word and we keep using it, even when it seems no one large enough is listening” (para. 8). She seems to believe that positive words have a smaller effect than the negative words that weigh down her cousins, but that if we are persistent, they will make a difference.

Nye's optimism is especially apparent in her work with children, whom she believes are mostly open-minded (Nye and Castro 231). She has worked as a Poet in the Schools (234), a program in which visiting poets spend time in the classrooms of schools and encourage children to write (“Poetry WITS”). She has printed an anthology of some of her favorite student works and has written several stories for children of different age groups from a Palestinian-American viewpoint and also from a viewpoint as a visitor to Mexican-American culture. She is a strong advocate of multicultural experience, saying in

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an interview, “We are uplifted by one another's cultures, infused, enlarged. Cultures by necessity blend and co-mingle and enrich and flavor one another” (234). Nye believes that there is an open space for more Arab-American children's literature because, as we have seen, she believes in the power of words and familiarity in creating a shared cultural experience.

The response she has seen from children with whom she speaks seems encouraging. They are interested in Palestine and ask questions about her visits there, and they seem sympathetic to the difficulties of people who have been displaced. Children who have had experiences in Israel or Palestine eagerly share their own stories (Elmusa, Nye, and Unknown 112). Nye seems especially pleased with a young girl whom she quotes as saying, after reading *Habibi*, “I will never think about the Middle East in the same way again. It has become a real and human place to me. I care about it now” (113).

Gómez-Vega and her collaborator say, “Poetry provides people with the tools to recreate experience. It does not change the experience, but it makes em-

pathy possible” (117). Nye's agreement with this philosophy allows her to express simultaneously the sorrow and pain felt by Arab-Americans as they try to balance their sense of home between two very distant places and the hope and optimism she feels for the future. By sharing her experiences, she hopes to change the Western view of the Middle East as distant and strange to one of understanding, changing the dominator-dominated dynamic to one of shared humanity.

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History

Pater Noster: The Apotheosis of Washington

Kelton Riley



At the founding of a new country, citizens of any fledgling nation seek to lay a strong foundation for the institution that will become their sovereign state. The pillars erected at a nation's founding will form the structure upon which the future of that nation will be built. For that nation to prosper, such pillars must be strong. One of the most effective means to appropriate legitimacy for a new nation is to bind state establishment to the divine. This can come through the anthropomorphism of gods (or demigods) as with Aeneas (son of Venus) for Rome, or Helen (descendent of Prometheus and Pandora) for Greece. At the founding of America, however, entrenched in the cool rationality of the Enlightenment, such implausible tales would never have sufficed. Gone were the days in which man could bring the gods down to earth. The possibility still existed, however, to promote man up among the gods. If young Columbia could not pluck her fathers from the heavens, she could at least see that they ascen-

"Did anybody ever see Washington nude?" - Nathaniel Hawthorne

ded there. Among the pantheon of American fathers, only one could be the obvious occupant of primacy: his Excellency George Washington, Esq.

The founding generation offered a rare breed of thinkers who forged the shape of a new republic, who dug into the dank, scatological trenches of political battle necessary to fecundate a new order. Unlike Hamilton, Adams, and even Jefferson, Washington, at least the image of Washington, manages to hover above the grit and muck, to remain a clean, noble figure—a figure who is ironically kingly. Well after Washington's death, Nathaniel Hawthorne summarizes the lofty image of our first president: "Did anybody ever see Washington nude? It is inconceivable. He had no nakedness, but I imagine he was born with his clothes on, and his hair powdered, and made a stately bow on his first appearance in the world."¹ Hawthorne's point not only effectively demonstrates the elevated state of George Washington, but also contrasts him

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, quoted in Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books A Division of Random House, 1991), 649.

with the other founders. It is rather easy to imagine Hamilton naked. But such is not the case with Washington. Even his childless state allows his image to remain virginal, chaste, perfectly clean and upright. The father of our nation did not fornicate; he never violated honor; he could not tell a lie.² At least, that is the way Americans, especially the founding generation, needed him to be. The biography Washington left behind was formed in the image of God, passing through noble youth, triumphant hero, beatified legend, and finally, apotheosized father.

Mason Weems, one of the better known biographers of George Washington, spared no expressive expense in romanticizing Washington's childhood. He states:

[...] I will tell of Washington in the days of his youth, when his little feet were swift towards the nests of birds; or when, wearied in the chase of the butterfly, he laid him

down on the grassy couch and slept, while ministering spirits, with their roseate wings, fanned his glowing cheeks, and kissed his lips of innocence with that fervent love which makes the Heaven!³

Weems' *The Life of George Washington* is composed in a vernacular plucked from Romanticism's secret gardens. The book, filled with anecdotes that are "too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted"⁴ is both admirable and ridiculous. Within the first chapter Weems establishes the fact that the purpose of the book is more for ethical instruction than biographical—a theme which seems to have been common among biographical sketches of Washington in the first century of America's founding. Weems established the young Washington as a youth infused with a sense of duty, (sacred obligation to his departed father⁵) peacemaking, (among quarreling school peers⁶) and manly athleticism (running so that the "swift-footed Achilles

²M. L. Weems, *The Life of George Washington* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1860), 14.

³Weems, 14.

⁴Weems, 15.

⁵Weems, 22.

⁶Weems, 23.

could scarcely have matched his speed”⁷). In describing the young man's strength, Weems offers the following anecdote regarding a remarkable weapon Washington inherited from his father, “His gun [...] is of such enormous weight, that not one man in fifty can fire it without rest. And yet throughout that country is it said, that he made nothing of holding it off at arms length, and blazing away as the swans on Potomack [sic].”⁸ When paired with the aforementioned virtues, this rifle, as impossible to wield as Ulysses' bow, helps to establish the young Washington as a figure who is beyond extraordinary. Not only was he a youth of martial prowess and dangerous masculinity, but also the child of halcyon days and sweet butterfly bliss. This dichotomy of ferocity and gentility exhibits the very balance required for Washington to evolve from the golden child to the triumphant hero.

Washington was known for his courage in battle. His

experience in the French and Indian War is illustrated by Weems in the battle at Fort Necessity in which Washington's men were outnumbered 5:1. He describes this outnumbered troop of three hundred men as being “lead by a smooth-faced boy [...] far from home—and from all hope of help [...] yet without sign of fear, preparing for mortal combat!”⁹ He draws the obvious comparisons to Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans in his praise of Virginia valor. According to Weems, even Washington's enemies marveled that the Colonel was untouchable. He quotes an Indian warrior as swearing, “Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet! For ... I had seventeen fair fires at him with my rifle, and after all could not bring him to the ground!”¹⁰ When rallying fearful troops, Washington would ride along the front, restoring his men's courage at his own peril.¹¹ Weems' chronicling of Washington's encounter with Banastre Tarleton provides further insight

⁷Weems, 25.

⁸Weems, 25.

⁹Weems, 39.

¹⁰Weems, 48.

¹¹Weems, 94.

to Washington's willingness to lead from the front, "At one time, Washington was 30 or 40 yards ahead of his men. Tarleton, observing this, suddenly wheeled with a couple of his dragoons to cut him off. Washington, with more courage than prudence, perhaps, dashed on, and rising in his stirrups, made a blow at Tarleton, with such force, that it beat down his guard."¹²

Though Weems puts great energy into painting Washington as a great general, an "American Fabius [...] who opposed Hannibal with success,"¹³ it would be more accurate to say that Washington, like Fabius, opposed his adversaries less with "success" than with "not failure." Gordon Wood explains, "[Washington] was never a traditional military hero. He had no smashing, stunning victories, and his tactical and strategic maneuvers were never the sort that awed men."¹⁴ Even so, Washington's success as com-

mander in chief cannot be denied; the war was won, after all. But his brilliance for leadership was not the result of military genius, but of pure character. "What he lacked in military skill," Woods continues, "he made up with prudence and wisdom."¹⁵ Washington, whatever his faults as a tactician, possessed an even more important skill: he was easy to admire. And admired he was. Before the Revolutionary War was even over, his birthday was being celebrated by Americans.¹⁶ Cold, hungry, ragged troops remained loyal to him¹⁷, his elders rose to honor him, and ladies crowded around, eager to be his partner in dance.¹⁸ Even his enemies admired him. Though known as "Town Destroyer" among the Iroquois, Washington was "the only white person to figure (with honor) in the visions of the Seneca Prophet Ganenodiyo, which guided the Seneca Nation's recovery [...] after the disaster of

¹²Weems, 124.

¹³Weems, 98.

¹⁴Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 84.

¹⁵Wood, 84.

¹⁶Wood, 84.

¹⁷Weems, 91.

¹⁸Weems, 58.

the American Revolution.”¹⁹ As commander of the army, George Washington was undoubtedly respected and beloved, but no act of valor performed under that commission did more to sculpt him into the hero of legend than the single act of surrendering his post after the war.

Far more than any of his military exploits, the act of surrendering his sword to congress cemented Washington's image as the benevolent, protective hero of America. This unprecedented willingness to relinquish power stunned the world. George III “who knew what Oliver Cromwell had done after the beheading of Charles I, remarked that doing so made Washington ‘the greatest man in the world.’”²⁰ William Blake and Lord Byron, the bards of their day, took up their ink in praise to Washington's goodness. While criticizing Napoleon's

betrayal of republican ideals after the French Revolution, Byron lauds Washington as a revolutionary leader still worthy of respect: “[...]the first—the last—the best— / The Cincinnatus of the West, / Whom envy dared not hate, / Bequeath'd the name of Washington, / To make men blush there was but one!”²¹ Historian François Frustenberg reiterates the significance of this one act, “Washington's ‘honest ambition’ [his willingness to resign from power...] made him a modern-day hero, and distinguished him from tyrannical figures of antiquity like Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar.”²² The leader who refrains from abusing power is an archetype revered time and again in epic texts. Beowulf refuses a throne not rightfully his;²³ Frodo carries the One Ring to Mount Doom;²⁴ Harry Potter rejects the Elder Wand.²⁵ Even

¹⁹Edward Countryman, “Getting to Know George Washington,” *Southwest Review* 94, no 2 (2009): 133, accessed August 28, 2012, *Academic Search Elite*.

²⁰Countryman, 134.

²¹Lord Gordon Byron, “Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte.” In *Miscellanies* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1837), 48, accessed October 17, 2012, Google Books.

²²François Frustenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 65.

²³J. B. Trapp, ed., *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature: Medieval English Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 81.

Christ, when faced with a people who would make him king by force, withdraws from them, refusing what would have been an illegitimate throne.²⁶ By living up to this exemplum, Washington proved worthy of the power he had refused. Frustenberg explains the effect this act had on the Enlightenment populace: “Indeed, it would be difficult to exaggerate the impact of his resignation [...] the power of Washington's iconic act [impressed his greatness] among the Enlightenment intelligentsia of the Atlantic world, a wonder shared by many in the United States.”²⁷ Mason Weems elaborates:

[...] this man [Washington] scorning to abuse his power to the degradation of his country, dutifully bowing before her delegated presence, the congress—cheerfully returning the commission she had

entrusted him with—piously laying down his extensive power at her feet. This sight of their great countryman, already so beloved, and now acting so generous, so godlike a part, produced an effect beyond the power of words to express.²⁸

Had Washington refused to yield power—and Weems suggests that the army would have readily supported his retaining of power²⁹—he would have taken his place among other great conquerors of history: Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, or Napoleon. He might have become a king, perhaps even a good king. However, by refusing a fraudulent crown, he not only secured earthly power (being unanimously elected President of the United States³⁰), but he set in place the framework to ascend from triumphant hero to beatified legend.

²⁴J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 925.

²⁵J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (New York: Aurthor A. Levine, Books, an Imprint of Scholastic, 2007), 749.

²⁶John 6:15 King James Version.

²⁷Frustenberg, 66.

²⁸Weems, 142.

²⁹Weems 133-134.

³⁰Weems, 146.

The idolization of one's leaders seems contrary to the ideals of republicanism. This fact was not missed by Abigail Adams who noted that at his death, Washington received more honors than kings or princes might expect.³¹ Her point is a fair one, and is it curious that a largely protestant, republican American populace would so willingly embrace Washington's image as an Arthurian-style saint. By placing attention on his virtue—most specifically his surrender of power—it became possible to elevate Washington's demonstration of republican ideals over the man himself. Frustenberg explains it thus, “This intense focus on Washington's act of resignation has an important ideological effect: it helped balance the anti-republican implications of [this] filio-piety. To celebrate Washington was not merely to celebrate a man; it was to celebrate political principles of virtue and popular sovereignty.”³² Thus Washington became not an idol in his own right, but the embodiment of an ideal—the patron saint of virtu-

ous republicanism.

In keeping with saintly traditions, the collecting of Revolutionary relics became popular after the Revolution, and on through the Civil War era. Kammen explains:

That pattern [collecting relics] had steadily increased ever since 1875-76, when furniture for patriotic purposes had been made from [...] the old Cambridge elm under which Washington took command of the Continental forces in 1775[...] Certain cherished pieces of furniture were deemed sacred on account of their historic roots[...]³³

Even a lock of his hair was venerated by the Grand Master of the 1901 chapter of the Masonic Order. Presenting the lock to his congregation, the Grand Master proclaimed, “It appears before you a priceless relic, worshipped by the [Masonic] followers as coming from that noble head which a more imaginative people would have beatified with the halo

³¹Furstenberg, 64.

³²Furstenberg, 68.

³³Kammen, 200.

of a saint."³⁴ Even locations associated with Washington became sacred, with Mount Vernon becoming a popular place for pilgrimage.³⁵

Perhaps the most famous account of relic reverence involves John Brown during his raid at Harper's Ferry. Brown, who came to be (controversially) called a Transcendentalist "saint" in his own right,³⁶ sought to capture George Washington's relics to aid him through his campaign to start a slave uprising. Two weapons, a sword he believed to have been gifted to Washington from Frederick the Great³⁷ and a pistol given by the Marquis de Lafayette³⁸ were captured by Brown from Washington's great-grandnephew Lewis Washington. John Brown scholar Merrill Peterson likens this weaponry to a sort of "American Excalibur."³⁹

If Americans were willing to esteem their first president as a

saint, Mason Weems aided them with the imagery of such holiness both at Washington's death, "It has been said that a man's death is generally a copy of his life. It was Washington's case exactly. In his last illness, he behaved with the firmness of a soldier, and the resignation of a christian [sic] [...] Washington, who so often conquered himself, is now about to conquer the last enemy [death]."⁴⁰ If such a noble account of Washington's last moments left any doubt regarding his sainthood, Weems makes certain to dismiss that doubt by explaining Washington's assumption to heaven:

Swift on angel's wings the brightening saint ascended; while voices more than human were warbling through the happy regions, and hymning the great procession towards the gates of heaven. His

³⁴Kammen, 203.

³⁵Fursenberg, 61.

³⁶Merrill D. Peterson, *The Legend Revisited: John Brown* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 24.

³⁷Peterson, 25.

³⁸David S. Reynolds, *John Brown: Abolitionist* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005), 130.

³⁹Peterson, 160.

⁴⁰Weems, 182-183.

glorious coming was seen afar off;
and myriads of mighty angels
hastened forth, with golden harps,
to welcome the honored
stranger.⁴¹

Such descriptions do more than honor the man. Here Weems binds Washington to the divine, the triumphant Christian who has fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith and won a crown of righteousness.⁴² Not only did Washington's life become the exemplary journey a young nation needed, his words, left to us in his Farewell Address would become the scripture that would preserve that nation. Not only had George Washington proved himself to be Columbia's defender against past enemies, his heartfelt counsel would preserve her from her own internal schism.

Washington's Farewell Address, the most revered of his writings, laid out the principles of unionism that would maintain the steady helm of state through pos-

terity. His appeal for the Union would influence the devotion of Unionists during the secession crises of 1812 and the 1850s.⁴³ Regarding union, Washington says:

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. [...] it is the main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize [...] it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness [...]⁴⁴

In this testament, Washington gave his parting advice to the nation he had helped to forge. Though Washington expressed his hope that the reflections he offered would come under fre-

⁴¹Weems, 183-185.

⁴²Timothy 4:7-8 King James Version.

⁴³Furstenberg, 44.

⁴⁴George Washington, "Washington's Farewell Address," in *Charters of Freedom: Founding Documents of American Democracy* (Konecky & Konecky, 2012), 393.

quent review,⁴⁵ he could have scarcely imagined that his words, far more than becoming mere thoughts of a departing president, would become the civic gospel of America's apotheosized father.

More than sound guidelines for governing, Washington's advice became the scripture by which to preserve the nation. Reverence for his words prompted calls to "Let [Washington's Farewell Address] be engraven [sic] upon tables of brass and marble, and, like the sacred law of Moses, be placed in every Church, and Hall and Senate [...] for the instruction [...] of all future generations of Americans."⁴⁶ By appropriating Washington's writings into civic canon, Americans established a new psyche for themselves, one fashioned in the "image of the father."⁴⁷ Not only were Washington's works widely circulated, they were, more importantly, distributed with a dis-

tinct suggestion as to how they should be read. Calls to have Washington's Farewell Address bound into the Bible⁴⁸—which was actually done in the 1792 Bible⁴⁹—equate the reading of Washington's words not just with civic exercise, but sacred study. By placing the words of Washington's words next to the Sermon on the Mount in the family Bible, his writings, and thus Washington himself, are endowed with a divine authority, thus making him a "Savior' on par with Jesus."⁵⁰ Even his mother, Mary Ball Washington, came to be referred to as "Mary, the Mother of Washington"⁵¹ which easily echoes "*Theotokos*." The legacy of Washington became a standard by which to refine one's own behavior. According to one U.S. Senator, "Cherishing Washington's memory will make us better sons—better fathers—better husbands—and better citizens."⁵²

⁴⁵Washington, 393.

⁴⁶Furstenberg, 41.

⁴⁷Furstenberg, 34.

⁴⁸Furstenberg, 32.

⁴⁹Furstenberg, 59.

⁵⁰Furstenberg, 52.

⁵¹Kammen, 203.

⁵²Furstenberg, 36.

Revolutionary scholar François Furstenberg relates this idea brilliantly, “By thus internalizing Washington’s words—by, so to speak, accepting him as their national savior—audiences would be born again as Americans.”⁵³

By becoming the apotheosized father of the nation, Washington was able to continue to serve the country in death as he had in life.⁵⁴ Beyond the historical general and president, Washington the father became the embodiment of republican virtues. As the personification of prudence, wisdom, duty, selfless execution of power, respect for civil authority, and modesty, Washington became the vehicle by which to convey the strong virtues required of republican citizens to the children of the nation. As a model, Washington helped to engage as passive audience to actively virtuous citizens. Furstenberg explains:

By fostering active remembrance [of Washington], by turning readers, listeners, and parade members

into emulators, the process of appropriating these texts helped transform audiences into Americans. Collectively remembering Washington, emulating these virtues, and passing those virtues on to their children, it would fall to these newly constituted Americans to preserve the nation.⁵⁵

According to Weems, “Washington has wisely spent his life in acquiring the immortal virtues. ‘He had fought the good fight’ against his own unreasonable affections. He had glorified God, by exemplifying the charms of virtue to men.”⁵⁶ Thus, George Washington proficiently served his country not only as a historical figure, but as a mythical one, rising above the worldly needs of a nation to fulfill its spiritual needs as well.

Quipping about the American Revolution, John Adams remarked that the entire revolution would be remembered thus: “Dr. Franklin’s electrical rod smote the earth and out sprang

⁵³Furstenberg, 57.

⁵⁴Furstenberg, 30.

⁵⁵Furstenberg, 36.

⁵⁶Weems, 181.

General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod and thenceforth those two conducted all the policy, negotiations, legislatures, and war."⁵⁷ Though the history of the American Revolution has not been quite that fictionalized, one can feel some sympathy for Adams' position. The Revolutionary generation offered no shortage of heroes, many who are worthy of study and even emulation. But none other than George Washington, the Father of our Nation, managed to ascend through the ranks of the epic sanctification to become much more than a hero. As man and memory he continued to remain a bulwark of liberty and union in ways that his contemporaries could not rival. As Weems describes, "General Washington[s] gaze], like that of the sacred dragon, was always open and fixed upon the enemies of America [...]"⁵⁸ The pilgrims who have visited Mount Vernon, from 1799 to today, might argue that he is watching still

Throughout her history this nation needed a center, one with sufficient gravity to keep her

from splintering apart. At each stage, George Washington became exactly what the United States of America needed him to be: noble youth, triumphant hero, beatified legend, apotheosized father. While it can be argued that his beatification was the construct of American imagination rather than historical accuracy, the fact remains that Washington certainly helped by making himself remarkably easy to beatify. He did this not by being our first president, but the most enduring. Today, in a nation wrought with faction, it might be wise to give a little more consideration to Washington's "scripture."

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⁵⁷John Adams, quoted in Countryman, 132.

⁵⁸Weems, 109.

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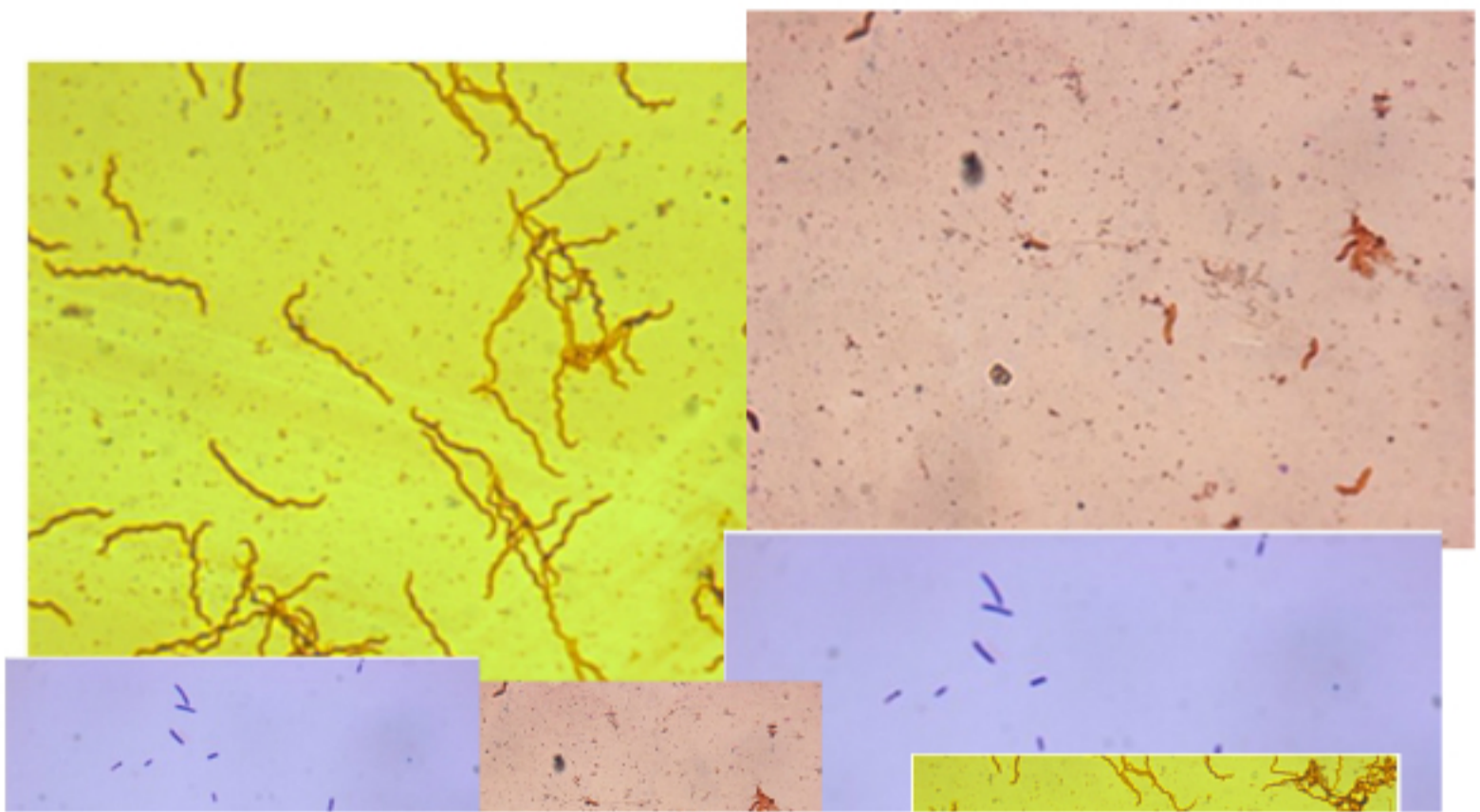
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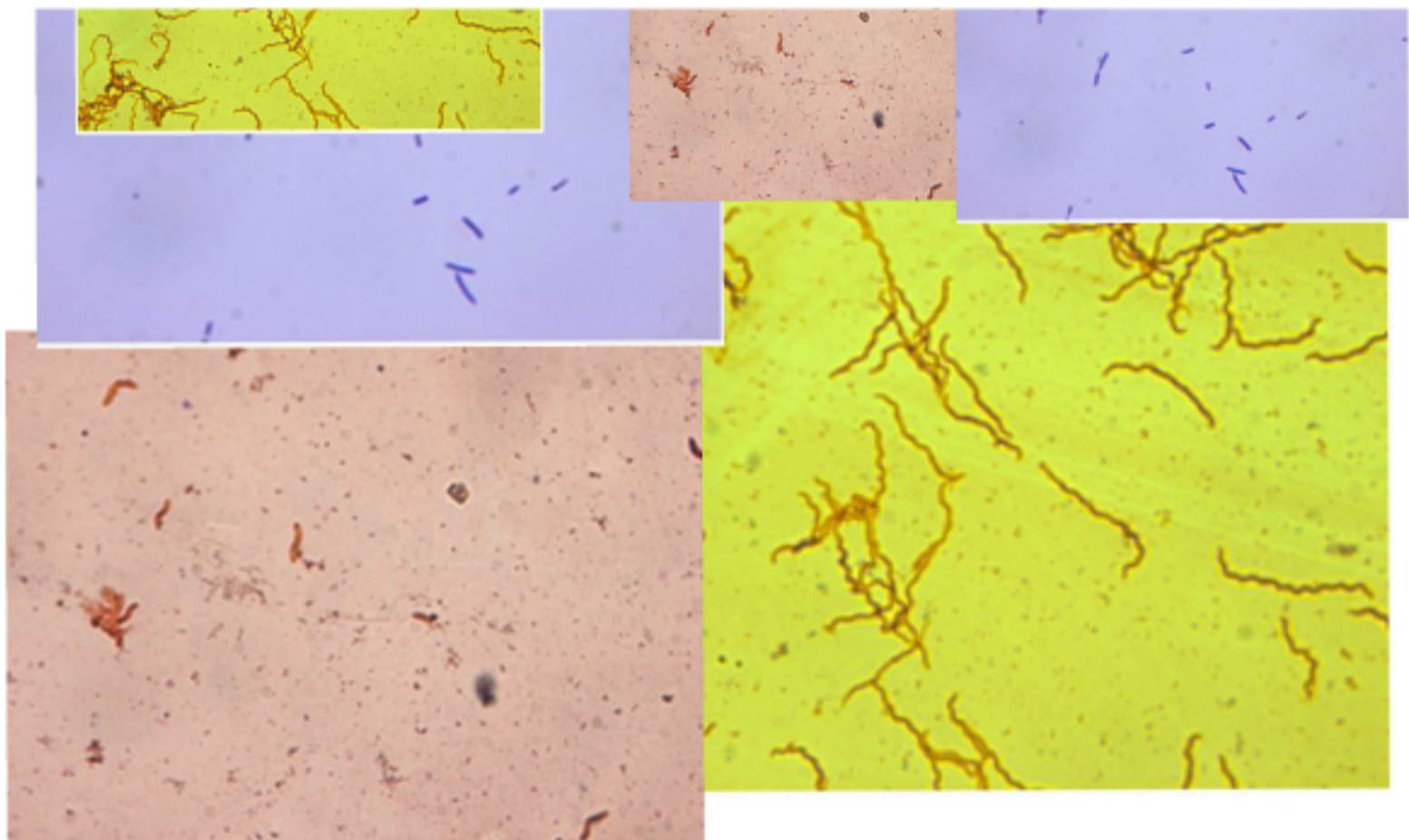
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Biology

Some Unique Features of Alkaliphilic Anaerobes

Erin Roof and Elena Pikuta



Abstract

This article explores two topics involving the examination of four strains halo-alkaliphilic anaerobes. The first topic had covered experimental work in concern of the ability saccharolytic anaerobes to metabolize alternative chirality sugars. Two saccharolytic halo-alkaliphilic bacteria were chosen for this experiment: *Anaerovirgula multivorans*, strain SCA^T, which is gram positive and spore-forming; and *Spirochaeta dissipatitropha*, strain ASpC2, which is gram negative and not spore-forming. It was found that both strains were able to use *L*-ribose and *L*-arabinose as growth substrates.

The second part was dedicated to the study of chemolithotrophic metabolism of two halo-alkaliphilic sulfate reducing bacteria: *Desulfonatronum thiodismutans* strain MLF1^T and *Desulfonatronum lacustre* strain Z-7951^T. The experiments with litoautotrophs had demonstrated that strain MLF1 is capable of growing without any organic source of carbon, while strain Z-7951 required at least 2 mM acetate for growth. Hungate's anaerobic technique was used for preparation of the growth media and maintenance of the bacterial cultures. Routine methods for Gram-, spore-, and flagella- staining were applied to characterize cytology and morphology. In this article, the results of the experiments performed on morpho-cytological, physiological, and biochemical levels are presented and discussed.

Keywords: anaerobes, halo-alkaliphiles, sulfate-reducing bacteria, chirality, enantiomers

Introduction

Chirality

In chemistry, chirality refers to the existence of two mirror image forms of organic molecules, called enantiomers. These two forms may exist under abiotic conditions, but in organisms, generally only one form manifests (Pikuta, Hoover, Klyce, Davies, and Davies, 2006a). The two enantiomers are labeled as either D (right-handed) or L (left-handed), according to the orientation of the grouped bulk elements of the molecule:

L or D chirality affects how chemical compounds form; for example, a particular molecule may bond with the L-form of another molecule in a perfect fit, yet due to the orientation of the D-form, the molecule cannot successfully bind with the D-form. As such, the orientations and structures of complex organic compounds and molecular helix chains, such as RNA or DNA, are determined by chirality.

The significance of chirality may be seen in the metabolic functions of organisms and in lab conditions. Considering the latter, applications of chirality include using L-sugars to provide altern-

ate sweeteners for diabetics or health conscious individuals (Pikuta et al., 2006a). Also, the creation of medical drugs may result in an generally equal mixture of chemical enantiomers; as humans and other organisms may only be able to safely metabolize one form and tolerate the other in only certain amounts, this situation leads to risks of toxicity, which may even be desired, such as in chemotherapy treatment of cancer (Pikuta et al., 2006a). In nature, organic molecules usually occur mostly in either L form or D form. For example, most occurring amino acids have L chirality, while most occurring sugars have D chirality, and the metabolic uses by organisms generally follow that pattern of utilizing one form, with some exceptions. In bacteria, the cell walls usually contain particular D-amino acids. In addition, some microorganisms use D-amino acids and L-sugars in their anabolic and catabolic processes, while humans, for example, utilize D-sugars. This incorporation and utilization of opposite chirality molecules is also found in higher organisms, including humans: for example, D-amino acids are found in the central nervous system of

mammals (Pikuta et al., 2006a).

L-sugars

While the presence and utilization of D-sugars are typical for most organisms, some microorganisms utilize or produce L-sugars. Some examples include *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Alcaligenes* sp. 701B, which produces L-xylulose *Acinetobacter* sp. Strain DL-28, which utilizes L-ribose; *Mycobacterium smegmatis* strain SMDU, which transforms L-ribulose into L-arabinose (Pikuta et al., 2006a). One implication of chirality is that the understanding and identification of opposite chirality may enable researchers to identify ways of preventing or neutralizing pathogenic metabolic processes as medical treatment. Another is the use of medical tests to calculate the amount of opposite chirality molecules as markers for non-microbial diseases, such as renal failure (Pikuta et al., 2006a).

Stickland Reaction

The Stickland Reaction, as a type of anaerobic respiration, is a pathway in which amino acids are used by clostridia - obligate anaerobic bacteria to catabolize carbon,

whereas most organisms use fermentation. Through the Stickland Reaction, these bacteria synthesize adenosine triphosphate (ATP) for energy accumulation (de Vladar, 2012; Nisman, 1954). These clostridial bacteria use a pair of certain amino acids: one for oxidation (electron donor), and the second, for reduction (electron acceptor), respectively. This pathway results in two keto-acids with synthesis of ATP (de Vladar, 2012). The *Clostridiaceae* family is an example of bacteria that use the Stickland Reaction in metabolism (Nisman, 1954).

Sulfate Reduction

Organotrophic and lithotropic anaerobes that live in anoxic, sulfur-rich environments, such as soda lakes and marshes, may use different sulfuric compounds as acceptor of electrons in respiration (Muyzer, 2008). As electron donors, the organotrophic sulfate-reducers use carbohydrates and other organic compounds, while lithotropic anaerobes use H₂ gas (Boundless, 2013). Most importantly, these obligate anaerobes can use sulfate as a terminal electron acceptor, and so are called sulfate reducers (Muyzer, 2008). Through

this chemical pathway, the sulfate is first transformed by the bacteria into sulfide, which may be used for anabolic needs, specifically to synthesize amino acids and enzymes (assimilatory sulfate-reduction). The final product of this chemical pathway, hydrogen sulfide, is released back into the environment, a process called dissimilatory sulfate-reduction. In addition, the presence of hydrogen sulfide produced by sulfate reducers gives their habitats an unpleasant, rotten eggs odor. Hydrogen sulfide, in presence of metal ions, will produce metal sulfides, which form black color sludge. Hydrogen sulfide, once released by sulfate reducers, may also be used by other organisms as a nutrient. The goal of the second experiment was to perform the quantitative measurements of hydrogen sulfide produced by halo-alkaliphilic sulfate reducers at different growth conditions.

Alkaliphilic Bacteria

For growth, alkaliphilic bacteria require environments with pH higher than 8.0 (Pikuta 2007). Alkalitolerant bacteria may grow at pH 10-11, but these organisms better grow at neutral pH. The

most extreme alkaliphiles, represented by cyanobacteria, some of them could grow at pH 12-13, the highest pH known for life. In addition, some alkaliphiles may be considered halo-alkaliphiles due to their obligate need for NaCl in growth media. Certain alkaliphiles and halo-alkaliphiles, those which grow in soda lakes in particular, may also require CO_3^{2-} for growth. The need for high pH in some alkaliphiles is due to enzymatic activity being optimal at a high pH. Through these evolutionary adaptive pathways, alkaliphilic extremophiles are able to withstand conditions that are not ideal for the majority of the others.

Methods

Methodology for Culturing Anaerobic Bacteria

The specimens chosen for this experiment are non-pathogenic and due to their anaerobic, alkaliphilic nature, extremely unlikely to be able to survive in the open air, on lab surfaces and equipment, or on the skin and inside the human body. All lab procedures required sterilization of the lab equipment and media. Autoclave was used for sterilization, and to prevent a

caramelization, the solutions with sugars were autoclaved at 110° C, 0.5 atm. during 30 min. All other solutions and media were autoclaved at 121° C, pressure of 1 atm. during 1 h).

General Media Composition

Per 1L: distilled water; 1% salinity; final pH 9-9.5

Compound	Amount	Purpose
NaCl	10g /30g	Buffer; source of Na ⁺ for ionic pump of cellular membrane
Na ₂ CO ₃	2.76	Buffer; critical source of C and Na
NaHCO ₃	24g	Critical source of C
KCl	0.2g	Source of K
K ₂ HPO ₃	0.1g	Buffer; source of P
MgCl ₂ *6 H ₂ O	1.0g	Source of Mg
NH ₄ Cl	0.4g	Source of ammonia for anabolism
Na ₂ S* 9H ₂ O	0.001g	Reducer; source of sulfate for anabolism
Resazurin	0.01g	Pink/Blue (acidic/alkaline) indicator of O levels
Yeast extract	2.0 ml	Source of vitamins of group B
Vitamin solution	1.0 ml	Source of all necessary vitamins
Trace mineral solution		Source of necessary trace elements for enzymatic activity

Preparation of Media

Salt solution was boiled for five minutes, then, flask was cooled under stream of high-purity nitrogen. Bicarbonate, vitamins, and yeast extract were added after cooling. The final pH was adjusted to 9-9.5 by 6N NaOH and 6N H₂SO₄. 15 ml Hungate tubes were filled out with anaerobic medium under flow of nitrogen gas (10 ml liquid phase and 5 ml head space with N₂). The Hungate tubes were autoclaved at 121° C 1 atm. for 1 hour.

Results

Experiment One

The goal of this experiment was to check the ability of strains ASpC2^T and SCA^T to metabolize *L*-sugars.

Procedure

Seven tubes with growth medium and fresh culture of strain ASpC2^T were placed in a rack. Control and the six experimental tubes were labeled with the specimen's name, the sugar to be tested, and the date of inoculation. The stoppers of the tubes and solution flasks were wiped with ethanol. Work with syringes was by the open flame. 0.01ml of the each sugar solutions was extracted in final concentration 3 g l⁻¹. This procedure was repeated in the same manner for the experimental inoculations of the strain SCA^T. Inoculated tubes were incubated in thermostat at 37 °C.

After 24 hours, incubation the tubes with grown cultures were observed for turbidity. The first transfer had demonstrated turbidity in all tubes. The results of all transfers are shown in the tables below. In all cases, growth was also confirmed by observation of the cultures under a phase contrast microscope.

Spirochaeta dissipatitropha strain ASpC2^T is obligately anaerobic bac-

Anaerovirgula multivorans strain SCA^T

Substrate	1 st Transfer 1/17/13	2 nd Transfer 1/18/13	3 rd transfer 1/21/13	4 th transfer 1/28/13
D-maltose	+	+	+	n/a
L-glucose	+	-	-	n/a
L-ribose	+	+	(-)	+
L-arabinose	+	+	(-)	+
L-fucose	+	-	-	n/a
L-mannose	+	-	-	

Spirochaeta dissipatitropha strain ASpC2^T

Substrate	1 st Transfer 1/17/13	2 nd Transfer 1/18/13	3 rd transfer 1/21/13	4 th transfer 1/28/13
D-glucose	+	+	+	n/a
L-glucose	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
L-mannose	+	-	n/a	n/a
L-fucose	+	+	(-)	-
L-arabinose	-	+	n/a	n/a
L-ribose	+	+	(+)	+

Erin Root and Elena Pikuta

terium that can use opposite chirality sugars for its metabolism (Pikuta, Hoover, Bej, Marsic, Whitman, and Krader, 2009).

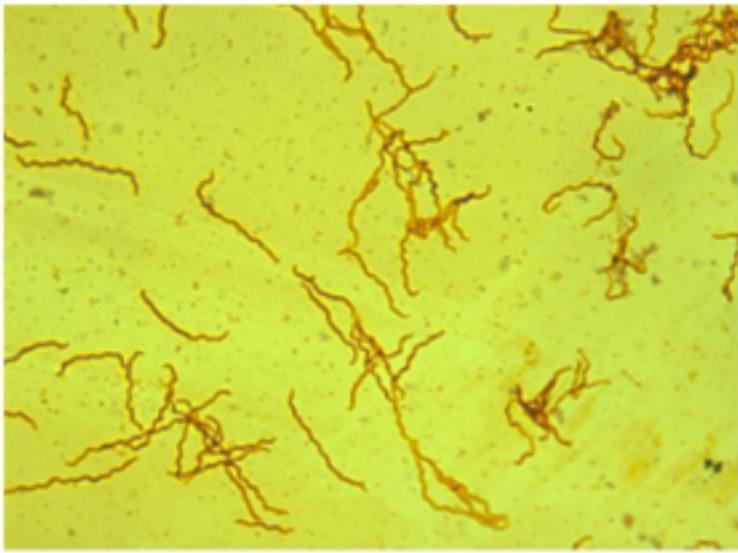


Figure 1. Photograph of flagella staining with *Spirochaeta dissipatitropha* strain ASpC2^T

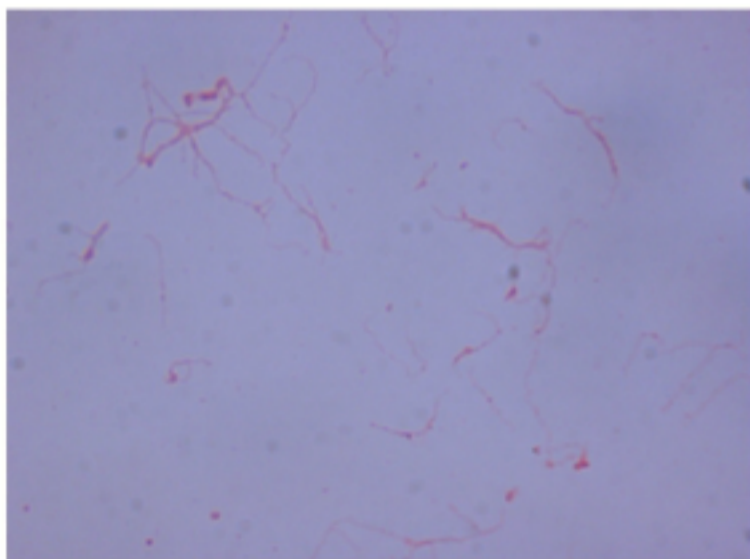


Figure 2. Gram staining of the strain ASpC2^T

ASpC2 is a secondary anaerobe and mesophile within its cyanobacterial community. It is alkaliphilic and was isolated from alkaline, hypersaline Owens Lake in California. ASpC2 is Gram-negative, helical, and very motile. The growth medium include: NaCl, high concentrations of carbonate ions, Casamino acids, yeast

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Alkaliphilic Anaerobes

extract, peptone, and certain sugars, organic acids, and amino acids. Its optimal growth temperature is 35 °C, and its optimal pH is 10.0. ASpC2 utilizes *D*-glucose for energy and the end metabolic products of the fermentation are CO₂ and acetate.

Anaerovirgula multivorans strain SCA^T is Gram-positive eu-

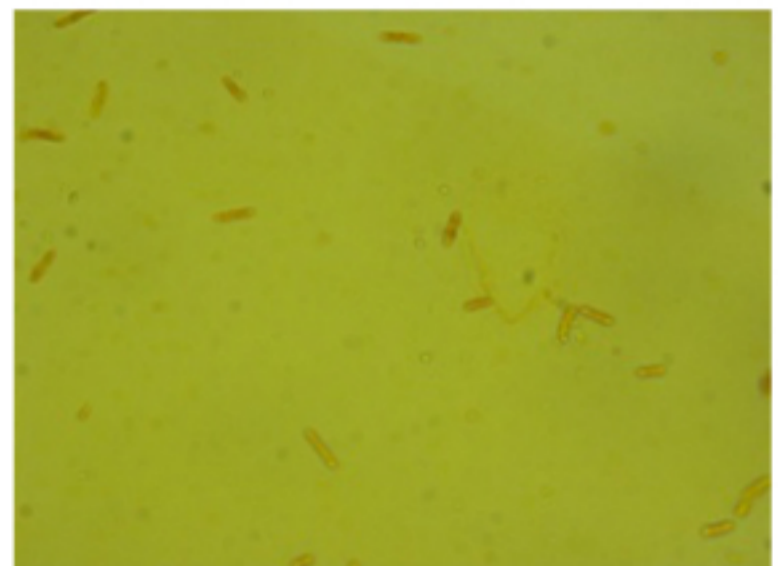


Figure 3. Photograph of flagella staining with *Anaerovirgula multivorans* sp. strain SCA

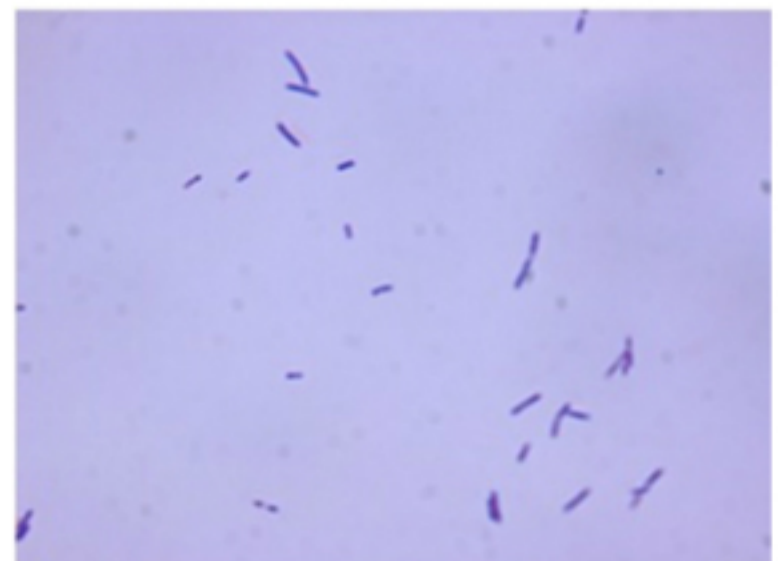


Figure 4. Gram-staining of *Anaerovirgula multivorans* strain SCA^T

bacterium that is able to use opposite chirality *L*-sugars for metabolism (Pikuta, Itoh, Krader, Tang, Whitman, and Hoover,

athena's web

2006b). SCA is a catalase-negative, obligately anaerobic alkaliphile isolated from the mud sediment of a high carbonate lake in California. This chemo-organotroph has rod-shaped cells and motile by peritrichous flagella, and spore-forming. Optimal growth temperature for SCA is 35 ° C, and its optimal growth pH is 8.5. The strain SCAT ferments sugars but also ferments certain organic acids, amino acids, glycerol, *D*-cellobiose, cellulose, and some proteolysis products. It may also weakly hydrolyze cellulose in the media that contains yeast extract. SCA's growth media requirements include NaCl and CO₃ ions (56). Its glucose fermentation products are acetate, and CO₂.

Conclusions

For *Anaerovirgula multivorans* strain SCA, continuous growth in the presence of *L*-ribose and *L*-arabinose was observed. Using a phase-contrast microscope, the live samples from the tubes was confirmed to be strain SCA by observation of known characteristics of morphology, including the rod shape, observation of motility, and presence of spores in the third and fourth tube samples.

Further confirmation was provided by gram staining, flagella staining, and spore staining. The stained samples were observed to be gram-positive, having flagella, and producing spores.

For *Spirochaeta dissipatitropa* strain ASpC2T, continuous growth in the presence of *L*-ribose was observed. Using a phase-contrast microscope, the cultures were confirmed to be strain ASpC2T by observation of known characteristics of morphology, including spiral shape and motility. Further confirmation was provided by gram staining and flagella staining. The stained samples were observed to be gram-negative and having flagella.

Experiment Two

For second experiment, two alkaliphilic sulfate reducers, *Desulfonatronum thiodismutans* strain MLFT¹ and *Desulfonatronum lacustre* strain Z-7951^T were observed for growth and production of hydrogen sulfide in the presence of acetate, formate, and yeast extracts.

Procedure

0.1 mL of the Na formate was

injected into a set 3 Hungate tubes of prepared media. 0.1 mL of acetate (final concentration 2 mM) was then injected into the second Hungate tube. 0.1 mL of yeast extract was injected into the third tube. This procedure was repeated for a second set of Hungate tubes. The first set of tubes was inoculated with strain MLF1^T and the second set was inoculated with strain Z-7951^T. All tubes were incubated in a thermostat at 35 °C for 48 hours.

Hydrogen Sulfide Production

Strain MLF1	3% NaCl :10	1. Yeast extract	0.376	5 mM
	:40	2. Acetate	0.170	9.2 mM
		3. Formate only	0.130	1 mM
	:20	1. Yeast extract	0.166	4.5 mM
		2. Acetate	0.150	4 mM
		3. Formate only	0.065	2 mM
Strain Z-7951	1 % NaCl :40	1. Yeast extract	0.192	10.4 mM
		2. Acetate	0.204	11.2 mM
		3. Formate only	0.174	10 mM
	:40	1. Yeast extract		
		2. Acetate	0.100	5.2 mM
	:10	3. Formate only	0.012	3 mM
			0.094	1.2 mM

Desulfonatronum thiodismutans strain MLF1

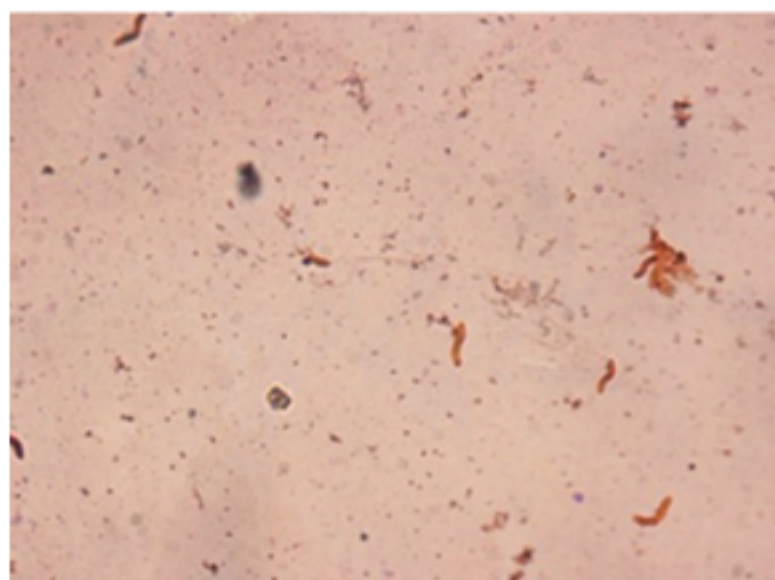


Figure 5. Flagella staining of *Desulfonatronum thiodismutans strain MLF1*

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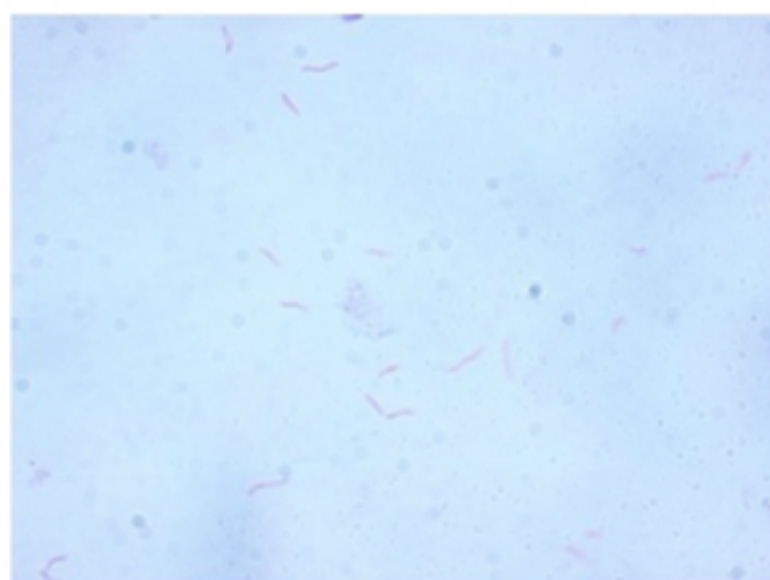


Figure 6. Gram-staining of *Desulfonatronum thiodismutans strain MLF1*

Desulfonatronum thiodismutans strain MLF1 is a catalase-negative, sulfate-reducing, lithoautotrophic halo-alkaliphile (Pikuta, Hoover, Bej, Marsic, Whitman, Cleland, and Krader, 2003). It is Gram-negative and non spore-forming. The cells had shape of vibrios and are motile by the polar flagellum. Its growth media requires: high concentrations of carbonates, yet it can grow on hydrogen with no organic source of carbon. MLF1 uses hydrogen, formate, and ethanol as electron donors, and can use sulfate, sulfite, and thiosulfate as electron acceptors. Its optimal growth temperature is 37 ° C, and its optimal growth pH is 9.5. The NaCl optimum is 3 %.

Desulfonatronum lacustre strain Z-7951

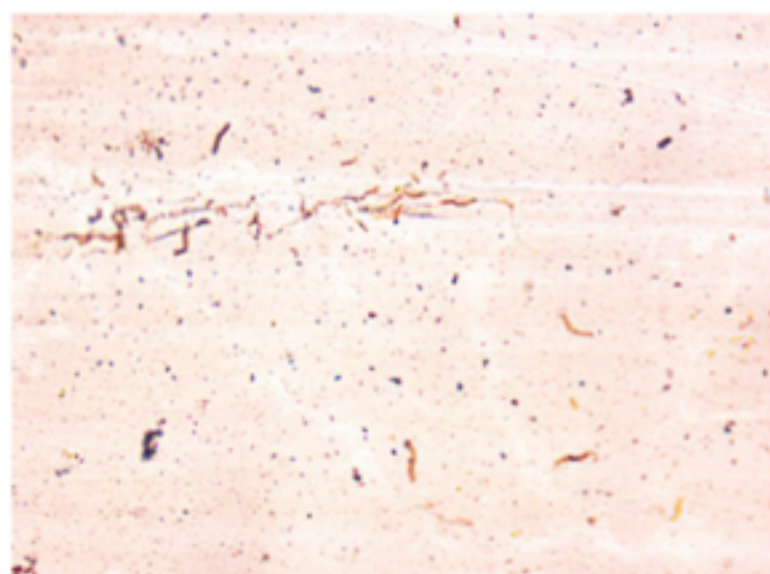


Figure 7. Flagella staining of *Desulfonatronum lacustre* strain Z-7951

Desulfonatronum lacustre strain Z-7951, isolated from the sediments of alkaline athalissic Lake Kadyn in Russia, is a chemolithoheterotrophic, obligately alkaliphilic anaerobe (Pikiuta, Zhilina, Zavarzin, Kostrikina, Osipov, and Rainey, 1998). This mesophile is Gram-negative, vibrio shaped, and motile by a singular polar flagellum. Its optimal temperature is 37-40 ° C and its optimal pH is 9.5. Like strain MLF1, strain ML Z-7951 uses hydrogen, formate, and ethanol as electron donors and uses sulfate, sulfite, and thiosulfate as electron acceptors. Media growth needs include carbonate and sodium ions but is not dependent on Cl^- ions.

Conclusions

After 48 h incubation, the tubes were examined for conformation through observation of turbidity and presence of expected morphotypes under a phase-contrast microscope. For the strain MLF1, growth was observed to be approximately equal in the presence of acetate with formate and only with formate. Growth in the tube containing yeast extract showed the richest growth, proving that although MLF1 is able to

grow without adding an organic carbon source to the growth media, but it grows faster in the presence of an organic carbon source. The same results were true for the strain Z-7951.

Discussion

Conducted experiments had demonstrated various growth requirements among living extremophilic organisms. The discovery of such organisms, which use opposite chirality sugars, perform the Stickland Reaction, and/perform sulfate reduction as metabolic processes, challenged previously held beliefs about the limits of life requirements and the inability of organisms to grow in extremely harsh conditions. In addition, the scientists studying these organisms are enabled to hypothesize the origin of evolution of extremophilic organisms in comparison to complex multicellular organisms in terms of the life requirements and environmental restrictions. These findings may rewrite assumptions regarding to the life requirements of organisms that may exist on other planets as well as unusual, not explored yet habitats on Earth.

These discoveries have

and will impact other fields of study and industry/biotechnology in addition to microbiology. Knowledge of how unusual organisms may thrive under harsh conditions will aid environmental scientists in further study of disruption of ecological niche structures, pollution control, and bioremediation. In chemical and pharmaceutical application, a better understanding of the organic processes of chirality, the Strickland Reaction, and sulfate reduction in natural bacterial metabolism may enable scientists to improve creation of new drugs and alternative approaches for disease treatments. In addition, medical scientists, armed with a better understanding of the varying possibilities of bacterial growth requirements, may be able to improve the treatments based on hindering growth by attacking/blocking these processes.

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Dr. Richard Hoover for the collection of the unique samples, from which the extremophilic

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Contributor Notes

Kristi Coughlin is an Athens native who teaches stringed instruments with the Huntsville Symphony, Athens State University's Center for Lifelong Learning, and Huntsville's Railroad Bazaar. Kristi is deeply involved with her local community theater and is an avid theatre-goer. She is an aspiring author with most of her writing focused on poetry. She is also the mother of five children and is going for her liberal arts major with a minor in drama at Athens State University. She is currently working on the Athenian Players' Summer 2013 production of *Trojan Women*, playing Athena and serving as Chorus Leader.

Destiny L. Fowler is a Pre-Law student at Athens State University. She enjoys writing short stories, poems, and is currently working on her first novel.

Samantha Godsey is a student at Athens State University.

Joseph Hipps is an English major and Drama minor at Athens State University. He will graduate in August 2013.

Robyn Locke is an Art major at Athens State University with a focus on graphic design and a minor in Art History. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Calhoun Community College in 2010 with two Associate of Applied Science degrees in graphic design. She has exhibited work in the national juried art exhibition *Athens Voices*. Her interests include rock hunting, crafting, painting, and photography. She resides in Elkmont, Alabama, with her husband and three children.

A. Scott Michael is an English major and computer science minor. Prior to coming to Athens State University, he studied geography at the University of Kansas. He works at a local television station but does not own a television. His interests include creative writing and critical theory, par-

ticularly ecocriticism. He is also the Editor of *Athena's Web*.

Mark R. Moebes, Sr., called Randy by friends and family, was born and raised in the Decatur, AL, area. He is currently pursuing a BA in Art. His first love as an artist was in oil painting but expanded to the digital world in the past few years, earning a Certificate in Communication Arts Technology-Video Production and an AS in Communications Arts Technology, both from Anne Arundel Community College. He lived in Maryland, returned to North Alabama, and is now residing in Huntsville with his wife, two dogs, and a cat. He has six sons, all past or present military and one of whom just began his second tour in Afghanistan. He and his wife have a combined eight children and seventeen grandchildren.

Elena Pikuta is a visiting research scientist and adjunct professor at Athens State University.

Kelton Lord Riley, a Samford University graduate, is currently pursuing his second degree with majors in History and English. Formerly a Benedictine Monk, his interests include writing, religion, and romanticism. Among his manly (possibly imaginary) pursuits are camping, waltzing, and being dapper as hell. Riley is terrible at legal studies. He is one of the only literary theorists to insist that Formalism and Deconstruction are happily wed, and that academics should stop judging their love.

Erin Roof is a student at Athens State University.

Marilyn Sanchez is a student at Athens State University.

Travis Sharp has a BA in English from Athens State University and is an MFA student in the University of Washington's creative writing and poetics graduate program. He is the founding editor of and editorial adviser for *Athena's Web*. His main theoretical interests lie in gender studies and in the concept of post-gender. Travis has worked as a paraprofession-

al in the Madison City school system and as a Writing Consultant in the Athens State University Writing Center. He is also the Stage Manager for the Athenian Players. He enjoys writing short fiction and rereading Amy Hempel's short story collections.

Tracy Szappan is earning a second degree in English to complement her previous degree in IT and multimedia. Her eventual goal is to work in technical writing and editing, and she is currently Assistant Editor of *Athena's Web*. Born in Michigan, she moved to the Huntsville area in 2005 with her husband and two children and now lives in Athens. Her hobbies vary with her mood, the day of the week, and the weather, but she mostly just enjoys creating things and studying language.

Tammy Tanner grew up in a small town of Afton, Oklahoma. She moved to Alabama in the year of 2008 and began college after a year of residency. She graduated from Calhoun Community College with an Associate of Science in Art, December of 2012. After completion of a Bachelor in Studio Art at Athens State University, she will continue her education for her Masters in Fine Art. Her goal is to expand her knowledge of both art studio and art history to become a professor at an Alabama University.

Jonathan Tyler is a senior at Athens State majoring in English and will graduate this fall. Upon graduating, Jonathan plans to seek his M.A. at the University of North Alabama in order to teach literature at the college level. He also plans to see if his writing talent is good enough to have a literary career on the side since teaching is his first love. Jonathan would like to thank his parents, Greg and Patricia, and his little sister, Whitney, for all the love and support they've given him all his life.

Submission Guidelines

We accept both academic and creative work produced by College of Arts and Sciences students. As such, we welcome a wide range of submissions including research and analysis papers, case studies, short stories, essays, poems, photographs and photo essays, artwork, novel excerpts, short plays, and others. The submission deadline for the Fall 2013 semester is November 8.

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In order to be considered for publication, academic work must be submitted to the editors along with a faculty recommendation: when submitting academic work, note in the body of the email that you have discussed submitting the work with a faculty member. Submitted work can be a maximum of 15 double-spaced pages and must be formatted using the citation style appropriate to the content. Submit the work and the faculty recommendation to the editors at athenas.web@athens.edu.

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Athena's Web will be hosting a cover page design contest each semester. Contestants will create an original artwork which will be used as the cover page for the journal for one issue. The only limitation of medium is that it must be capable of being saved as an image file or of being scanned. Photographs of student artwork are also acceptable. The artist will be credited on the Information page and will be listed as a contributor. All works entered into the contest will also be considered for publication in the journal.

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All entries should display the title of the journal, *Athena's Web*, and should also display the subtitle, A Journal of the College of Arts and Sciences, in smaller font OR leave space for the addition of such. Use the font Mistral. All entries should also display the semester and year of publication (Fall 2013).

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