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Food safety knowledge and safe practice attitudes of employees in fine dining and quick service restaurants

Jee Hye Shin
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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UMI®
FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE AND SAFE PRACTICE ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEES
IN FINE DINING AND QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS

by

Jee Hye Shin

Bachelor of Science
Yonsei University, Seoul Korea
1997

Master of Science
Sejong University, Seoul Korea
1999

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Jee Hye Shin

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Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative
ABSTRACT

Food Safety Knowledge and Safe Practice Attitudes of Employees in Fine Dining and Quick Service Restaurants

by

Jee Hye Shin

Dr. Lesley Johnson, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Food and Beverage Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The foodservice industry has a responsibility to provide safe food to all customers. Food safety and foodborne illness (FBI) prevention, therefore, have become a primary concern in the foodservice industry. The first step in this food safety chain is employee awareness of food safety procedures to mitigate the potential of causing FBI if correct procedures are not practiced.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether a difference in food safety knowledge and attitudes exists between fine dining restaurant and quick service restaurant (QSR) employees. The relationship between attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge was also examined for possible causal links.

The results indicate that a significant difference between the two sample groups exists between food safety knowledge and attitudes regarding cooling/reheating. QSR employees in particular were deficient in food safety knowledge in the areas of cooling/reheating. Attitudes, food safety knowledge and restaurant type were causally related. The result of this study should be useful for restaurant managers or trainers who are responsible for food safety training programs.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, people eat out more than ever before. They depend on foodservice establishments to provide not only food that tastes good, but also that is safe to eat. The industry, therefore, has a responsibility to ensure that throughout the production and service process, all food is handled in a manner that prevents bacterial contamination. The first step in this food safety chain is employee awareness of food safety procedures and the potential to cause foodborne illness (FBI) if correct procedures are not practiced.

The highly publicized incidents of FBI of the last few years have highlighted the importance of good food safety practices in commercial operations. According to a 1999 report released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 1,800 deaths are attributed to FBI each year (Prewitt, 2000; Grover & Tong, 2000; Varaljay, 2000). The figures do not include illnesses that an individual or physician does not report to this government agency (Grover & Tong, 2000; Varaljay, 2000).

FBI also inflicts considerable economic loss on the food service industry. The costs of FBI to the food service industry include the loss of customers and sales, the loss of prestige and reputation, legal suits resulting in lawyer and court fees, increased insurance premiums, lowered employee morale, employee absenteeism, the need for retraining employees, and embarrassment (McSwane, Rue & Linton, 2000).

According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, the estimated cost of treating FBI and lost productivity ranges from $7 billion to $32 billion annually (Varaljay, 2000). A major
cause of FBI is caused by improper employee food handling practices. Only knowledgeable
and skilled employees who are trained to follow the proper procedures can ensure food
safety. Cochoran-Yantis, Belo, Giampaoli, Every, and Gans (1996, p120) stated, "the
practical knowledge of the successful foodservice operator might prove to be a key to solving
today's food safety crisis."

The lack of employee knowledge about food safety can be attributed to many factors.
Cohen, Reichel, and Schwartz (2001) stated that poor knowledge is caused by the following
factors: (1) inexperienced teenagers or foreign employees who have difficulties
communicating in the local language: (2) unawareness of the dangers associated with
improper food handling and incorrect sanitation practices: and (3) the gap between the
accumulated knowledge of food safety and the actual implementation of food sanitation
practices. These researchers concur that food safety training is essential to decrease the
incidence of FBI. By providing appropriate training programs, the lack of knowledge and
improper food handling practices can be overcome.

Manning and Snider (1993) studied workers in temporary public eating places and
documented their food safety knowledge, attitudes, and practices. In their study, the
assessment of workers in temporary public eating places revealed deficiencies in attitudes,
knowledge, and practices in the areas of cooling/reheating, temperature control and cross-
contamination. These deficiencies could be due to the limited training these workers received.

In a follow-up study, Manning (1994) found that workers from institutions had a better
understanding of safe food handling than those in temporary foodservice operations. This
study supported the positive impact of training and identified weaknesses in food safety
knowledge and attitudes. The use of employee food safety training programs as a means to
prevent FBI is widely discussed in the literature (Hernandez, 1999a,b, 2000; Cochoran-Yantis.
Employees can be trained in a number of ways from traditional classroom training to new methods of e-training. The tools of a training program are varied: videotape, audiotape, slide, poster, classroom, and computer (Adams, 2000).

In training, there is an implied assumption about the ability of training to change food safety practices (Coleman, Griffith, & Botterill, 2000). The gap between knowledge and attitudes toward food safety practice contributes to the incidence of FBI (Cohen, Reichel, & Schwartz, 2001). For example, Walczak (1997) found that employees at a five-diamond hotel in Florida made little effort to follow the food safety procedures listed in their manual. For example, the cooks frequently used their fingers to taste the food. Contrary to this practice, their culinary mission statement specifies: “Be sure to taste all products you are using with your disposable tasting spoon.”

Many researchers agree that FBI can be caused by employees’ lack of knowledge about food safety or poor training. However, few studies about their knowledge and attitudes have been published (Worsford, 1993; Manning & Snider, 1993; Manning, 1994; Hart, Kendall, Smith, & Taylor, 1996; Cochran-Yantis, et al., 1996; Strivers, 1998). The objective of this study, therefore, is to expand the research content in this area by examining the food safety knowledge and attitudes of employees working in two different types of restaurants, fine dining and quick service. This study compares these two employee groups in order to determine if there is a difference in the knowledge level and attitudes depending on restaurant type, and if any causal relationship exists between attitudes and food safety knowledge level.

Purpose Statement

FBI can be caused by the employees’ lack of knowledge of safe food handling and poor attitudes toward food safety practices, both of which can be improved by appropriate training. The prevention of FBI begins with the knowledge of where contaminants come from, how
they get into food, and what can be done to control or eliminate them. The purpose of this study is to identify and assess the level of knowledge and attitudes toward food safety of restaurant employees. As a response to the limited research in the area of food safety knowledge and attitudes in the foodservice industry, this study seeks to determine to what degree food safety knowledge of employees is related to their practice attitudes. Through this study, a better understanding of employees' knowledge levels and attitudes toward food safety can be obtained. This study also identifies the differences in employees' food safety knowledge and attitudes by restaurant type.

Significance of Study

Minimal research in the literature in this area exists. Prior research has focused on food safety attitudes and knowledge of employees working in healthcare, temporary food facilities, and institutional food service operations. However, studies concerning employees working in other areas of food service are limited. This study compares fine dining restaurants and quick service restaurants (QSR) and will expand the area of prior research and contribute to the body of literature. The results obtained from this research will increase the amount of information available to assist food service managers who train employees in the food service industry. This study will provide managers with information regarding employees' attitudes toward food safety. By identifying knowledge deficits, the study will contribute to the development of effective restaurant food safety programs for these specific employee groups. This study should be of significant value to foodservice managers in using food safety training to decrease incidents of FBI.
Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To examine the food safety knowledge and attitudes of employees working in fine dining and QSRs;
- To determine if there is a difference in employees' food safety knowledge and attitudes between fine dining and QSRs; and
- To examine if good safety attitudes of employees are causally related to food safety knowledge of employees.

Research Hypotheses Schema

Figure 1. Representation of Schema of Research Hypotheses
Research Questions

Research questions in this study include:

- What is the level of food safety knowledge and attitudes of fine dining restaurant employees?
- What is the level of food safety knowledge and attitudes of QSR employees?
- Is there a difference in the level of food safety knowledge between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees?
- Is there a difference in the attitudes toward food safety between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees?
- Is there any relationship between employees' food safety attitudes and food safety knowledge level?

Research Hypotheses

The following are the null hypotheses of the study:

- $H_0$ 1. There is no difference in the attitudes toward food safety between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees:
- $H_0$ 2. There is no difference in the food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees:
- $H_0$ 3. There is no relationship between employees' food safety attitudes and food safety knowledge level.

The following are the alternative hypotheses of the study:

- $H_a$ 1. There is a difference in the attitudes toward food safety between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees:
- $H_a$ 2. There is a difference in the food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees:
dining restaurant employees and QSR employees: and.

H3. There is a relationship between employees' food safety attitudes and knowledge level.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Because the restaurants used in this survey were confined to the Las Vegas area, the results of this study may not be generalizable to fine dining and QSRs in other areas of the country. Also, this study is limited to fine dining restaurants and QSRs. Further research would be needed to determine if the results of this study were generalizable to other types of food establishments such as family restaurants and casual dining restaurants. This study uses a convenience sample. Additional research would be needed to determine the variations in responses if a random sample were employed.

Definitions

Listed below are the definitions of the key terms used in the study.

Attitude — “Enduring disposition to consistently respond in a given manner to various aspects of the world, composed of affective, cognitive, and behavioral components” (Zikmund, 2000, p. 288)

Contamination — “Unintended presence of harmful substances or micro-organisms in food or water” (ServSafe®, 1992, p. 343)

Critical control point — “Operation (practice, preparation-step, procedure) by which a preventive or control measure can be applied to eliminate, prevent, or minimize hazards” (ServSafe®, 1992, p. 343)

Cross-contamination — “Transfer of harmful micro-organisms from one item of food to another by means of a nonfood-contact surface (human hands, utensils, equipment), or
directly from a raw food to a cooked one” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 343)

Fine dining restaurant – “Luxury restaurant providing maximum service accompanied by the highest menu prices” (Lundberg. 1994. p. 223)

Foodborne illness - “An illness caused by the consumption of a contaminated food” (McSwane. et al., 2000. p. 419)

Hazard – “Unacceptable contamination (of biological, chemical, or physical nature), unacceptable microbial growth, or unacceptable survival of micro-organisms of concern to food safety, or persistence of toxins” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 345)

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) - “A food safety and self-inspection system that highlights potentially hazardous foods and how they are handled in the food service environment” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 345)

Personal hygiene – “Safe and healthy habits that include bathing, washing hair, wearing clean clothes and handling/serving food and beverages” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 347)

Sanitation – “Creation and maintenance of conditions favorable to good health” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 348)

Temperature danger zone – “Temperature range between 45°F and 140°F within which most bacteria grow and reproduce” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 349)

Temporary food service establishment – “One that operates in one location for a period of not more than 14 consecutive days and in conjunction with a single event or celebration” (ServSafe®, 1992. p. 349)

Time-and-temperature management – “Requires that all potentially hazardous food be kept at an internal temperature below 45°F or below 140°F during transport, storage, handling, preparation, display, and serving. Also, potentially hazardous food cannot remain at temperatures in the danger zone for more than a total of four hours” (ServSafe®. 1992. p. 349)
Training — "Teaching employees through a variety of methods how to do a specific job properly" (ServSafe®, 1992, p. 349)

Training program — "Structured sequence of information and activities that lead, step-by-step, to learning" (ServSafe®, 1992, p. 349)

Quick service restaurant — "Fast-food restaurant preparing food and serving food to guests quickly" (Lundberg, 1994, p. 222)
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Ensuring food safety is a primary concern of today's food service industry. FBI is frequently caused by food service employees' lack of knowledge of food safety practices (King, 2000; Walczak, 1997). Because FBI is preventable if the rules of food safety are routinely followed, food safety education and training are essential to the food service industry.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of employees' knowledge levels and attitudes regarding food safety practices and to investigate whether differences exist in attitudes and knowledge of food safety between employees who work in different types of restaurants. The literature review is organized into five sections: FBI, food safety, training methods, training methods specific to the food service industry, and food safety knowledge level and attitudes of employees towards practicing safe food habits.

Foodborne Illness

The Cause of Foodborne Illness

FBI is a disease carried or transmitted to human beings by food and the sickness that some people experience when they eat contaminated food (ServSafe®, 1994; MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2001). The International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians (IAMFES) defines an "outbreak" of FBI as an incident in which two or more
persons have the same disease, similar symptoms, or excrete the same pathogens (ServSafe®. 1994). Any outbreak of FBI is a serious matter. FBI stems from contamination, which is the unintended presence of harmful substances or diseases or disease-causing microorganisms in food. At least 30 pathogens are associated with FBI. For reporting purposes, the CDC categorizes the causes of outbreaks of foodborne illnesses as bacterial, chemical, viral, parasitic, or unknown pathogens. Although food may be contaminated by biological, chemical, or physical agents, the most frequent offenders are bacterial pathogens (Farber & Todd. 2000; Doyle. 1993). The CDC has targeted four agents – E. coli O157:H7, Salmonella Enteritidis, Listeria monocytogenes, and Campylobacter jejuni – as being of greatest concern (see Table 1).

Table 1  Major Foodborne Diseases of Bacterial Origin (ServSafe®, 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease Pathogen</th>
<th>Salmonellosis</th>
<th>Listeriosis</th>
<th>Campylobacteriosis</th>
<th>E. coli O157:H7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathogen</strong></td>
<td><em>Salmonella Enteritidis</em></td>
<td><em>Listeria monocytogenes</em></td>
<td><em>Campylobacter jejuni</em></td>
<td><em>Escherichia coli</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symptoms</strong></td>
<td>Abdominal pain, headache, nausea, fever, diarrhea, vomiting</td>
<td>Headache, nausea, fever, vomiting, chills, backache, meningitis</td>
<td>Abdominal pain, headache, nausea, fever, diarrhea</td>
<td>Bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, headache, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and occasionally fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reservoir</strong></td>
<td>Domestic and wild animals, also human beings (intestinal tract), especially as carriers</td>
<td>Soil, water, mud, human beings, fowl, domestic and wild animals</td>
<td>Domestic and wild animals (intestinal tract)</td>
<td>Animals (particularly cattle), human beings (intestinal tract)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three of these pathogens, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, and *E. coli* O157:H7, were unrecognized as causes of foodborne illness 20 years ago (Egendorf, 2000; Zottola, 2001; MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2001). These pathogens cannot be seen by the naked eye, and can be carried on human skin or in the throat (e.g., *S. aureus*, group A Streptococcus) and the gastrointestinal tract and stool (e.g., *Norwalk virus*, *rotavirus*, *Hepatitis A*, *Salmonellae*, *Shigella*) (Kahrl, 1978; Farber & Todd, 2000).

Pathogen growth is stimulated by poor food handling techniques. From 1980 to 1993, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) found that frequent contributing factors of FBI in the food service industry were: (1) inadequate refrigeration (26.7 percent); (2) contaminated ingredients (23.2 percent); (3) infected person (17.6 percent); (4) unapproved source (16.8 percent); (5) consumption of raw or highly cooked food of animal origin (16.5 percent); (6) inadequate cooking (16.3 percent); (7) inadequate hot holding (15.9 percent); (8) improper cooling (11.9 percent); (9) natural toxicant (10.9 percent); and, (10) cross-contamination (9.1 percent) (Farber & Todd, 2000). Loken (1994) stated that the most common errors in food handling are caused by the following factors: improper cooling, advance preparation (12 hours' lapse), infected persons, inadequate reheating, and improper hot holding. The National Restaurant Association (NRA) concurs that the major causes of FBI outbreaks are time and temperature abuse (heating and cooling), poor personal hygiene, and cross-contamination. Understanding food-handling errors, therefore, is the first step in establishing an effective food safety system.

**The Incidence of Foodborne Illness**

The CDC in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the federal agency primarily responsible for monitoring the incidence of FBI in the United States. In collaboration with state and local health departments and other federal agencies, the CDC investigates outbreaks of FBI and supports disease surveillance, research, prevention efforts,
and training related to FBI. Through voluntary reporting from state and local health
departments, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Food Safety and Inspection
Service (FSIS), it monitors individual cases of illness from harmful bacteria, viruses,
chemicals, and parasites as well as foodborne outbreaks (Egendorf, 2000). The CDC also
coordinates its activities concerning the safety of the food supply with the FDA, which is also
part of HHS.

According to estimates provided by several studies conducted by the CDC since 1986,
between 6.5 million and 81 million cases of FBI and as many as 1.800 related deaths occur
each year (Thayer, 1999; Cohen, Cukierman, & Schwartz, 2000). The wide range in the
estimated number of FBI and related deaths is due primarily to the considerable uncertainty
about the number of cases that are never reported to the CDC (Egendorf, 2000).

In 1999, the CDC reported that 325,000 people spent at least a day in the hospital because
of a food-related illness and nearly a third of the nation becomes ill at least once a year from
tainted food (Prewitt, 2000; Grover & Tong, 2000; Varaljay, 2000). FoodNet (a collaborative
project with the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], FDA, and CDC) reported that there
were 51.3 cases of FBI per 100,000 persons in 1996 and 50.4 cases per 100,000 persons on
1997. The drop in this figure was attributed to improvements in food safety technology and
an increased focus on food safety training in the food service industry (Thayer, 1999).

Recent incidents, however, indicate that a serious food safety problem still exists. In
1993, three Seattle children died due to undercooked Jack-in-the-Box hamburgers. These
deaths were caused by the presence of a strain of the E.coli bacterium in the burgers. Jack-in-
the-Box had not cooked its patties properly (Anders, 1993; Liddle, 1997; The Economist
1993). After that tragic occurrence, the Jack-in-the-Box chain reviewed and updated its
policies and now only use two beef patty suppliers and test for E.coli and other pathogens
every 15 minutes at these two supplier plants. Patty size and weight specs are being enforced
(Anders, 1993; Puzo, 1994). Jack-in-the-Box Vice-President David Theno had enabled the chain to distance itself from its 1993 E.coli tragedy by saying that food safety is too important to be hidden and should not be a competitive advantage ("Food Safety". July 7, 2000).

Shortly after the Jack-in-the-Box incident, several franchised Sizzler units in Oregon were also linked to E.coli infections. Two Sizzler restaurants closed for eight days when 62 customers fell ill from FBI. Health investigators blamed the outbreak on cross-contaminated mayonnaise. In the aftermath. Sizzler suffered prolonged sales slumps from the negative publicity and it cost the chain $4.9 million to recover the costs from this E.coli outbreak. The Sizzler company now insists that its food-handling practices are second to none in the industry (Prewitt, 2000).

FBI inflicts considerable economic loss on the food service industry and costs society billions of dollars each year. These costs occur in the form of medical expenses, lost work, reduced productivity by the victims of the illnesses, legal fees, punitive damages, increased insurance premiums, lost business, and loss of reputation. Consumer confidence also goes down when a foodborne disease outbreak is reported (McSwane, Rue & Linton, 2000; Varaljay, 2000; Grover & Dausch, 2000).

In May 2000, a Port Washington, N.Y. family sued the Shish-Kebab Snack Bar and Restaurant for $15.5 million, claiming that negligence in safe food preparation led to the illness of three family members. Two other women, who also became sick after eating at Ayhan’s Shish-Kebab in Plainview, N.Y., filed a suit seeking $500,000 each, claiming that employees failed to follow proper sanitation procedures when preparing food. Whether the outbreak stemmed from employees who failed to wash their hands after using the bathroom or from a contaminated product received from a supplier has yet to be determined by health
department officials (Alien, 2001). Good training can help avoid such costs related to an outbreak of FBI.

Food Safety

The Definition of Food Safety

Food safety encompasses all practical measures involved in keeping food safe and wholesome through all the stages of production to the point of sale or consumption (MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2001). Safe is different from “clean.” The word “clean” means free of visible soil, but food safety reaches beyond the monthly clean-up, the checking by someone in authority, or the daily mopping of the kitchen floor. It is easy to see if the facility and equipment are clean just by observing, but the dangers that lurk in improper food handling are not so easy to see (Kahrl, 1978). The management of food safety is changing from the traditional sanitation system to a food safety management system. The old paradigm focused on the visible cleanliness of the physical facility, but the new paradigm emphasizes proper food-handling techniques throughout the entire process from receiving to service.

The Key Factors of Food Safety

The key elements of ensuring food safety are time/temperature management, cooling, reheating, personal hygiene, and cross-contamination (McSwane, Rue, & Linton, 2000; MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2001; Elsasser, 1999; West, 1992; Cohen, Reichel & Schwartz, 2001). Seventy percent of FBI incidents are due to the inadequate time and temperature control of food including cooling and reheating, while the remaining 30 percent are the result of cross-contamination (Wilson, Murray, Black, & McDowell, 1997).

Temperature control remains a critical factor throughout the food service system. The range of temperatures that is most hazardous is 40°F-140°F. It is in this range that bacteria have the best opportunity to grow and reproduce. To reduce the likelihood of bacterial
growth, it is important to get foods through the "Danger Zone" of 40°F-140°F as quickly as possible by rapid chilling or heating (Elsasser, 1999; Hernandez, 2001b). The danger zone concept limits the amount of time foods are held at temperatures that permit bacterial growth.

The cooling of foods is a function of both time and temperature. Large masses of food tend to cool slowly; therefore, foods should be cooled in small quantities by a method that will cause the food temperature to be between 120°F and 41°F for as little time as possible (Farber & Todd, 2000). When food is reheated, it must be 165°F for 15 seconds. If the food's temperature falls below 140°F, it must be reheated within four hours to 165°F for 15 seconds; if that cannot be accomplished, the food must be discarded (Million, 2001).

The next barrier of bacterial growth directly involves employees. Proper hand washing and using clean and sanitized utensils greatly reduces the risk of contaminating or cross-contaminating the food itself during preparation (ServSafe®, 1992). Just as bacteria are the primary causes of FBI, people are the primary agents for spreading contamination. In particular, poor personal hygiene, ineffective food-handling procedures, and improperly cleaned equipment facilitate cross-contamination.

**Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point**

Due to the growing concern about food safety, the FDA, the USDA, and other regulatory agencies are seeking alternative approaches to effectively and comprehensively evaluate a food service facility's ability to produce consistently safe, and high-quality foods (Riswadkar, 2000). One such alternative is the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. HACCP treats the production of food as a continuous system that assures food safety from harvest to consumption. Included in this system are purchasing, receiving, storage, preparation, and service. The HACCP system is carried out with appropriate controls during each stage of food handling and production flow. Through task analysis, the system identifies specific Critical Control Points (CCPs) at each stage where safeguards can be used to
prevent contamination. If each step of the process is carried out correctly, the end product will be safe.

HACCP is also an evaluation system used to identify, monitor, and control contamination risks in food service establishments. This process includes assessing hazards, identifying CCPs, setting up procedures for CCPs, monitoring CCPs, taking corrective action, setting up a record-keeping system, and verifying that the system is working (Loken, 1994). The monitoring of critical limits in HACCP is analogous to implementing multiple barriers in the chain of infection.

HACCP can be considered advantageous in many aspects of the food production cycle. First, control is proactive, as compared to remedial action, and is initiated before problems occur. Second, the monitoring strategies are relatively easy as they deal primarily with time, temperature and appearance. Third, in comparison with other chemical and microbiological analyses, control is more cost-effective as the personnel directly involved with the food production also perform the monitoring tasks. Fourth, the implementation of HACCP includes all levels of staff within the organization, not just management. This gives the staff a greater sense of belonging to the organization which often results in a greater motivational output. Fifth, the implementation of HACCP can be used effectively to predict potential hazards. Finally, a larger sample of measurements can be used for each batch of products as control is focused on the CCPs of the operation. Nevertheless, it must be noted that there are limitations to the HACCP program. It is almost impossible to prove that problems have been prevented, although better hygiene practices are likely to partially counteract this argument. In addition, carrying out a HACCP audit efficiently requires a considerable amount of time and expertise (Wilson, et al., 1997).
Restaurant Categories

The NRA defines the restaurant industry as encompassing all meals and snacks prepared outside the home. As such, the restaurant industry includes all takeout meals and beverages in this definition. The major restaurant groupings used by the National Restaurant Association in its analysis of the industry are as follows (Lundberg, 1994):

- Commercial Restaurant Services (Group I): This group consists of establishments that are open to the public, are operated for profit, and may operate facilities and/or supply meal service regularly for others. Commercial restaurant service accounts for 91 percent of industry sales.

- Noncommercial Restaurant Services (Group II): This group comprises the business, educational, governmental and noncommercial organizations that operate their own restaurant services. Though some establishments operate at a profit, this is not the aim of the restaurant-service activity. Rather, they serve food principally for their own employees, students, patients, etc.

- Military Restaurant Services (Group III): This group comprises the sales of food and beverages at officers' clubs and military bases.

The Commercial Restaurant segment includes the fine dining restaurant, casual dining restaurant, family restaurant, and quick service restaurant as defined by average check and other characteristics. The NRA defines a full service restaurant as an establishment that provides waiter or waitress service and patrons pay after they eat. In contrast, a quick service restaurant usually does not provide table service; patrons generally order at a cash register or drive-thru window, or select items from a food bar and pay before they eat.

Fine Dining Restaurant

This kind of restaurant concentrates on promoting high standards and establishing a reputation that draws customers back time and time again. The chef and staff are highly...
trained, and are noted for giving personalized service. Less frequent turnover is needed because of the high guest-check average (Ware & Rudnick, 1991). According to the NRAs Restaurant Industry Operation Report 2000, the average per-person check of the typical fine dining restaurant is $25 or more (Ebbin, 2002).

Casual Dining Restaurant

Like other full-service restaurants, these operations offer a varied menu and table service, with prices ranging from mid- to upscale. The ambience is intended to support a dining experience that is fun and relaxing. To achieve this effort operations often use ethnic themes in both décor and food service, creating an evening’s adventure in a far away place. In the mid-scale price range, chains predominate with operations such as TGI Friday’s, Chi Chi’s, Red Lobster, and Olive Garden (Powers, 1992, & Kochak, 2000). According to the NRA Restaurant Industry Operation Report 2000, the average sale per guest in a typical casual dining restaurant ranges from $15 to $24.99 (Ebbin, 2002).

Family Restaurant

Family restaurants usually offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Most meals consist of a choice of soup or salad, an entrée with rolls and butter, and perhaps a dessert. This reduction in courses simplifies service. Platters, sandwiches, and salads are the mainstay of the menu, all attractively but simply served. Place settings usually consist of paper place mats and a minimum of china and silver. In this segment, chains dominate with approximately three quarters of the market. Leading family restaurant chains are Denny’s, Big Boy, IHOP (International House Of Pancakes), and Waffle House. Many family restaurants offer budget menus or special selections for seniors. To appeal to all these market segments, family restaurants are offering expanded menus featuring selections that are lighter and healthier (Powers, 1992). According to the NRA’s Restaurant Industry Operation Report 2000, the average check per-person in a typical family restaurant is less than $15 (Ebbin, 2002).
Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) or Fast Food Restaurant

A QSR is one that sells quickly prepared foods. This kind of restaurant is often a franchise operation. The limited menu is generally low-priced; the food is mainly take-out in disposable containers. The staffing requirements are minimal and staffs need not be highly trained (Ware & Rudnick, 1991). Automation is the key to the modern QSR. The automating concept in the fast-food operation is a reduction in menu choices, a sharp limitation on customer service, and different customer behavior. Through self-service, the customer replaces the entire front-of-the-house staff, even to the point of cleaning up. Moreover, because fast-food operations offer a simple menu, very specialized and highly efficient kitchens can be built around this limited menu (Powers, 1992).

Food Safety Training in the Food Service Industry

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), established in 1987, is the industry's leading resource for training and educational programs. In June 1990, the NRAEF began a training program called ServSafe®. More than one million restaurant professionals have been certified using this program. The program is designed to teach managers and employees sanitation principles and how to apply them to food preparation, service, and storage. Many state and local health agencies have accepted ServSafe® certification as a valid training and certification program (Stephen, 1991).

ServSafe® food safety training is taught through more low-tech, traditional methods such as textbooks, games, and instructor-led classes. In addition to these teaching tools, the Educational Foundation offers ServSafe® food safety training on Compact Disk Interactive (CD-I), which is cost-effective, durable, and easy-to-use; it is also offered via the Internet. Both CD-I and Internet training allow students to learn from the food safety suite materials at...
their own pace and from within their work units or from their home computers (Hernandez. 1999b).

Hart, Kendall, Smith and Taylor (1996) studied food safety knowledge, confidence levels, and attitudes regarding safe food handling and food safety behaviors particular to beef safety. In their study, the NRA’s ServSafe® program was administered to 93 beef demonstrators. The eight-hour program used lectures, slides, and videos to address proper storage of food, sanitation, contamination and its prevention, and HACCP principles. Questionnaires were based on critical issues regarding beef safety and critical points for prevention of FBI in cross-contamination, proper cooking temperature, and personal hygiene. The results showed a significant change in the overall food safety knowledge, confidence level, attitudes, and food safety practice after completing the program.

In the food service industry, because of high turnover levels, training still remains undervalued. The majority of hospitality firms continue to use traditional training technology and tools. Classroom-style and one-on-one training are most often used by smaller firms. The barriers or obstacles to providing more innovative programs are lack of time, high costs, and the short life span of current computer technology (outdated hardware and software) (Harris, 1995).

Strivers (1998), a seafood specialist, studied seafood safety and quality at the grocery store level with 274 employees representing 113 southeastern U.S. grocery stores. His study found that seminars were the most effective safety training method in the seafood department, followed by on-the-job training.

The most-used method in food safety education overall, regardless of restaurant size, is the videotape (Harris, 1995). Smith and Shillam (2000) studied the effectiveness of food safety training using videos. Two hundred and forty foodservice workers from 36 commercial foodservice operations participated in the study. Based on results of the pre- and post-tests
administered, the videotape training sessions substantially improved the knowledge of safe food-handling practices in the majority of workers. The research indicated that the educational session increased awareness of issues surrounding the prevention of FBI, resulting in increased health department inspection scores and decreased violations for issues related specifically to the material presented in the video.

In today's high-tech world, computer-based training is becoming increasingly popular in the food service industry. Large firms or large chain companies which have a large number of learners in widely scattered locations use computer-based training (Berta. 2001; Adams. 1993).

Gaddis (1997) evaluated two techniques for teaching food safety principles to food service employees. In this study, the typical lecture format was compared to a computer interactive training format in terms of knowledge gained and retained as well as any changes in participants' attitudes toward computer usage in their work environment. The results indicated that the advantage of the computer interactive training method included knowledge gained, consistency, ease of operation, flexibility of scheduling, training time conservation, ability to reuse, and cost effectiveness.

Hernandez (2000, 2001a) suggested using a formal classroom, CD-ROM & Web-based training to teach food handlers about food safety procedures. Each training method offers unique benefits. In the instructor-led classes, employees have an opportunity to learn while receiving feedback from the instructor and sharing experiences with classmates. However, this may not be the most economical or flexible way to deliver training. CD-ROM and Web-based training offer large measures of flexibility and ensure that learners receive a consistent message, even when they do not train in a group situation.

Training in Fast Food Restaurants

The fast food industry is where entry-level food servers learn to work and where many
people learn the basic skills that they take to future jobs in food service. Because the fast food industry is the initial training ground for much of the country's work force, food safety training programs in fast food restaurants are very important (Dobbs. 2000).

Fast food restaurants traditionally have relied on part-time employees. A fifth of the company's line workers are always in their first year on the job. With an annual turnover rate of 120 percent, acclimating new employees is part of the daily routine (Dobbs. 2000). On a typical shift, much of the crew is comprised of high school students who are new to the work force (on average, 40 percent are under age 22). Since assembly lines must keep moving at full speed, formal training cannot carry the entire learning load for each employee.

According to a 1997 Education Development Center. Inc. (EDC) report, employees in fast food restaurants learn 70 percent of their job skills informally from the people with whom they work (Dobbs. 2000; Dailey. 2000). McDonald's estimates that two-thirds of all its training is accomplished informally between co-workers. In the case of McDonald's, for example, the corporation is hoping to foster the simple moments of learning that take place between crew members by taking a closer look at informal training. Each McDonald's entity depends on informal learning from managers who learn at Hamburger University, the company's corporate center for managers. McDonald's states that informal trainings are encouraged out of necessity (Dobbs. 2000). The informal training system is supplemented with written materials from the corporation.

A corporation of fast food restaurants must pay attention to food safety training. Many corporations of fast food restaurants rely on distributing food safety training programs to the manager of each franchise. McDonald's, for example, has developed 11 different courses and has put them on CD-ROMs because of a need for a more consistent way to train crews. The programs consist of videos and graphics and require users to make choices to demonstrate their understanding. The training programs, however, are not required for all franchise
operators and those who do wish to use them must buy the computers themselves (Berta, 2001).

Allied Domecq Quick-service Restaurant, Massachusetts-based parent of Dunkin Donuts, Baskin Robbins, and Togo's Eatery, has created 16 different training titles on CD-ROM in the past 18 months. Atlanta-based Popeye's Chicken & Biscuits made a decision three years ago to transfer all of its training materials onto the Internet to provide easier access to its operators. The company has developed a training module that is posted on the Web for managers (Berta, 2001). At Burger King, employees receive in-depth food safety instruction via interactive CD-ROMs and DVDs to ensure proper understanding (Perlik, 2001).

Today's workforces are thinly staffed and typically fast-paced. Because often there is little time for a formal training session, fast food restaurants continue to use informal training methods combined with support materials from the corporate office.

Food Safety Knowledge and Attitudes of Employees

While many studies have focused on food safety training, few researchers have examined employees' actual knowledge of food safety and their attitudes towards the importance of food safety practices. Manning and Snider (1993) examined the food safety knowledge, attitudes, and practices of workers in temporary public eating places with 64 workers in 11 temporary establishments. The research questionnaire focused on four categories of factors that frequently contribute to outbreaks of foodborne disease: cross-contamination, cooling/reheating, personal hygiene, and temperature control. Appropriate attitudes with the strongest agreement were in the cross-contamination (91.2 percent) and personal hygiene (71.9 percent) categories, while the appropriate attitudes about cooling/reheating (49.7 percent) and temperature control (56.6 percent) had weak agreement. In the knowledge questions, the fewest correct answers were to questions in the cooling/reheating (37.7...
percent) and temperature control (62.6 percent) categories, while the number of correct answers was higher for cross-contamination (87.8 percent) and personnel hygiene (87.8 percent) questions. The study reported that workers in temporary public eating places were generally deficient in attitudes, knowledge, and practices in the areas of cooling/reheating, temperature control, and cross-contamination. These deficiencies could be due to the limited training these workers received.

Manning (1994) repeated the study, comparing difference in attitudes and knowledge of food safety between workers from institutional and temporary foodservice operations. Food service workers from institutions appeared to have a better understanding of safe food handling than those in temporary food service operations. The study indicated that institutional workers are more likely to receive formal training through on-the-job classes or a correspondence course. Manning found that formal training ensured more consistency and a higher level of quality than informal training from employees or supervisors, which are the most frequent types of training for workers in temporary operations.

Cochoran-Yantis, et al. (1996) investigated restaurant foodservice operators' attitudes and knowledge of food safety and assessed whether there was a difference in attitudes and knowledge between restaurant operators with favorable health code records and those having difficulties in achieving and maintaining acceptable standards. The restaurant operators in Santa Clara County, California conducted the survey. Researchers found that the practical knowledge of the successful foodservice operator was a key to solving today's food safety crisis. Moreover, restaurant operators lacking food safety knowledge or lacking positive attitudes toward the importance of basic food safety principles were, in fact, at a much higher risk of operating a restaurant under unfavorable health code conditions. The results of this study reinforced the need for in-house food safety programs.
Summary

In summary, today's food safety issues are more challenging and complex than ever before. Food service operators must be aware that the opportunity to transmit a FBI to their customers is a serious issue that must be examined on a daily basis. Training employees to handle food safely throughout the production and service cycle, therefore, represents the first critical step in preventing FBI. Few studies, however, have examined the knowledge level and attitudes that food service industry employees have regarding food safety practices. This study seeks to expand the research content in this area by examining and comparing the food safety knowledge and attitudes of employees working in two different industry segments, fine dining and quick service restaurants.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to examine the level of food safety knowledge and safety practice attitudes of employees who work in fine dining and quick service restaurants (QSR). This chapter describes the sample selection, questionnaire design, and data analysis.

Sampling

A convenience sample of 130 employees from twenty-six restaurants was employed in this study. Convenience sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique, which is used to obtain units or people most conveniently available. Researchers generally use convenience samples to obtain a large number of completed questionnaires quickly and economically (Zikmund, 2000). Eight fine dining restaurants and eighteen QSRs in the Las Vegas area composed the sample for this study. Fifty percent of the study participants were fine dining restaurant employees and 50 percent were QSR employees. The sample included full-time, part-time, and per-diem employees that worked in the front and back of the house. Managers and supervisors were not included in the sample.

In this study, the fine dining restaurant and the QSR were selected as the sampling frame because of the variation of characteristics between the two types of operations. For many young people, the QSR is their first place of employment (Muller & Campbell, 1995). A QSR has numerous part-time and generally unskilled employees with various schedules (Powers,
However, in a fine dining restaurant, the chef and staff are highly trained, and are noted for giving personalized service (Ware & Rudnick, 1991).

Sample Size

Sample size is based on the absolute precision desired in the study and a specified level of statistical significance and population variance. Churchill (1995) described the use of an absolute precision approach for sample size determination when estimating a population parameter. With an unknown population variance (the usual case), the formula is:

\[ n = z^2 \times \sigma^2 / H^2, \]

in which:

- \( n \) = the required sample size;
- \( z^2 \) = the square of the standardized significance level chosen;
- \( \sigma^2 \) = the (unknown) population variance; and
- \( H^2 \) = one-half of the desired absolute precision level.

For this study, using a 95 percent level of statistical significance equates to a standardized \( Z \) score of 1.96. The approximation \( z = 2 \) is used because it simplifies the calculation. Since responses will be gathered on a 5-point Likert scale, the desired level of absolute precision relates to a deviation from the mean of the observations. For the purpose of this research, the absolute precision level will be 1.0. Thus, one-half of this desired level would be 0.5. In other words, if the mean of the responses were equal to 3.0, this precision level would specify that 95 percent of the estimated means would fall between 2.5 and 3.5. Combining these factors, and substituting into the above equation yields:

\[ n = (2)^2 \times 4.0 / (0.5)^2 = 64 \]

Solving the equation for “n” results in a required sample size of 64. Therefore, a minimum sample size of 64 for each restaurant type was used for this study, since it provides a relatively tight level of absolute precision around the mean Likert-scale rating.
Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was a questionnaire, which is included in Appendix I. The questions were developed from the work of Manning (1994) and written permission was obtained from the author (personal communication, Aug 1, 2001) (Appendix II). The questionnaire was reviewed and approved on Jan 29, 2002 by the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (Appendix III).

The survey instrument was divided into three parts. Part I included 14 attitude statements. The type of scale utilized in the questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (1) being “strongly disagree” to five (5) being “strongly agree.” Likert scales are popular for measuring attitudes because they are simple to administer (Zikmund, 2000). Respondents were asked to indicate their attitudes by checking the appropriate answer. Part II measured knowledge. This part was composed of five multiple choice and five true/false questions. Part III contained eight demographic information questions.

Pre-Test

The pretest allows the researchers to determine if the respondents have any difficulty understanding the questionnaire or if there are any ambiguous or biased questions (Zikmund, 2000). Manning (personal communication, Aug 1, 2001) stated that she did not test the instrument for validity or reliability, so a pretest was conducted. In this study, the questionnaire was pretested with university students. Twenty-seven University of Nevada Las Vegas undergraduate students with food service or dietetic work or academic experience completed this pretest. The students were asked to evaluate the questionnaire for its clarity and appropriateness of questions. The students completed the instrument without difficulties. No one asked to clarify the meaning of any of the questions during the pretest. Therefore, this
outcome ensured that the questionnaire was easy to complete and that questions were both clear and relevant.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed to employees at eight fine dining restaurants and eighteen QSRs by the researcher. Employees were asked to complete the survey during their break time.

The demographic information was summarized by frequency of response to provide a description of the sample responding to the survey. Paired t-tests were used for testing hypotheses one and two, comparing fine dining and QSRs. The t-test may be used to test a hypothesis stating that the mean scores on some variables will be significantly different for two independent samples or groups. The t-test is used when the number of observations (sample size) is small and the population standard deviation is unknown (Zikmund, 2000).

To explore a possible causal relationship between attitudes and knowledge toward food safety, regression analysis was used. Regression analysis is a technique for measuring the association between a dependent variable and independent variable. Regression assumes the dependent variable is predictively linked to the independent variable (Zikmund, 2000).

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to assess the relationship between demographic variables and the food safety knowledge score. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to assess the correlation between demographic variables and food safety attitudes. ANOVA is a statistical technique that provides a simultaneous significance test of mean difference between groups, and MANOVA is the same statistical technique made for two or more dependent variables (Zikmund, 2000).

All hypotheses were tested at the 95 percent significant level (α = .05). Statistical analysis was performed using Minitab software version 13.0.
Factor Analysis And Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results (Zikmund, 2000). The most widely used procedure of a scale’s internal consistency is Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. The alpha coefficient indicates the degree to which items within a scale are related to each other. The index can range from 0 to 1. The higher the alpha coefficient is, the higher the internal consistency and reliability are. Generally an alpha value of 0.8 or greater is an acceptable level of reliability. Sometimes studies can tolerate a lower reliability, as low as 0.5 in exploratory research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This research followed Manning’s earlier study in attempting to use the same questionnaire to measure both food safety knowledge and attitudes of restaurant employees. In a personal communication, Manning (2002) stated that she did not test the validity or reliability of her survey instrument. Because this study is attempting to confirm Manning’s study, the measurement of reliability in this study was estimated by Cronbach’s alpha value with 0.60 as a threshold.

Factor Analysis

Attitudes toward food safety practice were measured with fourteen 5-point Likert scale questions. Because Manning did not check reliability, factor analysis was conducted first and the resulting factors were renamed. Factor analysis was performed using SPSS software 10.0 program. Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was conducted to identify distinct constructs among those items.

Four factors were extracted from the scree plot shown in Figure 2 since their eigen values were greater than 1.0. Table 2 presents the results of the factor analysis. The constructs are grouped as (Q2, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q11), (Q5, Q6, Q14), (Q4, Q12, Q13), and (Q1, Q3, Q10) and named as cross-contamination, cooling and reheating, home practice, and safe handling.
practice, based on the commonality of the items' characteristics. This result is different from factors that Manning used in her study.

Figure 2. Scree Plot for Food Safety Attitudes

Table 2 Factor Analysis: Rotated Component Matrix for Food Safety Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>.612</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td></td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td></td>
<td>.775</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.638</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.729</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 7 iterations.
Note: Values less than 0.45 omitted for ease of interpretation.
Reliability

Table 3 shows the results of the reliability analysis for the four resulting constructs of food safety attitudes. The results of the factor analysis showed that the construct designated safe handling practice had a low level reliability. The safe handling practice factor was comprised of the following questions (Q1, Q3, Q10). These questions reflect attitudes concerning practices regarding temperature control and personal hygiene and the representative of both home and institutional food handling practice. Since the questions reflect more than one construct, the reliability for the safe handling practice factor is low. This result indicates that the question grouping should be revised before using this survey in future research.

Table 3 Reliability for Four Constructs of Food Safety Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cross-contamination</th>
<th>Cooling/Reheating</th>
<th>Home practice</th>
<th>Safe handling practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N of Cases</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of items</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha (α)</td>
<td>0.8693</td>
<td>0.6949</td>
<td>0.6259</td>
<td>0.2501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity

The validity is the ability of a scale or measuring instrument to measure what is intended to be measured. Content validity refers to the subjective agreement among experts in the specified subject that a scale logically appears to reflect accurately what it purports to measure (Zikmund, 2000). In this study, content validity regarding the knowledge section of the survey was developed through the literature concerning foodborne illness. Temperature management, cooling/reheating, cross-contamination, and personal hygiene are cited consistently in the literature as keys to the prevention of foodborne illness (McSwane, Rue, &
Linton, 2000; MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2001; Elsasser, 1999; West, 1992; Cohen, Reichel & Schwartz, 2001).

Summary
This chapter has described the survey instrument, data collection, the data analysis methods, reliability and validity. The next chapter will cover the results of the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are described and discussed. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first presents the demographic information collected from responses of the study. The second discusses the results of hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Analysis for Demographic Information

One hundred and sixty three employees from eight fine dining restaurants and eighteen quick service restaurants completed the survey. In reviewing the responses, 28 surveys were identified as being completed by managers rather than line employees and therefore, they were discarded. Five surveys were excluded from the analysis due to the fact that they contained missing data. Thus, the final sample consisted of 130 surveys, comprised of 65 respondents (50 percent) who work in fine dining restaurants and 65 respondents (50 percent) who work in quick service restaurants (QSR). Demographic information of respondents in terms of gender, age, position, education level, work experience, and job training about food safety practice is presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Fine Dining Restaurant

Of the total of 65 fine dining restaurant respondents, 56.9 percent were male and 43.1 percent were female. The 26 to 40 age group had the highest frequency of 56.9 percent, followed by the less than 25 age group with 27.7 percent, and 15.4 percent were more than 41 years old. Only 3.1 percent had less than high school education and 21.5 percent had a high
school degree. Forty seven percent of the respondents graduated from a 2-year college or technical program and 29.2 percent graduated from a 4-year college or a graduate degree program. Sixty six percent have worked at least 5 years in the restaurant industry. Twenty percent of the respondents had from 1 to 3 years experience and 9.2 percent had 4 to 5 years experience. The fine dining restaurant respondents with less than one-year of experience were only 4.6 percent.

Table 4 Demographic Variables of Fine Dining Restaurant Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency (N of respondents)</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>≤ 25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 – 40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥ 41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>≤ High school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-year college or Technical program</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-year college or Graduate degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>≤ 1 year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 – 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥ 5 years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quick Service Restaurant

As indicated in Table 5, of the total of 65 QSR respondents almost half (50.8 percent) were male and half (49.2 percent) were female. More than half (56.9 percent) of respondents were less than 25 years old, followed by the 26 to 40 age group with 36.9 percent, and only 6.2 percent were more than 41 years old. In terms of educational level, over half of the QSR...
respondents (56.9 percent) had a high school diploma. Twenty percent of the QSR respondents had not graduated from high school and 18.5 percent graduated from 2-year college or technical program. Only 4.6 percent had a 4-year college or graduate degree. More than half (72.3 percent) had worked less than 3 years in a restaurant. Twenty-seven percent had less than one year of experience. Almost eleven percent of the QSR respondents had 4 to 5 years experience and 16.9 percent had more than 5 years experience.

Table 5 Demographic Variables of Quick Service Restaurant Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency (N of respondents)</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>≤ 25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 – 40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥ 41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>≤ High school</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-year college or</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-year college or</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>≤ 1 year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 – 5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥ 5 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a big difference in the education and work experience between the two sample groups. Generally, the respondents of fine dining restaurants had higher educational levels and more years of work experience. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the demographic differences between the fine dining restaurants and QSRs employees.
Figure 3: Age of Fine Dining and QSR Employees

Figure 4 shows the educational level of the two restaurant types. The educational level of fine dining restaurant employees was slightly higher than the ones from the QSR segment. The main difference was that 76.9 percent of the fine dining restaurant respondents graduated from at least a 2-year college. Of the QSR respondents, 23.1 percent graduated from more than 2-year college. Fifty-seven percent of the QSR respondents had a high school education and 20.0 percent did not complete high school.

Figure 5 shows the difference in work experience between employees in the two restaurant types. Overall, employees of the fine dining restaurants had more work experience than the ones in the QSR segment. Seventy-five percent of the fine dining restaurant respondents had worked in the restaurant industry for more than four years. However, 72.3 percent of QSR respondents had worked in restaurant industry for less than three years.

It was expected that the two different restaurant types would reflect different employee demographic characteristics. Fine dining restaurants offering high quality full table service require employees who have more work experience in restaurant industry. This was
demonstrated by the samples in this study as 66 percent of fine dining restaurant employees had more than 5 years work experience. QSRs do not give high quality table service. Therefore, QSR can hire more entry level employees with a lower educational level. As shown in this study, 70 percent of QSR employees had less than 3 years work experience and high school diploma.

Figure 4. Education Level of Fine Dining and QSR Employees

Figure 5. Work Experience of Fine Dining and QSR Employees

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Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Minitab computer software program version 13.0. The analysis was performed using paired t-tests, regression, ANOVA, and MANOVA.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no difference in the attitudes toward food safety practice between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

H₁₁: There is a difference in the attitudes toward food safety practice between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

Questionnaires about attitudes were assigned from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) using a 5-point Likert scale. To test Hypothesis one, the paired t-test was performed to investigate the statistical differences on the four factors and the two different types of restaurants. The hypothesis was tested at 95 percent significant level (α = 0.05). The results of the t-tests are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 T-test and Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Food Safety Attitude Between Fine Dining Restaurant and QSR Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food safety attitude</th>
<th>Fine dining restaurant (n = respondents)</th>
<th>Quick service restaurant (n = respondents)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Contamination</td>
<td>4.80 ± .45 (65)</td>
<td>4.71 ± .74 (65)</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooling/Reheating</td>
<td>4.39 ± .66 (65)</td>
<td>3.83 ± 1.10 (65)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Practice</td>
<td>2.67 ± 1.09 (65)</td>
<td>2.50 ± 1.23 (65)</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Handling Practice</td>
<td>3.14 ± .84 (65)</td>
<td>3.14 ± .94 (65)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05. ** p<0.01

Scale: 5-point Likert scale, Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
The fine dining restaurant employees had higher mean scores for three items in the food safety attitude section of the survey, cooling/reheating, cross-contamination, and home practice. The only significant difference (p=0.001), however, occurred in the attitudes toward cooling/reheating. The high p-values (p=0.391, p=0.442 & p=1.000) provide evidence to support the assertion that there is no significant difference in the food safety attitudes toward cross-contamination, home practice, and safe handling practice between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no difference in the food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

H₁₂: There is a difference in the food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

To test hypothesis two, the paired t-test was performed to investigate the statistical differences on knowledge level between the two different types of restaurant employees. The number of correct answers to the multiple choice and true/false knowledge questions was averaged to determine the knowledge level score. Table 7 shows the result of the paired t-tests.

Table 7 T-test and Mean Values of Food Safety Knowledge Level Between Fine Dining Restaurant and QSR Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Answers</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% (N of respondents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine dining restaurant</td>
<td>Quick service restaurant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety knowledge</td>
<td>77.9** (65)</td>
<td>65.7 (65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p<0.05, ** mean for answers
Note: Questions are true/false and multiple choices.
The null hypothesis of food safety knowledge was rejected with a p-value of \( p=0.000 \).

There was a significant difference in the employees' food safety knowledge level between the two groups. The overall average knowledge score in fine dining restaurant was 78 percent. By comparison, average knowledge score in QSR was 65 percent.

Table 8 shows that fine dining restaurant employees had a higher mean score for knowledge level than QSR employees. The questionnaire about food safety knowledge has four categories. Questions 1, 2, and 7 are related to temperature control; questions 3 and 6 are about cooling/reheating; questions 4, 5, and 10 are about cross-contamination; and, questions 8 and 9 ask about personal hygiene. Fine dining workers had a better understanding of food safety in all four categories.

Table 8 Percentage Mean Score of Food Safety Knowledge Between Fine Dining Restaurant and QSR Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Safety Knowledge</th>
<th>Correct Answers</th>
<th>Fine dining restaurant % (N of respondents)</th>
<th>Quick service restaurant % (N of respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperature Control</td>
<td>73.4*</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>65 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooling/Reheating</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>65 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Contamination</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>65 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Hygiene</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>65 (65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* mean for answers
Note: Questions are true/false and multiple choices.

Both groups of food service workers had a high number of correct responses when asked about personal hygiene (91.5 percent and 84.9 percent, respectively). Although knowledge was weak concerning cooling and reheating, more fine dining restaurant employees responded correctly (60.0 percent). When asked about cooling and reheating, fewer QSR
workers responded correctly (32.6 percent). In case of cross-contamination, a substantial knowledge difference existed between the two groups of workers (92.9 percent and 70.3 percent, respectively).

**Hypothesis Three**

**H**$_{03}$: There is no relationship between attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge level.

**H**$_{a3}$: There is a relationship between attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge level.

It was hypothesized that there was no relationship between attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge level. Regression analysis was performed to assess a possible causal relationship between food safety attitude score and knowledge score (Figure 6).

\[
Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Restaurant type} + \beta_2 \text{Attcross} + \beta_3 \text{Atthome} + \epsilon
\]

Where.

Dependent variable = Food safety knowledge score

Independent variables = Restaurant type and attitudes toward food safety

\(Y\) = Food safety knowledge score

\(\beta_0\) = Constant

Attcross = Cross-contamination in attitudes toward food safety

Atthome = Home practice in attitudes toward food safety

\(\epsilon\) = Error term

Figure 6. Regression Model

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The data first had to be converted from proportional to continuous data. This was done because the knowledge scores from the assessment instrument were constrained between 0 and 1. One of the basic assumptions of regression is that errors are normally distributed. Therefore, the proportional data were converted to continuous data using a transformation calculation. Two transformations were evaluated: arc sine and logit. The data were transformed using both of these methods. Figures 7 and 8 present the formulas of logit and arc sine transformation calculation.

\[
\text{Logit} \left( \frac{\text{Percentage score}}{100} \right) - \frac{1 - \text{Percentage score}}{100}
\]

Figure 7. Logit Transformation Calculation Used on Knowledge Score

\[
\text{Arcsin} \sqrt{\frac{\text{Percentage score}}{100}}
\]

Figure 8. Arc Sine Transformation Calculation Used on Knowledge Score

To determine which transformation resulted in linearity, the normal probability plot of the residuals was used. A residual is the difference between the actual value of the dependent variable and the estimated value of the dependent variable in regression analysis. Figures 9, 10, and 11 show the normal probability plot of the residuals when the response of food safety knowledge part is percent score, logit, and arc sine. The logit transformation, which is more linear than the other two models, yielded the best linear fit of the data. Logit transformation of the knowledge score was used for regression analysis.
Normal Probability Plot of the Residuals
(response is %score)

Figure 9. Normal Probability Plot of the Residuals Using Knowledge Percentage Score

Normal Probability Plot of the Residuals
(response is Logit)

Figure 10. Normal Probability Plot of the Residuals Using Logit Transformation of Food Safety Knowledge Score

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Figure 11. Normal Probability Plot of the Residuals Using Arc Sine Transformation of Food Safety Knowledge Score

Table 9 presents the results of the regression analysis for investigating a possible causal relationship of attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant type</th>
<th>Coef.</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>R-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant type</td>
<td>-0.25317</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-4.75</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attcross</td>
<td>0.043344</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atthome</td>
<td>0.022660</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12 shows the results of regression on Food Safety Knowledge. Restaurant type

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was represented by a binary indicator variable taking on value 0 and 1. Fine dining
restaurants and QSRs were coded 0 and 1, respectively. The negative restaurant type in the
equation, therefore, indicated that QSR employees have less food safety knowledge than
those in fine dining restaurants.

\[ Y = -0.619 - 0.253 \text{Restaurant type} + 0.0433 \text{Attcross} + 0.0227 \text{Atthome} + \epsilon \]

Where,

\( Y \) = Food safety knowledge score

\( \text{Attcross} \) = Cross-contamination in attitudes toward food safety

\( \text{Atthome} \) = Home practice in attitudes toward food safety

\( \epsilon \) = Error term

Figure 12. Results of Regression on Food Safety Knowledge

The coefficient of determination \((r^2)\) measures the amount of the total variance in the
dependent variables that is accounted for by knowing the value of the independent variable
(Zikmund, 2000). In this study, 33.3 percent represents total variance of knowledge that is
accounted for by food safety attitudes regarding cross-contamination and home practice.
Because one-third of the employees' knowledge could be predicted by food safety attitudes
and restaurant type, it is thought to be a fair prediction model for the study. The other two-
thirds could be explained by many other variables such as personal experience in preparing
food at home or organizational culture of restaurant.

Food Safety Knowledge, Attitude and Demographic Variables

ANOVA was performed to assess the relationship between the demographic variables and
the food safety knowledge score. The independent variables included: (1) gender; (2) age; (3)
education level; (4) work experience; and, (5) training at current worksite, and the dependent
variable was the food safety knowledge level. The high p-values indicated that there was no significant difference between employees with these demographic variables and the food safety knowledge level (Table 10). Therefore the demographic characteristics of the respondents did not affect their food safety knowledge scores.

Table 10 ANOVA for Food Safety Knowledge and Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Seq SS</th>
<th>Adj SS</th>
<th>Adj MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4055</td>
<td>0.0728</td>
<td>0.0728</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5334</td>
<td>0.5432</td>
<td>0.2716</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1872</td>
<td>0.0057</td>
<td>0.0057</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1236</td>
<td>0.5564</td>
<td>0.1855</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6463</td>
<td>0.5208</td>
<td>1.1736</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in Current worksite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0833</td>
<td>0.0833</td>
<td>0.0417</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>13.0332</td>
<td>13.0332</td>
<td>0.1124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>17.0125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To assess the relationship between the demographic variables (independent of restaurant type) and food safety attitude. MANOVA was performed. Minitab automatically performs four multivariate tests - Wilk’s test, Lawley-Hotelling test, Pillai’s test, and Roy’s largest root test – for each term in the model and for specially requested terms. All four tests are based on two SSCP (sums of squares and cross products) matrices: H, the hypothesis matrix and E, the error matrix. There is one H associated with each term. E is the matrix associated with the error for the test.

The independent variables included: (1) gender; (2) age; (3) education level; (4) work experience; and, (5) training in current work site. The dependent variables included food safety attitudes toward: (1) safe food handling; (2) cooling/reheating; (3) cross-contamination; and (4) home practice.

The results of the MANOVA showed that none of the demographic characteristics affected the food safety attitudes (Tables 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15).
Table 11 MANOVA for Food Safety Attitudes and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilk’s</td>
<td>0.97040</td>
<td>(4. 114)</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawley-Hotelling</td>
<td>0.03051</td>
<td>(4. 114)</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s</td>
<td>0.02960</td>
<td>(4. 114)</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s</td>
<td>0.03051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 MANOVA for Food Safety Attitudes and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilk’s</td>
<td>0.88062</td>
<td>(8. 228)</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawley-Hotelling</td>
<td>0.13446</td>
<td>(8. 226)</td>
<td>1.899</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s</td>
<td>0.12035</td>
<td>(8. 230)</td>
<td>1.841</td>
<td>0.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s</td>
<td>0.12570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 MANOVA for Food Safety Attitudes and Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilk’s</td>
<td>0.95210</td>
<td>(12. 301)</td>
<td>0.471</td>
<td>0.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawley-Hotelling</td>
<td>0.04980</td>
<td>(12. 338)</td>
<td>0.468</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s</td>
<td>0.04839</td>
<td>(12. 348)</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s</td>
<td>0.03645</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 MANOVA for Food Safety Attitudes and Work Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilk’s</td>
<td>0.90547</td>
<td>(12. 301)</td>
<td>0.962</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawley-Hotelling</td>
<td>0.10223</td>
<td>(12. 338)</td>
<td>0.960</td>
<td>0.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s</td>
<td>0.09650</td>
<td>(12. 348)</td>
<td>0.964</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s</td>
<td>0.07323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 MANOVA for Food Safety Attitudes and Training in Current Worksite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilk’s</td>
<td>0.91131</td>
<td>(8. 228)</td>
<td>1.355</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawley-Hotelling</td>
<td>0.09565</td>
<td>(8. 226)</td>
<td>1.351</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s</td>
<td>0.09020</td>
<td>(8. 230)</td>
<td>1.358</td>
<td>0.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s</td>
<td>0.07280</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Summary of the Findings

Three hypotheses were tested in this study. Hypothesis One tested the difference between the food safety attitudes between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees. There was a significant difference between two sample groups in the food safety attitudes regarding cooling and reheating.

Hypothesis Two tested the difference between the food safety knowledge level between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees. The null hypothesis was rejected because a significant difference was found in the overall food safety knowledge level between the two sample groups.

Hypothesis Three focused on the relationship between the food safety knowledge level and attitudes toward food safety practice. Attitudes toward food safety practice, especially cross-contamination and home practice, were significantly causally related with the food safety knowledge level. The demographic variables age, gender, education level, work experience, and training in current worksite were all found to have no significant effect on food safety knowledge.

The results from the survey for the three hypotheses have been presented. The next chapter will discuss the implications and recommendations from this results.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Food safety is the most important issue in the food service industry. If safety rules are not followed well, the restaurant can suffer a fatal loss economically and harm its reputation. This study supports the importance of food safety knowledge and food safety training for employees. These are several substantive findings of this study.

First, food safety knowledge showed a significant difference between fine dining restaurant employees and QSR employees (p=0.000). In this study, employees from fine dining restaurants appeared to have a better understanding of safe food handling than those in QSR. The knowledge difference between the two groups may be attributed to the difference in their demographic factors. Demographic data indicated that fine dining restaurant employees were more likely to have higher education levels and have more work experience in the restaurant industry. Employees who have more work experience may have had more opportunities to obtain food safety training. Employees who have higher education levels may have an easier time understanding and assimilating training than those with lower education levels. Previous research has also indicated that the QSR workers, being younger, had fewer work experiences, which could influence one's knowledge negatively (Hart, Kendall, Smith, & Taylor, 1996).

Second, in evaluating the questions designed by Manning to measure attitudes, a significant difference was seen only in the cooling/reheating questions between the two groups. The difference in attitudes was also influenced by the characteristics of restaurant

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In the food preparation process of QSRs, employees do not need to cool and reheat the food, because it is served immediately or disposed of if not served within the designated time frame. Therefore, employees in QSRs may not have received designated training about cooling/reheating. However, in fine dining restaurants, food may need to be cooled and reheated during a meal period.

Manning's study (1993, 1994) also found a deficiency in knowledge regarding cooling/reheating. In Manning and Snider (1993), workers in temporary food service operations showed poor attitudes about cooling/reheating. For knowledge questions, the fewest correct answers were shown in the cooling/reheating (37.4 percent) and temperature control (67.6 percent) categories. The follow-up study (1994) found that there was a significant knowledge difference in cooling/reheating (p<0.001) between institutional workers and temporary food service workers.

Third, demographic factors, regardless of restaurant type, did not affect food safety knowledge and attitude. This means that demographic factors alone did not appear to affect the food safety knowledge and attitude. The differences in knowledge and attitudes may be attributed to characteristics of the restaurants and people's commitment to work. A previous study has suggested that organizational culture and the work environment are related to FBI (Walczak, 1999). Work environment, commitment, and organizational culture can have a positive influence on employee knowledge.

Fine dining restaurants give full table and high quality service. Compared with QSRs, the average check is higher and employees may have more pride in working in an upscale restaurant. The environment of the fine dining restaurant motivates employees to learn about food safety. Fine dining restaurant employees may have more commitment to their jobs. The QSR industry employs large numbers of part-time staffs and has a high staff turnover rate (Powers, 1992; Coleman, Griffith & Botterill, 2000). Work environment and commitment by
restaurant type are important in raising the knowledge level. The fact that restaurant type is related to food safety knowledge was also supported by the results of the regression analysis in this study.

Fourth, the two sample groups presented significant differences in food safety knowledge (p=0.000). Attitudes, food safety knowledge and restaurant type may be causally related. In the case of the QSR, the result of this study reinforced the need for evaluation of food safety training. Evaluating contents and methods of food safety training in QSR could increase employees' knowledge acquisition. Increased employees' knowledge could help ensure a positive attitude toward food safety.

This study attempted to confirm the work of Manning (1993, 1994). The finding that restaurants employees were deficient in food safety knowledge and attitudes regarding cooling/reheating supported the results of her study. Manning, however, did not conduct tests of reliability and validity of the survey instrument. In this research, reliability was determined using Cronbach’s alpha value. It was found that the factor of safe practice handling (α = 0.2501) was low in reliability. Therefore, prior to using this questionnaire in future research, the questions should be reviewed or retested for reliability of the safe handling practice factor. Validity was determined to be satisfactory by reviewing the literature and establishing content validity.

Implications

This study suggests a number of practical implications for the food service industry. First, when it comes to food safety knowledge, the mean scores were lowest in areas of temperature control and cooling/reheating. In particular, employees lacked knowledge about cooling/reheating. Sixty-four percent of the fine dining restaurant and only thirty-two percent of the QSR employees correctly responded to questions about cooling/reheating. The failure
of food handlers to cook and hold foods at the proper temperature is a common contributor to FBI. In fact, seventy percent of food poisoning outbreaks are due to the inadequate temperature control of food (Wilson, Murray, Black, & McDowell, 1997). For restaurant employees and managers, these are very important factors in ensuring that uncontrolled cooling/reheating is properly conducted. The result of this study indicates a need for initial and continuous training in the cooling/reheating area of food safety.

Other researchers (Hart, Kendall, Smith, and Taylor, 1996) found that food safety knowledge increased the feeling of confidence in the employees' ability to carry out safe food handling and to answer customers' questions on food safety issues. Their increased confidence contributes to improvements in food safety attitude and behavior. The regression analysis of this study showed a possible causal relationship between attitudes toward food safety and food safety knowledge, which supports the work of Hart, Kendall, Smith, and Taylor (1996). By improving food safety knowledge, managers can also positively influence employees' attitudes toward food safety. This creates a positive cycle of reinforcement that can result in improved safe food handling practices.

Third, this study found a significant difference in total food safety knowledge and attitudes regard cooling/reheating between fine dining restaurant and QSR employees. This finding should be of prime concern to industry operators. When eating food in any restaurant, people believe and expect that all employees will handle food safely. Even though the restaurant type is different, customers assume or perceive that the same food safety rules and standards apply in food service establishments. To overcome this knowledge gap, evaluating the contents and more training about cooling/reheating is needed. Managers need to be aware of the potential harm caused by improper cooling/reheating practices and educate their staff accordingly. Management also needs to establish monitoring tools for cooling and reheating.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study has stimulated areas for future research. Due to the limited sample size, geographic location, and restaurant type, further research is needed to generalize the findings presented in this study. Additional research will expand the study areas to include more restaurant types such as casual dining or family restaurant and geographic locations. Also, it suggests a need to investigate other variables such as amount of training needed and the methods of training delivery.

Summary

This study examined the employees' food safety knowledge and attitudes in fine dining and QSR. The key finding was that there were significant differences in the knowledge and attitudes of food safety between the two groups, especially in the aspect of cooling/reheating. Managers and employees need to recognize the potential for creating FBI if proper procedures for cooling/reheating are not followed. Additional training in this area is needed in both fine dining and QSRs.
REFERENCES


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Hernandez, J. (1999a). Show your commitment to "cooking it safely". *Food Management,* 34(8), 76-80.


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APPENDIX I

COVER LETTER AND SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
School of Hotel Administration

I am Jee Hye Shin, a graduate student at the University of Nevada Las Vegas in the  
Department of Hotel Management.

I am requesting your participation in a survey for my thesis. The purpose of the research is to  
investigate the level of knowledge and attitude toward food safety of restaurant employees.  
The expected length of time of your participation is approximately 10 minutes. The risks of  
this study will be minimal. Your participation will involve answering a questionnaire.  

Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The majority of the questions can be answered by simply checking. All records will be used only for the thesis.

Sincerely,

Researcher: Jee Hye Shin  
jeehyeshin@hotmail.com  
702-650-3664

Faculty advisor: Dr. Lesley Johnson  
702-895-1265
Food safety Questionnaire

How do you feel about these statements?

I. Please circle the number which best describes your feelings on a scale of 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is okay to thaw frozen food on the kitchen counter prior to preparation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I believe that a thermometer is a necessary tool in making sure that food is safe to eat.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When the room temperature is 90°F or above, cooked food should not be left out longer than 1 hour before reheating or freezing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hot foods should be cooled to room temperature before being placed in the refrigerator.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In order to prevent foodborne illness, previously cooked food such as meat or poultry should be thoroughly reheated to 165°F or higher.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The size of the container is important when placing hot food in the refrigerator to be cooled.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Food handlers may smoke in food preparation and service areas.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I believe that a sanitizing agent should be used to clean the surfaces on which I prepare both raw and cooked foods.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. After handling raw meat or poultry, I always wash my hands with soap and water.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I believe that frequent and thorough handling is very important in keeping food safe to eat.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When I am at work preparing food, I always wear a clean apron and a hair restraint (hairnet or cap).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I can tell by my nose or taste when a food item would make a person sick.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I prepare and serve the food here at work in the same manner I prepare and serve food at my home.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. When I am in doubt about the safety of a previously cooked food, I throw it out rather than serve it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Circle one answer for each of these questions:

1. Hot foods should be kept above 140° F and cold foods below 45° F. True. False. I'm not sure

2. You should prepare salads containing meat, poultry, eggs or fish with pre-cooled ingredients whenever possible. True. False. I'm not sure

3. Cooked foods can be held at room temperature for several hours because the bacteria have been killed during cooking. True. False. I'm not sure

4. You should keep raw meat, poultry, eggs or fish separate from cooked foods during preparation. True. False. I'm not sure

5. Dishes should be washed, rinsed and sanitized, but kitchen equipment (such as slicers and grinders) only need to be wiped off with a dampened sponge or cloth. True. False. I'm not sure

6. The maximum height of pans used to cool and store food in refrigerators should be not more than:
   a. 10 inches. b. 8 inches. c. 6 inches. d. 4 inches. e. 2 inches

7. Frozen food should be received and stored at:
   a. 32° F. b. 20° F. c. 0° F

8. Employees with communicable diseases:
   a. may handle food if they wear gloves
   b. should not handle food as long as they are sick
   c. have the right to make their own decision on the matter

9. How often should a food handler wash his or her hands?
   a. once each hour
   b. before beginning work and after each rest break
   c. after every possibility of contamination

10. When handling cooked foods, you should:
   a. use plastic disposable gloves
   b. use waxed paper
   c. use forks, tongs or long-handled spoons or scoops
   d. do any of the above
   e. do none of above; use your hands

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III. About yourself: Please check the appropriate response.

1. Your gender:  Male  Female

2. Range of age:  under 25  26 to 40  more than 41

3. Your position:  Entry level  Mid-level  Manager level

4. What level of school have you completed?

- Less than high school
- High school
- Some college or technical program
- College or graduate degree

5. How many years have you worked in the restaurant industry?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- More than 5 years

6. In your current job, how many times in the past year have you received on-the-job training about food safety practices?

- 0
- 1 to 2
- 3 or more

7. What kind of training have you had in preparing and serving food safely in the past 2 years either on or off the job? (Check all that apply)

- None
- On-the-job training by a co-worker
- On-the-job training by supervisor
- Formal class on-the-job
- Seminar outside of the job
- Correspondence course
- Computer course or Internet course
- Other (Please specify: ________________________)

8. Of the items checked above, which did you feel was the most helpful in learning about food safety? (Check all that apply)

- None
- On-the-job training by a co-worker
- On-the-job training by supervisor
- Formal class on-the-job
- Seminar outside of the job
- Correspondence course
- Computer course or Internet course
- Other (Please specify: ________________________)

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX II

PERMISSION LETTER FROM Dr. MANNING

August 1, 2001

Lesley J. Johnson, RD, PhD
College of Hospitality Administration
Food & Beverage Management Dept
4915 Maryland Parkway
Box 254022
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-4022

Dear Dr. Johnson:

Enclosed please find a copy of the questionnaire used in the research article published in the Journal of Environmental Health, vol 56, no. 1 - Temporary Public Eating Places: Food safety knowledge, attitudes and practices.

You are welcome to use it or adapt it for your study of food service employees in casinos.

Sincerely,

Carolyn K. Manning, MAg, RD
Associate Professor
APPENDIX III

HUMAN SUBJECT PROTOCOL APPROVAL

UNLV

Notice of Approval to Conduct Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: February 5, 2002

To: Ice Hye Shim, IRBM
Dr. Lesley Johnson (Advisor)

FROM: Dr. Fred Preston, Chair
UNLV Social Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board

RE: Status on Research Project Entitled: Food Safety Knowledge and Safe Practices

OPRS Number: 604811901-174
Approval Date: January 29, 2002

This memorandum is official notification that the protocol for the project referenced above has
been reviewed by the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) and has been
determined as having met the criteria for exemption from full review by the UNLV Social
Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in regulatory statute 45CFR
46.101. The protocol has been submitted through the expedited review process and has been
approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification. Work on the project may
proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond January 29, 2003,
it will be necessary to request an extension. Should there be ANY changes to the protocol, it
will be necessary to submit those changes to the Office for the Protection of Research
Subjects.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of
Research Subjects at 895-2794

cc: OPRS File
VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jee Hye Shin

Local Address:
3182 East Flamingo Rd. #204
Las Vegas, Nevada 89121

Home Address:
#403 Dawon Village 287 Gumidong Bundangu, Sungnamsi.
Kyoungkido, 463-500, South Korea

Degree:
Bachelor of Science, Food Engineering, 1997
Yonsei University, Seoul Korea

Master of Science, Hotel and Tourism Management, 1999
Sejong University, Seoul Korea

Publication:

Thesis Title: Food Safety Knowledge and Safe Practice Attitudes of Employees in Fine Dining and Quick Service Restaurants

Thesis Examination Committee Members:
Chairperson, Dr. Lesley Johnson, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Karl Mayer, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Andy Feinstein, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. LeAnn Putney, Ph.D.
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NEGOITIATION AND AUTONOMY IN A
FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

by

Eric Orion Silva

Bachelor of Arts
State University of New York, Oswego
2000

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in Sociology
Department of Sociology
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2002
The Thesis prepared by

Eric Orion Silva

Entitled

Negotiation and Autonomy in a Fast Food Restaurant

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Sociology

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representation
ABSTRACT

Negotiation and Autonomy in a
Fast Food Restaurant

by

Eric Orion Silva

Dr. Ronald W. Smith, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This study is an attempt to apply the negotiated order perspective to the analysis of the lived experience of workers in two franchised fast food restaurants. Drawing primarily on the work of Anselm Strauss (1978) and D.H.J. Morgan (1975), I have examined data taken from auto-ethnographic and overt observation. I found that workers in different negotiation contexts would use implicit and explicit negotiation to achieve internal and external goals. Worker’s negotiation strategies depended on the actor’s individual proclivities and their interpretation of the negotiation context. Issues subject to negotiation included wages, the schedule, the amount of effort expended, and the definition of deviance. Employees may occupy core or peripheral status within the restaurant, and their status relates to what types of goals may be achieved within the setting. Autonomy may become a bargaining piece in the ongoing negotiations, with employees and franchisees often trading autonomy for wages or number of hours.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee Dr. Ronald Smith, Dr. Andrea Fontana, Dr. David Dickens, and Dr. Marta Meana for the time that they have invested in me. I am particularly grateful to my chair, Dr. Smith, whose guidance over the last two years will undoubtedly prove valuable beyond this simple project. I would also like to thank Dr. Fontana for the comments that he provided me during the last week of writing. I am indebted to my friends and colleagues whose intellectual and emotional supports have greatly helped me see this process to completion. I would especially like to thank Candice Seppa, Tina Wininger, Amy Walker, Bill Goldberg, Lisa Kopinski, Monique Diderich, and James Rutahindurwa. Lastly, I would like all of my former coworkers, employers, the crew at Anna’s, and most of all Fred.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The analytical line between process and structure divides sociologists. Decades of systematic social scientific inquiry have failed to elucidate the line between agency and structure. Structural functionalists have tended to focus on the deterministic affects of social structure, while ignoring human agency. Symbolic interactionists have been accused of placing too much emphasis on human agency and ignoring structural forces (Maines 1977; Strauss 1978). Because formal organizations are one nexus between micro and macro realities, they provide an optimal site to study the interplay between the individual and society (Hall 1999). This particular investigation will consider the agency of workers in fast food restaurants. If anyone is trapped in Max Weber's "Iron Cage" of rationalization, it is the stereotypical image of the fast food worker, mindlessly pressing cash register buttons with pictures of sandwiches in place of numbers and mouthing scripts ("Would you like fries with that?"). The freedom or autonomy that can exist in this milieu may have implications for the notion of human freedom in other rationalized environments.

Ronald Smith has noted that functionalists focus on the structure of organizations, while other sociologists focus "on the organizational member and on the way that individual feelings impinge on organizational life" (1984:101). Like Smith, this study will approach organizational life from an actor's perspective. By taking individual
motivations, rational and nonrational, alike into consideration we may improve our understanding of individual freedom in organizations. The analysis will consider relevant structural features, which include economic forces (i.e. the unemployment rate), cultural norms and laws (i.e. racism and board of health regulations).

The lived experience of fast food workers will be analyzed from the negotiated order perspective, first developed by Anselm Straus et al. (1963). The negotiated order perspective, which draws on the assumptions of symbolic interactionism, offers a means to understand the interaction between structure and agency. Although the negotiated order perspective may be used to analyze social order at the micro and macro levels, its practitioners have tended to study organizations (Maines 1977). Studies in negotiated order demonstrate how social order is maintained through interaction. Oftentimes, the perspective has been used to analyze how individual autonomy is created and preserved in an organization (Maines 1977). This perspective, which can demonstrate the existence and limitations of agency in a restrictive organization, has been ignored in the literature concerning fast food workers.

In this study, I am exploring the lived experience of workers in franchised fast food restaurants. Restaurant workers are defined as employees that receive a relatively low hourly wage and whose primary tasks are customer service, food preparation, and sanitation. For the purposes of this research, franchised fast food restaurants have the following features. First, they are one of a chain or number of restaurants, operated by different franchisees, offering similar menus and décor, which have been decided upon by a single franchisor. Second, a franchisor has created a formally rational system for the scientific management of the labor process, which reduces labor costs, as well as meal.
cost and food preparation time. Third, to paraphrase a portion of Robert Emerson’s
definition of fast food, customers order from a counter or drive-through window
(1979:53). The franchisor is the individual or group that creates and maintains the
standards of operation for a given chain of restaurants. The franchisee(s) is the individual
or individuals who operate(s) a franchised restaurant according to a rationalized plan. In
my analysis, I will describe my observations from two, franchised fast food restaurants,
that I will name Anna’s and Grinders.¹

Goals of the Study

In this study, auto-ethnographic and participant observational data is analyzed from
the negotiated order perspective. In doing so, I have four main objectives. The first goal
is to describe the processes of negotiation that occur in a fast food restaurant, and
particularly the processes whereby workers attempt to achieve their personal ends. The
negotiated order perspective is relatively undeveloped (Strauss 1978). This study will
further improve the negotiated order perspective by reworking the existing sensitizing
concepts and expanding the perspective to a new milieu. This research improves our
understanding of highly restricted social orders with the negotiated order perspective. The
second goal is to understand the nature of autonomy in a rationalized environment. How
and under what circumstances will workers increase their autonomy? The third goal of
the study is to expand the negotiated order perspective. The fourth aim of the study is to
expand the substantive understanding of fast food restaurants. There are a number of
ethnographic studies of fast food restaurants, however they tend to focus on restaurants

¹ The names of both restaurants and all individuals (except for my own) have been changed.
that have large highly differentiated crews. By examining fast food restaurants that have smaller and less complex crews I hope to offer a useful contrast to the existing research.

The first research question is "How do low-level fast food restaurant workers achieve their goals?" To understand how workers in an increasingly rationalized world are able to achieve their ends despite limited power, I describe the various types of individuals who influence the social order. Next, I provide a typology of possible issues that workers negotiate for in a fast food restaurant as well as an explanation of how the structural features of the environment impinged on the negotiations.

The second set of research questions involves an attempt to understand how the negotiated order perspective is used to understand highly rationalized work places. As the service sector of the North American economy continues to expand and become rationalized, it is increasingly important for scholars to understand the ramifications of these changes (Ritzer 1993). Although, the factory continues to be an important site of sociological inquiry, sociologists who are interested in understanding how workers are able to use their agency to create autonomous spaces in the face of scientific management should also look to the service sector of the economy. This study seeks to develop the negotiated order perspective to aid in that effort.

The third purpose of this research is to increase sociological understanding of individual autonomy in highly regulated settings. Fast food restaurants, like factories, are governed by a strict formal rationality that attempts to control workers through scientific management. Not surprisingly, the goals of employers often differ from the goals of fast food workers (Leidner 1993; Royle 2000). While a number of researchers have considered the nature of autonomy in fast food restaurants, none have applied the
negotiated order perspective to this endeavor (Garson 1988; Reiter 1991; Leidner 1993; Newman 1999; Royle 2000; Tannock 2001). Moreover, those who have used the negotiated order perspective have tended to analyze milieus that clearly demonstrate issues of negotiation (for instance Strauss et al. 1981; Hall and Hall 1982; Kleinman 1982; Levy 1982; Spencer 1993). These sociologists have focused heavily on professionals and how they achieve their shared and divergent goals through interaction. In as much as these studies are helpful in demonstrating how social order is maintained through interaction, they collectively ignore social situations that are less readily amenable to the existing analytical tools of negotiated order. However, the negotiated order perspective is founded on the notion that “A social order—even the most repressive—without some forms of negotiation would be inconceivable” (Strauss 1978:ix). Therefore, the negotiated order perspective may be used to examine the most oppressive environments, so it is necessary to study how processes of negotiation affect the social order of settings that are rigidly defined.

Fast food restaurants present an appropriate challenge to a researcher who wants to understand how people may have limited freedom in seemingly restricted environments. Simply delineating autonomy, defined as “the absence of external constraint” is not the end goal of this research, rather; it is to understand how workers are able to achieve their own goals when they are at variance with those of management (Katz 1968:4). The degree to which workers are successful at achieving goals that are in conflict with managerial goals is dependent on their autonomy. Workers will be successful at achieving goals that are at variance with management to the extent to which they are not controlled by management. Conversely, when workers’ goals are in line with managerial
goals, or where their goals are dependent upon the achievement of managerial goals, workers may choose not to negotiate for autonomy.

The fourth objective of the research is to improve the already thorough sociological literature on fast food restaurants. The existing ethnographic studies of fast food restaurants and workers have focused on restaurants that are similar to McDonald's (Garson 1988; Reiter 1991; Leidner 1993; Newman 1999; Royle 2001; Tannock 2001). McDonald's, although highly recognized, is not the only form that fast food restaurants may take. Owing to differences in investment capital, menu, and volume of business, there are thousands of fast food restaurants that are organized differently from McDonald's and Burger King. These restaurants, while similar in terms of rationalization, differ in terms of crew size and differentiation or division of labor. There is a considerable diversity in franchised fast food restaurants. This diversity exists within and between different chains. Some restaurants are franchisees, while others are company owned. Some restaurants are highly differentiated and have large crews, while others have a simple division of labor and have very small crews (Eberts and Gisler 1989). Although I am assuming that the social order of all fast food restaurants is based on implicit and explicit negotiation, I expect that negotiations will be much easier to observe at smaller, less highly differentiated franchised restaurants. The greater structural autonomy of franchisees and employees in less complex restaurants allows an observer to more readily understand the workplace interactions. Although, there are thousands fast food restaurants in the United States that meet this description, they are largely ignored in current discourse over fast food restaurants. This study will consider two franchisees that tend to have a more simplistic structure. The variable crew size and worker specialization
contributes to differences in the lived experience of fast food workers. This study will add to the existing literature, which does not account for these differences.

Study Overview

In chapter two, I will present a review of the scientific literature. The relevance of the processes of rationalization and scientific management to the study will be examined. Fast food restaurants are based on a scientific management of workers, where management seeks to control most workers' acts, consequently reducing their autonomy. Workers who attempt to achieve their goals often have to negotiate for increased autonomy to do so. Then I will explain the negotiated order perspective and how it may be used to examine fast food restaurants by discussing the perspective in relation to existing ethnographic literature. In chapter three, I will describe the methodology employed in the study. I discuss my decision to use auto-ethnographic and observational data and the selection of settings. Lastly, I consider the ethical issues that are pertinent to the study. In chapter four, the data will be presented and analyzed from the negotiated order perspective. First, the two franchises and the individuals who are involved in negotiations are described. Next, the aspects of negotiations in fast food restaurants are explained. Lastly, a typology of issues that may be negotiated for by workers is presented. In chapter five, the study is brought to a conclusion. I review the findings in the analysis chapter, assess the study's achievements, and discuss how we may generalize from the findings.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review ethnographic literature on fast food workers. I will present some of the findings of these researchers to show how issues of negotiation relate to fast food work. Before reviewing ethnographic literature, this chapter will review the work of Weber, Harry Braverman, and George Ritzer who theorize about the reduction of worker autonomy. While the ethnographers demonstrate the lived experience of workers, Weber, Ritzer, and Braverman place the experiences of workers within the context of rationalization. This chapter will show how the negotiated order perspective might better exhibit how workers are able to resist formal rational job designs as well as the limitations of worker agency.

Rationalization, Deskilling, and the Fast Food Restaurant

Weber, writing at the turn of the century, explained how the western world was increasingly becoming rationalized. In the 1970s, Braverman argued that employers deskill jobs to further control and marginalize their employees. More recently, Ritzer has reasoned that the process of rationalization is continuing to dominate a globalized society and that rationalization is now exemplified by the rise of the fast food restaurant. All three theorists argue that the boundaries of human freedom or autonomy have been substantially restricted.
The Iron Cage of Formal Rationality

A sociological consideration of rationalized food service must begin with Weber whose ideal type of bureaucracy exemplifies how the Western world is increasingly becoming governed by formally rational social action. Weber feared that society would become trapped in an "Iron Cage" of rationality (1997:181). Generations of sociologists have been concerned with the accuracy of this grim prediction. Rationalization refers to the expansion of a particular type of rationality, namely formal rationality. George Ritzer explains Weber's use of the term:

formal rationality means that the search by people for the optimum means to a given end is shaped by rules, regulations, and larger social structures. Thus, individuals are not left to their own devices in searching for the best means of attaining a given objective. Rather, there exist rules, regulations, and structures that either predetermine or help them discover the optimum methods (emphasis in original) (1993:19).

Of course, the best means to a given end may not be the best means for everyone. Procedures that may be the best for some may not meet the goals of others. According to Weber, rationalization with its emphasis on calculability, technical understanding, and formal rules has increasingly come to rule social life. The emphasis on using scientific principles to order the economic world leads to a replacement of moral relations by market relations (Schroeder 1992:124). Rationalization has encouraged people to view each other in terms of their economic relation to one another not in terms of their common humanity as dictated to them by the increasingly disavowed religious institutions.

Rationalization, according to Weber, is taking place in all spheres of Western society. In the economic sphere, "rationalization involved the organization of commercial
practices by means of technical rules calculated to produce profits by the use of rational accounting methods” (Morrison 1995:218). Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills note:

Even so ‘inward’ and apparently subjective an area of experience as that of music lends itself to a sociological treatment under Weber’s concept of ‘rationalization.’ The fixation of clang patterns, by a more concise notation and the establishment of the well-tempered scales; ‘harmonious’ tonal music and the standardization of the quartet of woodwinds and string instruments as the core of the symphony orchestra (1946:51).

For Weber, the emergence of bureaucracy with its highly rationalized form of administration is the quintessential example of how social life has become rationalized. Weber constructed a picture of what an “ideal” bureaucracy would look like. The salient features of the bureaucracy include: a high division of labor, hierarchical structure, codified employee roles, impersonal and impartial social relations, and lastly, appointment and promotion is based on technical competence (1946:196-198). The results of bureaucratization are routinization, impersonality, and the general restriction of idiosyncratic behavior. In short, rationalization not only reduces individual autonomy; it destroys the creative agency of the individual actor.

Weber recognizes both positive and negative aspects of rationality. It is positive in that it allows for greater precision, objectivity, and calculability. The impersonality of bureaucracies allows them to operate “without regard for persons” (1946:215). Weber writes, “Bureaucratization offers above all the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations” (1946:215). Lastly, bureaucratic administration manipulates actions along “calculable rules.” Weber writes, “The peculiarity of modern culture, and
specifically of its technical and economic basis, demands this very ‘calculability’ of results” (1946:215).

Despite the benefits afforded by bureaucracy, Weber was very mindful of the downside of bureaucratization. For Weber, the bureaucracy exemplified the impending Iron Cage of rationality that may come to descend upon individuals in the modern world. He writes, “Once it is fully established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are hardest to destroy” (1946:228). The permanency of the bureaucracy may be deleterious for those who are subsumed within its structure. Weber states

> The individual bureaucrat cannot squirm out of the apparatus in which he is harnessed. In contrast to the honorific or avocational ‘notable’ the professional bureaucrat is chained to his activity by his entire material and ideal existence. In the great majority of cases, he is only a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march” (1946:228).

Weber uses the “ideal type” of bureaucracy to illustrate how rationalization might reduce human agency. In the concluding paragraphs of the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber warns against a possible future where all aspects of life have become rationalized, a world where people’s roles are locked into an iron cage inhabited by “specialists without spirit, and sensualists with out heart” ([1930] 1997:182).

**Scientific Management and the Degradation of Labor**

Braverman, in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, explains how capitalists have come to bring about the “division of labor in the workshop” which, occurs when job tasks are analyzed and dissected into small parts (1974:75). These parts are then assigned to different workers. The division of crafts, performed by skilled craftsmen into tasks
performed by many unskilled workers significantly reduces the cost of production. This division is only worthwhile however when production is high (1975). Consequently, skills are “destroyed” for most workers, while those “relatively few persons for whom special knowledge and training are reserved are freed so far as possible from the obligations of simple labor. In this way, a structure is given to all labor processes that at its extremes polarizes those whose time is infinitely valuable and those whose time is worth almost nothing” (Braverman 1974:82-83).

Braverman describes how scientific management has succeeded in bringing about this division of labor. Fredrick Taylor, the father of scientific management, was an innovator in managerial control, as he was the first to assert “as an absolute necessity for adequate management the dictation to the worker of the precise manner in which work is to be performed” (emphasis in original) (1975:90). Additionally, Taylor redefined the notion of ‘a fair day’s work’ to “all the work a worker can do without injury to his health, at a pace that can be sustained throughout a working lifetime” (Braverman 1974:97). Braverman summarizes Taylor’s thought:

So long as [workers] retain their grip on the labor process itself, they will thwart efforts to realize to the full the potential inherent in their labor power. To change this situation, control over the labor process must pass into the hands of management, not only in a formal sense but by the control and dictation of each step in the process, including its mode of performance (1975:100).

Scientific management is based on three principles. First, is the separation of the knowledge of how to perform a task from the act of performing a task (Braverman: 1974:113). Second, management should be in possession of the knowledge of the labor process; this knowledge should be transmitted to workers on a ‘need to know’ basis
(Braverman 1974). The third principle is “the use of this monopoly over knowledge to control each step of the labor process and its mode of execution” (Braverman 1974:119).

Scientific management is the vehicle for the formal rational control of the capitalists.

Braverman provides a detailed discussion of the effects of Taylor’s scientific management. He writes, “The physical processes of production are now carried out more or less blindly, not only by the workers who perform them, but often by lower ranks of supervisory employees as well. The production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected, and controlled by a distant brain” (1974:125). Braverman is continuing the Marxian argument that capitalism serves to dehumanize and devalue workers, culturally and economically. He explains how workers who had previously developed their minds are slowly stripped of their intellectual faculties. Braverman reports:

> the craft provided a daily link between science and work, since the craftsman was constantly called upon to use rudimentary scientific knowledge, mathematics, drawing, etc., in his practice. Such craftsmen were an important part of the scientific public of their time, and as a rule exhibited an interest in science and culture beyond that connected directly to their work (1974:135).

However, as scientific management denuded workers of their skill, they lost their desire for higher learning. Scientific management has destroyed the autonomy that they had previously possessed. Braverman relates the anger of one pundit sympathetic to the plight of workers during the Tayloristic revolution in the 1910s “the worker is no longer a craftsman in any sense, but is an animated tool of the management” (quoted in Braverman 1974:136). When the process of rationalization described by Weber was applied to the labor process as scientific management, the result was the devolution of the working class.
McDonaldization

Weber, who died shortly before White Castle restaurants came to prominence in the 1920s (Jakle and Sculle 1999), never publicly wrote about the rationalization of food service. However, his elucidation of the process of rationalization in Western society clearly informs contemporary research on the subject. Seventy years after Weber’s death, and nearly two decades after Labor and Monopoly Capital, Ritzer, in his widely popular book, The McDonaldization of Society, claims that the process of rationalization is very much in full force, and that even the sphere of consumption has become rationalized. Ritzer asserts that while Weber viewed bureaucracy as the “paradigm case of rationality,” he thinks that this should be updated to McDonald’s (1993:18-19). He labeled the current rationalization of society McDonaldization, which is defined as “the process by which the principles of the fast food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (emphasis in original) (1993:1). Ritzer argues that McDonaldization is an “extension of the Weberian theory of rationalization” (1993:18). In using the term McDonaldization, Ritzer is not only referring to McDonald’s per se, but also any equivalent organization (i.e. Seven Eleven or Jiffy Lube) (1993:xiii). Ritzer outlines the rational dimensions of McDonald’s and similar organizations: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control (1993).

Similar to Weber’s concept of an Iron Cage, Ritzer takes note of the negative aspects of rationalization for employees. Ritzer argues that McDonaldized organizations dehumanize customers and employees alike. He writes, “The fast food restaurant offers its employees a dehumanizing setting within which to work.” as “workers are asked to use only a minute proportion of all their skills and abilities” (1993:131). Fast food
restaurants are dehumanizing in that they “minimize contact among human beings” (1993:133). The relationship between customers and employees is “rushed” due to an emphasis on speed and “fleeting” due to high turnover rates (1993:133). Moreover, fast food restaurants are dehumanizing for employees, “Because employees remain on the job for only a few months, satisfying personal relationships among employees are unlikely to develop” (1993:134). Ritzer contends that fast food workers will be unable to improve their work conditions. He writes:

One can predict that McDonald’s will not significantly alter its working conditions until it is unable to find a steady supply of new workers. Even then, it may simply move in the direction of eliminating human employees rather than humanizing the work. If this is the case, we can expect to see more automation and robotization in the fast-food restaurants of the future (1993:169).

In. *The McDonaldization Thesis*, Ritzer (1998) includes a chapter titled, “McJobs: McDonaldization and Its Relationship to the Labor Process” where he explores the affect of rationalization on the labor process (1998:61). He paints an incredibly bleak picture of fast food employment. Ritzer decries the power of capitalists to control workers. Ritzer claims that McDonald’s has succeeded in controlling not only the actions of workers but also their diction (suggestive selling) and affectation (an emphasis on smiling). He writes. “McDonaldized jobs are tightly scripted: they are characterized by both routineized actions… and scripted interactions” (emphasis in original) (1998:63-64). According to Ritzer, corporations completely dominate workers who possess little to no autonomy. He relates, “Beyond the usual exploitation of being paid less than the value of what they produce, McDonald’s employees are often not guaranteed that they will work the number of hours they are supposed to on a given day. If business is slow, they may be sent home.
early in order that the employer can economize on labor cost” (1998:66). Additionally, McDonald’s successfully appropriates customers, who now perform tasks formally assigned to employees, such as busing one’s table, significantly reducing labor costs. Consequently, employees are more expendable and have even less room to resist their employers. Ritzer argues that franchisees, the owners of the individual restaurants, maintain very little autonomy. Despite the fact that they provide much of the capital for their restaurant, they exercise limited control over it. Ritzer writes, “The operators take much of the financial risk, while the franchise companies sit back and (often) rake in the profits. In addition, the franchise companies frequently have detailed rules, regulations, and even inspectors that they use to control the operators” (1998:68).

Currently workplace repression is facilitated by structural and cultural forces that augment managerial efforts to control workers. An example of structural control can be found in the drive-through window associated with the fast food restaurant... structures both what customers in their cars and employees in their booths can and cannot do. They can efficiently exchange money for food, but their positions (in a car and a booth) and the press of other cars in the queue make any kind of personal interaction virtually impossible (1998:62).

Moreover, individuals come to accept McDonaldization, subsequently destroying all resistance (1998:68). In fact, “workers and customers often both buy into McDonaldization and are actively involved in its creation” (1998:66). Workers who cannot conceive of an alternative to the reified state of affairs cannot be expected to reorder their environment.
Braverman, Ritzer, and Weber describe a world where the economic elite has successfully rationalized the world for their own benefit and to the detriment of low-level employees. Ritzer expands on Weber to show how fast food workers have very little autonomy or ability to gain more through negotiation. A number of ethnographers have examined the lived experience of fast food workers. Although these ethnographic presentations have considered issues of worker autonomy and negotiations, they have not done so from the negotiated order perspective. The next section will provide an overview of the negotiated order perspective and its relevance to the lived experience of fast food workers. It should be noted that there has been considerable literature analyzing the interaction processes among organizational members. Some classic studies include Karl Weick’s (1979) analysis of the sense making processes among actors (i.e. the “double interact”). Granovetter’s (1985) analysis of social networking as related to decision making (i.e. “embeddedness”). Lastly, Randall Stokes and John Hewitt’s (1976) study of role taking and adjustment to the behavior of others (i.e. “Alignment of Actions”). However, this research does not focus on the micro social psychological processes involved, but instead describes how workers act to satisfy their motivations, solely in the tradition of work from the negotiated order perspective.

The Negotiated Order Perspective

The negotiated order perspective is an attempt by interactionist sociologists to account for the relationship between structure and agency in social life, particularly in organizations. Gary Alan Fine (1996) lists the critical assumptions of the negotiated order perspective. The first is that social order is based on negotiation (1996:3). Social order results from the process of negotiation. Strauss writes, “Even dictators find it impossible
and inexpedient simply and always to order command, demand, threaten, manipulate, or use force; about some issues and activities they must persuade and negotiate" (1978:ix). Social order is not a priori; rather it is created through interaction. The second assumption is “specific negotiations are contingent on the structure of the organization and the field in which the organization operates” (1996:3-4). Power differentials affect negotiations in patterned ways. There are structural features such as laws, normative values, and economic forces, which affect negotiations. The third assumption is that negotiations are impermanent. They must be continually renewed (1996:3). Lastly, “structural changes in the organization require a revision of the negotiated order” (1996:3). In as much as negotiations are impermanent and affected by structural features, the social order will have to be renegotiated when structural features change.

Strauss defines negotiations as “one of the possible means of “getting things accomplished” when parties need to deal with each other to get those things done” (1978:2). He attempts to differentiate negotiations from “other modes of attaining desired ends-such as persuasion, education, appeal to authority, or the use of coercion or coercive threat” (1978:2). Strauss’ concept of negotiation is the quintessential example of a sensitizing concept (Blumer 1954) in that there is no clear and distinct definition of negotiation that can be made independent of context. Research from the negotiated order perspective has demonstrated that negotiations may take on a number of different forms depending on the situation (Morgan 1975; Strauss 1978). These modes may be used in different combinations in different situations.

Strauss identifies three main analytical dimensions in the negotiated order perspective. These dimensions include the negotiations, the structural context, and the
negotiation context. The first is a description of the negotiations. Strauss states. "Included in the descriptions will be the accompanying interactions, types of actors, their strategies and tactics" as well as "consequences" and "subprocesses of negotiation" (1978:98). This dimension includes the motivations of the social actors, how they go about gaining what they want, and how successful they are. Researchers analyzing a social setting from the negotiated order perspective must describe the types of negotiation that occur. A description of the negotiations should elucidate, what Strauss terms "the subprocesses of negotiation" that are exemplified by "tradeoffs, obtaining kickbacks, compromising toward the middle, paying off debts, and reaching negotiated agreements" (1978:237).

The subprocesses are behaviors engaged in by actors who are negotiating with one another. The subprocesses of negotiation are not necessarily expressed through verbal communication. The term negotiation is a sensitizing concept. Therefore, negotiations may take forms that are not usually associated with the denotations of the word. For instance, negotiations may be explicit or implicit. At times, individuals explicitly work out an arrangement, while at other times the following pertains:

Negotiations may be very brief, made without any verbal exchange or obvious gestural manifestation; nevertheless, the parties may be perfectly aware of "what they are doing"—they may not call this negotiating *bargaining*, but they surely regard its product as some sort of *worked-out* agreement. Other negotiations may be so implicit that the respective parties may not be thoroughly aware that they have engaged in or completed a negotiated transaction. If the latter kind of agreement gets broken by one person, however, the other is sure to experience some feeling, whether surprise, disappointment, annoyance, anger, or even a sense of betrayal or exploitation, but possibly also relief or unexpected pleasure (Strauss 1978:224-225).
As will become clear below, the existence of implicit negotiations may exist in situations where explicit negotiation has seemingly been squashed.

The second dimension is the structural context. Strauss states “the structural context is that “within which” the negotiations take place, in the largest sense” (1978:98). Essentially, he is referring to the larger structural features that affect negotiations. Structural features may include the demography, economy, laws, cultural norms such as racism or sexism, infrastructure, and geography that influence the negotiation context.

The negotiated order perspective does not assign deterministic qualities to the structural context. Strauss writes, “Structural context is larger, more encompassing than negotiation context, but the lines of impact can run either way. That is, changes in the former may impact on the latter, and vice versa” (emphasis in original) (1978:101).

The negotiation context is the analytical structure that houses the interaction. He provides a number of variables that relate to negotiation context such as the number of actors, the stakes of the negotiation, the relative power of the negotiators, the openness of negotiations, the number and clarity of negotiated issues, and the “options to avoiding or discontinuing negotiation” (1978:100). The negotiation context consists of what directly affects the negotiations. Strauss differentiates between structural and negotiation contexts. He claims “the structural context bears directly on the negotiation context, but the latter refers more specifically to the structural properties entering very directly as conditions into the course of the negotiation itself” (1978:99). In as much as the proceeding concepts are sensitizing concepts, researchers have added to the list proposed by Strauss. For example, Noreen Sugrue has argued that “emotions can and do become properties of negotiation contexts” (1982:280).
Emotions and Negotiation

Sugrue posits, "Each participant negotiates from a particular emotion standpoint. That is, while each may acknowledge that the emotion context is one of, say anger, one person may have intense feelings leading to that emotion, while the other may not have those feelings" (emphasis in original) (1982:281). Although "there can be a sharing of similar or parallel feelings, but not of identical feelings. The concept of emotion standpoint thus allows for the analysis of each person's perspective during negotiations that are directly influenced by emotion context" (1982:281). This revelation brings up two important points pertinent to the negotiated order perspective. The first is that negotiations contain rational as well as extrarational factors. This aspect distinguishes the negotiated order perspective from rational choice or exchange theory. Second, a researcher from the negotiated order perspective must carefully understand the position of the individual negotiators. There will never be one uniform perspective of "the workers" even when they engage in collective bargaining. In any social order, voluntary or involuntary, members come from slightly different perspectives. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers avoid conflating the perspectives of workers. An analysis from the negotiated order perspective should consider the "existential selves" (Smith 1984) of a given milieu.

Negotiated Order and Symbolic Interactionism

Negotiated order is one way that symbolic interactionists have attempted to understand social order (Maines 1977). As such, it is based on the same assumptions as symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionists seek to understand "the actual formation of conduct in social interaction and not to assume that social and cultural patterns by themselves explain conduct. In this task they emphasize meaning, arguing
that people act on the basis of meanings they construct in social interaction” (Hewitt 1994:25-26). Additionally, “symbolic interactionists view human beings not only as shaped by culture and society, but also as capable of shaping them… culture and society depend upon human actions constructed on the basis of meanings formed in everyday social interaction” (Hewitt 1994:26). The negotiated order perspective rests on these implicit assumptions.

Concepts such as negotiation, negotiation context, and structural contexts are examples of Herbert Blumer’s notion of sensitizing concepts (1954). Blumer writes, “Because of the varying nature of the concrete expression from instance to instance we have to rely, apparently, on general guides and not on fixed traits or modes of expression” (1954:149). Moreover, these “general guidelines” or “sensitizing concepts” are to be “tested, improved and refined” (Blumer 1954:149-150). Clearly influenced by Blumer, Strauss writes:

These properties of negotiation contexts are not logical constructs, but emerged from the examination of numerous instances of negotiation… whenever properties are salient in a given case involving negotiations; I bring them out in analyzing the specific negotiation context for that case. The chief consideration… is the relevance, not “logic,” in developing the specific typologies or analyses of context. One must judge for oneself the fit and relevance of these negotiation contexts to the specific cases of negotiation to which they are applied. Their various permutations and clustering constitute the explanations for the specific kinds of negotiators, interactions, tacit, strategies, subprocesses of negotiation, and consequences that will be discussed. Of course, it is expected that this list of useful properties of the negotiation context will be added to by other researchers as they do their own studies” (1978:100).

Strauss’ preceding discussion of how he intends to study negotiations mirrors Blumer’s notion of a “sensitizing concept” (1954).
As a variant of symbolic interaction, the negotiated order perspective is based in large part on the work of George Herbert Mead. David Maines explains Mead’s influence on negotiated order, “among Mead’s many contributions to sociological thought was the argument that human conduct cannot be properly understood unless the social organizational matrices in which conduct takes place are first understood” (1977:244). Maines also discusses the relevance of Mead’s work on the interpretation of the past. He writes,

Mead argued that the past is not only continually being redefined in light of the present, but that it has a structuring effect on what is likely to occur in the present. He presents us with a dialectical view encompassing structure and process, determinacy and indeterminacy. It is that dialectical perspective that lies at the base of the negotiated order, and that appears in a number of studies informed by that perspective” (1975:244).

The negotiated order perspective adapts Mead’s notion that structure and process must be viewed together.

**Negotiated Order and Employee Autonomy**

Maines reports, “issues pertaining to autonomy are central” in analyses conducted from the negotiated order perspective (1977:245). D. H. J. Morgan uses the negotiated order perspective to explain how workers are able to gain and maintain autonomy within their jobs (1975). Morgan uses Fredrick Katz’s definition of autonomy “as the absence of external constraint” (1968:4). Katz argues, “workers have considerable autonomy within the confines of the organization. Even when work is prescribed in exact detail, the work role tends to be defined narrowly. This situation leaves a considerable portion of the workers life within the work organization undefined” (emphasis in original) (1968:47). While Morgan accepts Katz’s argument that factory workers have autonomy within the
organization he does not accept Katz's structural functionalist portrayal of autonomy, which “accords the worker a relatively passive role in the organization, a willing object of managerial repressive tolerance” (1975:207). Morgan then discusses the negotiated order of the workplace. He asserts:

The concept of “negotiation” has arisen out of the realization that human behavior cannot readily be understood simply by reference back to a normative order or, in the case of organizational settings, to a set of rules... The social order of say, a workplace is not a once-and-for-all accomplishment brought about by either the ultimate threat of force, deprivation, or a postulated harmony of interests, but is something which is subject to continuous negotiation. (1975:209).

Morgan challenges Strauss' notion of negotiation. Morgan uses the concept of negotiation as a “generalized metaphor for human conduct” (1975). Instead of only focusing on explicit negotiations, sociologists should recognize two levels of negotiation. The first is

An everyday covert implicit substratum of negotiation. The appropriateness of the use of the negotiation is determined by the problem under investigation and indeed, the negotiation between the investigator and his critical professional colleagues.” The second is “a more overt form of negotiation which is recognized as such by the participants (1975:211).

He maintains that negotiations do not take place amongst equals. Some actors have far more power than do others. Morgan asserts, “negotiation is not randomly distributed throughout an organization, but is patterned according to the particular set of statuses which form the structure of the organization” (1975:211). Morgan concludes that the negotiated order perspective may actually “draw our attention to those persons whom one has to take account of in this process of negotiation. Thus an emphasis on negotiation, far
from ignoring the unequal distribution of power in an organization, in fact draws our attention to the sources of that power, the uses to which it is put, and its limits” (1975:211-212). Morgan presents the limits of power. Despite power differentials, “this account shows that there are limits to the exercise of managerial or supervisory power. These limits are less in terms of formal rules and more in terms of their expectations of what the workers will stand for regarding practices that have now come to be taken as given” (1975:224). Additionally, Morgan (1975) explains that autonomy is not static, as Katz (1968) professes. Rather it is something that is continually worked out through negotiation. Morgan claims, “The two concepts stand in reciprocal relationship to each other for autonomy refers to those areas which are, for the time being free from the necessity of overt negotiation, while negotiation can be seen as being about the enlargement, maintenance, or diminution of existing sphere of autonomy” (1975:212).

The first area of negotiation, that Morgan analyzes, is the use of the radios in the factory. In the factory, legitimate radio use was defined by a number of important rules such as what programs could be played, and what the volume should be set at. These rules were neither clearly defined nor evenly enforced. The workers tended to use the radio as they pleased until management enforced the rules. We can see the atomization of the workers who did not comprise a uniform bargaining unit. Some workers liked to play music loudly, while others did not like the high volume pop music. Conflicts over the radios were crudely divided by age, with young women, who were the majority in the factory, playing pop music loudly, and a majority faction of older women who did not care much for loud pop music. Although the sympathies of management were with the older group, management had to respect the wishes of the younger group because “the
presence of a group of younger girls was felt to be necessary for some of the finer assembly work” (1975:215). Younger workers by virtue of their perceived worth to the factory were able to compensate for their numerical inferiority. Morgan states that they were able to bargain for greater use of the radios because “it was on the whole easier for management not to make an issue of this relatively minor problem and that it meant that something could be kept in reserve for bargaining over other more serious matters” (1975:216). Morgan contends that radio use represents “an area of autonomy in the workshop that was overt, that was of doubtful legitimacy, but which was generally tolerated. However this was not a stable once-and-for-all situation, but was the subject of occasional negotiation” (1975:216).

Morgan also examines the negotiation of time in the factory. In a factory, time is highly regulated. Unlike radio use, the rules regarding time are clearly delineated with time cards and bells. Workers, whose time was highly regulated, engaged in implicit negotiations with management over the use of time. For example, workers would try to reduce the number of hours that they had to work by stopping work early before breaks and the end of the day or by lingering over breaks before starting work. Workers would also take disguised breaks, for instance, chatting with a co-worker while going to the storeroom for supplies. Sometimes management would counter negotiate; for instance, the assistant supervisor would sometimes prevent workers from getting their coats early by standing near the cloakroom. Management was completely aware of how the workers would find ways to reduce their work time; some estimated that employees were able to “waste” an hour per day. Morgan (1975) contends that workers were able to continue this behavior because time wasting is a part of an ongoing negotiation with management.
Management did not stop the practices because they “liked to keep a bargaining counter in reserve for use on more strategic occasions” (1975:221). Some actors thought that the time wasting had become established slowly and incrementally. Additionally, some thought that the time wasting went unchallenged because it was not worth disturbing the relationship between workers and management. Morgan argues that management was not in complete control of the situation. He writes, “To say that management could use elements in the situation in the more overt processes of negotiation is not to say that it was fully able to choose whether to have these elements in the first place nor was it necessarily the case that workers responded to them in those terms” (1975:222). Morgan adds that negotiation takes place on an individual and group level. Not all workers “wasted” time equally. While single worker’s implicit negotiations may have been influenced by the implicit negotiations of others, they were conducted at an individual level (1975:223).

Fast food restaurants, like factories, are governed by a strict formal rationality that seeks, through Tayloristic means to make workers conform to practices that allow for the aims of management to come to fruition. The goals of management are not always commensurate with those of fast food workers (Leidner 1993). While a number of researchers have considered the nature of autonomy in fast food restaurants, none have applied the negotiated order perspective to this endeavor (Garson 1988; Reiter 1991; Leidner 1993; Newman 1999; Royle 2000; Tannock 2001). Moreover, those who have used the negotiated order perspective have tended to analyze settings that clearly demonstrate issues of negotiation. These researchers have focused heavily on skilled organizational members and how they seek to achieve their shared and divergent goals.
through interaction (for instance Strauss et al. 1963, 1981; Hall and Hall 1982; Kleinman 1982; Levy 1982; and Spencer 1993). In as much as these studies are helpful in demonstrating how social order is maintained through interaction, they collectively ignore social situations that are not readily amenable to the existing analytical tools of negotiated order. The perspective may be enriched by further study of settings that are rigidly defined.

Morgan’s application of the negotiated order perspective to the study of factory workers is an important step in this effort. In his analysis, he argues that although behavior in the factory is rigidly constrained by rules, workers negotiate an agreement with management that allows both groups to achieve their goals, to some extent. From Morgan’s study, we can surmise that when management in a highly rationalized work environment suppresses explicit negotiation, it merely takes on different forms (1975). Since explicit negotiations over some rules are not possible, workers engage in implicit negotiation, wherein negotiation is unstated and occurs through nonverbal action.

Morgan’s notion of implicit negotiation can be translated into other repressive milieus to understand how workers are able to create autonomy where it does not ostensibly exist. As previously mentioned, fast food restaurants present an appropriate challenge to a researcher, who wishes to understand how people may have limited freedom in seemingly restricted environments. As previously stated, demonstrating worker autonomy is not the end goal of this research, rather; it will be to understand how workers are able to achieve their own goals when they are at variance with those of management. The degree to which workers are successful at achieving goals that are in conflict with managerial goals is dependent on their degree of autonomy.
Current ethnographic research has tended to depict fast food workers as having neither autonomy nor the agency to attain autonomy (Garson 1988; Reiter 1991). While fast food workers certainly do not share the levels of autonomy enjoyed by lawyers, doctors, and architects, it is difficult to believe that millions of workers have been completely controlled by management in all settings. In keeping with the negotiated order perspective, I suspect that in different negotiation contexts fast food workers are variably capable of negotiating implicitly and explicitly for their ends.

Factors affecting the negotiation context might include: the size of the restaurant; whether the restaurant is franchised or company operated, the type of contract between the franchisee and the franchisor; the goals of the franchisee; the number of customers who patronize the restaurant; the location of the restaurant, the goals of the employees, how easily employees may be replaced; whether relations between employees and management are primary, secondary, or mixed and no doubt many others. Ethnographic research that is cognizant of the preceding factors (as well as others) that affect the negotiation context may be able to demonstrate how order is maintained in the restaurant with both parties achieving their goals to enough of an extent so as to make their relationship viable.

It should be noted that a number of sociologists have considered the topic of worker agency. Michael Burawoy (1979) found that employers do not exercise the degree of control of lower level employees reported by Braverman (1974). David Mechanic (1962) demonstrates how many low-level workers are able to wield considerable power. Randy Hodson (1991) contends that workers play an active role in the construction of their social environment. While these studies and others are related to this research, they will
not be given thorough treatment here for two reasons. First, they are not explicitly from the negotiated order perspective. Second, they are not dealing directly with fast food restaurants that are the focus of this study.

Fast Food Ethnographies

A number of journalists, sociologists, and anthropologists have done ethnographic research of routinized restaurants. This section will attempt to demonstrate how the negotiated order perspective could better inform the ethnographic study of fast food workers. Strauss suggests that researchers who are “interested in general theory of negotiation for its own sake” may analyze existing data (emphasis in original) (1978:245). Furthermore, “their elaborations and qualifications of a negotiation theory would proceed by further theoretical sampling of data from extant negotiation literature in many different substantive areas. This secondary analysis could greatly- and probably quickly- help to further a general theory” (1978:245). This section of the literature review seeks to achieve some of the preceding objectives. Although I will not be using the existing data to directly inform a burgeoning theory of negotiations. I will be using the existing data to argue that the negotiated order perspective may gain from an analysis of fast food restaurants.

Barbara Garson

Barbara Garson’s (1988) publication, *The Electronic Sweatshop*, provides a journalistic account of how “a combination of twentieth-century technology and nineteenth-century scientific management is turning the Office of the Future into the factory of the past” (1988:10). She argues that employers have appropriated modern technology to thoroughly reduce worker autonomy. She claims that the centralization of
control stems from a desire to reduce costs and an "irrational prejudice against people" (1988:13). Garson interviews a number of workers including fast food workers, social workers, and stockbrokers. Her presentation of fast food work is of particular interest here.

Garson provides the contents of her interviews with two former crew persons, one current crew person, and a recently resigned manager of a corporate owned McDonald's in New York City. The general theme of the chapter is that McDonald's has introduced computerized systems that have eliminated any self-determination that may be exercised by crew workers and management alike. Automated buzzers tell an employee when it is okay to pull a fillet o' fish out of the fryer, a bell beeps when it is time to flip the burgers, the condiment guns are calibrated for Big Macs and cheeseburgers, and a computer program predicts how many employees will be needed for a given shift. One interviewee left after only one day because the managers would not give her the schedule that she desired. Another employee, who cannot afford the luxury of quitting, is frequently chastised for voiding the register without the assistance of a manager. In short, a computerized formal rationality has eradicated any sense of freedom or creativity. The jobs have been deskillled to the point where the most competent crew person can be replaced in a matter of minutes. Even a highly capable manager admits, "Basically, I can't be any more creative than a crew person. I can't take any more initiative then the person on the register" (1988:35).

From her interviews, Garson concludes, McDonald's has successfully rationalized its operations. She laments:

By combining twentieth-century computer technology with nineteenth-century time and motion studies, the
McDonald’s corporation has broken the jobs of griddleman, waitress, cashier, and even manager down into small, simple, small steps. Historically these have been service jobs involving a lot of flexibility and personal flare. But the corporation has systematically extracted the decision-making elements from filling french fry boxes or scheduling staff. They’ve siphoned the know-how from the employees into the programs. They relentlessly weed out all variables that might make it necessary to make a decision at the store level, whether on pickles or on cleaning procedures. (1988:37)

Restaurant workers that formally contained a great deal of autonomy have become gears in a Weberian wheel.

Given these same data, a researcher coming from the negotiated order perspective might ask if the structural context (such as unemployment rate, the type of fast food restaurant) might affect the negotiation context. In other words, can we really assume that this is the situation that all fast food workers find themselves in or is this one restaurant somewhat anomalous? Could it be that structural change, also the result of negotiation (Denzin 1977a, 1978) could alter the negotiation context such that workers (who cared to) might be able to negotiate for increased autonomy?

Ester Reiter

Ester Reiter’s ethnography, *Making Fast Food*, explores the lived experience of fast workers in a Burger King restaurant in suburban Toronto. Reiter, like Garson (1988), explains how fast food work has been deskilled (1991). For instance, “the cashier inside the store does not need to know how to make change to operate the register” (1991:84). In addition, Reiter relates that interactions are scripted (1991:84). Reiter provides detailed descriptions of the restaurant, the promotional hierarchy, worker profile, training, and work tasks.
She explains the motivations for employment at Burger King. The reasons are that it fits the schedule of workers (particularly students and mothers), it is among the only jobs available to unskilled workers, and the location of the restaurant is convenient for some employees. Reiter identifies scheduling to be of the highest concern for employees. The first step to discovering how workers attain their goals is to find out what those goals are. Reiter succeeds in this, but does not really explain how workers go about obtaining the schedule they desire.

Reiter relates that Burger King rotated its managers in the stores that it owned. She writes, “The director explained that they didn’t want the managers to become “stale.” This was not very clear to me. Perhaps, I thought, managers who got to know their subordinates well would be less likely to stick closely to Burger King rules” (1991:104). Reiter provides an example of a manager who disliked Burger King’s attempt to save profits by cutting crewmember hours. Burger King is attempting to prevent the conflation of primary and secondary relationships. Like Weber’s ideal type bureaucracy, Burger King believes that it is in their best interests to prevent informality between workers and managers. Moreover, Burger King makes substantial claims on its employees. She writes, employees “are asked to place their responsibilities to Burger King above everything else in their lives: school, family, friends.” (1991:107). Burger King, operating according to the logic of scientific management, seeks to squeeze as much as it can from its employees. Reiter concludes, “just as Taylor considered that workers were ‘soldiering’ if they worked at less than their physiological maximum, so Burger King considers that it is entitled to the physiological maximum from its minimum wage employees” (1991:120).
Burger King seeks to increase profitability through a formally rational routinization of labor. Reiter, like Ritzer (1993) and Garson (1988) discusses the importance of computers in rationalizing food service. Burger King uses computers to track inventory and productivity. Computers are also used to decide the most efficient use of labor. Technology is used to control (or limit the autonomy of) workers. Reiter provides an interesting example of the negotiated interaction between workers and management by revealing how routinization fails to squash all variance. She writes, this tightly organized system is not completely predictable...Even in a very controlled situation, there are good days and bad days, good managers and bad managers” (1991:123). Reiter explains:

> There is a consensual aspect in translating labour power into labour; workers cooperation is needed, even if it is just at the level of showing up on time. However, the kind of political power that can be exercised by a worker with scarce, not easily obtainable skills... is quite a bit greater than that of a worker who can be instantly replaced by another if she of he doesn’t smile enough (1991:129).

Essentially, there is more to a fast food restaurant than the Weberian formal rational plan. No matter what rules are created by upper level management, operations have to be enforced by managers and followed by employees.

Reiter delineates Burger King’s strategies for controlling its labor force. In addition to scientific management, Burger King uses psychology to influence employees (1991:133). For instance, management has appropriated Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” and Herzberg’s “satisfiers and disatisfiers” to conclude that emotional encouragement can satisfy workers, in place of improved wages, hours, and working conditions (1991:135). Reiter concludes that management attempts to extract as much as they can from employees before they resign. She writes, “Burger King efforts to martial loyalty are
focused on creating the kind of morale that will keep work intense and productivity high. The attempts to ensure long-term commitment are minimal" (1991:139). Workers are given miniscule raises and poor opportunities for advancement. Reiter explains that promotion at Burger King is problematic in that “A production leader’s working conditions... are actually worse than those for crew, and they achieve little monetary gain” (1991:139). Instead, management chooses to use inexpensive methods such as social activities, competitions, and managerial encouragement to extract as much effort as possible from employees. In addition, the restaurant is designed to allow waiting customers to view the employees. Workers are thus pressured to work faster (1991). The previous manipulations could be labeled management’s negotiations. A researcher from the negotiated order perspective would note that management is attempting to implicitly negotiate for their ends with motivational items instead of offering higher wages.

Reiter considers the role of worker agency. She relates that she was surprised to find that the management at Burger King had far more power over their employees than she imagined. She writes:

I assumed... that in a fast food restaurant there were bound to be forms of cooperation between workers and some mediating power that workers would have over management directives... I looked and looked by never found this active participation in determining the labour process... Workers at Burger King do not have even a limited arena in which they can delude themselves into thinking of the labour process as a game in which they participate via commonly agreed-upon rules. Control of the game and setting the rules of playing are the prerogative of Burger King alone. If one does not choose to play by Burger King’s rules, one must leave the game entirely (1991:141).
Workers identified favored and distasteful job tasks. Reiter does not report how workers vie for preferred tasks. Rather, she seems to imply that workers are simply assigned to assorted tasks by a multitude of managers. Workers are pressured to work hard regardless of how many customers are in the restaurant. Workers did not challenge (overtly or covertly) managerial authority. She does, however, offer some examples of worker resistance. For instance, one worker circumvented a $2.50 limit on free employee food by ringing herself up for one item and taking a more expensive one. Another worker walked off after continually being denied a brake (1991). Reiter claims that workers' only response to unfavorable conditions was to leave. Quitting is the only individual action that she recognizes. Reiter presents unionization as the only possible means by which workers may successfully negotiate for their goals (1991).

Reiter indicates that Burger King has more or less eradicated worker autonomy. She concludes, "there is little personal space at Burger King. The 'working knowledge' or 'tacit skills' Burger King workers bring to their jobs give them little room to manoeuvre in the moderating management directives. Even physical needs such as drinking water or using the washroom are regulated" (1991:165). Workers have no autonomy and there is nothing they can do to negotiate for more autonomy "their individual protests, which usually take the form of "voting with their feet", however, do not change management prerogatives in the organization of the workplace" (1991:165). She does not allow for the possibility that given some structural changes workers could negotiate for increased autonomy.
Robin Leidner

Robin Leidner’s (1993) ethnography, *Fast Food. Fast Talk*, focuses on the routinization of service work. She presents interview and participant observation data from a company owned McDonald’s restaurant and an Insurance company. Leidner’s work is of particular interest because her data relate to processes of negotiation in rationalized food service establishments. Leidner argues that employee-employer relationships are not intrinsically antagonistic. Moreover, the relationships are not static, but change with different situations. Both insights support the negotiated order perspective. Rather than focusing only on the relationship between management and workers, Leidner posits that the examination of interactive service work (including fast food) must include the three-way relationship between workers, management, and customers. She writes, “All three parties are trying to arrange the interactions to their own advantage, whether they want to maximize speed, convenience, pleasantness, efficiency, customization of service, degree of exertion, or any other outcome they feel to be beneficial” (1993:3-4). The implication is that when the interests of management and workers coincide they may cooperate to see that their own interests are met. In another situation, workers and customers may form a temporary alliance against the restaurant owners. Alliances shift with the situation. We may observe situations where it is in the “self-defined” best interest of workers to comply with routinization (Leidner 1993:135). However, in other situations, workers may, successfully resist routinization through negotiation and build autonomous spaces for themselves. Leidner finds evidence of worker agency. She writes, “Analysis of routinization is too often cut short by the assumption that management has the capacity to impose routines unilaterally, an
assumption that historical research on routinization has proven untenable” (1993:127). Although, not coming from the negotiated order perspective, she demonstrates how the social order of the restaurant is continually recreated through strategic interaction that involves patterned negotiations that are affected by structure.

In some instances, routinization can be beneficial to employees. She claims, “workers expressed relatively little dissatisfaction with the extreme routinization…” as some workers “felt that their interactions with customers were more than mechanical and that they were able to express their personalities on the job (1993:134). Other workers, in contrast, appreciated the routine precisely because it did not require that they treat exchanges with customers as full-fledged personal interactions” (1993:134-135). As would be necessary in an analysis from the negotiated order perspective she is identifying individual worker goals and how they attain them.

Leidner also demonstrates worker resistance to the aspects of formal rationality that they found particularly offensive. For instance, “Workers disobeyed the rule about suggestive selling whenever they could get away with it” (1993:140). Her analysis can be translated into the negotiated order terminology. She provides data that indicate implicit negotiation between managers, workers, and customers concerning suggestive selling. It was in management’s best interest for workers to suggest additional products; this practice annoyed many customers. Employees “were more likely to resolve this dilemma in the customers’ favor, because management had not created any incentives that brought the workers interests into line with their own” (1993:140). The divergent interests of customers and management affected the social order of the restaurant. Management wants workers to engage in suggestive selling and negotiates for this by asking workers
to do so. When workers engage in suggestive selling customers often become annoyed, they negotiate against this annoyance by acting disparagingly toward employees.

Employees are caught between customers and management. In this case, the customers’ implicit negotiation action (acting annoyed) is more compelling than management’s negotiation (continually requesting but not sanctioning employees) many employees reorder their environment by refusing to engage in suggestive selling. Per the negotiated order perspective, this arrangement is not permanent. Managers could renegotiate, by offering employees rewards or sanctions that may (but not necessarily) convince workers to engage in the practice of suggestive selling. This situation is very similar to what Morgan (1975) described, except for the fact that I have superimposed negotiated order terminology on Leidner’s account of this instance of negotiation.

Leidner, like Reiter, identifies scheduling as an issue of central importance to McDonald’s employees. She reports considerable variation in the number of hours desired by workers. Although, some workers were content with few hours, others who desired more hours “were expected to compete for them, proving themselves deserving through conscientious job performance. In practice, a core group of about twenty steady workers was sure to get its preferred hours, but cutting back an employee’s hours was a standard way the managers showed their displeasure over poor performance or attitude” (1991:62). She also reports that management may seek to lengthen or shorten individual shifts depending on the number of customers at a given time. Workers tended to be successful in obtaining a schedule that fit their needs. “For example, workers who played on a high school team could cut down their hours during the sports season, and workers who needed to take a particular day off could usually arrange it if they gave sufficient
notice" (1993:64). Although she does not analyze the process by which workers are able to negotiate for desired schedules, she does identify a possible site of negotiation. In a process that will be described in chapter four, workers will move from the periphery to the “core” to increase their position in negotiations. Despite the fact that Leidner’s ethnography does not mention negotiated order, she does show how the social order of the restaurant is continually created through structured interaction as the negotiated order perspective posits it.

Katherine Newman

Katherine Newman’s (1999), *No Shame in My Game*, examines impoverished fast food employees in Harlem. Although the focus of the work is much wider than interactions within restaurants, she does present data that is relevant to workplace negotiations. For instance, she explains how the high unemployment rate in Harlem serves to depress job wages (1999:63). From the negotiated order perspective one might conclude that the structural context of the restaurant, in this case the unemployment rate, impinges on the negotiation context by reducing the power of employees in negotiations over wages. Newman also describes the process by which prospective employees negotiate for a position. She explains how employees seeking employment must carefully present themselves and use social networks. Newman also relates that managers cannot accomplish their goals by simply resting on their power to dismiss disobedient employees. She explains:

Ninety percent of Fernando’s job involves coaxing his workforce to abide by the dozens of rules the firm imposes over the preparation of food. There are regulations covering virtually every move a worker makes in the production process. While he has the authority to discipline workers who fail to cooperate, he has discovered what most
manages come to know in time: a willing workforce is much easier to supervise. And as Fernando points out, you cannot keep a constant watch on everybody (1999:179).

This "coaxing" may also be described as Fernando's negotiation with his employees to encourage workers to follow the regulations that have been set by the corporation.

Tony Royle

Tony Royle (2000), in *Working for McDonald's in Europe*, presents data on fast food work. Royle analyzes the relationship between workers and managers in Europe, with particular attention given to Germany and Great Britain. He considers how workers individually and collectively seek to achieve their personal aims. Royle's data indicate that the negotiated order perspective may be used to study fast food restaurants.

Royle found that there were a number of motivations for employment at McDonald's. Economic marginalization drives many foreign-born and minority workers to McDonald's in search of employment. Workers that have failed out of college or an apprenticeship may come to McDonald's for a second chance at a managerial career. There are "coasters" whose employment at McDonald's allows them to 'tread water' while they decide what they want to do with their life. These workers may be uninterested in climbing the corporate ladder. There are workers who have no previous experience or who only want part-time employment (Royle 2000). Workers that approach the metaphorical bargaining table at McDonald's for the above reasons may have little in the way of resources to negotiate for increased autonomy. By considering the individual motivations of employees, as well as their reasons for choosing to work and continuing to work at a given restaurant we can begin to understand how workers go about negotiating
for their ends. We may be able to delineate the limits of negotiation. As well as why workers may not attempt to negotiate for some goals.

Royle explains how workers may resist managerial directives by creating “short cuts” or sabotaging the food. In contrast to the image of the completely controlled worker presented by Garson (1988), Royle asserts that workers often ignore orders that are not in their interest. He writes, “Although there are rules and tight procedures for everything and managers usually working alongside closely monitor the work, workers do sometimes find shortcuts...” (2000:60). He relates that these short cuts tend to occur when the restaurant is busy and the formally rational plan will not be effective. These mavericks were labeled ‘cowboys’ in one UK restaurant. Royle quotes a floor manager, “yeah, some of the lads, the ‘cowboys’ have figured out how to save time on cleaning, missing out some of the steps but getting the same results. Or. sometimes, they make more burgers than are required by the shift leader on the wrap and call station, so that they get a short break” (2000:60). Some workers engaged in acts of sabotage, such as allowing sweat or “nasal fluid” to enter the food, serving food that had fallen on the floor, and making food with purposely unwashed hands. Additionally, the food may not be prepared according to specifications. He claims that managers sometimes assume what Gouldner called an “indulgency pattern” where managers “turn a blind eye” to deviant behavior “providing that customer demand is met” (2000:60). Although he is not using these terms, this account represents a negotiation of the social order. First, management establishes a formal rational plan of action. Second, workers adjust this plan to better fit their own needs being careful to meet the more important goals of the organization. Third, management accepts these changes. This negotiation is not final, workers could try
for too much, go over the line, so to speak, and at which point management might react by decreasing autonomy.

In addition to examining the individual negotiations between workers and management, Royle also considers group negotiations. While collective bargaining has been virtually nonexistent in North America for legal and cultural reasons, European nations tend to be more culturally and legally supportive of unions. These structural differences allow for greater space for negotiation than is found in the United States. In other words, the structural context (in this case laws and norms) affects the negotiation context. When McDonald's first entered the European market, they resisted unionization (Royle 2000). For the most, part unions have been unable to muster a desired level of influence. However, European workers have had more success in terms of collective action than their North American counterparts. Royle explains how a combination of cultural values, economic forces, laws, and individual motivations has allowed workers to engage in collective bargaining (Royle 2000). Additionally, unions exert a limited amount of influence on McDonald's they have been able to reorder their environment so that collective bargaining or negotiation is possibility (Royle 2000). Royle relates that unions have improved the pay where they have existed (2000:171). His data show that collective bargaining and legal regulations are more efficacious means of achieving the goals of fast food workers than individual negotiations.

Negotiations between unequal parties are not likely to yield equitable results. The negotiated order perspective does not argue that fast food restaurants are unable to exploit workers. Rather, negotiated order demonstrates how organizational interactions are not unidirectional. It is significant that employees continue to lose the battle. The social order

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continually arises from interaction and management must continue to see that its goals are met. The negotiated order perspective argues that rationalistic oppression is a process of keeping the worker down. In this difficult undertaking, one might expect that in different negotiation contexts, particularly ones where management has fewer resources, (as may be the case in smaller franchises) workers might be more able to negotiate for autonomy. Using the negotiated order perspective to understand fast food restaurants does not mean that workers will necessarily achieve their goals. Even though Royle is not coming from a negotiated order perspective he presents data that suggest that the negotiated order perspective may be a useful way to understand how workers may use their agency to reorder their environment to their own benefit.

Stuart Tannock

Stuart Tannock (2001) in. *Youth at Work*, examined the implications of unionization in two industries that employ large numbers of young workers, fast food restaurants and grocery stores. His data on a unionized Canadian fast food restaurant he names "Fry House" are relevant to this study. Tannock's research is interesting from a negotiated order perspective in that he is concerned with how age, culture, and related structural issues serve to weaken young workers in negotiations. Moreover, Tannock explains how unionized workers are more able to achieve their goals than are non-unionized workers (2001).

Tannock contributes to an understanding of the negotiated order of a fast food restaurant by noting the substantial differences between workplace environments. Tannock explains. "The working communities found in the different outlets are not solely the creation of workers; they are the result of interactions among workers, managers."
corporate employers, and local environments— as well as the union local that represents these workers” (2001:71). He argues that working environments emerge through negotiations. Workers may exert some influence over the labor process through negotiation. For example, in some instances, workers will band together to pressure a disliked manager to leave (2001:75).

Tannock supports the negotiated order perspective when he concludes:

Sociologists conventionally describe the fast-food industry using the framework of routinization. Researchers point to routinization, along with close managerial supervision and the indoctrination of workers into global corporate cultures, as the key element of management control in the fast-food workplace. The example of Glenwood suggests that patterns of control and worker-manager relations may be more complicated (2001:82).

As we will find in the chapters that follow, employers are not able to simply control the labor process.

Tannock summarizes the advantages of unionization at one union. He writes, “Higher starting wages, guaranteed raises, employer-provided benefits, and just-cause job protection from arbitrary discipline and termination constitute the basic union advantage for young Glenwood Fry House workers” (2001:158). Unionization is not an automatic panacea; rather its usefulness is borne out in negotiations. Tannock claims, “These contrasts in the benefits of unionism for young stopgap workers in Box Hill and Glenwood are not accidental. Local C has made an explicit commitment to minimizing differences between junior and senior and younger and older workers in the Fry House bargaining unit” (2001:160). Tannock’s research demonstrates the possible affects of unionization on the negotiation context of a fast food restaurant.
Greta Paules

Greta Paules (1991), an anthropologist, produced an ethnographic account of waitresses at a chain restaurant located on an interstate highway in New Jersey. As her title, *Dishing it Out: Power and Resistance among Waitresses in a New Jersey Restaurant*, indicates she is presenting "a study of women who are neither organized nor upwardly mobile yet actively and effectively strive to protect and enhance their position at work" (1991:1). Paules begins *Dishing it Out* with a description of the field. She discusses the geographic location of the chain restaurant she labels "Route", on an interstate highway in an area "undergoing rapid residential and commercial development" (1991:2). This constitutes an important aspect of the negotiation context of the restaurant. Her ethnography is not from the negotiated order perspective, however it is very similar to what might come from this perspective. For example, Paules asserts:

> the Route waitress is not passive. She is engaged in ongoing efforts to shield herself from the emotional and financial hazards of her occupation and advance her work interests. Her strategies of action include... methods of manipulating management to ensure her grievances and demands will be heeded; and techniques for controlling the movement of customers thought the restaurant to maximize her tip income (1991:10).

It is also interesting, that some workers are in a better position to negotiate for ends than others are. She writes, "all waitresses are not equally skilled or aggressive in defending their interests. Full-time workers are more prone to rebuke impatient or impolite customers, more fearless in reproaching management, and more adept at manipulating the tipping system" (1991:11). Although, Paules’ ethnography is dealing with waitresses in a ‘sit down’ restaurant and not fast food, her subjects have a great deal in common with fast food workers. Paules’ ethnography focuses on low-level food servers in a formally
rational chain of restaurants. Fast food workers, although structurally less autonomous and less skilled face similar issues in a similar environment. Both types of workers may attempt to renegotiate a formally rational food service establishment.

In a chapter entitled, “Sources of Autonomy,” she delineates the reasons why routinization has been limited at Route. She lists inadequate training, the tipping system, a chaotic environment, high managerial turnover, labor shortages, and the manager’s role as fill-in man as sources of autonomy for waitresses. For example:

Employees also exploit the manager’s vulnerability as fill-in man directly, to increase their control and resist interference in their work lives. Between managers and senior employees, and especially experienced waitresses, virtually all negotiation takes the form of an ultimatum: management must comply with the employee’s demands or redress her grievance, or she will leave. So often does a cook threaten to walk off the line or a waitress threaten to walk off the floor, that the act has acquired an almost ritual consistency. In the following instance, a waitress who was angered that a co-waitress was staying late and potentially “tapping into” her money, ensured that she would be favorably “seated,” despite the extra person on the floor, by threatening to walk out.

I said, “Innes, I’m in [station] one and two. If one and two is not filled at all times from now until three, I’m getting my coat, my pocketbook, and I’m leaving.” And one and two was filled, and I made ninety-five dollars (emphasis in original) (quoted in Paules 1991:91).

Here, we see how waitresses are able to take advantage of structural features (labor pressures, diminished managerial authority) to change the social order to their individual advantage. Waitresses are able to interpret their situation and militate for increased autonomy accordingly.

In a chapter entitled, “Up a Crooked Ladder,” Paules builds on her argument that diminished managerial prestige and the ability of waitresses to achieve their ends have
led to a situation where waitresses often eschew the concept of vertical mobility. Waitresses see themselves as being in a better position than managers, and consequently do not seek out promotions to management. The implication here is that waitresses are able to decide for themselves what their course of action should be. Instead of accepting the corporation’s notion of promotion through loyal service, these waitresses are able to act in a way that allows them to achieve their ends (Paules 1991).

Paules concludes the ethnography by restating her main point that waitresses are capable of negotiating the routinized restaurant. Waitresses are able to autonomously reach their own ends because of their adaptation to structural conditions such as tipping system, the shortage of labor and supplies and the diminished authority of management. These workers are actively exploiting structural features in order to gain autonomy. Without personal agency, these waitresses would not be able to reorder their social order through negotiation. Structure will not create autonomy on its own; workers in highly rationalized environments must take advantage of it if they are to affect their social order. Paules is not explicitly using the negotiated order perspective, yet her work demonstrates how negotiated order may be used to understand a rationalized food service environment.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate how the negotiated order perspective could be used to inform ethnographic research on fast food workers. Weber, Braverman, and Ritzer have theorized that rationalization and scientific management have reduced the freedom of employees. One group arguably most constrained by these processes has been fast food workers. Ethnographic research by Garson (1988); Reiter (1991); Leidner
(1993); Newman (1998); Royle (2000); Tannock (2001) has augmented the theoretical work on rationalization.

Ethnographies of routinized restaurants present a multitude of data that is relevant to this study. Paules (1991) and Royle (2000) show how structural features affected workers’ negotiations for increased autonomy. Leidner (1993) and Reiter (1991) considered how workers negotiated for autonomy. Individually, they differ somewhat on how much autonomy workers have; however, all agree that autonomy is severely limited. However, these ethnographies, excluding Paules (1991), focus on one type of restaurant, namely McDonald’s or similarly designed restaurants. They do not adequately consider the differentiation of the fast food industry. Ethnographic research that analyzes fast food restaurants from the negotiated order perspective may come to find a great deal of diversity in the lived experience of fast food restaurants. Research that makes use of participant observation data in different negotiation contexts may find differences between. An ethnography written from the negotiated order perspective that takes the individual actor’s rational and extrarational motivations and actions into account will be able to demonstrate not only how social order is maintained through processes of interaction, but also how individuals are free within rationalized environments.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

There are a number of means of collecting empirical data. A researcher must choose his or her methodology by examining the research questions, theoretical guidance, and the available resources (i.e. time, money, and skills). Fortunately, researchers in the planning stages of a descriptive study usually have a wealth of past research to guide their project. This descriptive study is no exception. There are a number of existing studies of fast food restaurants as well as analyses from the negotiated order perspective. These studies guided my research design. Most studies of negotiated order and of fast food restaurants have used qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodologies are used to examine a large number of features of a few cases (Ragin 1994). Qualitative methods measure data that is expressed as words and include, field work and observations, interviews, qualitative content analysis, and historical analysis (Neuman 2000). After considering the existing literature, the particular resources that were available, as well as my biographical relationship to the subject matter, I chose to collect data through a combination of auto-ethnographic and observational means.

Negotiated Order, Fast Food, and Qualitative Methodology

The overriding purpose of this study is to demonstrate how fast food restaurants exemplify the maintenance of social order through processes of negotiation. Additionally,
by using the negotiated order perspective to analyze the employee-employee and
employee-employer interactions at a fast food restaurant we may understand how and
under what structural conditions the employees in fast food restaurants may attain their
personal goals. Although this is the first study to analyze fast food restaurants using the
negotiated order perspective, there have been several studies from the negotiated order
perspective and ethnographies of fast food restaurants.

The analysis of the negotiated order of any milieu requires research methodologies
that collect in-depth or rich data. To analyze a milieu from the negotiated order
perspective researchers must obtain descriptions of individuals’ motivations, actions, and
interpretations. Additionally, a researcher must be aware of structural data such as laws,
cultural norms, and power. Lastly, the researcher should trace the negotiations over time.
Qualitative methodology is appropriate to the study of negotiations in a fast food
restaurant for a number of reasons. First, qualitative methodology allows a researcher to
analyze the full complexity of a setting (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). Second, Jaber
Gubrium and James Holstein assert, “Qualitative research also is distinguished by a
commitment to studying social life in process, as it unfolds” (1991:12). Thirdly,
qualitative research attempts to reach subjective meanings (Gubrium and Holstein 1997).
For these reasons, researchers working from the negotiated order perspective employ
qualitative studies of a small number of cases. Participant observation was used by
Strauss et al. to study psychiatric hospitals (1963, 1981). Likewise, Tim Faupel and
Charles Faupel (1987) used fieldwork to analyze an Introduction to Sociology classroom.
Judith Levy (1982) who studied the interaction between Hospice and medical
organizations used in-depth interviews and some observations. Raymond Lee (1980)
employed a historical analysis of documents and journalistic accounts to study ethnic relations in Malaysia. Lawrence Busch (1982) used historical analysis to study the negotiations over agricultural research. Researchers may combine a number of methods such as observations and interviews. For instance, Albert Meehan (1992) analyzed data drawn from fieldwork, interviews, and an analysis of calls made to the police, in his study of the negotiated order of policing.

A number of social scientific studies of fast food restaurants have used qualitative data. Royle’s (2000) cross-cultural study of European McDonald’s restaurants made use of participant observation, questionnaires, and interviews, with the bulk of his data coming from interviews. Reiter (1991) explains that after some difficulty gaining entrée she worked without pay at a Burger King restaurant in Ontario for a year. Leidner (1993) used a combination of observations and structured interviews. Tannock’s (2001) data come from observations of two union halls and the public spaces of restaurants and grocery stores and unstructured interviews with workers and union representatives. Newman (1998) oversaw a team of researchers who collected data through participant observation, interviews, and diaries. Regardless of their specific focus, these descriptive or exploratory studies have largely sought to demonstrate the actual working experience of fast food employees, the meanings that this work has, and how the lives of workers may be improved. Qualitative methods were used to obtain details that are often left untouched by quantitative research (Ragin 1994).

Goals of the Study

This study is an attempt to contribute to existing theory (Ragin 1994). The negotiated order perspective conceived of by Strauss is not a fully developed theory (1978). Strauss
delineates a number of possible ways in which researchers may contribute to a theory of
negotiation. He writes:

there are those who while doing substantive research find
also they can contribute to a general theory of negotiation.
... they might elaborate sections of the paradigm that are
sparse or underdeveloped-as by working through the
implications of an additional negotiation contextual
property, by following out in more detail a property already
noted by me or any other theorist, by focusing intensively
on different subprocesses and types of negotiation
interaction, or by treating the same ones more elaborately.
Another conventional and entirely necessary possibility is
to qualify the formulated theory, since some of its parts are
inadequate or inaccurate. (1978:244).

The negotiated order perspective has been used to analyze a number of different
milieus. With the exception of Morgan (1975), few studies from the negotiated order
perspective analyze highly rationalized social orders. This research attempts to contribute
to the negotiated order perspective by demonstrating how social order is maintained
through negotiation between actors who have relatively little autonomy. Moreover, this
study seeks add to the negotiated order perspective by collecting data that will inform the
existing sensitizing concepts (such as implicit negotiations or structural context). A
second, related objective is to describe the negotiations that employees engage in to attain
their ends. A third objective is to better understand the concept of autonomy as it relates
to the rationalized work place. A fourth objective of the study is to the substantive
understanding of labor in fast food restaurants. While there have been a number of
ethnographies of fast food restaurants, the diversity of employee experience in fast food
restaurants has not been fully presented. McDonald’s and Burger King and similarly
structured restaurants account for the majority of fast food ethnographies. These
restaurants tend to have a highly differentiated or specialized labor process. However,
there are thousands of fast food restaurants that are less differentiated. Likewise, corporations operate some fast food restaurants while others are operated by individual franchisees. There is considerable diversity for capital required for the purchase and operation of a fast food restaurant. I believe that these variables may have an important impact on the lived experience of workers.

Choosing a Data Collection Method

Studies of negotiated order require the richly detailed data that are generated by qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation. For a host of reasons, I choose to collect my data through observations. Based on Morgan’s (1975) study of the negotiated order of a factory, I conjectured that the negotiations that would occur in a fast food restaurant would tend to be implicit rather than formally articulated. Observing the negotiations that might occur in a highly rationalized environment would necessitate careful analysis. Workers may not be entirely cognizant of the negotiations that are occurring. Moreover, in order to understand the process of implicit negotiations I would have to observe how workers interacted with each other and with management. Observational data would allow me to understand what is important to workers and for what they would and could negotiate. Reiter explains the advantages of fieldwork over interviews, “Sometimes answers do not jibe with what people actually do or think when they are in a situation. For example, one worker I knew would insist on how much she loved her job at Burger King, but when I saw her at work, she always looked bored and unhappy” (1991:76). She also relates, “involvement in the situation allows researchers the opportunity to learn something they didn’t know before” (1991:76). By taking observations, I was in a position to record what occurred in the setting.
Data Collection

Danny Jorgensen writes, "selection of a setting is interrelated with problem being studied" (1989:40). The objectives of this study and theoretical concerns guided my selection of setting. Grinders and Anna's were selected, in part, through purposive sampling, which is used "when a researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation" (Neuman 2000:198). I wanted my observations to come from restaurants with reasonably small, undifferentiated crews, which were owned by individual franchisees. Firstly, this type of fast food restaurant has not been adequately studied. Additionally, I believed that the processes of negotiation would be easier to observe and document in a simple organization, than in a more complex one. Although, I infer that the social order of complex restaurants is maintained through negotiation, it will be easier to document the processes of negotiation in complex restaurants once more simplistic restaurants have been studied.

Convenience and feasibility also played a decisive factor in the selection of sites. As Jorgensen explains, "the selection of a setting for participant observation... is contingent on (1) whether or not you can obtain access to the setting, (2) the range of possible participant roles you might assume, and (3) whether or not this role (or roles) will provide sufficient access to phenomena of interest" (1989:41). My biography led me to two franchises. Over a period of a number of years, I have been employed by four different Grinders franchisees. I have spent over six thousand hours working at six different restaurants in very different environments. During my career at Grinders, I was a sociology student. I was always interested in trying to gain a scientific understanding of my personal experiences. I kept a daily journal of my experiences during my most recent
tenure, where I was employed full time for a little under a month, in the summer of 2001. I placed entries in it at the end of each shift. This journal provides the bulk of my data from Grinders. Given my deep immersion into the world of Grinders I have access to data that may otherwise be unobtainable. This deep immersion is important because, the ability to reach the hidden details of implicit negotiations is crucial to the success of the study. Norm Denzin explains how a researcher may achieve this goal, “Because the covert act is so difficult to penetrate, I have advocated the use of introspective-investigator accounts of the self in process. Such accounts provide the basic source of data on the covert features of the public act” (1978:15).

As an insider, I have been able to understand processes of negotiation that may have remained hidden to an outsider. My decision to is not unorthodox. Jorgensen writes, “the researcher already may be a participant before deciding formally to conduct research in the setting” (1989:41). Additionally, David Hayano relates “some auto-ethnographers worked at various jobs before or even during their careers as professional social scientists. and later analyzed their experiences” (1979:100).

Observing a second franchise deepened my perspective and increased the generalizability of the study. Obtaining access to a particular milieu can be very problematic. A number of researchers who have studied fast food restaurants have reported difficulty in gaining entrée (Leidner 1993; Reiter 1991; Royle 2000). Fortunately, I am acquainted with a franchisee who allowed me to be a semi-employee at his fast food restaurant named Anna’s. Fred allowed me to perform job tasks such as cleaning and some food preparation. I observed Anna’s on twelve different occasions for
over eighty hours, in the fall of 2001. The employees knew that I was conducting research, so I was able to ask them questions.

Ethnographers usually do not have the ability to state with any degree of statistical accuracy their confidence in the generalizability of their sample. Denzin explains.

The naturalistic observer seldom can specify with precise detail the universe of interactive relationships he wishes to generalize to. He takes several approaches to the problem. He may... locate himself in a situation where the joint act occurs and argue that his sample is drawn from the behaviors of all people who pass through this situation...” (1978:19).

The two restaurants represent a venue where one is able to observe what may occur in a fast food restaurant. While, I maintain that there is a tremendous diversity in the lived experience of fast food employees, there are limits on that diversity. Franchised fast food restaurants are based on a rationalized plan. A single restaurant in a franchise will share a similar labor process, similar structuring of hierarchy, and similar equipment with all other restaurants within the franchise. In as much as every Grinders restaurant where I have been employed is distinct in some ways there are many commonalties. For instance, franchisees instruct their employees to slice the rolls in the same way. Most employees wear roughly equivalent uniforms within the franchise. Each restaurant owned the same brand of tomato slicer. By definition, there are important similarities in fast food restaurants of the same chain. Consequently, most franchised fast food restaurants will share some common experiences. In addition to arguing that all fast food restaurants (regardless of chain) share some common features, it is important to note the “theoretically relevant features” of the restaurants that I observed (Denzin 1978b:19). For instance, the restaurants that I observed are located in large cities, they are owned by a
husband and wife; they have relatively small crews (under twenty employees). Relevant theoretical features are identified throughout the analysis.

Difficulties and Limitations

Each type of methodology carries with it certain intrinsic limitations. Autoethnography and participant observation are no exception. There is some debate over the degree to which qualitative social scientists should be aware of how their personal biography impinges on their interpretations (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). My biographical relationship to the subject is significant. Whatever biases arose from the closeness of biography to the setting at Grinders should be offset by my distance from the setting at Anna’s. Conversely, whatever relevant data I was unable to uncover at Anna’s due to my outsider status was corrected by my insider status at Grinders. In short, by using two types of observational data I surmise that the problems associated with either type of observation will be offset. Moreover, it should be noted that this work is not an exercise in praxis. I did not begin with the intention of improving the lives of workers. This study is simply a negotiated order analysis of simple fast food restaurants. Therefore, feelings of sympathy or camaraderie will have little influence on my findings or conclusions.

There is also some difficulty in the actual recording of observations at fast food restaurants (Reiter 1991; Royle 2000). It is often difficult to take notes in hectic environments. I corrected for this problem by recording my observations shortly after leaving the field. While I cannot attest to the absolute veracity of quotations and descriptions, in each case they are very close to what actually occurred. Any distortions are most likely insignificant.
Ethical Issues

There are a number of ethical issues that arise when observing human subjects. These non-mutually exclusive issues include, the need to protect subjects from legal, physical, and emotional harm; the need to preserve the anonymity or confidentiality of the subjects; to obtain informed consent; and to not misrepresent oneself in the field (Neuman 2000). These ethical issues are based on not causing harm to the people who provide scientists with data. The non-controversial nature of this study and the concerted effort to maintain confidentiality have protected my subjects from any reasonable possibility of harm. Observations were taken at Anna’s after receiving approval from the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board on October 31, 2001. After submitting my request to observe Anna’s I submitted a revision to my original protocol requesting permission to analyze my biographical data. Many identifying characteristics have been altered or suppressed. For instance, the names of the restaurant, employees, and franchisees have been changed. It is sincerely believed that none of the data presented here are of a seriously controversial or damaging nature. In many parts, the data relate to my own personal experience as an employee at a fast food restaurant. As mentioned above, working at Grinders is a substantial aspect of my biography. Criticisms of a privileged ethnographer obtaining data from a marginalized group are not relevant here.
CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEGOTIATED ORDER OF A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

In this chapter, I will apply the negotiated order perspective to fast food restaurants. While the social order of the fast food industry is subject to negotiation at many levels and amongst a myriad of different actors, this analysis will focus on the negotiations between coworkers and franchisees. I will begin by introducing the site of the negotiation, including the general features of each restaurant and the specific actors. The chapter will then move to discuss the cast of a typical fast food restaurant and what their individual motivations and strategies may be. Next, the essential aspects of negotiations will be considered including strategies, the negotiation context, structural context, and temporal aspects. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the specific issues that were negotiated in the restaurants. The issues are separated into two types, external (including wages, scheduling, and security) and internal (including job task assignment and the definition of deviance). While the point of view of the franchisees will be taken into account, this analysis focuses on the perspective of individual workers.

A Tale of Two Franchises

This research is largely based on my personal experiences and observations at two nationally franchised fast food restaurants. Both franchises are less uniform than McDonald’s (Jackle and Sculle 1999). In both locations the franchisor seemed to exercise
less control than what Royle described at McDonald's (2000). Grinders specializes in long sandwiches, commonly referred to as submarines, heroes, hoagies, or in this case grinders. Anna's specializes in ice cream, but also presents a menu of hamburgers, hotdogs, fried chicken, and french fries. Both Grinders and Anna's are less differentiated than the McDonald's or Burger King restaurants that have been studied by other researchers (Reiter 1991; Leidner 1993; Royle 2000). The relatively simple division of labor allows for a more clear portrayal of the negotiation of social order. Although these restaurants are less complex than some fast food franchises, they still operate according to a uniformly rational model. By outlining the salient features of the structural and negotiation contexts, we can achieve a sense of how the social order of the fast food restaurant is achieved through cooperation amidst competition. The following will describe the setting, and the cast, of each location. Afterwards, I will present a more general description of the types of actors, their motivations, abilities, and their position vis-à-vis other actors.

Grinders

The location where much of my auto-ethnographic data is based is a mature restaurant in a commercial center of a large northeastern city. The restaurant is located in a freestanding building within walking distance of a number of hotels, businesses, and other entities with a high number of employees. Located in a dense commercial location it did not have a drive through window. The restaurant was usually busy between 11:00 AM and 2:30 PM on weekdays. After lunch (about 2:30 PM) and weekends were relatively slow. However, conventioneers at the nearby hotels would sporadically supplement the restaurants business.
At Grinders, customers ordered from an employee who would fix the sandwich or salad. All of the materials for sandwich construction were located in front of the employee. Who would prepare the order and either receive payment or pass the wrapped item to the person at the register. There are three principle job tasks: food preparation (such as slicing vegetables, mixing tuna fish and mayonnaise, etc.), cleaning, and customer service (constructing sandwiches, and operating the cash register). During busy periods there would be four or five workers continually taking customer orders while another employee or more likely James (the franchisee) or Kiran (James’ wife and the manager) stayed on the cash register. The workers labored under confined conditions. Frequently, there were too many or too few well-trained employees working during the busy periods. Whenever the crew was short staffed, the employees who were present would attempt to compensate for their missing compatriots. Whenever too many people were working at one time, it would be difficult for the employees to maneuver around each other. During busy lunches, the line of customers would stretch to the entrance. Employees would struggle to prepare food items around their coworkers and to isolate the voice of their individual customer from the cacophony of voices. When James was present, he would usually operate the cash register; otherwise, Kiran would receive payment. When business was slow, the same employee who filled the customer’s order would take money from the customer.

The crew was ethnically and racially diverse; it consisted of two franchisees, three core employees, and a fluid stock of periphery, less dependable characters. A core member may be defined as one who is capable of performing most of the routine tasks and has worked for a relatively long amount of time. An indication of core status might
be if an employee is asked to help train new employees. The core members included two twenty-year old Puerto Rican college students named Juanita and Maria; an eighteen-year old high school student of mixed racial background named Shawn; an Indian thirty something named James who owned the restaurant and his wife Kiran who managed the restaurant. Shawn, Maria, and Juanita were able to do almost all of the tasks that were required to run the restaurant. Due to their centrality, they held a distinct position in negotiations. The restaurant would be far less profitable for James and Kiran were it not for the presence of the core workers. Moreover, the core workers relieved Kiran and James of a great deal of the worry over the mundane details of restaurant management. An essential feature of core employee status is that core employees effectively exercise authority over peripheral employees in the absence of the franchisee. However, for all their competence, this particular restaurant simply could not function effectively on the labors of the core figures alone. A constantly changing pool of periphery employees contributed to the restaurant. During my month long tenure (including me) four people resigned, (one of whom Kiran claims that she was about to fire), and one was fired (the worker claimed that she was about to resign). In the same time period four people were hired. The periphery employees could be divided into two groups, the competent, and the incompetent. Of course, this is a sliding scale; employees can be relatively useful or useless (some employees were so incompetent that they became a physical obstacle) to their co-workers. A competent peripheral employee may be peripheral due to part-time status or having only been employed for a brief period of time (three employees at Grinders fit this description). An incompetent peripheral employee is simply one who for whatever reason is of little usefulness to coworkers or management. An actor’s status as a
core or periphery worker has an important affect on the workers position in the ongoing negotiations.

A crew may change over time. According to one core employee, James had originally run the restaurant with enthusiasm, but over the years, he came to be less and less concerned with the daily operation of this location. Perhaps, his other Grinder restaurant was a distraction or maybe he was slowly burning out. Whatever the cause, James did not present himself as someone who identified with his franchise. I never witnessed even a hint of the corporate ideology that has been reported by other ethnographers (Reiter 1991). There was some concern that he might sell the restaurant. The Grinders restaurant was well worn. I presume the equipment was purchased when James first bought the restaurant was fairly beaten up. The walk in freezer appeared to be in constant danger of failure. The food disposal broke down periodically. The schedule was often posted a few days late or not at all. We were usually out of some menu items. James’ lack of enthusiasm was of central importance to the negotiations. The employees who sought to negotiate implicitly or explicitly for their own benefit from their own position interpreted his position. The core employees tended to be somewhat extroverted and seemed to feel quite comfortable in expressing their concerns. In fact, the extroverted behavior extended into other spheres of behavior that had nothing to do with jockeying for preferable job tasks or scheduling. Shawn would loudly announce the arrival of his birthday or his displeasure with a given shift. Maria and Shawn might have a conversation about their home lives. As the employees felt comfortable expressing themselves, they often made their motivations known as easily as any other aspect of their life that they felt sharing with the group. This ease with their surroundings influenced the pursuit of their interests.
Anna’s

The Anna’s restaurant is located on the corner of an intersection in a freestanding building complete with a sizable parking lot and drive through window. The restaurant has a large dining area, an area for the preparation of desert food that is within customer’s view and a grill and deep fryer in the kitchen. Additionally, there is a break room and storage area. The restaurant is located near a residential area in a large city. Anna’s business is largely comprised of the families in the surrounding residential area. Given the restaurant’s heavy emphasis on traditional summertime desserts, the weather is an important component of the structural context of the social order. The volume of business or rather the franchisee’s interpretation of the volume of business is directly related to the terms of negotiation. The observations were made during the off-season. The crew had already been reduced to Fred, the franchisee; his wife, Cary; two core employees, Sandra and Dianne; and two part-time workers named John and Mike.

While Grinders seemed to be a portrait of constant strife and fluidity, Anna’s was far more static. The schedule did not change substantially from week to week. The crew was stable; there was no turnover during my observations. Fred, who unlike James, was not divided between two locations was able to devote his full attention to the maintenance of the restaurant. His near constant presence significantly reduced the autonomy of the employees. Sandra and Dianne were so overwhelmingly competent that they did not have any difficulty serving the customers according to the established routine. The literature on routinized labor tends to focus on large operations that have a highly differentiated labor force. This restaurant, which during the busy season may become highly differentiated, was operating with a reduced crew. During the occasional busy period, a
single employee may have to perform the work of two or three employees. This was possible because the franchisee and the workers had honed their skills to the point where they could seamlessly work with each other. As with any fast food restaurant, the labor process at Anna’s is highly routinized. There is a very specific procedure for each menu item. Large parties would arrive; one worker would take the order while the other would prepare it. One worker would go to the kitchen to grill or fry the dinner foods while the other would prepare the dessert items. The worker who finished first would package the food. The clockwork operations stood in stark contrast to the near chaos of Grinders.

The Cast

Individuals have their own motivations for entering the restaurant. These motivations may be similar or disparate. Likewise, actors may be in conflict or in allegiance with each other. Confusing the situation is that the same two individuals who are working together for one end may be conflict over another. Two employees who are cooperating to close the restaurant on time may be in conflict over who will receive a certain day off. The individuals are existential selves, each with their own motivations that may include rational and extra-rational desires. These desires may shift and change with the situation. A number of structural factors such as regulations, the weather, the economy, and cultural values affect the milieu. The motivations, emotions, and social skills of the actors as well as their interpretation of the structural factors influence the negotiation context. The franchisee and the employees form the core of the social order. In addition to the franchisee and the employees, there is an endless succession of competitors, property owners, suppliers, regulatory agents, customers, and the franchisee and its representatives, who each make their presence felt as they bargain for their interests.
The Franchisee

The franchisee stands at the center of negotiations in the social order of the fast food restaurant. The franchisee must interact, directly or indirectly, with regulatory agencies, property owners, competitors, customers, employees, and the franchisor. If the franchisee is to be successful then all of the proceeding actors (with the exception of the competition) must be satisfied. Ultimately, all decisions and all actions are her or his responsibility and she or he retains immediate authority over what transpires. Corporate mandates can be ignored, irate customers can be refused service, insubordinate employees can be dismissed, and the board of health can be ignored. However, if a franchisee wants to keep her or his franchise, retain customers, maintain a crew, and avoid legal sanction, the franchisee must pacify all of the relevant actors. In the unstable environment of the restaurant, customers and employees must feel that they are receiving enough from the interaction for them to remain in the interaction. The restaurant depends on some actors individually (such as the franchisor or the board of health) or collectively (in the case of customers or employees).

In order to achieve her or his goals, a franchisee must interpret the demands of the people with whom she interacts. Myriad questions confront franchisees. What will a particular health inspector allow? How trustworthy are the employees? How competent are they to run the restaurant without supervision? How closely should the company line on prices, formulas, and decor be followed? How much will customers pay for a small order of french fries? How long will they wait for a milk shake? How much meat do they expect on their submarine sandwich? As the franchisee interprets the various demands
and predicts the most probable, actions of the individuals in question, the franchisee must then attempt to minimally satisfy all parties concerned.

The Employees

Collectively, the employees are an integral component of the restaurant. With the possible exception of restaurants that have very few customers, a franchisee cannot exist without help. The franchisee must interpret what employees will and will not do. A franchisee cannot make claims on employees that are out of line with the majority of their expectations. Individually, however, a single employee may be utterly replaceable. Given the virtual absence of unions in fast food restaurants in the United States, fast food employees are an atomized group. Fast food employees are just as likely to be in conflict with each other as they are to be in conflict with management. The interchangeability, which ostensibly weakens fast food workers, might also increase their power. In as much as they can be replaced easily, frequently, they may replace one fast food job with another. Since the job offers an employee little in the way of formal training or recognized skills, a worker who has been successful in obtaining one fast food job can usually expect to be capable of gaining another. The significance of this fact is that depending on the structural context (the unemployment rate, or the number of low skill jobs) a franchisee may have to compete with other employers. If a franchisee consistently offers his employees less in the way of wages or scheduling flexibility than do other employers in the immediate surroundings, the franchisee may find her or his restaurant suffering from a shortage of labor. Conversely, if there are few options for alternative employment, an employer may be able to make greater claims on his or her employees.
Like franchisees, fast food employees must assess the structural and the negotiation context if he or she is to be triumphant. Employees interpret the franchisee’s desires, his or her value to the franchisee, the various biases and proclivities of the employer, and what can and cannot be negotiated with the franchisee. A franchisee that does not allow employees to use the telephone may allow them to have visitors. A core employee may be allowed to use the telephone while a peripheral employee may not.

As mentioned above, employees negotiate vertically (with management) and horizontally (with co-workers). There are a number of issues where co-workers will be in direct or indirect involvement with each other. For instance, in some restaurants, co-workers may have to negotiate the assignment of job tasks. Workers may be left to decide who will prepare vegetables, wait on customers, or clean the toilets. Scheduling issues, in terms of who gets to work when and who gets the most hours may bring workers into direct conflict or cooperation. Co-worker negotiation is exemplified by the common practices of “switching schedules” or having another worker “cover” for one who wishes to take a given day off. The agreement to do this is invariably worked out through some form of explicit or implicit negotiation. For instance, many years ago, one August evening, some friends of mine came in to visit me while I was working. They were going to see a movie in a nearby theatre. It was the end of the summer; I was tired of working, and anticipating the arrival of a substantial student loan check. In short, I really wanted to ‘blow off’ work and go to the movie. I could not afford to simply quit, nor would I walk out on an employer who I personally liked. I was there with two co-workers, one who was scheduled to work until 11:00 PM; the other was due to leave five minutes ago. Neither had been trained to close the restaurant. That was my job. I could not trust the
one scheduled to work until 11:00 PM to manage the restaurant alone. My only hope was to convince the worker who was about to leave to cover the shift for me. I asked him if he would like to increase his hours. He informed me that he would not. I offered to pay him ten dollars on top of the extra three hours wages that he would earn while I was at the movie. Deal. This is a simple example of explicit co-worker negotiation. Notice that the features of the negotiation context such as the role of emotions and personal ties (not wanting to cause harm to my employer) trust (not trusting to leave my co-worker alone). Structural features (the presence of financial aid) also impinged on the negotiation context.

Successful employees are able to read the structural context and discern how it might affect the negotiation context. An employee who knows that there are a number of other similar jobs in the immediate vicinity may be able to claim more for herself than an employee working in an area plagued with a dearth of similar jobs. An employee must also be able to interpret the negotiation context. For instance, the emotions that are a part of any social environment may affect the negotiations at any given time. An employee who is in search of a raise or increased hours must interpret the optimal time to initiate negotiations with the franchisee.

The Significant Extras

In addition to the employees and employers, there are a number of other actors who take their part in the ongoing negotiations of the social order. Customers, franchisors, competitors, and regulatory agents (health inspectors) each pursuing different interests enter the negotiations. They are considered extras here because on any given day they may not actually negotiate directly or individually with either the franchisor or the
employees. First, there are the customers. Without enough customers, a restaurant will not be economically viable. While the customers, as a whole, drastically influence the social order, an individual customer has relatively little affect on the ongoing negotiations. If a single customer does not agree with the price a hamburger, the quality of the patty, or the length of wait, that single customer may negotiate 'with his feet' and never be missed. However, customers will have to be reckoned with if they all take a similar stance to an action by a franchisee or franchisor. Customers form a negotiating block in the ongoing incremental negotiations. In order to meet their goals, the franchisee and the franchisor attempt to interpret and meet the customer's expectations. Their recognition of customer demands significantly influences the negotiations. Issues that can and cannot be bargained for often depend on what employers' believe customers expect.

The health inspector affects the social order. On a typical day, the health inspector is unlikely to be directly involved with the restaurant. However, this official's judgement may have dire consequences for the franchisee and employees alike. If the health inspector finds regulations being ignored, the inspector may sanction the franchisee. This is a threat that Fred and Kiran, two franchisees thousands of miles apart, took very seriously. It can be assumed that most restaurateurs feel an ethical obligation to maintain sanitary conditions, but the government, in the person of the health inspector decides precisely what the standards will be. A single franchisee has little power in relation to the health inspector. I witnessed little in the way of negotiation between health inspectors and franchisees. The franchisees had nothing to offer health inspectors save their compliance to the impersonal social order. The impersonal social order that is enforced by the health inspector is itself a matter of explicit negotiation. Much like the governmental regulations...
of the liquor industry, at some level, the laws that regulate restaurants, (or the laws that regulate the regulators) must be negotiated (Denzin 1977, 1978a). For instance, lobbyists working on behalf of the restaurant industry may influence the social order.

Like the health inspector, the franchisor sets the terms of the specific interaction. Many franchisees seek to ensure a level of uniformity by having periodic inspections of the franchisee. Interactions between franchisees and franchisors are highly variable. In some instances, franchisors maintain a great deal of control over franchisees; in other cases franchisees operate with relative autonomy. The terms of the interaction are set at the time of the contract signing. Potential franchisees have the option of selecting from a large pool of franchisees in order to find the arrangement that best suits his or her desires. The two franchisees under consideration here maintained a relatively high degree of autonomy from the franchisor. The corporation periodically inspected both restaurants, but these inspections did not seem to carry the weight of the health inspections. While the authority of the health inspector clearly weighed on the minds of Kiran and Fred neither franchisee expressed concern for the views of the franchisor. This lack of concern may partially be explained by the fact that many of the interests of the franchisee and the franchisor coincide. Both franchisee and franchisor want sales to be high. In addition to the name and the product, the franchisee purchased the formula for operation, it is only logical that the franchisee makes use of that formula, and with negligible exception they did. However, there are instances when the motives of franchisor’s and franchisees are in conflict (Royle 2000; Schlosser 2001).
Aspects of Negotiations

To examine the issues that may be negotiated in a franchised fast food restaurant, we must understand some of the essential features of negotiation. First, negotiations occur between actors who are attempting to satisfy varying desires. Each actor comes to the negotiations with different motivations. Actors with similar goals may attempt to achieve their goals through different means. We must be mindful of the negotiation context that surrounds the interactions. Unlike rational choice models of negotiation, this analysis is mindful of the role that emotions play in influencing the unfolding negotiations.

Likewise, we cannot lose our awareness of the structural context that contains the negotiation context. Finally, the negotiated order perspective maintains that the negotiations over social order are never final, rather social order is fluid and must be continually renegotiated with changes in the structural and negotiation contexts, as well as when actor's motivations change or when different individuals enter a milieu (Strauss 1978).

The Structural and Negotiation Contexts

The structural context of negotiations refers to the structural features that affect negotiations (Strauss 1978). Structure does not strictly determine the outcome of negotiations. However, an actor's interpretation of the social structural, coupled with the actor's interpretation of the other actor's interpretation of the social structure yields a great influence on the negotiations. The structural context of a restaurant includes but is certainly not limited to the size of the restaurant, the volume of business, the weather, cultural beliefs (racism, consumerism, sexism, etc.), the presence of competitors, the laws, the formal organization of restaurant, and so forth. In order to consider the
negotiations of any milieu we must understand how actors interpret the relevant structural features. The negotiation context refers to all things that directly affect the negotiation of a social order (Strauss 1978). The negotiation context includes the structural features and the individuals' motivations, values, strategies, and emotions.

Emotions

Emotions play a large role in the ongoing negotiations. Employees and franchisees often work at a frantic pace, for long hours, in tight quarters near hot fryers, grills, and ovens. In restaurants that are not highly differentiated (like Grinders and Anna’s) the labor process may combine the repetition of an assembly line, with the degradation and exasperation of customer service work, and the sometimes-nauseating characteristics of janitorial work. One can imagine how a fast food restaurant might become an emotionally charged environment. Two employees may find that they would like to fill the same niche in the ecosystem. A worker’s compensation dispute can boil beneath the façade of an ostensibly harmonious worker-employee relationship. As the actors cooperate and compete with each other, intense feelings of admiration, loyalty, and resentment may develop. These emotions are a continually varying element that must be interpreted and adjusted to if the actors are to cooperate with each other. Emotional issues have a drastic effect on how people interact with each other. There are times to negotiate and there are times to avoid interaction. For instance, Shawn, a day after an argument about the schedule with James was incredibly reluctant to make work-related suggestions to his employer. Conversely, Shawn wisely pressed James for a raise while the four of us were celebrating the most profitable day of the year. A symbiotic maintenance of the social order requires sensitivity to the emotions of one’s fellow members in an emotionally
charged environment. Affecting the emotional context is the conflation of primary and secondary relationships.

In many ways, fast food restaurants are the epitome of the process of rationalization described by Weber. These restaurants have deskill the labor process to a point where employees are said to have become interchangeable (Reiter 1991). Impersonality is one of the defining marks of rationalization in general and fast food restaurants in particular. However, impersonality is not a factor at all fast food restaurants. Despite rationalization, high turnovers rates, comparatively low pay, competition and atomization, market relations have not completely erased moral relations. Both employees (usually core employees) and the franchisee often come to share a history and an interpersonal understanding that defies the popular notion that impersonal relations mark fast food employment. Some workers become friends. A franchisee might come to empathize with long-term employees. Workers do not necessarily allow their feelings of camaraderie or intimacy to occlude their personal desires. To the contrary I have yet to see a conflation of primary and secondary relationships result in either a worker or an employee seriously departing from their own position simply because they may “like” or “care for” another person in the restaurant. One of the features of negotiations in a simple franchised fast food restaurant is that individuals often pursue their own personal interests in a contentious or competitive fashion, with people they intimately understand. There are a number of different strategies that actor’s may employ in their negotiations.

Strategies of Negotiation

Two individuals who are in structurally similar positions may attempt to achieve widely divergent goals. One employee may wish to increase his autonomy to improve his
individual working conditions. Another may be primarily motivated to earn as much money as possible. The specific strategies of the employees and the franchisee depend on their individual interpretations of the negotiation context. David Altheide explains.

The crucial element in negotiating order, however, is the essential relationship between an actor’s situational definition and the social world within which it emerges. The context does not automatically direct or lead actors to one course of action rather than to another; there always is more than one possible course of action (emphasis in original 1988:343).

If an actor is going to be successful in getting what he or she wants from the social order, he or she may calculate his or her actions. Franchisees and employees interpret the negotiation context. Sometimes actors will articulate their desires and what they are willing to give in return. Other times, actors will choose to engage in implicit negotiations. The decision depends, in part, on the personal proclivities of the individual. Some people prefer explicit negotiations, while others choose to negotiate implicitly through action. The next section will examine some strategies that franchisees employ in their negotiations with their employees. Employee strategies will be considered in the section describing the typology of negotiated issues.

Franchisee Strategies for Negotiating with Employees

A single franchisee, operating one or two restaurants may not have access to the human resource specialists. While the Burger Kings and McDonald’s of the industry can invest a great deal of resources to placate employees, this task takes on a different meaning for individual franchisees. Reiter describes how Burger King uses an industrial psychology to encourage their employees to work hard for little pay (1991). Eric
Schlosser reports that McDonald's uses transactional analysis to motivate employees without offering material rewards. Schlosser relates, "that managers are trained in a technique called "stroking," wherein managers give "deliberate praise, and recognition that many teenagers don't get at home. Stroking can make a worker feel that his or her contribution is sincerely valued. And it's much less expensive than raising wages or paying overtime" (2001:74). Depending on the individual proclivities of the franchisee can use a sort of layman's human relations theory of management may be used to smooth over the effects of the scientific management on the psyches of employees.

Both Fred and James are willing to negotiate with increase the wages of core employees that they wish to retain. Fred offered overtime to his core employees and I witnessed James give an hourly raise to a core employee. Unlike some of the managers at some corporate fast food restaurants, the franchisees at Anna's and Grinders maintain enough autonomy from the franchisor to decide how and if they want to negotiate with industrial psychology or human relations theory to supplement the scientific management intrinsic to the fast food restaurant. This decision depends largely on the franchisee. I never witnessed Fred attempt to use any technique that resembled stroking. James, however, did not appear to share Fred's candor. This is not to say that James is dishonest, but rather. James (who is rumored to have a BA in psychology) is willing to use the emotionality of the negotiation context to his advantage.

The following situations exemplify how James maintained the social order, in part by knowing when to mollify an angry employee. Saturdays at Grinders are supposed to be easy days. This expectation is a part of the negotiation context. This section of the city is very quiet on the weekends. Kiran and James react to the structural context by reducing
the number of crew over the weekend. One Saturday I was scheduled to work from open
to close with Juanita and Maria. It was supposed to be an easy day. I expected to have
two highly competent co-workers to help me serve few customers. Unfortunately, there
was a convention and my highly competent co-workers were sick and at home. The
conventioners, stationed in a hotel near the restaurant had few culinary options over the
weekend when many restaurants were closed. At 11:00 AM, I called James and Kiran
requesting help. James claimed that he would be at the restaurant at 11:30 AM. The
conventioners continued to enter the restaurant. I processed the customers successfully,
but the restaurant looked as if I had been playing with hand grenades. Discarded wax
paper covered the floor. The dining area needed to be bused. The sink was overflowing
with dishes. James and Kiran kept failing to show up. My anger deepened steadily. By
12:30 PM, James and Kiran finally appeared. Kiran immediately set to work. James
assessed the situation. Unfortunately, the rush had subsided, making it seem as though I
had exaggerated the number of customers that I had served. He did not chide me for not
working hard enough or for being sloppy. Instead, he decided to maintain the social order
by stating, “You did well for your first time alone.” He then read the register tape and
realized that I had been busy. James interpreted the situation, realized that I might be
somewhat angry about having had to work so hard without assistance. He modified his
original statement. “You did tremendous!” His articulated recognition worked to diffuse
my frustration. By interpreting the negotiation context, he preserved the social order by
encouraging me to remain at the restaurant.

Another example of a franchisee being mindful of the emotions in the negotiation
context occurred when James wanted to alter the established work schedule. I had been
working for ten days in a row without a day off. While this would not seem out of the ordinary in some negotiation contexts, at this Grinders restaurant, a feature of the negotiation context was that employees expected to receive regular time off. I was greatly looking forward to the next four days. It was Thursday and I was not scheduled to work Friday, Saturday, or Tuesday. The negotiation context had changed in that some workers were continually calling off. James interpreted the change in the negotiation context and decided that he needed to increase the hours of another worker to make up for the potentially truant workers. James decided that I should work some extra shifts. I too had interpreted not just the absence of workers in the negotiation context, but also that James might ask me to sacrifice my time off. My excitement dissolved into trepidation as the shift wore on. James interpreted my emotional state when he approached me toward the end of my shift.

James: Tomorrow you get a day off. You deserve it. What is it your first in...

Eric: Three weeks.

James: Five years.

[Restrained chuckles all around]

He then proceeded to tell me that I would have to work on Saturday and for a half-shift on Tuesday. I could have protested. However, I did not want to be fired. Moreover, it was exceedingly difficult to argue with a boss who was demonstrably sympathetic to my plight. Lastly, emotionally, it was easier to accept an easy Saturday shift because I was relieved about not being asked to work for an eleventh day in a row. James was successful in negotiating for his desires, in that he was able to fix the deficiency in the schedule, without having an employee resign (an ever-present danger). James was
successful, in part because he correctly read the emotional elements of the negotiation context and compensated for this in his negotiation strategy. This interaction, as we will see later, represents a negotiation in that I could very well have refused. Later I will relate a similar instance where the employee decided not to accept an undesired shift.

The Temporal Aspects of Negotiation

The analysis of the negotiated order of fast food restaurants is based on the notion that social order is continually negotiated. Issues that have been negotiated at one time will most likely be renegotiated as the structural and negotiation contexts change. A change in the unemployment rate, the actors, the laws, cultural beliefs, emotions and so forth may present an opportunity or call for a renegotiation of specific issues. Since social order is created through interaction, the social order may change with each set of negotiations. Employees who collaborate at one time may not cooperate in the future. A tense employee-employer relationship may improve. Likewise, an amiable employee-employer relationship may sour over time. Negotiations are usually conducted in the shadow of previous negotiations. For instance, the employees at Grinders warned me about the dangers of being too flexible in terms of scheduling. One day after I had agreed to come in off of the schedule one employee warned. “Now that you covered, he’ll always expect you to...[it will be like] you need the day off, see Eric…” Oftentimes issues are negotiated periodically, with the conclusion of the negotiation holding until the next time the issue comes up. For example, an employee may explicitly negotiate for a higher wage. The negotiations presented below will illustrate how the social order changes with the ongoing negotiations.
The Negotiations

Within the social order of the restaurant there are innumerable points that must be compromised upon, from the schedule to the assignment of job tasks to the definition of deviance. This section will focus on employee-employer and employee-employee negotiations. There are two main types of issues that may be negotiated, those that are external (i.e. wages and the schedule) and those that are internal (i.e. job task assignment). This section will examine what issues are negotiated for and what strategy employees use to achieve their goals. Additionally, I will consider the nature of autonomy and how it relates to negotiations in highly regulated environments.

External Issues

Under the heading of external issues, I will include all issues that constitute the economic rationale for obtaining a job, most notably, the wages, opportunity for advancement, security, and the schedule. These issues must be worked out but do not directly relate to the actual working conditions. The external issues are directly connected to the ‘outside’ non-work lives of employees. The external issues are among the most critical of an employee’s life such as: whether or not an employee can move out of her or his house; is able to schedule time for college classes, another job, or a social life; or if he or she will lose sleep because he or she is afraid of being laid off. These negotiations may be particularly contentious because they have the gravest stakes for both employee and franchisee.
Worker Autonomy and Negotiations

Over External Issues

Autonomy refers to the freedom from employer control (Katz 1964). Autonomy may take the form of control over issues such as the schedule or job task assignment. The notion of autonomy relates to negotiations over external issues, in that workers who seek to negotiate for increased wages, security, and hours, do so by explicitly or tacitly sacrificing their personal autonomy. In some cases, the workers who have the most autonomy are those who do not wish to earn more than minimum wage or work a full (forty-hour or more) schedule. If an employee wishes to move from the periphery to the core, she or he may have to sacrifice some personal freedom. An employee who wants as many hours as possible may have to make some sacrifices in personal autonomy such as being willing to work weekends or closing shifts. This same employee may also have to be willing and able to satisfy the franchisee’s expectations. For example, the day after Shawn received a raise, he was called upon to forfeit his scheduled day off to cover for co-workers who had failed to show up. Conversely, employees who wish to receive very little in the way of take home pay, advancement, and security can commonly maintain a high level of autonomy. If the negotiation context includes a labor shortage, a worker who cares little about external issues may demand quite a lot in terms of autonomy (not working weekends, not performing certain job tasks like cleaning the toilets). An employer may concede some control to prevent the employee from leaving. However, that same employee may be ‘let go’ when the negotiation context changes. Some employees assess their personal situations and decide how much autonomy they should
give up in order to have their material needs met. An employee who is dependent on his or her position may be less willing to press for autonomy.

Wages

One of the most salient issues to be negotiated in any work environment is the employee wage rate. There is no escaping the fact that fast food labor is considered to be among the least skilled jobs in the United States. Due to the low value placed on fast food labor, workers have considerably depressed wages (Ritzer 1998). The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2000 the mean hourly wage for fast food cooks was $6.78 per hour and the mean wage for “Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers. Including Fast Food” was $6.84 (http://www.bls.gov/oes/2000/oes_35Fo.htm). To some extent, the economic viability of fast food restaurants is predicated on the ability of restaurants to reduce labor costs. The economic pressure to pay employees as little as possible constitutes an important aspect of the negotiation context. Employees do exercise some agency over their wages. Although, there may be limits to what a franchisee is willing to spend, the specific hourly wage of each employee is subject to implicit and explicit negotiation.

Implicit or indirect negotiation tended to be continual and imprecise (for more than one issue at once). An employee could broker for increased wages by simply presenting himself as a “good employee” that is to say a more competent, dependable, and trustworthy employee. By not (openly) engaging in deviant activities, by agreeing to substitute for truant coworkers, optimally performing job tasks and so forth an employee may place herself in a position to command a pay increase without explicit negotiation.

For instance, when I was hired, I was informed that my initial wages was $6.00 per hour
and that if I was competent I could expect a pay raise. As it turned out, I was able to utilize my considerable Grinders experience at this location, to such an extent that I soon became recognized as a relatively useful employee and coworker. At the end of the first week, James informed me that I would be receiving a raise of $0.75 per hour. I had not asked for a raise. However, by satisfactorily performing my duties, I successfully (and unintentionally) bargained for a pay increase.

At this point, the reader might legitimately ask: How does this constitute implicit negotiation? Common sense would predict that competent employees are better paid than are incompetent employees. However, we must remember that in fast food restaurants (as in any number of work environments) workers choose to be 'good' employees. To understand an employee's decision to become competent we must consider the existential position of the individual actor. First, the decision to become a competent employee is not necessarily the same as the decision to retain one's position. In some (but by no means all) negotiation contexts, the labor pressures are such that even a relatively incompetent or 'poor' employee may enjoy a surprisingly high degree of job security. I observed some employees who seemed to interpret the structural forces operating on the restaurant, and decided that since they had little desire to garner a small increase in hourly pay, they would rather 'slack off'. Therefore, if a worker may be able to remain employed without being a 'model' employee, workers who do attempt to meet what they believe to be the franchisee's expectations are making a choice to do so. I am not making the argument that anyone can work well in fast food restaurants. Quite the contrary, despite the highly rationalized labor process, becoming a model fast food employee is very much an accomplishment. If a worker is to become a core or even a competent...
periphery member of the organization, he or she must make the decision to do so. The attempt to move from the periphery to the core requires an individual to interpret the environment and the means necessary to achieve this goal. The industrious employee must learn how to perform the various job tasks successfully and to get along with the others, particularly the franchisee. This goal may be 'easier said than done' so to speak, as not everyone is successful. For the purposes of understanding how the social order of a franchised fast food restaurant is subject to negotiation, we can interpret the actions of the competent employee as one who is implicitly negotiating for increased wages by choosing to be competent.

Negotiations over wages may also take place on an explicit level. Not all employees who wish to receive an increase in their wages are willing to wait to be rewarded for their silent efforts. Some employees, particularly those who see themselves as having achieved a certain importance or core status within the restaurant may feel more comfortable making their wishes known. The ultimate decision-maker is the franchisee. In the non-unionized and non-contractual fast food restaurant disagreements are often reduced to a 'take it or leave it' situation. The employer will interpret the situation as he wishes regardless of the structural context, and may choose to set the wages regardless of the structural context. The decision not to negotiate is itself an act of negotiation. Correspondingly, the employee must then decide whether to stay or to leave, which is also an act of negotiation.

A franchisee may decide that it is in her or his best interest to 'work with' an employee who requests a pay raise. On a certain holiday, Grinders is traditionally busy and is subsequently open later than usual. The predictably increased business is a part of
the structural context. None of the core crewmembers wanted to work on this particularly
difficult evening. The individual motivations of the workers form an aspect of the
negotiation context. James was not willing to give all of them the night off. Although,
James was able to import one worker from another store, he still needed one more
worker. The unlucky candidate was Shawn, who parlayed his anger at being forced to
work when Maria and Juanita did not into a higher wage. After we finally finished
closing the restaurant at about midnight, James and Kiran took Shawn and I to dinner.
Shortly after our orders were taken, Shawn announced; “I need a raise!” He mentioned
that his pay should be eight dollars per hour. It came up that Juanita and Maria, who have
been with the restaurant longer, earn $8.00 per hour. Shawn related that the other core
members had received the holiday off last year (the fact that he had to work this holiday
two years in a row seemed to contribute to his resentment). Eventually, James relented to
Shawn’s request. In some negotiation contexts, an assertive employee may succeed in
bargaining for increased pay. This fact is demonstrated by Shawn, who was able to
steadily negotiate for wage increases until he was earning as much as employees who
were his senior in the restaurant. Although structural issues influence how much
employees can expect to earn, the actual pay may be subject to individual negotiations of
an atomized work force and the franchisee.

Promotion

As with other industries, an offer of a raise in wages may come with an increase in
responsibility. A franchisee may decide that if higher wages are to be paid, the increase in
outlay should come with a decrease in direct supervisory work for the franchisee.

Contrary to the common sense expectation that an employee will accept an opportunity
for promotion, in a fast food restaurant the desirability of such advancement is far from guaranteed. One slow evening, Juanita explained to me that promotion was not a part of her plans at Grinders.

"I wouldn't be a manager."

"Why wouldn't you be a manager Juanita?"

"Cause I had to do it full time, I wanted to do it part-time cause I wanted to go to school."

Juanita went on to relate that other managers experienced a significant reduction in personal autonomy. She rejected an offer of promotion because she feared that it would be difficult to keep up her studies if she accepted the encroachment on personal autonomy that comes with management. We can see that the terms of promotion are the subject of negotiation. Although the prospect of increased pay was attractive, she was not at the restaurant for wages alone. For her, autonomy (particularly her control of the schedule) was a stronger motivation for working at Grinders than the wages. This finding is not surprising considering the relatively low expectations employees may have of how much they can actually earn at a fast food restaurant. Juanita was not the only employee at Grinders to reject a promotion. One evening Shawn mentioned,

"After you left, when we went to [dinner], he [James] laid on me this offer to be manager at Placid Hills [James’ second location]."

"Why didn't you take it?"

"I'm not desperate yet. When I've got an apartment, I might want the ten an hour."

Shawn, who still lived at home, was not sure that he needed the commitment of full time management. However, he would not rule out the possibility of accepting a
managerial position. If his personal circumstances changed, he may wish to take the promotion. Again, we see that the personal motivations of the actors impinge upon the social order of the restaurant. Moreover, one might infer that James has placed a limit on how much an employee may earn without taking on a significant increase responsibility. Of course, James' offer comes because of his interpretation of Shawn as a competent and trustworthy employee. James has interpreted his fiscal situation to be healthy enough to delegate authority in exchange for increased labor expenditures. More likely than not, the promotional offer was an expression of his personal desire to decrease the personal strain of owning two restaurants.

Security

In addition to negotiating for wage increases, the security of an employee's position may be subject to negotiation. Security refers to a state of being insulated from the fluctuations of the market place. This may take the form of security from being laid off or security from drastic cuts in scheduled hours. The structural context of some restaurants includes a variable amount of business throughout the year. For instance, some areas may depend on the business of seasonal travelers or tourists; some areas become inhospitable during the winter, and some restaurants specialize in items that have seasonal appeal. For whatever reason some franchisees may find that it is in their best interest to close down completely or drastically reduce the number of employees during a slower season. Presumably, most employees know of the impending labor cuts. Employees may be forced to implicitly negotiate for a position of security or be laid off or have their hours reduced. Those employees who only need the job for a brief time (like those who do not need a wage increase) may opt to retain a periphery role, sparing themselves what they
may consider undue effort or strain. Other employees may decide that it is in their best interest to retain their position and their current schedule. Employees who wish to earn a measure of stability must decide to become as competent and trustworthy as possible. The obvious reason for this is that, all things being equal, the franchisee will retain the most competent employees during the periodic slowdowns in business. During transitional periods, there can be an erratic flow of business. Workers who have been lulled to complacency will find that they are suddenly very busy. This transition can be difficult and requires a high level of competence. When a franchisee contracts her or his labor force, it follows that the crew may find itself shorthanded. In order to avoid losing customers, the shorthanded crew must perform especially well. The issue of security is likely to be negotiated implicitly, as workers who wish to remain on the staff and or have their hours remain in tact will implicitly negotiate by demonstrating a high level of competence. The negotiations over the issue of security during slow times of the year may be affected by the emotions present in the negotiation context. When the negotiation context includes a conflation of primary and secondary relationships between workers and management, it may aid the cause of an employee who wishes to negotiate for increased job security. Despite the supposedly formal and impersonal relations that exist in rationalized environments, members of the restaurant may over time relate to each other on a personal basis. This is not to say that workers and employees become friends in any traditional sense of the word, but there may very well be a movement from market to moral relations. While it is doubtful that the individual actors in a restaurant ever lose sight of their personal interests, the conflation of primary and secondary relations may influence negotiations. For instance, it will be more difficult an employer to lay off an
employee that he or she has come to know, than an employee who is less well known. In other words, a franchisee is more likely to attempt to "take care" of a long time employee than one with whom he or she has little emotional connection. I observed this tendency both through out my personal career at Grinders and at Anna's.

The Schedule

Perhaps one of the most salient issues to be negotiated in a fast food restaurant is the schedule. The possible flexibility of scheduling is attractive to those with outside commitments such as single mothers and students (Reiter 1991). Given the relatively low-level of prestige, training, and money that can be derived from fast food employment an adequate schedule may be a particularly salient issue. Two major themes circulate around the issue of scheduling. The first is the ability of an employee to work around other aspects of their life such as extracurricular activities, a second job, parental responsibilities, and education. The second theme is the ability of workers to gain enough hours in order to be satisfied with one's income. The following testimonies, presented by Ivan Charner and Bryna Shore Fraser (1984), exemplify the ability of some fast food employees to obtain acceptable work schedules. One respondent related:

I found my grades dropping because I was working 4 or 5 hours every school night and 8 or 9 hours on Saturday. I talked to my manager and we decided that it would be best for me to only work 4 hours during the school week, then more on the weekends. Many of my working friends have told me how fortunate I am to have such an understanding manager and suitable hours. This has been my experience working for both the company and a franchise (Charner and Fraser 1984: 138-139).

However, some workers are not so successful. One respondent offered this statement:

I need more hours and more money with three children. They will give the people that don't want to work more
hours and the ones that want to work won’t get any. Something needs to be done or said (Charner and Fraser 1984:129).

Some fast food workers are far more successful at obtaining schedules that they find acceptable than others. Charner and Fraser, in a survey of over 4600 workers related:

a higher proportion of employees who have worked more than two years are satisfied with the way they are scheduled than are employees who have worked for a shorter length of time. Sixty percent of those who have worked more than two years are satisfied compared to 53 percent and 44 percent for those employees who have worked 13-24 months and one year or less respectively (1984:48).

We may conjecture that the longer an employee remains at a single restaurant, the stronger her or his bargaining position may become. Perhaps, as a worker remains at a single location, he or she becomes more indispensable, trusted, and well regarded by the person that sets the schedule. Additionally, we might conjecture that employers attempt to negotiate for a stable workforce by providing competitive schedules.

Employees are not likely to obtain a desired schedule without implicit or explicit negotiation. In the negotiated order of the fast food restaurant, workers do not necessarily form a collective entity against management. An atomized labor force is just as likely to be in competition with itself as it is to be in conflict with employers. Conflicts over which employees get a schedule that is favorable to them is one area where we can see employees in competition over an issue that is of diminished importance to the manager. If the schedule is filled with capable workers, who gets which days off is not of likely to be of primary importance to most managers or franchisees. However, who receives what day off can be of great importance to the employees. Employees who are in a better negotiating position will most likely have more control of the schedule. The ability to
control one's schedule is an important area of autonomy and may be a major reason why some workers remain at a restaurant. This is evidenced by Juanita who asserted:

You can write your own schedule, that's why I'm still here.
You see him [the franchisee James] ask me what days I'm available.

Not everyone is in the same bargaining position when it comes to the hashing out who will work when. Juanita explains:

Shawn doesn't understand that we get to write our own schedule because we've been here longer. He's still in high school. We're [her and Maria] are in college. Paul realizes we've got to study.

The schedule was an essential issue at Grinders. James was at the center of scheduling conflicts. About a week after the conflict over holiday scheduling, another scheduling controversy arose as Shawn was scheduled to work on a Saturday, after he had requested to not work weekends. In the past week, Shawn had worked a holiday that he had requested to have off, and the following day he sacrificed his day off to cover for three truant co-workers. Being told to work on Saturday was more than Shawn would stand. He believed that he was being taken advantage of because of his willingness to be versatile. Shawn confronted James. Shawn refused to work Saturday. James replied by telling Shawn that he would let him go if he did not work on Saturday. Shawn, aware of his value to the restaurant and believing that James was "bluffing," refused to back down. At this point, it seemed as though both men had drawn a line in the sand and now pride and emotionality were eclipsing pure economic rationality. Presumably, Shawn resigning would not be in the best interest of either man. James, running his restaurant with a small and oftentimes unstable crew relied on Shawn, who despite being assertive is a very competent employee. Shawn, on the other hand, certainly would not benefit from losing
his job. The existing social order of the restaurant depended on a resolution to this conflict, yet neither party seemed willing to retreat.

Fortunately, Juanita, who had recently decided that she would like to purchase an automobile, entered the negotiations. In order to reach her goal she would have to work as many hours as possible. A few days before the stand off she began to badger James for more hours. When Juanita saw that James had offered Shawn an ultimatum, and realizing that Shawn would be fired before he or James would acquiesce, she intervened by offering to work on Saturday. In this situation, the entrance of a third party into the negotiations, allowed both actors to attain their goals without either having to ‘back down’. Both James and Shawn maintained their pride without permanently sacrificing their business relationship. It should be noted that Juanita was not operating on purely selfish motivations. She did not want to see Shawn fired needlessly. The next day, when she and I were working alone together (the day that she was covering for Shawn), she asserted “I saved Shawn from getting fired.” When I contended that she was happy to obtain his hours, she vehemently denied the charge. While I personally do not believe that her offer to work Shawn’s shift and her desire to earn money to purchase an automobile are completely independent of each other, I do believe that she had acted with concern for Shawn.

This incident reveals a number of aspects of the negotiation of social order in a fast food restaurant. First, there is often a conflation of primary and secondary social roles. Co-workers and employers all have a formal, economic basis for their interaction. Ostensibly, actors in a highly routinized or McDonaldized setting would have impersonal economically defined relations with each other (Ritzer 1993:1998). Although the basis
for the relationships among crewmembers is certainly economically defined, non-
economically rational feelings of camaraderie tend to arise. These non-economically
rational feelings affect the negotiation context. People will have more than their own
personal goals in mind when they interact. Juanita’s willingness to cover Shawn’s
Saturday shift, (a day she usually did not like working) was most likely influenced by her
desire to earn more money and her desire to see Shawn remain employed at the
restaurant. Within a given setting, the motivations of individual workers can rarely be
reduced to a single motivation. Nor can social relationships be sharply defined, even in an
environment that has been subject to strict routinization.

Temporal Limits of Negotiations

Over External Issues

The interaction of the actors is influenced by a confluence of dynamic motivations.
As the desires of individual actors change, like when Juanita decided that she wanted to
earn enough money to buy a car, these individuals may seek to renegotiate the social
order to reach their new goals. The social order must be renegotiated in response to
changes in the negotiation context. This phenomenon occurs in fast food restaurants as
the structural forces, like the economy or the weather may affect the volume of the
business of the restaurant, thus changing the negotiation context. This is clearly
exemplified when a given shift is far slower than anticipated by management. One slow
evening at Anna’s, Sandra decided that her presence would not be missed and that she
would like to go home. However, she did not want to offend Fred. On the other hand,
Fred, who earnestly maintained that he would have not have asked anyone to leave, did
not mind reducing his labor costs. Neither Sandra nor Fred wanted to offend the other,
but the negotiation context had changed, and they subsequently could benefit from a renegotiation of the schedule. By gingerly approaching the subject, they worked out an agreement that was mutually beneficial. In doing so, they were careful to take the role of the other to avoid damaging their relationship.

Internal Issues

There is more to be negotiated than external issues. The working conditions are of tremendous importance to employees and franchisees alike. There is more to any job than its potential for income, and this is especially true in fast food restaurants where a routinization of the labor process has depressed wages. Everything from job task assignment to choice of radio station to the definition of deviance must be worked out and compromised upon. Fast food restaurants are designed with the intention of controlling workers in the minutest detail. Much like Paules’ waitresses, fast food employees may, depending on the negotiation context and their motivations actively resist managerial control (1991). This is not to say that workers always are successful or that they always attempt to expand their autonomy. Nonetheless, sometimes through a process of implicit or explicit negotiation, workers may increase their autonomy, and subsequently gain control of their working conditions. This section will be divided into three parts. One section will consider the general working conditions of the restaurant, which involves any legitimate issue that may be negotiated in the restaurant. Another section will consider the negotiations over the definition of deviance. First, we will examine how autonomy relates to negotiations over internal issues.
Worker Autonomy and Negotiation

Over Internal Issues

The rationalized labor process requires the tight control of employees. There is a correct way of doing things. Management at Grinders and Anna’s did not attempt to achieve the totality of control that has been reported by other ethnographers (Garson 1988, Reiter 1991, Leidner 1993). Neither James nor Fred are particularly interested in single handedly doing what requires several managers, assistant managers, and crew trainers at larger more highly differentiated restaurants. James and Fred did not seek to control laborers arbitrarily. Both Franchisees were willing to be lax on a number of issues. Their largest concern was that the customers were satisfied. Neither franchisee required his employees to wear an elaborate uniform. There were no nametags or work issue pants. Workers at Grinders and Anna’s were not expected to engage in the highly unpopular practice of “suggestive selling” (Leidner 1993:139).

Employees will usually have to increase their autonomy to make the job conditions fit their desires. At a Grinders restaurant where I was employed before my time with James, my employer seemed happy to allow me to use the telephone or do my school work during slow periods. I presume that his reasoning was, in part, to encourage me to remain at the restaurant, and because it was cheaper to allow these indulgences than it was to pay a higher wage. Many times employee gains in autonomy seem to come at the expense of material gains. Employers may compensate for the low wages by allowing favored workers increased freedom. The degree to which workers are free is an important component of the social order of the restaurant. Worker autonomy is always subject to negotiation and as will be seen later is connected to negotiations over the job conditions.
Issues such as the definition of deviance, which workers will perform what tasks, and which radio stations can be played, are all aspects of the job conditions that are directly related to how free workers are from employer control.

General Conditions

On any given day, innumerable issues may be the subjects of implicit or explicit negotiation. These issues may be relatively benign such as who will take their break first or something far more controversial such as whom will clean the toilet. While these issues do not directly affect an employee outside of the restaurant, they take on a great deal of significance within the milieu. As with the external issues, negotiations over the general working conditions may lead some employees to come into conflict with each other or with the franchisee. Conversely, negotiations over other issues may be cooperative.

The Radio

One issue of potential significance is the choice of radio station. Working in a fast food restaurant may provide few opportunities for enjoyable stimuli. The work can be hectic, the hours long, and the public unforgiving. One area that may greatly improve working conditions is the radio. Use of the radio is one of the issues of negotiation identified by Morgan in his study of the negotiated order of the factory (1975). When I was first hired at a certain Grinders restaurant (years before working for James) there were specific rules governing which radio stations were acceptable and which were unacceptable. Unfortunately for me, the radio station that I had grown accustomed to at a previous Grinders owned by a different franchisee was specifically off limits at this location. I was a recent addition in an industry that is renowned for its high turnover rate.
I was a periphery member of the crew and subsequently my negotiating position was relatively weak. I suffered through a winter of dance pop. However, a few months later, I had proven myself a reliable employee and some of the other core members had left the restaurant. My bargaining position had improved vastly, because my leaving would have caused hardship to the manager who controlled the radio (if I resigned this manager would have been forced to cover my night shift until a replacement could be found and trained). One day, I asked the manager, who had been upholding the ban on my favorite station, if I could change the radio station. We worked out an arrangement where I could listen to whatever station I wanted to after he had left for the day. This is significant in that it shows that a non-managerial employee may be able to increase his autonomy in the restaurant in a highly regulated system.

The radio was not a divisive issue at Anna's largely because the actors cooperated with each other. Fred set the guidelines of what was and what not acceptable. For instance, hard rock was not an acceptable option during the day. Employees negotiated within the parameters set by Fred. I asked Dianne, "Who decides the radio station?" She replied:

Fred's wife. When she goes we work it out. I don't want rap or heavy metal. I don't mind the more contemporary stuff if they don't mind my playing oldies once in a while.

The employees were able to negotiate with each other within guidelines established by Fred and Cary. I witnessed a very even give and take. During my observations, I listened to oldies, country, and contemporary adult. At Anna's the choice of radio station was an example of how employees and franchisees may explicitly negotiate an element of their shared existence.
Effort

Given the popular portrayal of the fast food restaurant, one might imagine that workers are locked into Chaplinesque world of timers, buzzers, industrial sized spatulas and savagely effective deep fryers. Reiter uses the Charlie Chaplin film, *Modern Times*, as an analogy to fast food work, concluding, “thanks to employment standards legislation, most workers can stop their work to have lunch, in almost every other way, Chaplin’s vision of a highly controlled workplace has been realized” (1991:111). However, the popular image of the fast food restaurant that is portrayed by Reiter (1991) neglects the long periods of downtime in many restaurants and the difficulty those employers sometimes have in fully extracting the labor power from recalcitrant employees. According to the Tayloristic logic of business management, the worker should be as productive as possible. That means that every paid moment of a worker’s day should in some way be spent in service to the restaurant (Braverman 1974: Reiter 1991). No doubt countless fast food workers have come across a manager or a franchisee who has uttered the words “If there’s time to lean there’s time to clean.” In my experiences and observations, it is difficult for management to implement this maxim. With the possible exception of a severely depressed economy, an employer will have a great deal of trouble attempting to be a ‘slave driver’ of workers who are being paid minimum wage. Employees ‘slack off’ when there are no customers. Workers who are slacking off may eat, smoke, read, or speak with each other. Many workers reject managerial attempts to make every second productive. One former co-worker responded to the “time to lean” dictum with one of his own. “Minimum wage means minimum effort.” Some franchisees may feel that because they are offering comparatively low-
levels of remuneration, they cannot ethically or consistently (that is without losing employees) extract a maximum expenditure sustained effort on the part of employees.

Fred, who once was a manager in a large highly Taylorized firm, said that he enjoyed the autonomy of being an employer, because he had the ability to let up on his employees, a luxury that he did not have as a manager. As the owner, he had the choice to not to push his workers every second of their shift, as long as the customers were attended to. Fred explained:

They can goof off a little bit, but when people come in, they have to be taken care of. People have this image of fast food. They don’t want to wait.

A factor of the negotiation context is that Fred’s emotional and ethical distaste for working his workers too hard. He spent a great deal of time at his restaurant, which reduced the autonomy of his employees significantly. The employees at Anna’s did not have the option of remaining idle for long stretches of time, even if there were no customers. When the restaurant slowed down, Fred would have the employees clean the restaurant.

Employees are also interested in the effort expended by their co-workers. Ethnographers have observed how what might be termed ‘peer pressure’ is used to encourage workers to perform effectively. Leidner (1993) writes, “it seemed to me that most workers did conceive of the work as a team effort and were loath to be seen by their peers as making extra work for other people by not doing their share (p. 77). As may easily be imagined, the workload at a restaurant is largely uncontrolled by employees. If one employee is not effective, the other employees are expected to ‘pick up the slack’ so to speak. Harmed employees may levy sanctions in the form of jokes or complaints or
even retaliatory slacking. At Grinders, a few employees (Juanita, Shawn, and I) would rotate as the primary closers (often the most senior closer would be in charge of the closing procedure). The two workers who closed the restaurant had a set amount of tasks to complete before they could leave. If an employee working in the afternoon failed to work effectively, the lack of effort would have repercussions for those who had to close after the offending worker had left. A worker who continually leaves his or her coworkers in a bad position may find that they return the favor when it is her or his turn to close the restaurant. One evening, I was scheduled to close and Shawn was scheduled to leave a few hours before closing, Shawn related that he was working hard for me because I had worked hard for him the previous day. One could speculate that if I had not worked well for him he would be less inclined to work well for me. Employees at Grinders continually negotiate an agreement to work competently, in part so that no one will be purposely left with an inordinate amount of work to do.

Visitors

One issue that may arise during periods of "down time" is if workers are allowed to accept personal visitors. One may assume that the worker is placed in a deeply regimented environment where there is little time for social interaction amongst crewmembers, much less between a crewmember and his or her family and friends. First, we have to consider the motivations of the employees. With some exceptions, the crewmembers at Grinders did not seem to want to be interested in receiving visitors. So receiving visitors was not an issue.

At Anna's, Sandra would occasionally receive visits from family members. Typically, they would chat for a few minutes and then she would return to work. Sometimes she
would intermittently wait on customers. Fred allowed her to receive visitors in part because she had proven herself a valuable employee. Moreover, the brief visits did not interfere with her ability to perform her job tasks. By continually demonstrating her competence, Sandra implicitly negotiated for the right to have visitors, thus increasing her autonomy. Although this is a relatively small issue, the fact that Sandra was able to receive visitors reveals how workers, in some negotiation contexts, may be able to increase their autonomy, should they want to.

Job Task Assignment

In fast food restaurants with a high division of labor all of the tasks such as food preparation, cleaning, and serving have been broken down to the point where a number of workers can perform highly specific tasks. At this type of restaurant, a manager will assign crew members to various tasks. Reiter describes this type of arrangement in some detail (1991). Although the potential for this degree of rationalization exists at both Grinders and Anna’s, as a rule, neither restaurant employed enough workers to operate in that manner. On occasion, Kiran and Fred would assign job tasks. However, the franchisees rarely assigned jobs, and when they did it was usually on a slow day where workers would have difficulty deciding what (if anything) to do without direction. More often, employees were left to decide amongst themselves who would do which jobs. Workers were not directed in large part, because with the exception of neophyte employees, everyone knew what needed to be done. Employees would negotiate implicitly and explicitly for various tasks. Many employees had preferences for some job tasks and an aversion to others. An employee might implicitly negotiate for a task by simply beginning the task. In these circumstances, core members had an advantage
because they possessed the cultural knowledge of when was the optimum time to begin a task. At Grinders, Shawn and Maria would frequently begin work on food preparation as soon as the lunch rush tapered off. They were able to use their experience to implicitly claim desired job tasks. Periphery members who had not obtained the specific cultural capital to challenge the claims of the core members had little choice but to find an alternative task. Workers who dislike a certain task may claim the unwanted task as "off limits." For example, one afternoon Maria announced, "My name is Mar-i-a and I don't clean bathrooms." Maria was a core member of the crew and could decide not to perform some job tasks, because she was able to perform other tasks competently. In order to get through the day more smoothly, employees who were not officially managers may assign tasks to peripheral crewmembers. For instance, the first time we closed Grinders together, Shawn who was very adept at closing the restaurant told me what tasks to do and when to do them. I accepted his authority as legitimate despite the absence of a formal managerial title, because it was to our mutual benefit to close the restaurant as efficiently as possible. At Anna's, Sandra and Diane, who had spent a great deal of time working together, would alternate job tasks. As customers came in one would make desserts and the other would make lunch items. One would go to the drive through window and the other would go the register. They had learned how to negotiate the social order by simply reacting to each other.

Unacceptable and Acceptable Deviance

Fast food restaurants are based on Taylor's scientific management, which strictly delineates what constitutes proper workplace behavior. Ideally, the franchisor is not simply selling a name and national advertising; rather it is selling an entire formula for a
business. The logic of the franchise is that a web of semi-independent entrepreneurs each operates their restaurants according to similar principles. Many customers are attracted to the predictability offered by franchised restaurants (Ritzer 1993). Therefore, in theory, franchises have one correct way of doing things. However, there are situations when employees and even franchisees may find it in their best individual interests to deviate from the plan. In doing so, they must renegotiate the meaning of deviance. Consequently, a new definition of deviance may emerge. When negotiations are unsuccessful, the social order is damaged, often with an employee’s tenure being terminated.

Deviance may take on a number of different forms. There is acceptable deviance and unacceptable deviance. Acceptable deviance includes all behaviors that deviate from the official way of doing things but are not considered deviant in the actual practice of everyday life. Unacceptable deviance includes all behaviors that deviate from the workplace norms. Unacceptable deviance includes actions that, if discovered, would require sanctioning (usually dismissal or resignation). The ongoing negotiations over deviance generally involve whether a behavior is defined as acceptable deviance or unacceptable deviance. There are different types of deviance. There is procedural deviance when the franchisee or the crewmembers perform a given job task in a way that differs from the written proscription. There is deviance from the established workplace norms. These behaviors would include giving food away, or not showing up for a scheduled shift. This section will focus on negotiations over which behavior is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Behaviors that are unacceptable beyond the pale of negotiation (such as giving away food) need not be considered here.
The franchisor, the franchisee, regulatory agencies, employees, and customers each have an interest in the definition of deviance. While many actors play a role in defining deviance, the franchisee and the employees are the ones who must act with or against the existing norms. The franchisee was often placed in a position of having to enforce regulations that were not of his or her making but could be damaging if ignored by the crewmembers. The franchisee must also tailor the general regulations to the specific location. Some rules may or may not be appropriate to the specific situation. The franchisee must attempt to communicate the definition of deviance to the crewmembers.

In general, the franchisee is the one who sanctions the employees. The sanctions generally include reduced hours, reduced autonomy, or termination of employment. The franchisee's ability to dismiss employees gives him or her the right to define what constitutes deviant behavior. Employees are not powerless in their negotiations. Employees can interpret their situation and choose to follow a deviant practice if they believe they will not be discovered, that they are not worried about being terminated, or that the negotiation context is such that it would be unwise for the franchisee to sanction them for a given act. Their actions may take the form of implicit negotiations if they choose to act in a deviant manner despite the fact that they will most likely be discovered.

In actually having to follow the rules, franchisees and employees may choose to accept or attempt to renegotiate the imposed order. Depending on their motivations, the franchisee and the crewmembers may or may not be brought into conflict or cooperation over whether or not a given practice is deviant. Oftentimes both the franchisee and employees have little difficulty following the rules that have been set for them without deviation. At Grinders, the franchisor has devised a formula for making sandwiches. For
the franchisor to impose a different policy or for an employee to experiment with radically different bread slicing techniques, would constitute deviant behavior. Neither the franchisee nor the employees had any reason to reject the rules about bread slicing. As Leidner reported, routinization is not intrinsically problematic (1993).

However, there were a number of official rules that are inconvenient to either the franchisee or the crewmembers. When the original rules do not benefit the franchisee, he or she may decide not to transmit these rules to her or his employees. The franchisee may decide to work out the rules on an individual basis, keeping one set of rules for some employees and a different set of rules for others. At Grinders, there is a specific formula for preparing all of the menu items. The rules prescribe the number of tomatoes on a large sandwich, the width of the green peppers, and the order that items should be placed on the sandwich. Usually, the rules are a helpful guide. Sometimes, however, the rules are an unnecessary hindrance. For example, the manual proclaims that when making seafood salad, the employee should measure the amount of mayonnaise to be mixed with the seafood salad. Kiran and James would train the periphery employees to prepare the salad according to the written instructions. Measuring the mayonnaise seemed an unnecessary waste of time to most of the people that have performed the chore more than once. After I had been shown how to measure the mayonnaise, I noticed that none of the core members bothered to follow this norm. When it was my turn to make the salad, I followed the norm that was specific to the restaurant and measured the mayonnaise by eye. Kiran saw me and began to reprimand me.

Kiran: You are supposed to measure the mayonnaise

Eric: I've been doing it like this for years. Jesus, I mess up the wraps and now I can't do anything right.
Kiran: No its just... we all measure by eye I forgot you have the most experience.

I explicitly negotiated for a redefinition of what was considered deviant. I cited my previous experience as being the basis for my claim that the practice of forgoing the measurement of the mayonnaise should be acceptably deviant. I then proceeded to add too much mayonnaise to the salad.

The negotiation context may allow workers an opportunity to redefine what forms of deviance are acceptable and what are prohibited. In most workplaces repeatedly calling in sick or failing to show up for a scheduled shift, even with an excuse, would be unacceptable. Not working when scheduled is a form of deviance that may easily lead to dismissal. At Grinders, some workers seemed to interpret the high turnover rate at the restaurant as providing an opportunity for them to avoid unwanted shifts without having sanctions imposed on them. Not appearing for a scheduled shift may be an implicit method of negotiating for a day off. Sometimes ignoring the schedule is a more effective means of avoiding an unwanted shift than explicitly negotiating for a schedule change.

Not showing up for a shift was a common occurrence. Of the twenty shifts that I worked at Grinders, there were eight instances of workers not appearing for shifts that they were scheduled to work. This is not to say that every time that a person failed to show up it there was no 'valid' excuse. However, it was widely speculated that some of the absences were illegitimate. One frustrated crewmember exclaimed to the franchisee, "You don't have enough people. They know you ain't going to fire them, so they don't show up."

The fact that James did not fire the employees that were suspected of illegitimately calling off from work supports the employee's claims. The employees who failed to show up had implicitly acted to push for the acceptability of a deviant behavior that could be
defined as unacceptable. James, in passing, mentioned that he would eventually fire the worst offender. I suspect that he would redefine the act of failing to show up for a shift as unacceptable only after the negotiation context changes in such a way that would allow him to remove certain employees without damaging his other interests.

The definition of deviance was a far less volatile topic at Anna’s. Workers seemed to have little motivation to redefine the behaviors or practices that are labeled as deviant by the franchisee. Months upon months of ongoing negotiations had led to a stable definition of acceptable and unacceptable practices. Fred was by no means a ‘slave driver’ and he did not create rules arbitrarily. So long as the customers’ needs were met and the restaurant’s equipment was treated properly, Fred was not interested in enforcing the rules simply for the sake of exercising authority. Likewise, the employees were largely unconcerned with redefining deviance. Anna’s did provide one example of the negotiation over deviance. Years ago, Fred did not allow employees to chew gum while they worked. This policy was a source of consternation amongst gum chewing employees. They implicitly negotiated for a redefinition of deviance by taking it upon themselves to chew gum in a manner that would not disgust customers. Eventually, Fred conceded the right to chew gum, so long as it was done in a tasteful manner. Fred did not want the sight of lip smacking, gum chewing employees to offend customers. However, he did not have any desire to needlessly deny his employees something that might improve their working conditions. When his core employees demonstrated that they could avoid violating the spirit of his policy despite deviating from the letter of the rules, Fred accepted the implicit negotiation, providing that the employees continued to act with respect to the customers.
Conclusion

Through an analysis of observations of two franchises, we may conclude that the social order of a restaurant is achieved, in part, through implicit and explicit negotiation. After describing Anna’s and Grinders, I presented a generalized description of the cast of actors in a fast food restaurant, and their relationship to the negotiation context. While franchisees have a great deal of power in negotiations, they also depend on the other actors. Although, fast food jobs are designed to make employees interchangeable, core employees may find that they can cancel negotiations more easily than their employer can. In other words, in some contexts, core employees may have an easier time replacing their employers than their employer would have replacing them. Employees may exploit this feature of the negotiation context to their benefit.

There are two types of negotiation (both external and conditions) that are subject to the processes of negotiation. Actors choose how to negotiate based on their interpretation of the situation and their own proclivities. Depending on their strategy, skills and relative power, employees may be able to achieve their goals. For instance, for the external issue of wages, employees may negotiate implicitly by attempting to become a core member of the restaurant or explicitly by stating he or she would like to receive. An actor may choose to use both methods in tandem. Actors will interpret the negotiation context and act accordingly. For instance, when Shawn avoided negotiation because of a previous argument or when James placated me after I had worked alone during a difficult shift.

Considering the highly rationalized design of franchised fast food restaurants, the nature of deviance is quite interesting. The different types of actors have potentially disparate interpretations of the social norms. The high priority placed on ‘correct’ rational
action, as well as the different positions of actors, results in a continuous negotiation over
the definition of deviance. There are two types of deviant actions, acceptable and
unacceptable. When actors are able to agree that a certain behavior while technically
deviant is not harmful; it will be considered acceptably deviant. For instance, at Grinders,
employees mixed salads without actually measuring the mayonnaise as prescribed in the
Grinders operations manual. The definition of some acts depends on the negotiation
context. For example, oftentimes employees who fail to show up for a shift are
terminated. At Grinders, the negotiation context was such that employees who failed to
appear for scheduled shifts were not sanctioned. Through implicit negotiation (not
coming to a scheduled shift), employees changed the definition of deviance, and what
was formerly unacceptable became marginally acceptable. Of course, once the
negotiation context changes again (i.e. when labor pressures become less intense) not
appearing for scheduled shifts will again become an unacceptable act. In the next chapter,
I will summarize the findings and consider the implications for future research.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

An analysis of data from two fast food restaurants supports the negotiated order perspective’s assumptions that all social order is dependent upon some form of negotiation and those negotiations are influenced by social structure. Contrary to popular portrayal, fast food workers are not always incapable of meeting their ends. Despite scientific management, the dearth of employment options, and the myriad of other structural features that systematically weaken individuals in low-level food service work, there are conditions wherein workers may choose to increase their autonomy. Although fast food restaurants can be viewed as the “paradigm case of the rationalization process” (Ritzer 1993:18) workers are not simply passive tools of a corporation’s formalized plan of action. Fast food employees are active agents. However, their ability to reach their goals is influenced by the subjective interpretation of the structural forces that impinge on the milieu. While actors often had opposed interests, their ability to reach their respective goals usually required some cooperation with the other actors. The social order of the restaurant depends on the ability of the organizational members to agree to work with each other. The notion that social order is continually achieved was demonstrated in the analysis.

The two franchises were analyzed using the conceptual devices of the negotiated order perspective. The salient features of the structural and negotiation context were
elucidated. Negotiations did not occur in a vacuum. The structural forces that affected the workers’ attempts to reach their aims included the economy, the unemployment rate, the number of similar jobs, the weather, the legal order, and so forth. The negotiation context included such features as motivations, personal skills, and emotions.

The preceding analysis provided an outline of the issues that are negotiated in a fast food restaurant. Although the outline may not be comprehensive, most possible topics of negotiation could be subsumed in the rubric of external issues (i.e. wages, promotion, and scheduling) as well as internal issues (i.e. job task assignment, the definition of deviance, and sundry daily concerns). The process by which these issues were worked out at two franchises has already been considered. The data drawn from observations and personal experience are highly specific to the setting. However, the processes of negotiation that were observed in the restaurants have implications for the sociological understanding of fast food restaurants, the nature of autonomy in regulated environments, the negotiated order perspective, and the interplay between structure and individual agency.

**Fast Food Restaurants**

Using the negotiated order perspective yields an improvement in our understanding of fast food restaurants. The ethnographies of fast food restaurants provide a sort of natural experiment, wherein we may begin to speculate about how different structural conditions may lead to differences in the lived experiences of workers. This study demonstrates a number of features of fast food restaurants. The findings include the need for a typology of fast food restaurants, the differences between core and periphery employees, a typology of negotiated issues, and the limits of autonomy in fast food restaurants.
More than McDonald’s

Ethnographies and journalistic accounts of fast food restaurants have focused on McDonald’s or similarly designed franchises. There is a pronounced tendency to conflate McDonald’s restaurants with the entire fast food industry. There is diversity amongst the fast food restaurants that use scientific management to control the labor process. Fast food restaurants that are unlike McDonald’s restaurants are not simply deviations from a statistical mean. There are thousands of franchised fast food restaurants that are significantly less differentiated than McDonald’s, offer different menu items, are fewer in number, and have different franchising arrangements, (Eberts and Gisler 1989; Jakle and Sculle 1999; Schlosser 2001). Even though McDonald’s and similar restaurants have received the bulk of the attention in ethnographic and journalistic accounts of fast food restaurants, there are many workers that are in similar (pay, prestige) positions who have significantly different lived experiences at their respective jobs. The creation of a typology of franchised fast food restaurants exceeds the scope of this study. However, the data presented here point to the diversity of structure in fast food restaurants.

This variety of structural conditions may allow for drastic differences in the lived experiences of workers. A comparison of this study with ethnographic accounts of McDonald’s and Burger King might lead us to the following speculations (Reiter 1991; Leidner 1993; Royle 2000). A relatively simple division of labor may allow workers to deal more directly with their employer. The fewer the levels of management the easier it may be for workers to negotiate with their employer directly rather than a manager or assistant manager. A franchisee has far more autonomy than a manager does. A franchisee has the authority to change the work environment while a manager has a
prescribed authority. However, a franchisee may also have a greater personal stake in the
given negotiation than a manager will. The outcome of employee-management
negotiations is partially influenced by the division of labor and the depth of the hierarchy.
However, this influence is not likely to be uniform.

Issues to be Negotiated

Additionally, this study adds to the existing studies of negotiated order in rationalized
environments by creating a typology of issues that are subject to negotiation in the
workplace. Issues that are subject to negotiation are of two general types. The first type
of issue includes all external issues that are directly related to an employee’s non-work
life. External issues include but may not be confined to remuneration, scheduling,
promotion, and job security. The second general type of issues to be negotiated are
internal issues job that affect an employee during the working day, such as the definition
of deviance or the control of the labor process. Any researcher analyzing a rationalized
workplace with the negotiated order perspective may employ this typology.

Core and Periphery Employees

In a highly rationalized environment, workers who share similar formal positions will
have different places in the organization. This study further elucidates an observation by
Leidner (1993) that core employees will have different experiences than other workers.
There are two general types of employees. Some fast food employees form the core of the
work crew while others lie along the periphery. There is often a difference between core
and periphery employees in terms of differential ends and means. The data show a
patterned relationship between an employee’s status (core or periphery) and what they
may hope to achieve for themselves. Core employees will have a slightly different set of
possible goals than periphery employees, as well as a different repertoire of possible means to attain those goals. One’s status as a core or periphery employee is hardly static. An individual may find that one status may work for a specific set of goals, but a change in status may be required if the worker’s goals should change. A worker who wants to work part-time and would like to minimize his or her responsibility may find that a high autonomy periphery status and the expectations that go with that are adequate for his needs. However, if that same worker finds that she or he needs to increase his earnings due to a change in his personal circumstances (such as tuition or new lodgings) she or he may negotiate for a wage raise by actively becoming a core member of the group. The terms core and periphery are neither clear nor distinct. They relate to a relative status within the group as opposed to a formally defined position. A person may be more or less core or periphery to the group. There is a fluid continuum between core and periphery. An employee may move from the periphery to the core and back again. A core employee may move even closer to the core. Either type of employee can leave suddenly, however a periphery employee will be far more likely to leave than will a core employee.

The Unstable Nature of Fast Food Employment

The restaurants that were observed were marked by their relative instability. Unskilled fast food employees are easily replaced and therefore less powerful (Reiter 1991). Fast food work exemplifies the deskilling of the labor force (Ritzer 1998). In as much as fast food labor has been deskilled so that workers have become replaceable, there are now such a multitude of fast food restaurants, each offering a similar lack of security, benefits, training, prestige, and wages that employers have become as replaceable as their deskilled employees. Instability is a structural component even in the
most harmonious restaurant. Reiter relates that disgruntled employees may often choose
to “vote with their feet” (1991:155). The ease with which franchisees may be replaced
may play a role in franchisees being as attentive as possible to ‘reasonable’ employee
demands. As Fred explained, “If someone wants a day off I just give it to him. Otherwise,
he could be at Burger King next week.” Although franchisees hold ultimate authority
over how much autonomy their employees have or who will remain employed at the
restaurant they must make some concessions to their employees are to be retained. The
absence of a contract and the relative ease with which employees and employers may end
the relationship play a large role in workplace negotiations. As Strauss notes, “options to
avoiding or discontinuing negotiation” are an important variable in the negotiation
context (emphasis in original) (1978:100). Employees or employers in fast food
restaurants may be more or less willing to make concessions during a conflict over a
specific issue depending on their interpretation of the ease with which the other could be
replaced. Some structural conditions may allow workers to have far more power than
usually ascribed to them in literature.

Autonomy in Regulated Environments

Differences in structure may have implications for our understanding of scientific
management. Scientific management seeks to control workers thus reducing their
autonomy. Reiter has described how McDonald’s has succeeded in applying Taylorism to
the restaurant (1991). The high degree of regulation required by scientific management
cannot be accomplished without a significant outlay of resources. The computers and
other labor saving devices require investments of capital that is assumedly not available
to all potential franchisees. Some restaurant owners make far less use of technology and
laborers than do others. Within the rubric of fast food, there are a number of restaurateurs who employ scientific management, but not to the degree to which McDonald's has been able to do so. Grinders and Ana's represent two such restaurants. Both employ scientific management to bring about a formally rational plan of action. However, neither have the resources to coerce workers to act as closely to the model, as McDonald's. The absence of capital investment in scientific management presents a structural contribution to the ability of employees to increase their personal autonomy. To the extent, that employers fail to deskill laborers, employers must depend on the abilities of their employees (Braverman 1974). Although, Anna's and Grinders have a formally rational way of performing most tasks, workers in both restaurants are under less of a structural obligation to follow the prescriptions exactly. In other words, an absence of capital investment in differentiation and technology can increase potential autonomy. This finding would partially explain why the employees at Grinders and Anna's possessed more autonomy than did employees at the restaurants studied by Garson (1988) and Reiter (1991). Workers who seek to increase their autonomy do so through a process of negotiation. Franchisees do not simply grant autonomy because they do not have the means to control workers. They often make demands that are similar to their counter parts in capital-intensive restaurants. However, franchisees at less structurally differentiated restaurants will be more likely to concede autonomy to workers that implicitly or explicitly push for greater autonomy. Of course, the degree of autonomy afforded to individual laborers is subject to continual processes of negotiation.

The data suggest that autonomy may become a bargaining piece in employee-employer negotiations. Workers may seek to exploit structural features such as a labor
shortage or high turnover by negotiating for increased autonomy. Workers, who are not interested in a minimal wage increase, might try to avoid undesired job tasks (i.e. I don’t clean toilets”) or controlling their availability (i.e. refusing to work weekends or evenings). However, if this worker wishes to earn more money, either through promotion or increased hours, the worker may negotiate for this end by sacrificing autonomy. An employee who was previously unwilling to work nights or weekends may find himself closing the restaurant on a Saturday night. Likewise, employers may concede increases in autonomy once employees have reached the limits of what he or she will pay in wages. Fast food restaurants are based on paying employees low wages. Oftentimes, workers will leave their position when they are able to earn higher wages elsewhere (Charner and Fraser 1984). Employers may find that certain employees are more valuable than what he or she can afford to spend. An employer may negotiate to retain an employee by offering increased autonomy in place of higher wages. For instance, an employer may allow a core employee to set his or her schedule, avoid unwanted job tasks, choose the radio station, receive visitors, or use the telephone. An employee may accept an increase in autonomy in place of an increase in wages. In short, we may observe an exchange of autonomy for financial compensation in the fast food restaurants.

Negotiations of Social Order

The findings of this study go beyond conclusions about fast food restaurants. The data support and add to the negotiated order perspective, consequently, leading to a better understanding of social order and how it is achieved through interaction. The data allow us to come closer to an understanding of the interplay between agency and social structure as well as rationalization and autonomy.
As stated previously, the assumptions of the negotiated order perspective are that social order depends on negotiation, social structure influences negotiations, negotiations must be continually renewed in response to structural changes, and negotiations are impermanent (Fine 1996:3-4). The data support these assumptions. In the highly unstable world of the fast food restaurant employees may resign or be terminated with little advance notice. It is not unusual for, both the employee and employer to be capable of replacing the other. However, all things being equal it is frequently easier to continue a business relationship than to find a new job or train a new employee respectively. Therefore, employees and employers have incentive to maintain the relationship; in spite of the conflict that is an intrinsic component of their relationship. Employees and employers cooperate with each other through the process of negotiation. This cooperation is not created in a vacuum. The second assumption of the negotiated order perspective is that structural features influence negotiations. The data show that the negotiations between different parties in a fast food restaurant are far from equal. Employers are far more powerful than are their employees. Although, employers depend on their employees, the ability of the employer to dismiss employees and set the terms of employment stacks the proverbial cards firmly in favor of the house. The power that employers wield is dependent upon structural variables that are subject to change. The third and fourth assumptions of the negotiated order perspective are supported by the observation that as the structural context of the restaurant changes the social order must be renegotiated. A change in the unemployment rate, the number of similar restaurants in the area, the building of a new road, demographic shifts, and so on may influence the power that workers and franchisees possess relative to each other. For example, in this
study, factors that led to an increase in the number of customers often necessitated a renegotiation of the social order. The holiday that caused a drastic increase in business resulted in a number of negotiations of the social order at Grinders.

This study supports many of the conclusions of Morgan who applied the negotiated order perspective to the analysis of a factory (1975). Unlike many studies of negotiated order, Morgan examined a highly regulated setting. He found that negotiation is present even in organizations where some actors have little power in relation to others. Morgan argues that negotiation may be either implicit or explicit (1975). This study expands upon Morgan’s research by applying many of his findings to the analysis of fast food restaurants. Fast food restaurants, like factories, are subject to the process of rationalization, which has systematically reduced the power and autonomy of lower level workers. As in Morgan’s factory, particular issues may be negotiated implicitly or explicitly (1975). This study supports Morgan’s observation that even the most formally rational organizations rely on negotiation to accomplish social order. From this research, we cannot go so far as to claim that all social orders are maintained through negotiation. For instance, the findings of this research may not be applicable to “sweat shops,” or internment camps. Although Erving Goffman’s, *Asylums*, certainly points to the possibility that processes of negotiation contribute to the maintenance of even the most repressive social orders (1961). We might speculate that in any organization where persons in power depend on the cooperation of subordinates (particularly subordinates who may for one reason or another be capable of choosing to leave the organization) the social order will be maintained, in part, through processes of negotiation.
The Imprecise Nature of Implicit Negotiation

This study adds to Morgan’s research in a number of ways. In highly controlled environments, low-level workers may engage in implicit negotiations when explicit negotiation is unfeasible. Morgan treats implicit negotiation as if it is conducted for specific aims such as control of time. While some forms of implicit negotiation may be conducted for specific issues, many times, implicit negotiations include actions that place persons in a position to demand different sets of issues. For instance, the employee who actively moves from a periphery to core status within the restaurant may be implicitly negotiating for a set of issues (i.e. increased pay or increased authority). From this finding, we may surmise that negotiations may occur in various stages. The imprecise implicit type of negotiation is typified by an employee who actively attempts to move from the periphery to the core, can be interpreted as a base level interpretation that places an actor in a position that allows her or him to make more precise negotiations. The employee who succeeds in becoming a core employee is in a better position to negotiate for increased wages or greater influence over the schedule. The movement from periphery to core status is an act of negotiation, as it requires the individual to provide certain bargaining pieces (i.e. effort and responsibility) in exchange for an intersubjectively held understanding that a person is a part of the core of the group.

Status and Autonomy in Negotiations

An employee’s level of autonomy and status (as a periphery or core member) will influence which aims the employee can hope to reach. Status and autonomy are two variable axes that an employee may wish to alter in order to reach different sets of goals.
The imprecise negotiation process can be illustrated by imaging the lived experience of two hypothetical employees.

Employee A begins her career at the restaurant as a periphery member with low autonomy. She exercises little influence issues that are negotiated because neither the crew nor the franchisee has come to depend on her. Employee A, in an effort to earn more money, does not push for greater autonomy (control of the schedule or job task assignment) rather she negotiates for increased wages and hours by working hard and efficaciously. After Employee A has attained what she interprets as the limits of her wages, she may use her core status to negotiate for increased autonomy. She may place limitations on her scheduling availability or what job tasks she will perform. The franchisee accepts these demands because he is not willing to pay her a higher wage, but he does not want her to resign.

Employee B has an opposite experience in the negotiations. Like Employee A, Employee B begins as a peripheral member with little autonomy. He is more interested in maintaining a balance between his personal life and his work life. As he becomes a core member, he negotiates for increased autonomy by placing limitations on which shifts he will accept. Because, he would be difficult to replace, the franchisee often accepts his scheduling limitations. However, should Employee B decide that he would like to increase his income; he may sacrifice his autonomy by decreasing his limitations on availability in exchange for more hours per week. Of course, these examples are oversimplifications. They are used to demonstrate the interplay between employee status and autonomy in the negotiated order of a fast food restaurant.
Individual Agency and Social Structure

The negotiated order perspective can allow us to obtain a greater understanding of the relationship between individual agency and social structure. The data support the notion that social structure does not have a uniform affect on actors (Sugrue 1982; Altheide 1988). Rational individuals interpret their social environment before they choose to act. Two individuals may view the same job market quite differently. Of course, the interpretation of reality is not subject to purely rational processes. One’s interpretation of reality will undoubtedly be affected by one’s emotions or values. Additionally, we may conclude that social structure is impermanent. The structure must be continually renegotiated, cooperation is achieved through a process of continual negotiation, individual motivations change, actors come, and go, and the definition of deviance is reworked. Social structure arises from interaction. Moreover, I have found that while the social structure will place limits on one’s agency, individuals are still capable of maneuvering through the structure. Some individuals are able to exploit their own abilities to manipulate the social structure to their personal advantage, while other, less efficacious individuals will fail to achieve their desires.¹

Lastly, this study allows us to come to a greater understanding of how the process of rationalization or as Ritzer (1993) has put it McDonaldization plays out in the lives of individuals. The act of calculating a single best way of performing a specific task significantly reduces the autonomy of workers (Weber [1930] 1997; Braverman 1974; Ritzer 1998). This study does not dispute the fact that the process of rationalization has steadily decreased the autonomy of employees. However, at a micro level, a formally

¹ Demographic characteristics such as race, gender, and age will affect on the negotiation context. However, the nature and extent of these variables exceeds the scope of this study.
rational plan may take on a different significance in the lives of individuals. By using the negotiated order perspective to examine specific formally rational workplaces, we may find that rationalization is not uniformly problematic for workers. In some instances, individual autonomy is far from ideal. Given the choice between autonomy and security, many workers will sacrifice autonomy. The freedom from control of the labor process may not benefit an employee who wants to expend as little energy as possible when at work (Leidner 1993). The employer who is less interested in controlling the labor process may be creating more work for employees who have to compensate for the lack of routinization with their own effort. The process of having to interpret a single best way to negotiate a chaotic situation may be allow for greater autonomy and greater dissatisfaction on the part of the worker. However, there are times when an employee may want to increase his or her autonomy. The ability to receive visitors, choose the radio station, decide when to take a break, set one’s schedule, eschew certain job tasks, or any of the other issues that may be negotiated in a restaurant will depend on the existential actor. By using the negotiated order perspective that accounts for contextual factors, we may come to understand how individuals negotiate for their existentially held motivations. We may come to see how and when workers may strive to increase their autonomy, likewise we may discern situations where freedom is problematic.

Future Research

Future studies of negotiated order or fast food research may move in a number of directions from here. This study did not examine highly differentiated fast food restaurants. Will workers have an easier time negotiating with managers or the owner? Will the increase in differentiation completely reduce worker autonomy by narrowing job
tasks thus further controlling the labor process? Does an increase crew size reduce the ability of management to supervise workers, thereby creating a structural potential for increased autonomy? The increase in structural complexity will certainly alter the negotiation context, yet without empirical data we may only speculate as to how.² Likewise, future researchers of the negotiated order perspective may focus on franchisees and their web of negotiations with their employees, property owners, suppliers, regulators, franchisor, and customers. Moreover, taking direction from Denzin's analysis of the liquor industry one could study the various levels of society where the social order of the fast food restaurants is maintained through negotiation (1977, 1978a). For negotiated order theorists, the data point to the importance of examining highly regulated milieus. Future studies of the disenfranchised may illustrate how individuals with little power achieve or fail to achieve their goals (prison inmates, welfare recipients, or sales clerks) through negotiation. These studies may improve the negotiated order perspective by adding to analytical concepts and strengthening existing sensitizing concepts such as implicit negotiation. Additional studies of the negotiated order perspective may incrementally develop a theory of negotiations, which, in turn, may allow sociologists to better understand the interplay between agency and structure.

² The data presented by Reiter (1991), Leidner (1993), and Royle (2001) when compared with this study would lead us to believe that an increase in the division of labor reduces the autonomy of workers. However, we could be far more certain with an analysis of highly specialized restaurants from the negotiated order perspective.
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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Eric Orion Silva

Local Address:
5155 Escondido Street Apt. 101
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Home Address:
53 Birch Avenue
Lake George NY. 12845

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Special Honors and Awards:
2002, Outstanding Master's Student. Sociology Department University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2000, William Seward Salisbury Award, outstanding student in sociology SUNY Oswego

Thesis Title: Negotiation and Autonomy in a Fast Food Restaurant

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Andrea Fontana, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. David R. Dickens, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Marta Meana, Ph.D.

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BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS
IN COLLEGE WOMEN

by

Leslie Ann Snyder

Bachelor of Arts
University of Texas at Austin
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Leslie A. Snyder

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Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Breast Cancer Screening Behaviors and Beliefs in College Women

by

Leslie Ann Snyder
Dr. Marta Meana, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Psychology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Despite recommendations by health professionals and the American Cancer Society, few women perform breast self-examinations (BSE) or have clinical breast examinations (CBE) on a regular basis. The current study used self-reports from 453 college women under 30 years of age to investigate factors that may influence breast cancer screening behaviors. Examiners and non-examiners were compared on a series of variables: 1) health beliefs and practices (personal risk estimates for breast cancer, risk reduction expectancies, perceived susceptibility to breast cancer, perceived seriousness of breast cancer, perceived benefits of BSE, perceived barriers to BSE, confidence in performing BSE, general health motivation, the extent to which others influence breast cancer screening behavior, and knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening practices) and 2) psychological well-being (somatic amplification, general mental health, optimism/pessimism, and social support). Results indicated that breast screening behavior is related to 1) the perception of benefits of breast cancer screening; 2) reduced perception of barriers to breast cancer screening; 3) higher risk reduction expectancies; 4) the influence of doctors and nurses; and 5) knowledge tests about breast cancer and breast cancer screening. Psychological well-being variables were not related to screening behavior.
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Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women in America, killing an estimated 43,900 women in 1998 (Garfinkel & Stellman, 1997; Landis, Murray, Bolden, & Wingo, 1998). One out of every eight women in America will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some time in their lives and, since currently there is no certain cure for the disease nor any known ways to prevent it, early detection is considered the best way to decrease mortality in this population (American Cancer Society, 1998; Wilcox, 1991). Despite recommendations by health professionals and a substantial public health campaign promoting different types of breast examinations, women in the United States do not appear to be practicing the early detection methods that could increase their odds of surviving breast cancer (Benedict, Coon, Hoomani, & Holder, 1997; Craun & Deffenbacher, 1986; Erblich, Bovbjerg, & Valdimarsdottir, 2000; Friedman, Webb, Weinberg, Lane, Cooper, & Woodruff, 1995; Giveon & Kahan, 2000; Hailey, 1986; Katz, Meyers, & Walls, 1995; Kenney, Hovell, Newborn, & Elder, 1989; Kuhns-Hastings, Brakey, Marshall, 1993; Lauver, Kane, Bodden, McNeel, & Smith, 1999; Mamon & Zappa, 1985, 1986; Oladepo & Adegoke, 1986; Romis & Kaiser, 1989; Ruda, Boucier, & Skiff, 1992).

There are three methods of early detection: breast self-examination, clinical breast examination (performed by a physician), and mammography. Of the three types of early detection methods, breast self-examination (BSE) is the most convenient, the least time consuming, and involves no monetary cost. It is recommended that BSE be performed by all women ages 20 and up on a monthly basis. To correctly perform this type of
examination, a woman should look at her breasts in a mirror, learn what is normal for her, and be able to notice changes that might occur. She should feel each breast for lumps, discharge, or any other change that seems abnormal for her body. There are several examination patterns that can be used to systematically determine if lumps have formed. It is recommended that a woman check her breasts both standing up and lying down with a pillow under the shoulder on the side of the breast being examined. If changes are noted, she should visit her health care provider as soon as possible. It is also recommended that women see their health care providers on a yearly basis even if no irregularities are found during their monthly BSE. Although BSE is highly recommended by physicians, is convenient to perform without assistance, and can be performed in the privacy of a woman's home without equipment and without cost, many studies indicate that it is performed regularly by less than 50% of women (Budden, 1995; Hailey, 1986; Katz et al., 1995; Scheier & Carver, 1985). This figure is cause for concern, as malignant tumors which could have been detected by BSE and treated early in the course of the disease, may go undetected for months, growing in size and often spreading to other areas. The second early detection method for breast cancer is a Clinical Breast Examination (CBE). This method is similar to the BSE, but is performed by a woman's health care provider and is recommended on a yearly basis for women over 20 years of age. It consists of a circular palpation of the breast, which may alert the physician to irregularities which should be more closely examined. The importance of CBE is that it happens on a yearly basis in a doctor's office and is conducted by a trained professional rather than the patient herself. The third method of detection for breast cancer is mammography. This is a type of x-ray conducted at an imaging clinic and is considered the most sensitive detection method for breast cancer today. It is recommended that women have mammography once every two years from the ages of 40 to 50 years and then yearly after that. In addition to its uses as a detection method, mammography is also utilized as a diagnostic tool, which
means it is sophisticated enough to provide conclusive evidence as to whether or not a tumor exists in the breast (McCool, Stone-Condry, & Bradford, 1998). The three procedures listed above are recommended to women as effective detection methods for breast cancer.

The concerning lack of adherence to early detection strategies has led researchers in a number of health disciplines (psychology, medicine, and nursing) to study the factors that may be influencing this behavior. The goal of this research is to determine both incentives and barriers to early detection in an attempt to develop public health efforts to increase this important and potentially life-saving behavior.

A review of the existing literature on women's decisions regarding breast cancer screening behaviors follows and shows that although a number of studies have been conducted, more research is needed to provide answers to questions about what determines these behaviors. Correctly performing BSE on a regular monthly basis saves lives, and although many intend to, a minority of women take the advice of their physicians and practice BSE. Clinical Breast Exams (CBE) and mammography also occur less frequently than doctors recommend, and the reasons for this lack of adherence are also unclear. In 1999, a study of 230 women ages 51-80 showed that 79% did not engage in the monthly practice of BSE, one third had not had recommended yearly CBE, and 56% of participants had not had mammograms as recommended (Lauver et al. 1999). Another study discovered that only 36% of participants followed recommended guidelines for BSE (Erblich, et al., 2000). In order to begin to understand why the practice of these screening behaviors is so low, it is necessary to examine the factors which may affect breast cancer screening behavior. It is likely that women's attitudes, beliefs, and fears about breast cancer, in addition to their personalities and more general beliefs about life, play some role in their decisions about how frequently they engage in this activity.
Factors Affecting Breast Cancer Screening Behavior

Scientists have hypothesized that factors related to other protective health behaviors may be similar to the ones at play in determining whether any one woman engages in breast cancer screening behaviors. The Health Belief Model is a theoretical model which is often used to explain many health behaviors and can be applied to breast cancer screening (Becker, et al., 1977). The five factors of the Health Belief Model have been hypothesized to affect breast cancer screening behavior and are discussed in detail in this section. These factors are: perceived susceptibility to the disease, perceived seriousness of the disease, perceived benefits of the behavior, perceived barriers to the behavior, and exposure to cues. In addition to these Health Belief Model factors, several others have been identified by researchers examining breast cancer screening behaviors. Coping style, emotion, competence/training/self-efficacy, affordability/accessibility/race, and physicians' influence have also been studied in the context of breast cancer screening and are addressed in this section.

Health Beliefs

Perceived susceptibility

Perceived susceptibility refers to the degree to which a woman believes she is personally at risk for developing breast cancer. Hailey (1987) examined a sample of female college students' behaviors and attitudes toward breast self-examination. She included only those students who were 20 years of age or older and analyzed questionnaires from 230 respondents who were enrolled in undergraduate psychology classes. The questionnaire was developed utilizing some of the same questions as an in-depth, semi-structured interview in previous research (Hailey, 1986). Participants were divided into 2 groups: examiners and nonexaminers, and answered questions addressing their reasons for practicing or not practicing BSE, and their ideas about what would
change their habits. Results indicated that a greater degree of worry about cancer was positively associated with a greater likelihood of BSE practice.

Not all researchers have found that perceived susceptibility to breast cancer affects women's decisions to practice examinations. Ronis and Kaiser (1989) administered questionnaires to female college students, 71% of whom were under 21 years of age. They addressed issues such as frequency of BSE practice (past and present), attitude toward BSE, beliefs about costs and benefits of BSE practice, knowledge about BSE, confidence in ability to perform BSE, social influences to perform BSE, personal experiences related to breast cancer, and perceptions of susceptibility to and severity of breast cancer. Approximately half (51%) of the participants exhibited moderate perceived susceptibility to the disease. They found perceived susceptibility to be only slightly related to BSE decisions, explaining only 24% of the variance.

In 1996, Savage and Clarke conducted telephone interviews addressing both BSE and mammography with 85 Australian women, aged 50-70. They measured perceived benefits of the early detection of breast cancer, perceived barriers to mammography and BSE, perceived susceptibility to breast cancer, concern about breast cancer, perceived self-efficacy in BSE, social influence, previous health behaviors, access to screening, and knowledge of mammography. Early detection was rated by 87% of the women to be "an extremely good thing" and an additional 11% more rated it as "quite a good thing." In addition, 70% of participants rated their chance of getting breast cancer at some time (perceived susceptibility) as being about the same as that of other women, and 12% rated it as greater than that of other women. They discovered that perceived susceptibility was a significant predictor of mammography intentions, but not of BSE intentions.

Similarly, in a study comparing the BSE practices of nursing majors to non-nursing majors, researchers did not find a statistically significant relationship between perceived susceptibility and BSE frequency (Ruda et al., 1992). They compared 59
female senior nursing students to 55 female non-nursing students on Health Belief Model factors. They found no differences between nursing and non-nursing students with regard to their perceived susceptibility to breast cancer and perceived benefits of BSE. Nursing students were, however, found to be more knowledgeable about breast cancer than non-nursing students. Frequency of BSE was not found to be significantly related to perceived susceptibility, knowledge about breast cancer, or perceived benefits of BSE.

**Perceived seriousness.**

In addition to perceived susceptibility to cancer, perceived seriousness of the disease has been hypothesized to influence decisions about protective health practices. Few studies, however, have addressed perceived seriousness as a factor influencing breast screening practices. One such study (Foxall, Barron, & Houfek, 1998) compared 32 African American nurses with 78 Caucasian nurses, 19 years of age or older, on BSE practice and health beliefs. Questionnaires assessing BSE proficiency and frequency were utilized and no differences were found between the groups' BSE frequency and proficiency. Perceived seriousness was inversely related to BSE frequency and proficiency in the Caucasian nurses, but not in the African American nurses. Thus, in this study, the perception of the seriousness of breast cancer seemed to influence one group's BSE behavior. The more serious the disease was perceived, the less likely that BSE was performed in one group.

Another study which addressed mammography behavior and perceived seriousness of breast cancer was conducted on 556 participants who were 31-83 years of age (Fuller, McDermott, Roetzheim, & Marty, 1992). A survey including 29 statements with five-point scale answers ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was administered to participants. Women who reported that they participated in mammography screening were compared to women who reported that they did not participate in mammography screening. Although no statistically significant differences
were found between women who scheduled mammography screening and those who did not with regard to the 29 beliefs examined, results indicated that among all respondents, perceived seriousness contributed to 12.8% of the total variance in mammography practice, and among women who participated in mammography screening alone, perceived seriousness accounted for 11.3% of the variance. These results suggest that perceived seriousness is not a very significant factor in a woman's decision to undergo mammography.

**Perceived benefits.**

Another health belief linked to higher frequency rates of BSE practice in college students is the perceived benefits of BSE practice. In Hailey's study of 230 college students, participants were classified as examiners and nonexaminers based on their reported BSE frequency (1987). Examiners answered a survey in which they were asked to choose their first, second, and third most important reasons for practicing BSE from a list of six possible responses. For over 90% of the examiners, realizing the importance of early detection was listed as one of the three reasons for practicing BSE. Early detection was reported to be the most frequently reported perceived benefit of BSE and likely contributed to these women's decisions to practice BSE.

A study of 690 female students between the ages of 15 and 29 in Nigeria used questionnaires to investigate BSE habits and beliefs of women (Oladepo & Adegoke, 1996). Results indicated that only 21.6% of participants reported never practicing BSE and that a majority of them believed in several perceived benefits of BSE, including a belief that it is possible to cure breast cancer (62%), that BSE makes it possible to detect breast cancer in its early stages (86.4%), and that early detection of breast cancer improves chances that it will be cured (91.8%). These results suggest that there are many perceived benefits of practicing BSE, even though they do not always seem to affect BSE frequency.
Perceived benefits are also important in mammography frequency. A study investigating racial, income, and educational influences on mammography adherence suggested that perceived benefits were a significant predictor of mammography screening for Caucasian women, but not for African American women (Miller & Champion, 1997). The sample included church women over 50 years of age and was 78% Caucasian and 22% African American. Surveys addressed attitudes and knowledge of breast cancer and mammography and included scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" for answers. The subscales were similar to the ones used in our research and, among others, included knowledge, perceived susceptibility, and benefits. Regarding participants' self reports as to whether or not they had ever had a mammogram, and whether or not they adhered to mammography recommendations for three years, perceived benefits was predictive of mammography screening for Caucasian women, but not for African American women. These results suggest that perceived benefits can be a factor in women's decision-making process regarding breast cancer screening, although findings are not consistent.

**Perceived barriers.**

Another factor in the health belief model believed to be associated with decision-making regarding breast cancer screening is barriers to the behavior, factors considered to be real obstacles to the behavior. In a study conducted by Erblich et al. (1999), women were classified as "regular performers" (those who met the recommended guidelines for performing BSE), "underperformers", and "overperformers." The mean age of the 135 women who participated in the study was approximately 42 years old. Participants completed several questionnaires addressing health beliefs, and psychological variables, such as mood disturbance, intrusive thoughts, and emotional states during BSE practice. Results indicated that perceived barriers to BSE and confidence in BSE performance were related to BSE frequency. That is, regular performers and overperformers scored lower
on the perceived barriers scale than underperformers. Erblich et al. (1999) found that perceived risk and benefits to BSE practice were not related to BSE frequency. This evidence suggests that perceived barriers to performing breast cancer screening may affect screening frequency.

A cross-cultural study of 206 female students (76% Asian and 24% Caucasian) revealed that inhibition regarding sexual issues was a significant barrier of BSE performance (Tang, Solomon, Yeh, & Worden, 1999). Researchers administered surveys which addressed breast and cervical cancer screening behavior, an acculturation scale, and cultural barriers (modesty; openness around sexuality; communication with mother about gynecological health, screening, and sexuality; crisis versus prevention orientation; modeling of mother's screening behavior; and utilization of Eastern versus Western medicine) to a group of Asian and Caucasian women after a university meeting. Between-group analyses revealed that Caucasian women were twice as likely as Asian women to have ever performed BSE. Within-group analyses indicated that the Asian women who were more open about their own sexuality were more likely to have practiced BSE. These results suggest that cultural barriers such as a lack of openness around sexuality in Asian cultures are significant factors which may affect women's decisions to engage in breast cancer screening behaviors.

In a study on differences between African American nurses and Caucasian nurses, researchers found barriers to be significantly related to BSE frequency and proficiency for the African American women in the study only (Foxall et al., 1998). The participants in this study included 32 African American nurses and 78 Caucasian nurses who were 19 years of age or older. Data included self-reports of BSE frequency and proficiency as well as various health beliefs in the categories of susceptibility to breast cancer, seriousness of breast cancer, barriers to BSE, confidence in performing BSE, and general health motivation. Results indicated no significant differences between African American
nurses and Caucasian nurses with regard to BSE frequency and proficiency. African American nurses were found to be more confident than Caucasian nurses about doing BSE and were more likely to consider BSE as beneficial. Caucasian nurses perceived significantly more barriers to BSE than African American nurses and perceived barriers were predictive of BSE frequency and proficiency for African American nurses. That is, BSE frequency and proficiency was inversely related to perceived barriers in the African American nurses. These results support the idea that barriers may influence women's breast cancer screening behaviors.

**Exposure to cues.**

Much of the literature on breast cancer screening behaviors has focused on exposure to cues and its influence on women's decisions to perform recommended screening. A cue is something which causes a person to think about the action and serves as a reminder to perform it (Benedict et al., 1997). In a study of 54 adult daughters of women with breast cancer, 52% of participants reported that they practiced BSE at least monthly, and nearly 76% of participants reported yearly CBE. Researchers found that participants' conversations with their mothers acted as a cue to action in this context, increasing frequency of BSE. Talking to their mothers about breast cancer, however, was not significantly related to CBE frequency. Participants' fear of breast cancer was significantly related to BSE frequency, while perceived susceptibility was not. These findings suggest that cues to action, such as conversations about breast cancer may be significant factors in women's decisions to practice some forms of breast cancer screening.

In a 2 (postcard/no postcard) x 2 (self-management/no self-management) experimental design, Grady, Kegeles, and Lund (1982) found that simple, inexpensive reminders such as postcards made a significant difference in BSE frequency, suggesting that exposure to cues is an important factor influencing women's breast cancer screening behavior. Participants in the self-management condition were given calendars and stickers.
to help remind them of when they were supposed to do their breast exams. Those in the no-self-management condition were given the same instructions as the self-management group, but were not given the aid of the calendar and stickers. Those women in the post card condition received a post card with the project logo "Keep-in-Touch" printed on it once a month at approximately the right time for BSE. Baseline frequency of BSE was determined via retrospective self-report for a period of six months before the experiment and then twice again during the experiment, and six months after the experiment. Frequency of BSE practice among all participants increased from 15% to 70% from pre-experiment to during the experiment. In addition, the quality of BSE practice was measured using a checklist of observable behaviors in a correctly performed BSE and increased overall from 29% self-efficacy in the reported figures before the experiment began, to 73% competence in the observed techniques at the end of the program. Results indicated that post cards were significantly related to higher BSE frequency, whereas the self-management system was not significantly related to BSE frequency. These results suggest that reminders which are inexpensive and relatively simple can be effective cues which increase women's performance of a monthly BSE.

College women appear to be influenced by exposure to cues to perform breast cancer screening. For instance, in Hailey's (1987) study, over 86% of non-examiners indicated that not remembering to do BSE was one of their three reasons for not performing the examination. She also discovered that more than 54% of non-examiner respondents indicated that if they were reminded to do it, they would be more likely to practice BSE.

In a similar study of 178 college students on both testicular cancer and breast cancer screening behaviors, only one-third of the women reported regular BSE practice, even though 98% of the women were aware of BSE and mammography (Katz et al., 1995). The reason most often cited by women for their lack of practice was
forgetfulness, which was cited by 26% of female participants. Perceived knowledge (as opposed to actual knowledge) of cancer and fear of cancer were both found to be significantly related to regular BSE performance, as well.

In addition, Mamon and Zapka (1986) conducted fixed-format telephone interviews to demonstrate that exposure to messages about breast cancer are positively related to BSE frequency. Participants were female undergraduates and graduates with ages ranging from 17 to 45 years of age. They were divided into four categories based on their frequency of BSE performance. These groups were as follows: never performed BSE, have performed BSE but not in the past 6 months, performed BSE within the last six months but less than once a month, and perform BSE currently and regularly. Results indicated that, among undergraduates, exposure to messages through the media, health care providers, or other educational mechanisms regarding breast cancer was positively related to BSE frequency. It appears, therefore, that exposure to cues about breast cancer screening is an important factor which may significantly influence women's BSE frequency.

Similarly, another experiment by Craun and Deffenbacher (1986), in which participants were mailed monthly reminders to practice BSE led to conclusions that prompting was an effective means of increasing BSE; that is, as cues increased, so did BSE frequency. Subjects included 227 female college students who completed four assessments including topics such as: breast cancer knowledge, BSE knowledge, attitudes (including perceived susceptibility, seriousness, benefits, etc.), cues associated with BSE, and frequency of BSE practice. Participants were assessed four times: prior to the study, one month after the intervention, three months after the intervention, and six months after the intervention. Eight treatment groups were designed by all possible combinations of the following training format variables: information (a lecture describing breast cancer and BSE), demonstration (a demonstration of BSE on a mannequin, followed by guided
practice on the mannequin), and prompt (a pamphlet explaining BSE, and monthly reminders to practice BSE at the beginning of each month). At pretest, variables which were significantly correlated with frequency of exams included cues, confidence, exam knowledge, lack of anxiety, and susceptibility. Similar to the study conducted by Grady et al. (1982), Craun and Deffenbacher (1986) found that prior to the project, only 19% of all participants reported monthly BSE practice, while at the six-month follow-up, 59% were reporting monthly BSE practice. Knowledge also increased between the pretest and 6-month follow-up measures over the entire sample. Participants in the prompt conditions performed significantly more examinations than those in the non-prompt conditions at post-treatment, 3-month, and 6-month testing. Results of this study indicated that cues to action and confidence were consistent predictors of BSE frequency. These results indicate that, as other studies have suggested, frequent and salient prompts should be used to increase the frequency of BSE practice.

**Coping Style**

In addition to health beliefs, coping style has been studied in the context of breast cancer screening behaviors. First, Millar and Millar (1993) examined 69 female college students by classifying them as either sensitizers (who tend to cope with a threat by utilizing intellectualization, obsessiveness, and rumination) or repressors (who tend to cope with a threat by utilizing denial and rationalization to avoid it), inducing affective or cognitive attitude orientations, presenting either informational or emotional messages, and measuring their attitudes and intentions to perform BSE. Affective and cognitive attitude orientations were manipulated by instructing participants to either think about how they felt when thinking about or performing BSE (affective), or to think about their reasons for liking or disliking BSE (cognitive). Once the attitude orientations were manipulated, participants received either emotional or informational messages encouraging the performance of BSE. Researchers then examined participants' attitudes and intentions to
perform BSE in the future. Repressors were found to be more accepting of messages that did not match the way they were previously thinking, whereas, sensitizers were more likely to accept messages which matched the way they were previously thinking about BSE. Also, repressors tended to indicate intentions to perform BSE in the future if they had an affective attitude rather than a cognitive one. Finally, repressors agreed more with the emotional messages that were presented to them, whereas coping style did not seem to affect agreement with informational messages. The complex relationships among coping style, attitude, and message type were examined and the hypothesis that differences in these variables produce different intentions for breast cancer screening behavior was supported.

Another such study examined coping style, health beliefs, and BSE practice by categorizing participants as repressors, true low anxious, true high anxious, and defensive high anxious women (Barron, Houfek, & Foxall, 1997). Using a sample of 269 women over the age of 19, Barron et al. (1997) administered the following 3 questionnaires: BSE Frequency/Proficiency Questionnaire, Health Belief Model Scale, and Coping Style. Women were divided into four categories of coping style, based on their scores on the questionnaires. Repressors are defined as reporting low anxiety due to defensive coping, true high anxious people have high anxiety without defensiveness, defensive high anxious people have high trait anxiety despite the use of defensiveness, and true low anxious people have low anxiety without defensiveness. Using this data, results indicated that coping style could predict BSE practice. Repressors and defensive high anxious women reported more frequent BSE practice than true high anxious and true low anxious women. Researchers concluded that a defensive coping style may help women cope with BSE performance by influencing their health beliefs, which in turn may influence breast cancer screening behaviors.
Emotion

In addition to health beliefs and coping style, many researchers believe that emotion plays a role in BSE frequency and in 1997 Millar conducted a study addressing this subject. The sample for this study consisted of 140 women from a university and the surrounding community, whose ages ranged from 18 to 74 years, with an average age of 30 years. Researchers instructed participants to imagine performing BSE and note their reactions to the behavior. They were then asked to write the first seven responses that came to mind when thinking about performing BSE. Once the responses were written, subjects were asked to rate them with a (+), (-), or (0) sign to show whether each response was positive, negative, or neutral. After writing and rating responses, participants reported how they were currently feeling, using a scale which had three bipolar adjective word pairs. Another scale was used to measure HBM variables, BSE knowledge, and BSE frequency. Participants also completed self-report measures of BSE frequency both before and three months after the experiment. Millar found that emotional reactions to BSE and HBM variables together more strongly predicted self-reported BSE behavior and future intentions to perform BSE than HBM variables alone. This evidence provides support for the idea that emotion is a factor in breast cancer screening behavior.

Fear is a specific emotion which can be associated with BSE and other screening behaviors because if a lump is discovered, a woman may have to face her own mortality. In the Benedict et al. (1997) study of adult daughters of women with breast cancer, for instance, fear of breast cancer was inversely related to BSE frequency, but was not related to CBE frequency. This finding is important because it highlights the dramatic effect fear may have on a woman's motivation to perform BSE at home, even though she still makes the decision to visit her doctor each year. It is still unclear, however, whether, and to
what extent, these emotions affect women who do not have a higher risk for breast cancer than women in the general population.

**Competence/Training/Self-Efficacy**

Much of the literature on breast cancer screening emphasizes a factor of competence, training, and/or self-efficacy. Many studies have examined the effects training programs and education have on women with regard to their breast cancer screening practices. Many researchers agree that these factors are related to BSE frequency as well as other protective health practices (Kuhns-Hastings et al., 1993, Mamon & Zapka, 1985, Street, Van Order, Bramson, & Manning, 1998). For example, a quasi-experimental study of rural women examined respondents' knowledge of breast cancer items before and after participation in an educational class (Kuhns-Hastings et al., 1993). The participants in the experimental class were exposed to an extensive multimedia presentation, while the comparison group only received a presentation of information from a single brochure. Identical knowledge tests were given to each group as a pretest, post test, and 3-month follow-up test, with the exception of 3 additional questions added to the follow-up test. Results of this study indicate significant gains in knowledge for both groups of women from pretest to post test administrations. In addition, both groups seemed to have retained the information three months later, on the follow-up test. Over 78% of the experimental group and over 76% of the comparison group reported that they had been checking their breasts more frequently than they were before the class. In addition, 100% of the experimental group and nearly 96% of the comparison group responded that they felt more confident in checking their breasts. These findings suggest that training and education increase knowledge as well as self-efficacy, which in turn, may increase BSE frequency. In addition, the BSE training does not need to be expensive or complex in order to be effective.
A similar study of 108 women ages 40 to 70 years suggested that education influences breast cancer screening, no matter what type of media is used to convey the message (Street et al., 1998). This study presented two different educational classes to two randomly assigned groups, with pretest and post test measures taken for each group on perceived importance, knowledge, and anxiety measures. The two types of educational classes were: presentation of an interactive multimedia program, and the reading of a single brochure. Scores improved on all three areas of the post test for both groups of women.

Education programs aimed at increasing and improving BSE procedures in college women have also been investigated. For instance, Mamon and Zapka's (1985) study of 1,682 female college students measured frequency and proficiency of BSE before and six months after a group education session which was conducted in classroom and workshop settings. Pretest and posttest measures indicated an increase in BSE performance of 26% as well as a 22% increase in BSE proficiency after the educational intervention. These results suggest that education about breast cancer, and specifically how to perform BSE, can influence women's attitudes regarding breast cancer screening procedures, as well as their breast cancer screening behaviors.

Affordability/Accessibility/Race

Important, though often overlooked, factors influencing women's decisions to participate in breast cancer screening behaviors are affordability, accessibility and race. One 1995 study investigated the breast cancer screening attitudes and knowledge of breast cancer screening practices of 1,545 women in a rural setting (Gardiner, Mullan, Rosenman, Zhu, & Swanson, 1995). Not surprisingly, researchers found that age, education, and insurance coverage were all significantly related to frequency of mammography utilization in the population. Women with education above the high school level were far more likely than women who had not completed high school to have
received mammography. Women who reported having insurance which covered mammography screening costs were more likely to have undergone mammography. Although older women (ages 50-64) were more likely than women in the 40-49 year age group to have ever received mammography screening, the younger women (40–49) were more likely than women over 75 years of age to report regular use of mammography. Also, women whose annual household incomes were greater than $25,000 were more likely than women whose annual household income was less than $25,000 to have had mammography screening during the past year.

In a study of 119 women, aged 51 to 80, who had not had mammograms in the past 13 months, telephone interviews were conducted to investigate mood states, attitudes toward mammography, barriers to mammography, and self-reports of mammography, CBE, and BSE behavior in the recent past (Lauver et al. 1999). Significant variables in determining mammography and CBE behavior were affect, barriers, prior history of breast problems, and race. The variables which were significantly related to BSE were: history of breast biopsy, family history of breast cancer, beliefs about screening and cancer, and prior instruction in BSE. Lauver et al. also found private insurance coverage and race to be related to mammography utilization during the last year. These results indicate that external barriers such as affordability and accessibility to screening are crucial factors in breast cancer screening behavior.

In another study, researchers examined data from 259 women over the age of 50 who were employees at a hospital (Friedman, Webb, Weinberg, Lan, Cooper, & Woodruff, 1995). Measures assessing breast cancer screening behaviors and health beliefs were included in the data collection. They examined racial differences in all three breast cancer screening behaviors, and found that Hispanics were more likely than African Americans to have had mammography screening in the past year. In the same study, both Caucasians and Hispanics were more likely to have had CBE in the past year as well.
Conversely, however, they also found that Caucasian women were less likely to have performed regular BSE than were Hispanic and African American women. In another study of 82 female medical employees who were at least 35 years of age, researchers found that Caucasian women were less likely to comply with mammography referral than other racial groups (Hyman, Baker, Ephraim, Moadel, & Philip, 1994). These findings suggest that race, in addition to accessibility and affordability are important factors in determining women's breast cancer screening behaviors.

**Physician Recommendations**

The role of health professionals should be examined closely, as they are the people women often look to as a trusted source of health knowledge and advice. One example of the dramatic effect physicians can have on their patients' decisions is illustrated by a study of patients who either received an intervention by their physician or did not receive one (Giveon & Kahan, 2000). The intervention consisted of the physician explaining the importance of early breast cancer detection and assisting them in scheduling an appointment for the recommended screening. Results indicated that a significantly greater change in behavior was manifested in the intervention group than in the control group. In addition, 85% of the patients who changed their behavior indicated they did so mainly due to the physician's advice. In Hailey's (1987) study of 230 college women, 35% of respondents indicated physicians as the source where they learned about BSE. Physicians were the most commonly cited source, followed by print media as the second most common source (27%) and then other health professionals (11%).

In accordance with these findings, as well as his own, Becker et al. (1977), who did much of the general research on the Health Behavior Model, suggest that professionals in the field of health care should take greater responsibility for their role of educating patients, and should view client education as an important activity. They further recommend that a greater emphasis on behavioral science perspectives should be routinely
included in health care professional training programs. If these perspectives were included in training, it is possible that physicians and nurses would not underestimate the influence they have on their patients' decisions about whether or not to engage in various protective health measures, including breast cancer screening, such as BSE.

Summary

Previous research has indicated that Health Belief Model factors such as perceived benefits, perceived barriers, and exposure to cues may influence women's breast cancer screening decisions. Although perceived susceptibility and perceived seriousness may also affect women's decisions, previous studies examining these factors have not shown a strong link with breast cancer screening behavior. In addition to the factors of the Health Belief Model, several other factors appear to be possible influences on women with regard to breast health. Coping style, emotion, competence/training/self-efficacy, affordability/accessibility/race, and physician recommendations are all factors which have been linked to breast cancer screening behaviors and beliefs in women.

Current Study

The purposes of the present study were to investigate and describe the breast cancer screening practices of college women and, more importantly, to investigate factors that may influence this behavior by comparing examiners and non-examiners on a series of variables hypothesized to be influential in the literature. We chose to focus on two broad categories of variables. The first broad category consisted of variables directly inquiring about health. These were perceived susceptibility to the disease, perceived seriousness of the disease, perceived benefits of breast cancer screening, perceived barriers to breast cancer screening, confidence in performing BSE, general health motivation, risk reduction expectancies, influence of others, and knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer...
screening practices. The second category was that of psychological well-being, specifically: life orientation (optimism), somatic amplification (preoccupation with somatic concerns), general mental health (anxiety, depression, etc.), and social support. Based on the findings indicated by our literature search, our hypotheses were that examiners would 1) be more likely than non-examiners to perceive benefits of and less likely to perceive barriers to breast cancer screening, 2) experience higher risk reduction expectancies (extent to which individual believes that risk of mortality is reduced by BSE) than non-examiners, 3) be more likely to report that doctors and nurses influence them regarding breast health, and 4) would score higher than non-examiners on knowledge tests about breast cancer and breast cancer screening. Our investigation into general psychological well-being variables was exploratory and we had no hypotheses regarding these measures.
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Participants included 476 female college students enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a medium sized university in the southwest United States. Four hundred fifty-three students (M age = 19.38 years; SD = 2.30 years) who completed questionnaires were under the age of 30, and were used in the analyses. The women received required research credits for their participation in the study.

Measures

The assessment measures for the current study were a compilation of several psychometrically valid scales designed to gather information about various beliefs and attitudes regarding a person's health. Some scales refer specifically to breast health habits and beliefs, while others inquire about more general health issues. The measures included in the questionnaire packet for the current study are as follows: 1) A short demographics questionnaire including questions about age, marital status, educational background, general health, and breast health history; 2) The Risk Adaptation Scale (Irvine & Ritvo, 1994), which assesses risk and risk reduction expectancies with respect to a specific health risk (i.e., breast cancer). The scale contains four questions regarding personal risk estimates for the disease (e.g., Compared to the average person of your age and sex, how likely are you to develop breast cancer at some time?) and four questions about risk reduction expectancies, or beliefs that risk can be reduced by engaging in certain behaviors (e.g., How much can your risk be reduced by following your doctor's advice about cancer screening and prevention?); 3) The Somatic Amplification Scale (Barsky, Goodson, Lane,
and Cleary, 1988), which is a reliable and valid measure consisting of eleven items regarding sensitivity to somatic cues (e.g., When someone else coughs, it makes me cough, too). Participants indicate extent of agreement with each statement by choosing a numerical rating of one through five, with possible answers ranging from "not true at all" to "extremely true." This scale is utilized to determine a person's tendency to be vigilant of her own bodily sensations; 4) Breast Cancer Screening Beliefs Instrument (Champion, 1993) which is a psychometrically valid instrument based on the Health Belief Model and used widely in studies on breast health beliefs and practices. This measure consists of ten sub-scales: a) confidence in performing BSE, b) general health motivation, c) perceived benefits of mammography, d) perceived barriers to mammography, e) perceived susceptibility to breast cancer, f) perceived seriousness of breast cancer, g) perceived benefits of BSE, h) perceived barriers to BSE, i) influence of others in relation to breast health, and j) knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening. The scales of the questionnaire have high internal consistency - ranging from $\infty = .75$ to $.93$ - and good test-retest reliability, based on computer correlation coefficients ranging from $r =$ .45 to .70. The questionnaire also has predictive validity as the attitude scales correlate highly with breast cancer screening behavior. Each sub-scale consists of a series of statements to which participants must respond with a degree of agreement in the form of a 5-point Likert scale rating ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The influence sub-scale consists of a rating ranging from "no influence" to "strongly influence" according to how much each person influences the participant in relation to her breast health. This variable was examined categorically as no influence or some influence. The knowledge sub-scale contains 18 multiple choice questions about breast cancer and breast cancer screening and is used to gain information about a participant's overall knowledge about these topics; 5) The Social Relationship Scale (McFarlane, 1981) which is a well-tested measure, assesses the extent of a person's social relationship network and its perceived
helpfulness in minimizing negative effects of life stresses on health. The participant writes the initials of people she confides in, each person's relationship to her, and rates each person on the helpfulness a discussion with them yields, and also rates each person's degree of reciprocity or the likelihood that each person would come to her to discuss his or her personal issues with her. Eight possible relationships may be mentioned and the rating for helpfulness of discussions is presented on a 7-point Likert scale which ranges from "makes things a lot worse" to "helps things a lot". The scale has good test-retest reliability, with correlations ranging from $r = .62$ to $.99$ with a median of $.91$. 6) The Mental Health Inventory (Veit & Ware, 1983) is a psychometrically valid, 38-item scale which measures psychological distress in general populations. This well-tested measure contains 18 questions with 6-point Likert scale answers ranging from "all of the time" to "none of the time" (e.g., Have you been a very nervous person?). An abbreviated version of this measure is utilized in the current study; 7) The Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985) which is a valid and reliable instrument containing 13 questions designed to measure dispositional optimism in terms of generalized outcome expectancies and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from "I disagree a lot" to "I agree a lot" (e.g., In uncertain times, I usually expect the best).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited using a bulletin board in the hallway of a medium-sized university. Those who signed up for the study were allowed to participate for required credit in undergraduate psychology classes. Upon entering the classroom at the time scheduled for the study, students were asked to respond to a questionnaire packet. They were told that the questionnaire was designed to provide information regarding health behavior and attitudes about certain health issues. They were assured that their answers would remain anonymous and confidential, and research assistants were present during
the entire session to help if participants had questions. Most questionnaire packets were completed within an hour.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 453 college women ranging in age from 17 to 29 years (M = 19.38, SD = 2.30) and was largely single (90%) with no children (97%). Nearly 91% of respondents described their overall health as excellent or good. An overwhelming majority of participants reported having a mother who has never had, and does not presently have breast cancer (96%). More than 57% percent of subjects reported having performed at least one BSE and 51% reported having had at least one CBE in their lives. When asked about how often they perform breast exams, over 38% of respondents reported having CBE yearly as recommended, but only 17% reported performing BSE on the recommended monthly basis. In women reporting having performed BSE at some point, the mean number of BSE performed per year was 10.84 (SD = 2.84). In women reporting having had CBE at least once, the mean number of CBE per year reported was 1.16 (SD = .53).

Demographic Differences Between Examiners and Non-examiners

For the purpose of this study a participant was considered a BSE examiner if she had performed at least one BSE and a CBE examiner if she had had at least one CBE in her lifetime. The literature traditionally considers screening practice a categorical variable as the reliability of self-report on the number of BSE and CBE performed is considered low. A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether examiners and non-examiners differed in age. BSE examiners were significantly older (F(1, 446) = 7.31, p < .01) as were CBE examiners (F(1, 447) = 26.26, p < .01). Chi-square tests showed that married
women were more likely to have performed BSE ($\chi^2(1, N=448) = 8.86, p < .01$) and CBE ($\chi^2(1, N=449) = 12.83, p < .001$). Chi-square tests also indicated that more CBE examiners had mothers diagnosed with breast cancer than CBE non-examiners ($\chi^2(1, N=443) = 4.11, p < .05$), although no such difference was found for BSE behavior. Because of the significant difference in age between examiners and non-examiners, analyses of continuous dependent measures used age as a covariate.

Risk adaptation.

No significant differences were found between college women who actively screened and those who did not in terms of the scales of four questions each relating to 1) their risk estimates for breast cancer (i.e., how much they believe they are likely to be diagnosed with the disease at some time in their lives), and 2) their risk reduction expectancies (i.e., how likely they are to believe that BSE and CBE will help reduce their risk of dying from breast cancer).

Breast health beliefs.

BSE and CBE examiners, compared to BSE and CBE non-examiners reported more confidence performing BSE, a higher motivation to engage in general health behaviors, more benefits to performing BSE, as well as fewer barriers to performing BSE (see Table 1 for the means, standard deviations, and analyses of covariance results for breast cancer screening beliefs). The groups did not differ in their perception of the seriousness of breast cancer nor of their own susceptibility to breast cancer.
Table 1.

**Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results for Breast Cancer Screening Beliefs**

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<td>Confidence in Performing BSE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BSE</strong></td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>7.99**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBE</strong></td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>20.29***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer Susceptibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSE</strong></td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBE</strong></td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer Seriousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSE</strong></td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBE</strong></td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of BSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSE</strong></td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>11.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBE</strong></td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>4.83*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to BSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSE</strong></td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>19.14***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CBE</strong></td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>17.26***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.
Influence of others on breast cancer screening behavior.

Chi-square tests were performed on the influence portion of Champion's Breast Cancer Screening Beliefs Instrument (1993) and with alpha set at .05. Both BSE and CBE examiners were significantly more influenced by doctors and nurses than were non-examiners. These findings are presented in Table 2. There were no between-group differences between examiners and non-examiners regarding the influence of close friends, children, partners, or mothers on screening behavior.
Table 2.

Number of BSE Examiners and BSE Non-examiners Reporting Influence of Various People on Screening Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>BSE Non-examiners (n = 186)</th>
<th>BSE Examiners (n = 262)</th>
<th>$\chi^2(1)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>7.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>10.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friends</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of CBE Examiners and CBE Non-examiners Reporting Influence of Various People on Screening Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>CBE Non-examiners (n = 216)</th>
<th>CBE Examiners (n = 233)</th>
<th>$\chi^2(1)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>12.95***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friends</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.
Knowledge.

Total knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening was significantly higher for BSE ($F(1, 432) = 20.568, p<.001$) and CBE ($F(1, 434) = 21.344, p<.001$) examiners than their non-examiner counterparts (see Table 3). A series of chi-square tests was performed to determine which individual items were answered correctly more often by examiners (see Table 4). The Bonferroni correction for multiple univariate tests of significance (.05/18) renders only item 8 in Table 4 significantly different, but results are presented to indicate areas in which knowledge may be particularly lacking.

Table 3.

**Adjusted Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results for Total Knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Examiners</th>
<th>Non-examiners</th>
<th>ANCOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSE</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>9.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>9.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.*
Table 4.

**Number of Correct Responses to Individual Knowledge Items for Examiners and Non-examiners [correct answers in brackets]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Examiners</th>
<th>Non-examiners</th>
<th>$\chi^2(1)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Which of the following can change a woman's breasts? [monthly cycle]</td>
<td>BSE (n=262)</td>
<td>182 113</td>
<td>3.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBE (n=233)</td>
<td>160 136</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When breast lumps are discovered, how many are cancerous? [most are not cancerous]</td>
<td>BSE (n=186)</td>
<td>108 60</td>
<td>3.85*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBE (n=216)</td>
<td>97 71</td>
<td>3.81*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. On the average, how many women will get breast cancer at some time during their lives? [1 woman out of 8]</td>
<td>BSE (n=262)</td>
<td>112 61</td>
<td>4.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBE (n=233)</td>
<td>91 84</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Who do you think is more likely to get breast cancer? [women over 50]</td>
<td>BSE (n=262)</td>
<td>99 51</td>
<td>5.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBE (n=233)</td>
<td>91 59</td>
<td>6.78**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Who do you think is more likely to get breast cancer? [women who have had their first child after 30]</td>
<td>BSE (n=262)</td>
<td>71 44</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBE (n=233)</td>
<td>68 49</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Who do you think is more likely to get breast cancer? [women with a close relative who had breast cancer]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Bumping and bruising breasts can cause breast cancer. [false]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Fondling and caressing breasts can cause breast cancer. [false]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>3.83*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Women with breast cancer must almost always have their breasts removed. [false]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>6.33**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do large breasts increase your chances for getting breast cancer? [no]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Can what you eat increase your chance for getting breast cancer? [no]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Is pain usually associated with breast cancer? [usually not in the initial stages]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Which of the following is recommended for women 50 and older? [yearly mammography screening]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Which of the following is recommended for women 50 and older? [yearly mammography screening]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSE</th>
<th>CBE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>5.95*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. A woman who is still menstruating should schedule a mammogram (for comfort)...
[right after her period]

|     | BSE |    | CBE |  
|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
|     |    137 | 70 |     121 | 88   |
| p   | 9.40** |    | 5.64* |     |

15. Women over the age of 40 should have breast exams by health care provider...
[every 2 years]

|     | BSE |    | CBE |  
|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
|     |    193 | 134 |     181 | 147 |
| p   |    .15 |    | 5.28* |     |

16. When is the best time during the menstrual cycle (your period) for a breast exam?
[about 1 week after your period starts]

|     | BSE |    | CBE |  
|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
|     |    121 | 57 |     108 | 72   |
| p   | 10.97** |    | 7.91** |     |

17. Should a non-pregnant woman should see her physician if she has discharge from her nipples? [yes]

|     | BSE |    | CBE |  
|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
|     |    231 | 151 |     206 | 177 |
| p   | 4.23* |    | 3.74* |     |

18. Should a woman should see her physician is she has unusual puckering or dimpling of her breasts? [yes]

|     | BSE |    | CBE |  
|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
|     |    227 | 146 |     202 | 172 |
| p   | 5.18* |    | 4.02* |     |

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.
Somatic amplification/mental health/life orientation/social support.

Analyses of the Somatic Amplification Scale, the Mental Health Inventory, the Life Orientation Test, and the Social Support measure yielded no differences with regard to college women who practice breast cancer screening and those who do not.
CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The present study supports the findings of previous research indicating that a majority of college age women do not follow recommendations about breast cancer screening behaviors (Hailey, 1986). Only about 57% of participants in this study reported having performed at least one BSE, and only about 51% reported having had at least one CBE in their lives. Women who had engaged in screening at least once were designated examiners for the purposes of the current research. When participants were asked how often they perform BSE and CBE, even fewer women reported recommended frequency. Only 17% of women in this sample reported performing BSE on a regular monthly basis as recommended, and 38% of respondents reported engaging in yearly CBE as recommended. The higher rate of recommended CBE practice may be due to the fact that the recommended frequency for this screening method is lower than that for BSE. Examiners tended to be older than non-examiners, however, the overall sample showed a disturbing lack of adherence to breast cancer screening guidelines.

Consistent with the first hypothesis of the present study, were found between examiners and non-examiners in attitudes and beliefs. BSE and CBE examiners had significantly higher scores than non-examiners on the following subscales: BSE confidence, general health motivation, and perceived benefits of BSE, although the effect sizes were small. They also had significantly lower scores on the perceived barriers to BSE subscale. No differences were found for perceived susceptibility or perceived seriousness scores.

The second hypothesis was not supported, as no differences were found between
examiners and non-examiners with regard to risk estimates and risk reduction expectancy. Total scores on the Risk Adaptation Questionnaire were not significantly different between BSE and CBE examiners and non-examiners.

Hypothesis 3 was supported, as examiners were significantly more likely than non-examiners to report that doctors and nurses influence them in relation to breast health, while no differences existed for the influence of romantic partners, mothers, children, or close friends on participants' breast health.

The final hypothesis in the current study was supported as well. Total knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening scores were significantly higher for both BSE and CBE examiners than their non-examiner counterparts. Differences on individual knowledge items are discussed in the following section. There were no differences between groups on measures of psychological well-being.

Much research has been conducted on the subject of breast cancer screening in women, particularly in high risk women and women of different racial and economic backgrounds. Regardless of the type of sample each study examines, results of many studies have revealed a low adherence to breast cancer screening recommendations. Beyond that common finding, however, there are still questions as to which factors heavily influence women's decisions regarding breast cancer screening behaviors. It is important that research continue to address these questions in order to develop a clearer picture of what types of approaches will be effective in increasing adherence to breast cancer screening recommendations. Increasing adherence to these guidelines will presumably decrease mortality rates due to breast cancer in the population.

The present study addressed many factors which have been posited in previous research as having an effect on women's decisions regarding their breast health. Although several factors appear to be related to BSE and CBE frequency, several others appear not
to be related, and it is important to note the information that has surfaced regarding these factors as well.

Many financial resources are utilized for public service announcements and other public messages to women with the purpose of increasing breast cancer screening awareness, knowledge, and behavior. The ultimate purpose of the current study is to assist the creators of those messages to target the factors that will accomplish their goal most effectively. For example, results of our study suggest that perceived susceptibility and perceived seriousness are not factors which are closely related to BSE frequency, therefore, trying to convince women that they are at risk for disease, or that the disease has a high mortality rate may not be the most effective way of increasing BSE frequency. Targeting the factors which are associated with women's breast cancer screening decisions will make financial resources more useful in the fight against the deadly effects of this disease.

The current research found examiners to hold certain beliefs more often than nonexaminers. For example, examiners tended to have more confidence (self-efficacy) in their breast cancer screening ability. They tended to believe that they know how to perform BSE correctly and that they can find a lump using BSE techniques. This was true for both BSE examiners and CBE examiners, and consistent with other studies, it suggests that a program that focuses on increasing BSE self-efficacy and confidence would be successful in increasing frequency of examinations (Erblich et al., 1999; Mamon & Zapka, 1985).

Examiners also scored higher on general health motivation scores, indicating that maintaining good health is important to them, and that they tend to search for new information to improve their health. Perceiving benefits of BSE also seemed to contribute to examiners' behavior. They reported feeling good about themselves when they perform BSE, and they also tended to indicate that they believe BSE will help them find a lump in
their breasts if one exists. Therefore, campaigns aimed at convincing women that their overall health is important, and that BSE is a practice with many health benefits would seem to have potential for increasing screening frequency.

Both BSE and CBE examiners perceived fewer barriers to BSE than did their non-examiner counterparts. They were less likely to believe that BSE is unpleasant, that it takes too much time, or that it felt awkward to perform. Based on the findings on barriers, it would seem useful to develop public service announcements that illustrate women performing BSE and looking confident and happy while doing it, as well as showing that it takes a minimal amount of time to perform. One program in New York, for example, created a campaign to encourage mammography for underserved women by making it a celebration of breast health (Englisbe, Jimson, Harper, & Cohen. 1995). This type of program, if used for BSE public announcements, would be likely to increase self-exam frequency based on the results of our study, which indicate that non-examiners perceive the task as time consuming and unpleasant. Examiners did not differ from non-examiners in their beliefs about susceptibility to breast cancer or the seriousness of breast cancer. One possible explanation for this finding is the fact that the sample in this study consisted of college age women who were 29 years of age or younger and likely feeling a youthful invulnerability to disease. However, judging from previous research, it is possible that seriousness and susceptibility are not factors at all, or that they are only factors for older women, as would be suggested by the results of studies done on women of an older age where susceptibility and/or seriousness was found to be significant (Savage & Clarke, 1996). If it is true that these factors are only important for older women, it would seem effective to develop a more age-specific approach to campaigns aimed at increasing BSE frequency. The results from the perceived seriousness factor indicate that scare tactics are not likely to increase screening with younger populations.

Many studies have pointed out the need for health care providers to adequately
explain BSE techniques and benefits to their patients, and our study supports those results (Lauver et al., 1999). It was found that among people who might possibly influence women regarding the subject of breast health, doctors and nurses seemed to be the most influential. Romantic partners, mothers, children, and close friends were not found to influence examiners more than non-examiners, and these results support the notion that health care providers can influence the health behavior of their patients. It is thus important to communicate this research to health care providers who may not be fully aware of the very significant impact they have on their patients regarding breast cancer screening.

Analyses of the Risk Adaptation Questionnaire yielded results suggesting that risk adaptation beliefs are not a driving force in women's decisions about breast cancer screening. No significant differences were found between examiners and non-examiners with regard to risk estimates or risk reduction expectancies. It appears, therefore, that convincing women that they are at risk for dying of breast cancer might not be an effective means of increasing their screening behaviors. These results suggest that, if beliefs are to be targeted to increase screening behaviors in younger women, beliefs other than risk estimates and risk reduction expectancies should be targeted.

Knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening appears to be related to women's decisions about their screening behaviors. Both BSE examiners and CBE examiners had significantly higher overall knowledge scores than their non-examiner counterparts. It is possible that women who know more about breast cancer and breast cancer screening are less likely to be intimidated by the prospect of an examination because they know what to expect from an exam, and are therefore more likely to be willing to go through with one, whether it is conducted by the woman herself or her doctor. Two notable single knowledge items that were found to be different between examiners and non-examiners for both BSE and CBE were the knowledge items about
when to schedule mammograms and when to perform BSE for the most comfort. Both BSE examiners and CBE examiners were more likely than their non-examiner counterparts to know the best time of the month to schedule mammograms and to perform BSE for the most comfort. It is possible that non-examiners do not know when to perform BSE, so performing BSE is uncomfortable for them. Therefore, educating women that BSE performance is most comfortable right after their periods may be a way to increase BSE performance. Perhaps the factor of knowledge also relates to the factor of emotion which, although addressed in previous research, was not included in the present study as a separate factor. Perhaps increased knowledge about breast cancer and breast cancer screening decreases fear and other negative emotions which may sometimes stand as barriers to completing breast cancer screening behaviors. An example that provides some support for this contention is that non-examiners in the present study were more likely to believe that women with breast cancer always have their breasts removed. More attention to the factors of knowledge and emotion is warranted in order to more clearly understand if and how they are related to each other and to behavior.

In addition to financial resources being utilized effectively and adding to previous research, the current study provides information regarding breast cancer screening behaviors and beliefs in a population of young women who are not yet at high risk. As noted previously, many studies on the subject of breast cancer are conducted on samples of high risk women, primarily women over 40 or women of specific racial or economic backgrounds. While research on these specific populations of women is understandable considering the rates of breast cancer mortality in these demographic groups, there is a growing belief that health behaviors need to be instilled early in life (Mamon & Zapka, 1986; Maurer, 1997). This developmental approach to health promotion grows out of the notion that if health behaviors are instilled prior to the presence of risk, they have greater preventive power and become more integrated into the person's lifestyle as habits.

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The challenge that is faced in dealing with young women is a lack of a sense of urgency when dealing with breast health. This research provides some information about behavior and beliefs in young women which may then be used to discover which factors are useful in instilling preventive health behaviors in young people.

Despite the statistically significant differences found in these two groups of examiners and non-examiners, it must be again noted that effect sizes were very small for attitudes and beliefs, as well as for knowledge. As has been the case for many studies of behavior change, attitudes account for much less of the variance than one would expect. Clearly, the reasons why women engage or do not engage in these behaviors are many and complex. Attitudes and beliefs may just be a relatively small part of the formula. In addition, several other limitations of this study should be noted. Although nearly 500 women participated in this study, a larger sample size may have provided a more accurate picture of that factors that are significant in relation to women and breast health. It is also important to interpret the findings cautiously because self-report was utilized as the mode of gathering data, and this method can sometimes be suspect due to demand characteristics, poor memory, and other factors which may blur the accuracy of self-report. However, by their own admission, nearly half of all participants had never performed BSE and nearly half of all participants had never experienced CBE. Even if their self-report is less than 100% accurate, these numbers are staggering and deserve attention. Another limitation of the current research is a lack of qualitative information. Perhaps a few open-ended questions about why women engage in or do not engage in breast cancer screening behaviors may have provided even more useful information about the factors which contribute to women's decisions about breast cancer screening.

This study provides data regarding college age women's breast cancer screening behavior and beliefs. It emphasizes the important role that health care providers play in convincing women to perform these examinations more often. It also examines the role
that education and knowledge play in the demystification of the procedures and consequences of not performing them. The role of beliefs such as self-efficacy, health motivation, perceived benefits of BSE and perceived barriers to BSE are also addressed, highlighting the potential impact these beliefs can have on women and their decisions about breast cancer screening behaviors. The information reported here can be useful in developing programs and messages that will be effective in convincing women at younger ages that it is important to examine their breasts, and to allow their health care providers to examine them, not just when they are older and at risk, but early in life, so they are able to develop the habits that may someday save their lives.
REFERENCES


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Background Information

The following are some general questions about you, and some questions about your mother. Please answer them to the best of your knowledge.

1. How old are you? (years) ________

2. Where do you live? (town) ___________________

3. What is your marital status? Are you ...(Circle the correct one)
   a) Single (whether divorced or not)
   b) Cohabiting
   c) Married
   d) Widowed

4. Do you have any children? ______ If so, how many? ________

5. How many brothers and/or sisters do you have? __________

6. How many years of formal schooling have you had? (years) __________

7. Are you currently employed? ______ If so, what kind of work do you do? ____________________________

8. Are you currently attending school? ______ If so, what are you studying? ______ ____________________________

9. How often do you see the following types of doctors?( Please indicate times per year)
   a) General Practitioner (G.P.) ________
   b) Internal Medicine Specialist ________
   c) Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.) ________
   d) Gynecologist (OBGYN) ________
   e) Psychiatrist/ Psychologist ________
   f) Other ________

10. How would you describe your overall health? (Circle only one answer)
    a) Excellent
    b) Good
    c) Fair
    d) Poor
11. Is your mother alive? If she is alive, how old is she? (years)

12. Does your mother suffer from a chronic illness? If so, what is it?

13. Did your mother ever have or does she currently have breast cancer? Yes No

Please answer the following to the best of your knowledge.

1. Have you ever performed a breast self-examination? (circle one) Yes No (if you answer "No" to this question, please skip to #4)

2. When was the last time you performed a breast self-examination?

3. How often do you perform breast self-examination?

4. Have you ever had a clinical breast examination (an examination of the breast cone by a medical doctor)? (circle one) Yes No (if you answer "No" to this question, please go on to the next page)

5. When was the last time you had a clinical breast examination?

6. How often do you have a clinical breast examination?

7. Have you ever had a mammogram? (circle one) Yes No (if you answer "No" to this question, please go on to the next page)

8. When was the last time you had a mammogram?

9. How many mammograms have you ever had?
QUESTIONNAIRE # 1

SUBJECT #___________

For the following questions please circle one response for each question.

1. How much can your cancer risk be reduced by things you do to stay healthy? The risk...
   1. Can be reduced a great deal
   2. Can be moderately reduced
   3. Can be reduced a minor amount
   4. Cannot be reduced at all

2. How much can your risk of cancer be reduced by following your doctor’s advice about cancer screening and prevention? The risk...
   1. Can be reduced a great deal
   2. Can be moderately reduced
   3. Can be reduced a minor amount
   4. Cannot be reduced at all

3. If your risk is not reduced, how likely are you to develop cancer?
   1. Highly likely
   2. Moderately likely
   3. Somewhat likely
   4. Not at all likely
4. How certain are you that your cancer risk can be reduced by the things you do to stay healthy?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
Completely Completely
Uncertain Certain

5. How certain are you that your cancer risk can be reduced by things doctors can do?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
Completely Completely
Uncertain Certain

6. Personally, do you feel your risk of developing breast cancer is...

1  2  3  4  5
Very Low Low Moderate High Very High

7. Compared to the average person your age and sex, how likely are you to develop breast cancer at some time?

1  2  3  4  5
Much Less Less About The More Much More
Likely Likely Same Likely Likely

8. Compared to the average person in your family, how likely are you to develop breast cancer at some time?

1  2  3  4  5
Much Less Less About The More Much More
Likely Likely Same Likely Likely
QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

On this questionnaire there are some statements. Please read each statement carefully and then make an "X" in the box which best describes YOU IN GENERAL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOT AT ALL TRUE</th>
<th>A LITTLE BIT TRUE</th>
<th>MODERATELY TRUE</th>
<th>QUITE A BIT TRUE</th>
<th>EXTREMELY TRUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When someone else coughs, it makes me cough too.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I can't stand smoke, smog, or pollutants in the air.</td>
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<td>3. I am often aware of various things happening within my body.</td>
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<td>4. When I bruise myself, it stays noticeable for a long time.</td>
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<td>5. I sometimes can feel the blood flowing in my body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sudden loud noises really bother me.</td>
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<td>7. I can sometimes hear my pulse or my heartbeat throbbing in my ear.</td>
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<td>8. I hate to be too hot or too cold.</td>
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<td>9. I am quick to sense the hunger contractions in my stomach.</td>
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<td>10. Even something minor, like an insect bite or a splinter, really bothers me.</td>
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<td>11. I can't stand pain.</td>
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</table>
QUESTIONNAIRE # 3

Please indicate your degree of agreement for each of the following statements by making an “X” in the appropriate box that reflects your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE # 1</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know how to perform breast self-examination.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I am confident I can perform breast self-examination correctly.</td>
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<td>3. If I were to develop breast cancer I would be able to find a lump by performing breast self-examination.</td>
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<td>4. I am able to find a breast lump if I practice breast-examination alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I am able to find a lump which is the size of a quarter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I am able to find a lump which is the size of a dime.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I am able to find a breast lump which is the size of a pea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I am sure of the steps to follow for doing breast self-examination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I am able to identify normal and abnormal breast tissue when I do breast self-examination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. When looking in the mirror, I can recognize abnormal changes in my breast.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I can use the correct part of my fingers when I examine my breasts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I try to discover health problems early.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Maintaining good health is extremely important to me.</td>
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<td>3. I search for new information to improve my health.</td>
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<td>4. I feel it is important to carry out activities which will improve my health.</td>
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<td>5. I eat well-balanced meals.</td>
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<td>6. I exercise at least 3 times a week.</td>
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<td>7. I have regular health check-ups even when I am not sick.</td>
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<td>8. I have yearly Pap smears.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TABLE # 3</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. When I get a recommended mammogram, I feel good about myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. When I get a mammogram, I don’t worry as much about breast cancer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Having a mammogram, or x-ray of the breast will help me find lumps early.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast will decrease my chances of dying from breast cancer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast will decrease my chances of requiring radical or disfiguring surgery if breast cancer occurs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Having a mammogram will help me find a lump before it can be felt by myself or a health professional.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
TABLE # 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Having a routine mammogram or x-ray of the breast would make me worry about breast cancer.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast would be embarrassing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast would take too much time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast would be painful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Having a mammogram or x-ray of the breast would cost too much money.</td>
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TABLE # 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is extremely likely I will get breast cancer in the future.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I feel I will get breast cancer in the future.</td>
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<td>3. There is a good possibility I will get breast cancer in the next 10 years.</td>
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<td>4. My chances of getting breast cancer are great.</td>
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<td>5. I am more likely than the average women to get breast cancer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TABLE # 6</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The thought of breast cancer scares me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. When I think about breast cancer, my heart beats faster.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I am afraid to think about breast cancer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Problems I would experience with breast cancer would last a long time.</td>
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<td>5. Breast cancer would threaten a relationship with my boyfriend, husband or partner.</td>
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<td>6. If I had breast cancer my whole life change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. If I developed breast cancer, I would not live longer than 5 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TABLE # 7</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. When I do breast self-examination I feel good about myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. When I complete monthly breast self-examination, I don’t worry as much about breast cancer.</td>
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<td>3. Completing breast self-examination each month will allow me to find lumps early.</td>
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<td>4. If I complete breast self-examination monthly during the next year I will decrease my chances of dying from breast cancer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. If I complete breast self-examination monthly I will decrease my chances of requiring radical or disfiguring surgery if breast cancer occurs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. If I complete breast self-examination, it will help me find a lump which might be cancer before it is detected by a doctor or nurse.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I feel funny doing breast self examination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Doing breast self-examination during the next year will make me worry about breast cancer.</td>
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<td>3. Breast self-examination will be embarrassing to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Doing breast self-examination will take too much time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Doing breast self-examination will be unpleasant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I don't have enough privacy to do breast self-examination.</td>
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</table>
Please rate how much each of the following people or groups of people influence you in relation to breast health. Mark with an “X” the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE # 9</th>
<th>No Influence</th>
<th>Slightly Influence</th>
<th>Moderately Influence</th>
<th>Strongly Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your husband or partner…</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Your mother…</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Your children…</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Your doctor…</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Your nurse…</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Your close friends…</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The next group of questions is about knowledge of breast cancer and breast cancer screening. Most people will not know all the answers. Please check the answer that you feel is correct.

1. Which of the following can change a woman’s breasts?
   - [ ] 1. Monthly cycle
   - [ ] 2. Menopause
   - [ ] 3. Touching the breasts
   - [ ] 4. Don’t know

2. When breast lumps are discovered, how many are cancerous?
   - [ ] 1. Most are cancerous
   - [ ] 2. Most are not cancerous
   - [ ] 3. About half are cancerous
   - [ ] 4. Don’t know
3. On the average, how many women will get breast cancer sometime during their lives?
   □ 1. 1 women out of 8
   □ 2. 1 women out of 25
   □ 3. 1 women out of 100
   □ 4. Don't know

4. Who do you think is more likely to get breast cancer?
   □ 1. Women under 50
   □ 2. Women over 50
   □ 3. No difference
   □ 4. Don't know

5. Who do you think is more likely to get breast cancer?
   □ 1. Women who have had their first child before 30
   □ 2. Women who have had their first child after 30
   □ 3. No difference
   □ 4. Don't know

6. Who do you think is most likely to get breast cancer?
   □ 1. Women with a close relative who had breast cancer
   □ 2. Women without a close relative who had breast cancer
   □ 3. No difference
   □ 4. Don't know
7. Bumping or bruising breasts can cause breast cancer...
   - 1. Yes
   - 2. No
   - 3. Don’t know

8. Fondling or caressing breasts can cause breast cancer...
   - 1. Yes
   - 2. No
   - 3. Don’t know

9. Women who have breast cancer must almost always have their breasts removed...
   - 1. Yes
   - 2. No
   - 3. Don’t know

10. Do large breasts increase your chances for getting breast cancer?
    - 1. Yes
    - 2. No
    - 3. Don’t know

11. Can what you eat increase your chance for getting breast cancer?
    - 1. Yes
    - 2. No
    - 3. Don’t know
12. Is pain associated with breast cancer?
   - 1. Yes, when a lump develops
   - 2. Usually not in the initial stages
   - 3. Don't know

13. Which of the following is recommended for women 50 and older?
   - 1. Yearly mammography screening
   - 2. Mammography screening every 2 years
   - 3. Mammography screening only when symptoms occur
   - 4. Don't know

14. A woman who is still menstruating should schedule her mammogram (for comfort)...
   - 1. Right before her period
   - 2. Right after her period
   - 3. It does not matter
   - 4. Don't know

15. Women over the age of 40 should have breast exams by a health care provider...
   - 1. Every 2 years
   - 2. Every 3 years
   - 3. Every year
   - 4. Don't know
16. When is the best time during the menstrual cycle (your period) for a breast exam?

☐ 1. About 1 week before your period starts

☐ 2. During your period

☐ 3. About 1 week after your period starts

☐ 4. Don't know

17. Should a non-pregnant women see her physician if she has had discharge from her nipples?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

☐ 3. Don't know

18. Should a women see her physician if she has unusual puckering or dimpling of her breasts?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

☐ 3. Don't know
Please list the people with whom you generally discuss Personal Issues. By personal issues we mean issues such as health problems, your relationships, your fears, your insecurities, or anything that is relatively private. Just write the initials of the person you confide in, in the first box of the table.

After the initials, fill in a one or two word description of the relation each person has to you (e.g., friend, sister, boyfriend, etc.)

Then mark the appropriate box with an “X” which indicates the degree of helpfulness or unhelpfulness of your discussions with each person.

Lastly, make an “X” in the yes or no column if you feel this person would come to you to discuss personal issues. Don’t feel you have to fill up all the spaces provided. Write down as few or as many people as you confide in. If you have no one you confide in, write NO ONE in the table. If you find you need more spaces, please inform the interviewer.

**I DISCUSS PERSONAL ISSUES WITH:**

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**HELPFULNESS OF DISCUSSION**
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QUESTIONNAIRE #5

For each question choose only one answer. Please make an "X" in the box that corresponds to your choice.

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<td>1. Has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you?</td>
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<td>2. Did you feel depressed?</td>
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<td>3. Have you felt loved and wanted?</td>
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<td>4. Have you been a very nervous person?</td>
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<td>5. Have you been in firm control of your behavior, thoughts, emotions, feelings?</td>
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<td>6. Have you felt tense or high-strung?</td>
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<td>7. Have you felt calm and peaceful?</td>
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<td>8. Have you felt emotionally stable?</td>
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<td>9. Have you felt downhearted and blue?</td>
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<td>10. Were you able to relax without difficulty?</td>
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<td>11. Have you felt restless, fidgety, or impatient?</td>
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<td>12. Have you been moody, or brooded about things?</td>
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<td>13. Have you felt cheerful, light-hearted?</td>
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<td>14. Have you been in a low or very low spirits?</td>
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<td>15. Were you a happy person?</td>
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<td>16. Did you feel you had nothing to look forward to?</td>
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<td>17. Have you felt too down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?</td>
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<td>18. Have you been anxious or worried?</td>
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QUESTIONNAIRE # 6

Please be honest and as accurate as you can throughout. Try not to let your response to one statement influence your response to other statements. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers. Answer according to your own feelings, rather than how you think "most people" would answer. Please make an "X" in only one box for each statement.

| 1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best. | I DISAGREE A LOT | I DISAGREE A LITTLE | I NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | I AGREE A LITTLE | I AGREE A LOT |
| 2. It's easy for me to relax. | | | | | |
| 3. If something *can* go wrong for me, it *will*. | | | | | |
| 4. I always look on the bright side of things. | | | | | |
| 5. I'm always optimistic about my future. | | | | | |
| 6. I enjoy my friends a lot. | | | | | |
| 7. It's important for me to keep busy. | | | | | |
| 8. I hardly ever expect things to go my way. | | | | | |
| 9. Things never work out the way I want them to. | | | | | |
| 10. I don't get upset too easily. | | | | | |
| 11. I'm a believer in the idea that "every cloud has a silver lining". | | | | | |
| 12. I rarely count on good things happening to me. | | | | | |
| 13. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad. | | | | | |
VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Leslie Ann Snyder

Address:
3251 Casey Dr. #202
Las Vegas, NV 89120

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, 1995
Univeristy of Texas at Austin

Special Honors and Awards:
Departmental Honors in Psychology

Thesis Title: Breast Cancer Screening Behaviors and Beliefs in College Women

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Marta Meana, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Christopher Heavey, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Mark Floyd, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Patricia Markos, Ph.D.
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UMI®
ROBERT HUGH BENSON AND THE CATHOLIC LITERARY REVIVAL
IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

by

Chad P. Stutz
Bachelor of Arts
Wheaton College
1997

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in English
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2002
The thesis of Chad P. Stutz for the degree of MA in English is approved.

Chairperson, Richard Harp

Examining Committee Member, Timothy Erwin

Examining Committee Member, Edwin Nagelhout

Graduate Faculty Representative, Catherine Bellver

Graduate Dean, Paul W. Ferguson

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada
August, 2002
ABSTRACT

Robert Hugh Benson and the Catholic Literary Revival in Edwardian England

by

Chad P. Stutz

Dr. Richard Harp, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of English
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Robert Hugh Benson was a popular religious author in Edwardian England; however, he has been all but forgotten by posterity. This study re-examines Benson’s contribution to the Catholic Literary Revival, a movement rooted in Romanticism. Benson utilized a “ministerial approach” to spread his message of renewal. Whereas other Revivalists wrote official histories, Benson wrote historical novels to advance the claim that the sixteenth century was responsible for British social disintegration. By presenting history as art, Benson presented his Christian worldview in a palatable form. Benson also had a complex relationship with 1890’s Aestheticism. Though he wrote a novel denouncing its tenets, Benson seemed attracted by it. While many of his own views on art contradicted Aestheticism, he recognized the aesthetes’ quest for beauty as valuable when consecrated to God. Finally, Benson authored a work of apocalyptic fiction which, though it prefigures many later twentieth-century works, also differs from them in some significant ways, especially in its purpose. Benson was a creative and original artist who deserves fresh attention by contemporary scholars.
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CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION: ROBERT HUGH BENSON AND THE
CATHOLIC LITERARY REVIVAL

Some writers take the reader back to past ages, to vanished civilizations, to periods dead and gone; others take a leap into the fantastic and the world of dreams, their vision portraying, with greater or lesser intensity, a time as yet unborn, in which, by an atavistic reaction, the writer unwittingly reproduces the image of past epochs.

—J.K. Huysmans, A rebours

The work of Mr. Chesterton has its point from appearing in a world which is definitely not Christian.

—T.S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature"

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

—St. Paul, Colossians 3:17

On a Friday afternoon in September of 1903 in a Dominican chapter room at Woodchester, Robert Hugh Benson, the youngest son of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, made a profession of faith before Father Reginald Buckler, submitting himself to the Roman Catholic Church. Early one Monday morning just over eleven years later, Benson died of pneumonia at the age of 43. Benson’s years as a Catholic were comparatively short as he “passed meteor-like across the horizon of the Church”; but during these brief eleven years, Robert Hugh Benson proved to be one of the most prolific writers ever to contribute to the annals of English literature.
Benson’s fecundity expressed itself through a variety of outlets. Between 1903 and 1914, he produced more than 20 novels in diverse genres—including historical, apocalyptic, and psychological novels—as well as plays and poems. He was a fertile essayist, appearing regularly in publications like *The Dublin Review*, *The Month*, and *Atlantic Monthly*. He also authored several books of Catholic apologetics and a spiritual autobiography chronicling his own path to Rome. Many of his novels were translated into a variety of foreign languages, including French, Spanish, German, and Italian.

When not writing books, Benson toured England and America speaking to large crowds that gathered to hear him. An ordained priest in the Catholic Church, Father Benson was a coveted preacher. When he preached on Good Friday in Kensington in 1907, the church was full an entire hour before the beginning of the service. Officials had to install sliding doors in order to enable the large crowds to exit smoothly. Similarly, when Benson traveled to New York in 1912 to preach on Ash Wednesday, 1250 people crowded into a church designed to hold 850. A return visit in 1914 saw even greater numbers. In addition, Benson supplemented his more formal sermons with frequent lectures throughout England on such topics as “Modern Miracles” and “The Modern Novel.”

Benson’s creative output and concomitant popularity found other venues as well. In 1907 he was offered the position of Chair of the English Department at the Catholic University, an offer he graciously declined. He wrote on “The Dissolution of the Religious Houses” for *The Cambridge History of English Literature* in 1909. Blossoming modern novelists like Ford Maddox Ford sought him out for help in faithfully depicting matters of religious ceremonial, while other popular novelists
solicited him to write prefaces for their books. And perhaps most importantly, Benson was an avid letter writer, taking time out of his busy schedule to correspond with hundreds of converts seeking spiritual advice, as well as with fans of his books. Indeed, Benson was so popular when he died—and the public response so overwhelming—that the Nonconformist paper *The British Weekly* declared with an air of exasperation “No More Hugh Benson!”.

Despite Benson’s immense popularity on two continents during his lifetime, however, he has been largely forgotten by posterity. The opening sentence of Janet Grayson’s recent biography—the only substantive study of its kind in more than 80 years—is a telling register of contemporary attitudes toward Benson. “Does anyone read Robert Hugh Benson anymore?” she quips. Today, only one of Benson’s books, *Lord of the World*, an apocalyptic thriller about the coming of Antichrist, is readily available in large, popular bookstores. A handful of others have been reprinted by small, private Catholic presses and can be obtained solely by direct order. Others can only be bought used, and still others cannot be found at all. Modern critical attention has been equally elusive. Only a few scattered and cursory articles have recently treated Benson’s work, and the term “Benson scholarship,” if such a thing exists at all, would likely meet with questioning looks.

Still, Grayson’s 1998 work on Benson marks a small but growing interest in the forgotten work of a hugely popular author. Whispers of a “Benson revival” have been uttered among Catholic scholars, and with the flood of interest in eschatological fiction engendered by the frenzy surrounding the Protestant *Left Behind* series, *Lord of the
World, at least, is slowly reappearing before the eyes of the general public. The time seems ripe for a new study of the literature of R.H. Benson.

A fresh study of Benson is also needed in that those major studies that do exist—both earlier and more recent ones—are limited by the fact that they are solely biographical in nature. The biographical approach is necessary, of course, and it is especially understandable when dealing with minor figures of literature that lack a sharply defined presence in the collective consciousness of literary critics. For despite the residual effects of the New Criticism's caveats about the biographical fallacy, students of literature nevertheless hunger for a certain authorial identity on which to pin their interpretations of individual works. At the same time, however, the biographical approach tends to subjugate both particular works of literature and larger literary trends to the task of understanding the psychological nuances of a given author. C.C. Martindale, author of the two-volume definitive biography on Benson, admits as much in his dedicatory epistle written to Benson's mother: "[T]o speak for one moment grandiloquently, I have had to try to treat this 'Life' as a psychological study, or not at all. As mere annals, a list of things done, or as a mere study of a litterateur's output, it was inconceivable." Clearly, what matters most to Martindale, and to the biographer in general, is not the art but the man. Various works of literature are utilized merely as keys to a greater understanding of the differing moods and life events of an author—a kind of tool for psychoanalysis—and as a result, a thorough examination of literature qua literature is often lacking.

This work pursues a slightly different path, aiming, in contrast to earlier studies, to examine several of Benson's novels for their own sake, for what they may serve to
reveal about the Catholic perspective in Edwardian Britain, and for what they contribute to the English literary tradition overall. In large part, this study offers readings of some of Benson’s most creative and original novels, including his historical novels, *By What Authority?* and *Oddsfish!*, a contemporary novel entitled, *The Sentimentalists*, representing Benson’s response to the fashionable Aestheticism of his day; and his apocalyptic novel, *Lord of the World*, in which he depicts the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. In conjunction with these interpretive projects, the present work also endeavors to place Benson’s literature in the context of a number of important historical discourses pervading Edwardian England, as well as a frequently neglected literary movement that flourished during the early part of the twentieth century in Britain—the Catholic Literary Revival. As a vanguard member of the Edwardian phase of the Catholic Literary Revival, Benson’s work manifests a number of similarities in both theme and form with other writers of the Revival, most notably its two prominent figures—G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. Together, Benson and “ChesterBelloc” (as George Bernard Shaw cleverly termed the tandem), along with Maurice Baring and others, constituted a concerted literary and religious response to certain post-Victorian cultural trends. By situating Benson within these milieus, I hope to make clear the creativity and originality, as well as the nuances and idiosyncracies, of Benson’s works and their important position in the Catholic Literary Revival.

**Benson as “Catholic Author”**

It is perhaps best to approach Benson by applying to him what, at first glance, appears an innocuous term. Robert Hugh Benson is first and foremost a *Catholic*
author. Significantly, later writers like Graham Greene and Francois Mauriac have vehemently denied the applicability of this term to their artistic enterprises. Graham Greene has proclaimed it a "detestable term," arguing that "Many times since Brighton Rock I have been forced to declare myself not a Catholic writer but a writer who happens to be Catholic." The differences between the two ideas are subtle, but important nonetheless, and it is a useful distinction that is worth preserving in relation to Benson. Initially, it seems as if authors like Greene are aiming to establish a kind of compartmentalized approach to their art and lives. Religion and literature are separate facets of life and need not interpenetrate or inform one another. Novels are one thing, devotion another. Such a dualism, however, forces one to question not only the integrity of the author's faith, but also the degree to which his art justly represents his vision of reality. While it does award an author a needed degree of freedom, it appears to do so at an unacceptable cost. Is a person truly faithful if he ostensibly sacrifices that faith to aesthetic concerns?

To charge authors like Greene with "compartmentalization," however, is to argue for something that is not borne out in their works. Greene's work clearly does reflect an inter-relationship between art and religion. His novels are permeated with a religious sensibility that informs the component parts. How, then, does Greene reconcile his novels with his own statement? By rejecting the term Catholic author, Greene opens the door for a more subtle exploration and expression of religion in literature—the kind of ambiguous inference favored in many modern novels. Like an underground spring watering fruits above, Greene's Catholicism nourishes his narratives as they flow forth from his underlying faith. Events may not always appear pious on the surface, but
underneath lies an attitude towards reality nurtured by Catholicism. Additionally, Greene is free to explore issues of faith (and lack of faith) without feeling constrained to preach a sermon at the conclusion of the novel. For “the author who happens to be a Catholic,” religious issues in novels are grayer, less black-and-white, even if the author himself happens to opt for a black-and-white reality in his personal life. Furthermore, the burden of interpretation, as is the case with most modern and post-modern novels, is left more squarely with the reader.

In contrast to this, the Catholic author would be more apt to engage in overtly didactic or polemical writing. He would accept the burden of the “apologetic and morally edifying” approach and devise stories accordingly. Instead of allowing a story to flow freely out of an investigation of the world colored by Catholic faith, the Catholic author begins with the Catholic faith and fashions a story to illustrate or defend it. The works of the Catholic author are less exploratory and more expository. Though certain areas of “grayness” may materialize from time to time, a feeling of “black-and-white” predominates. A further comparison may here serve to emphasize the point. A writer to whom one might justifiably apply the term Catholic author approximates the allegorist in form and purpose. In an effort to depict certain truths in an imaginative manner, the allegorist creates a story to illustrate the intended point. The writer who happens to be a Catholic, on the other hand, begins by writing a story (albeit surely one informed on some deep level by his belief system) and ends by permitting the reader to interpret the story accordingly. This does not mean that the work of the latter author is completely lacking in religious themes; rather, it means that his work would undoubtedly be more subtle and complex in the development and exploration of those themes, creating a
greater authorial distance and relying more on inference than on a “moral of the story” technique. Mauriac explains the difference nicely:

> Being a Christian, my Christian beliefs dominate my novels, not because I want to make propaganda for Christianity, but because it is the deepest part of my nature. . . . I am a Christian first and last, which means a man responsible to God and to his conscience for the epoch he lives in. . . . he has been put here to play a certain role among his fellow men. He is engaged; it isn’t a question of deliberately engaging himself.  

It is important to note here that Mauriac still professes some kind of engagement with “the epoch he lives in.” Indeed, the distinction he makes is at base a psychological one—engagement with the epoch does not require a conscious act of will, but rather develops organically from one’s core of faith. One can presumably imply from this notion a corresponding alteration in the way in which Mauriac’s faith manifests itself in his novels. Still, as Theodore Fraser points out, novelists like Greene and Mauriac have often come under attack for “authorial manipulation” and “creating puppetlike characters” as a result of their rejection of modernist biases against authorial intrusion.  

Thus, even though Mauriac decries a propagandistic approach, his use of certain literary devices commonly considered to be outmoded (the omniscient narrator discussing the inner-psychology of characters directly, for instance), opens him up to the critique of a type of propaganda anyway.

Nevertheless, whatever the psychological nuances of literary creation might be for various authors of the Catholic persuasion, and whatever the corresponding artistic manifestations, one grasps intuitively a fundamental difference between the novels of a Greene and a Benson. In speaking of Benson, then, the term Catholic author provides a proper starting point. Indeed, unlike Mauriac and Greene, Benson would surely have
embraced this designation and its implications. Patrick Braybrooke writes of Benson, "His philosophy peeps out from his writings the whole time. It is an insistence on the necessity of the Catholic point of view."\(^\text{17}\) Benson believed passionately that novels should have a clear point and that authors must not be ashamed to steer directly towards that point, carrying their readers along with them. For Benson, his art was a matter of deliberate engagement with his epoch, and because of this belief, it is not surprising that when critics speak of Benson at all, their discussions are usually rife with terms like "propaganda" and "polemic." Even George Shuster, a fellow Catholic and a critic who is, on the whole, sympathetic to Benson, declares that his novels have "some of the atmosphere of a 'tract'."\(^\text{18}\) Such labels are almost always meant pejoratively, and they carry with them negative connotations that even the most open-minded of readers may find it difficult to ignore as images of a merciless proselytizer flash before the mind’s eye.

Such charges, however, are in many ways a vestige of modernism. With the advent of post-modernism, critics and theorists have repeatedly questioned the ability of any writer to secure for oneself a truly objective vantage point. As a result, Benson’s purposeful brand of literature may no longer seem as out of place as it once did for earlier modernist critics. Despite this broadening of critical perspective, however, the idea of religious propaganda and its implied weakening effects on the quality of literature has perhaps not entirely disappeared altogether. Therefore, I would like to suggest a new term for the approach to literature which Benson and his fellow Catholic Revivalists took. This term is not intended as an escape from the very real charges associated with the notion of propaganda, but is meant only to eliminate the
instantaneous prejudices called to mind upon hearing the word. Moreover, this fresh term entertains the possibility that while polemical literature is often considered “weak” literature from the standpoint of some modern(ist) criticism, such literature is not entirely without its positive enjoyments and effects. And finally, this new term signifies more accurately the essential motivations which lie behind the writing of such literature; namely, in the case of Benson, Chesterton, Belloc, and Milton before them, “to justify the ways of God to man.”

One might say, then, that Benson wrote with a ministerial approach. (Closely related to this, one could argue that Benson deserves not only the label of Catholic author, but also the epithet priest-novelist. This term is valuable in that it succeeds in embodying not only Benson’s occupational status, but also his distinctive aesthetic program.) When reading a novel by Benson, one is confronted with the feeling that he is experiencing a kind of extended sermon illustration. Two of Benson’s novels, Lord of the World and The Dawn of All, are self-acknowledged extended parables delineating possible futures for European society. But even aside from these obvious parables, one senses with many of Benson’s books that the majority of typical artistic considerations—character, setting, even plot—have been pressed into the service of some over-arching religious theme. In By What Authority?, for example, Benson submits his readers to a theological survey of religious positions ranging from Calvinism to Catholicism (with a stop at Anglicanism in between), all in an effort to establish Catholicism as the only historical source of Christian authority. In The Sentimentalists, the reader apprehends almost from the start that the decadence of Christopher Dell is a bankrupt philosophy and that his only redemption is to be found in the Catholicism of John Rolls and Dick
Yolland. And in *Come Rack! Come Rope!*, the message is equally clear: Robin Audrey (and the reader) should answer the call to his vocation even if the result is death.

Benson’s ministerial approach is not confined to him, however. In fact, it is a defining characteristic of the Catholic Literary Revival in the Edwardian Period. Benson, Chesterton, and Belloc all employed versions of this method, and later writers like C.S. Lewis also showed signs of utilizing this approach. The ministerial approach can be identified by the following characteristics. First, the author consciously conveys a specific (spiritual) message and urges the reader toward accepting this message. Second, other artistic concerns typically adopt an ancillary position to theme. Third, the author using the ministerial approach is motivated by a belief that the conventions of art are an effective means of delivering the said message; or in other words, authors using this technique would likely disregard the dictum “art for art’s sake.” Fourth, and closely related to number three, the author senses the power of art to be a catalyst for change, both social and personal. And fifth, the author is driven by a kind of prophetic impulse; i.e., the author has a message of renewal that his audience must hear, often in opposition to a multitude of competing cultural messages. Very often this message is considered by the author to be rooted in divine truths and therefore of the utmost importance. Like a minister preaching to the congregation, purveyors of the ministerial approach use art to challenge their readers towards personal and social change.

Clearly, the ministerial approach does not dictate the use of a particular genre, nor does it superintend minute issues of imaginative expression (it does not, for example, determine what color boots a character wears or where a novel takes place); rather, the term speaks more to the preoccupations of the author and his specific goals in writing.
Moreover, varying degrees of success can be found within this approach to literature. Both Chesterton and Benson employ a version of this approach, yet while Benson has disappeared into history, Chesterton scholarship remains alive and vibrant. Whereas popular interest in Benson has waned so much as to be virtually non-existent, popular interest in Chesterton continues to grow.

One effect of the ministerial approach when reading Benson is the sense one gets that Benson is continually dealing with an ideal form of Catholicism. Rarely does Benson treat the dark sides of Catholicism, and when he does, it is only to insist that the ideal has not been met. This does not imply that Benson’s characters are always martyrs-in-the-making, carried away by their religious zeal—though certainly many of them are. Nominal, complacent, and even bumbling Catholics (Annie Brasted in The Conventionalists, for example) do appear, but Benson’s foundational message is frank and obvious in each and every one of his novels: Only in Catholicism can one find personal redemption and a divine system for the governance of human society.

Benson’s goal is to challenge all people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, to a higher form of faith and devotion. For non-Catholics, Benson seeks to substantiate the truth of Catholicism. (As a former Anglican, Benson is particularly hard on Anglicanism and its lack of apostolic authority.) For Catholics, Benson cautions them against the dangers of conventionalism—a favorite Bensonian term for Christ’s admonition to the Church in Laodicea against lukewarm religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that Benson’s passion and the ministerial approach which he adopted to relate it garnered criticism from all sides. Maisie Ward summarizes the negative effect Benson sometimes had on people from a variety of denominations: “Most ‘cradle Catholics’ and many converts...
disliked those jibes at Anglicans . . . Moreover, along with the jibes at Anglicanism were attacks upon Catholic complacency." In his private life, Benson treated people of all faiths with kindness, gentleness, and compassion. In his novels, however, Benson had a message to spread and did so with fervor and fire. Albert Sonnenfeld has suggested that Catholic novels "can be seen as arrogant, often filled more with hate than with love" because Catholic authors, grounded in what they believe to be Absolute Truth, must necessarily present a view of the world that is at once exclusionary. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). There exists little doubt that while Benson's passion was attractive in one way, his idealism sometimes invoked the critical fire of contempt from those who failed to share his zeal. Indeed, as the virtue of tolerance has become more and more the vogue throughout the twentieth century, it is little wonder that Benson's novels, with their strict claims that Truth is to be found in one place and one place only, have fallen by the wayside.

To speak of Benson as an idealist with a compelling vatic impulse is at once to point to another essential quality of his writings; in fact, it is an essential quality in all of the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival. Benson and his fellow Revivalist authors were, at base, neo-Romantics. Not only does a thread of religious idealism run throughout Benson's works, but he exhibits other Romantic characteristics as well. There exists a medievalism in Benson, a fascination with, and an energetic passion for, a time when the Church was one and ruled the world. Supernaturalism courses through the pages of his novels, displaying itself in a variety of forms as Benson strives to affirm the sempiternal reality behind the veil. Benson's world is a sacramental one—material and immaterial,
flesh and spirit, regularly fuse and transubstantiate. Even the Romantics' stereotypical love of nature is imbued in Benson's lush descriptions of the natural environment, what Christian tradition has called "the back of God."

The Foundations of the Catholic Literary Revival

Robert Hugh Benson was a central figure in the Edwardian phase of a literary movement known as the Catholic Literary Revival. A subsection of a larger Catholic Revival that had been sweeping Europe since the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholic Literary Revival was an attempt to reclaim for God and Church a literary institution that had become increasingly secularized and to spread a traditional and orthodox Christian message that had largely been lost. Benson and his fellow Revivalists strived to reinvigorate Edwardian society with a renewed sense of its spiritual roots and to remind the people of their need for God. Moreover, the Literary Revival was part of an ongoing effort to reclaim the status of a Catholic heritage that had been ignored and suppressed since Henry VIII's break with Rome in the sixteenth century. Broadly conceived, the Catholic Literary Revival impacted genres of literature ranging from history and biography to fiction and poetry. Though artistic in form, it was religious and socio-political in impetus, its main proponents confronting religious and social issues through imaginative means.

Benson and his fellow Revivalists burst onto the literary scene during a contentious period in English history. By the conclusion of the Victorian Era, Britain had reached a crisis of faith and found itself at the breaking point. Rationalism, empiricism, positivism, modernism, Darwinism, and Higher Criticism had succeeded in undermining
the traditional belief systems of not only the intellectual elite, but also those of many average citizens as well. A growing religious pluralism only exacerbated the situation. In 1902-3, R. Mudie-Smith conducted a poll of people living in the vicinity of London for the *Daily News*. According to the survey, only two out of every eleven people attended church. This marked decline in British church attendance is perhaps reflective of Victorian religious tensions, but the decline was certainly not for lack of choice among competing denominations. Since the Reformation, schism after schism had culminated in a developed state of religious pluralism. In England, the Anglican Communion remained the official national faith, but the nineteenth century had seen the explosion of a variety of Nonconformist sects, each with its own version of "true" Christianity. By the start of the Edwardian period, the splintered condition of Christendom contributed to the growing feeling that Christianity was in danger. People, according to Keith Robbins, "began to suspect that perhaps the condition of the churches in society had already reached its peak,...and that what lay ahead might be a long and difficult struggle to 'hold the fort'."^27

In large part, those people, events, and publications which epitomize the Edwardian Era take their distinctive quality from their efforts to wrestle with the forces of secularization and division. Much like the Romantic movement a century earlier, Edwardian England responded to a rapacious rationalism by seeking spiritual answers in new places. As Jonathan Rose writes: "Among Edwardian intellectuals, a recurring pattern can be traced: they commonly passed through a phase of doubt or disbelief, ultimately discovered they could not do without one or another of the comforts provided by religion, and went on to construct some secular form of faith."^28 Some of these new

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secular forms of faith included Socialism, Idealism, the demiurge of George Bernard Shaw known as the “Life Force,” and Spiritualism. The still embryonic discipline of psychology also sought to distance itself from the mechanism of its nineteenth century predecessor and did so by theorizing about the “subconscious” mind. Subsequently, the subconscious became for some a natural explanation for what had always been considered supernatural phenomena. The Apollonian and the Dionysian of Nietzsche constituted a similar attempt to posit the existence of a deeper non-rational reality without taking recourse to Christian concepts of God, spirit, and soul.

What many, if not all, of these new secular forms of faith had in common was their effort to mollify humanity’s desire for religion while preserving the intellectual integrity apparently demanded by the rationalist perspective. To adopt a phrase from Romantic criticism, many Edwardians aimed to devise eclectic belief systems of “natural supernaturalism” by striving to reconcile the supposedly polar claims of science and faith. Traditional religious urges were sublimated into political, preternatural, or non-conventional supernatural spheres. As a result, one finds among Edwardian writers, even Catholic ones like Robert Hugh Benson, a somewhat bizarre straining after a holistic model of the universe that could bridge the gap between science and faith. For example, one of the prominent organizations of the period, the Society for Psychical Research, purported to investigate the claims of Spiritualism through a strict use of the scientific method. Indeed, in the minds of many, a mutually satisfying relationship seemed to exist between Science and Spiritualism during the Edwardian Period. Scientists like Oliver Lodge found in the empirical study of spiritual phenomena a substitute for the lost hope of religion, while Spiritualists themselves longed for the
vindication of their experiences that science could bring. As historian Janet Oppenheim puts it:

It was the fond hope of British spiritualists that, through their faith, the constructive aspects of the scientific method might be harnessed to the search for philosophical or religious meaning in human existence, thereby mitigating the destructive impact of science. If the validity of spiritualist phenomena could be proven in acceptable scientific fashion, then science could become once again, as in past centuries, the defender and not the challenger of the faith. ²⁹

Whether scientists or spiritualists or both, Edwardians struggled valiantly to locate a source of meaning in the spiritual vacuum left by Victorian skepticism and materialism. However, concerned primarily with fulfilling the need for religious emotion in a doctrinal wasteland, people everywhere turned outside the Church for hope and a new kind of truth. ³⁰

Consequently, it is not at all surprising that Calvert Alexander, in his book The Catholic Literary Revival, argues that the Catholic Literary Revival “is primarily one of revolt. Catholic literature, when we discover it coming into being in the mid-nineteenth century, is a literature of protest against the course being followed by European society.” ³¹ Albert Sonnenfeld makes a similar claim in Crossroads: Essays on the Catholic Novelists. For him, the literary gifts of the Revivalist authors “were initially negative or reactionary. Their inspiration increases when the Church’s power decreases; they thirst most acutely for a world of order when their world is threatened by total disorder.” ³² These claims are foundational for understanding the Catholic Literary Revival. The Revival, like its half-brother Romanticism, is at base a revolt; or more precisely, the Revival is a counter-attack, a new offensive by a seemingly diminished tradition of orthodoxy. ³³ It is a group of authors speaking out through their
art against a creeping secularism and the decline in the European social consciousness that such secularism was causing.

That Romanticism and the beginnings of the Catholic Literary Revival should coincide is not surprising. Romanticism was a vehement reaction to Enlightenment rationalism. In his famous essay, *Was ist Aufklärung?*, Immanuel Kant posed the quintessential Enlightenment challenge to all of humanity—*sapere aude*—"dare to know." This tiny phrase epitomizes the Enlightenment *zeitgeist*—a period in history when men believed in the power of human Reason to effect a utopian state of perfection. The universe was no longer ruled by a supernatural deity (or a deity, at least, that took an interest in human affairs), but was subject to rational and scientific laws able to be deduced by the empirical observations of men. Science was the celebrated "hero" of the Enlightenment, and it was seen as "the basis for an unbounded faith in progress, a belief in perfectibility and the imminent elimination of pain and suffering." In response to this enlightened humanism, the Romantics celebrated the mysterious, the supernatural, the emotional, and the spiritual side of human existence. While Isaac Newton was busy discovering the laws of physics, the Romantics were busy exploring metaphysics—that "awful shadow of some unseen Power" which "Froats though unseen among us," as Shelley so beautifully describes it ("Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" 1-2). Romanticism was a reactionary movement that attempted to recognize and re-infuse an essentially religious spirit into an empty and hollow culture debased by pure intellect, or so Romantics like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats saw it. As such, "All Europe was feeling the profound stirrings of renovating forces which seemed to promise much not only for the renewal of the arts but for the revival of religion."
The sweeping sense of spiritual revival inaugurated by the Romantics fired the imaginations of men like John Henry Newman who, in 1833, along with John Keble, became a preeminent figure in the Oxford Movement—a movement designed to bring reform to the Anglican Church by hearkening back to the forms and rituals of traditional Catholicism. Alexander writes:

The Oxford Movement was a late echo of the Romantic Revival. Coming as it did...at a time when popular opposition to the Romantic excesses had already begun to solidify, it was in the nature of a last brave attempt to realize for religion and art some of the early promises of the revival before English society had hardened into Victorianism. 37

Thus the Oxford Movement—a distinctly Christian program—took its cues from the Romantic push for spiritual renewal.

The Oxford Movement also shared with Romanticism a hunger for the past; specifically, for the medieval past. 38 The Romantics were horrified by the effects of nineteenth-century industrial society. Large, poor urban masses lived in close proximity with little true human contact. Growing industrialization prevented people from living in simple harmony with Nature. And art had become too rigid, too strict, too rational. Western civilization seemed to be in chaos and on the brink of crumbling. As a result, the Romantics were attracted by the primitive simplicity of the Middle Ages with its harmony and order. They were drawn to its ritual, pageantry, and mysticism, and they sought to recapture the medieval spirit by transporting themselves and society—via art and imagination—back to the past. The Oxford Movement, with its atavism, also strived to reinvigorate Anglicanism by re-instituting older forms of worship.

However, after ten years as a figurehead of the Oxford Movement, Newman began to understand, in the words of Alexander, that its “program for the restoration of religion
was as nostalgic, vaporous, and unreal as that of the Romantics in other fields.” Though
the Movement was Christian in that it recognized humanity’s need for an encounter with
the authentically supernatural, its power was derived largely from a kind of sentimental
vision of the past and a drive to recreate that past in the present. In contrast to this,
Newman realized that “the revival of religion in England was not primarily a matter of
historical re-creation and renewed contact with the past at all. It was first and foremost a
matter of re-establishing contact with the authentic source of the supernatural in the
present.”^ For Newman, this authentic source of the supernatural in the present was
none other than the Catholic Church. Prior to any form of social revival or redemption,
Newman believed strongly that fallen human nature must be redeemed, and that the only
way an individual could be freed from “the terrible aboriginal calamity” was through
divine intervention.40 As is well known, Newman converted to Catholicism shortly
thereafter and transferred with him the seeds of the Catholic Literary Revival.

To suggest, however, that Newman and the Catholic Literary Revival were children,
or products, of Romanticism, is to overstate the case. Alexander’s phrase, “stimulated
by Romanticism,”^ is much more carefully chosen to reflect the finer nuances of the
relationship. Clearly, a conduit existed between the two movements. Both represented a
type of spiritual response to a growing trend of anti-supernaturalism. Both saw
something in the medieval past worth examining more closely. The fledgling Catholic
Literary Revival was inspired by and content to ride the spiritual wave of Romanticism,
at least temporarily. However, even from the beginning of the Oxford Movement, there
were important differences between the two responses.42 Indeed, the differences
between Romanticism and the Catholic Literary Revival are at least as important as the
similarities. Rather than viewing it as if Romanticism begot the Revival, it seems more just to suggest that Romanticism and the Catholic Literary Revival are themselves two children of a common parent—the Enlightenment—genetically similar, but different in personality and outlook. Or, to phrase it another way, they are like two trains that begin on parallel tracks only to diverge indefinitely somewhere down the line. Their motives are similar, their characteristic responses different.

Viewing the two movements in this way has important ramifications for the terminology one can employ. When one speaks of Benson and other authors of the Catholic Literary Revival as “Romantics,” one can effectively conjure an aspect of their artistry and thought. This approach also calls to mind tendencies these authors share with more famous writers like Wordsworth or Shelley. However, when utilizing such terms, one must also recall that the responses of Catholic authors to similar issues differ not only in degree, but also in kind. There is a qualitative difference between the Romantics and the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival, a difference that must be remembered at all times. “[T]t is. . .,” writes Alexander, “. . .inevitable that the numerous schools, tendencies, individual artistic preferences existing among modern Catholic authors should be called ‘romantic’ or ‘classical’ or ‘traditional’ or ‘modernist.’ But these terms must be applied with a difference. And that difference is fundamental and of great importance.”43

One important difference, then, between Revivalist authors and their Romantic predecessors, is that while the Romantics sought to reject Reason nearly altogether as a reaction to Enlightenment excesses, Revivalist authors acknowledged the importance of Reason and worked to retain it. As Alexander makes clear, the Catholic Church
repudiated Romanticism because "it attempted to dethrone the intellect." While Catholics surely could not accept the anti-supernaturalism of Enlightenment rationalism (and its descendant Victorian materialism), nor could they abide the notion that pure intuition and feeling were adequate guides to truth and reality. As a result, the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival aimed to strike a balance between rational modes of knowledge and mystical modes of knowledge. On the one hand was scientific knowledge which, in typical Edwardian fashion, could not be ignored, while on the other hand was the timeless truth that Christians must "walk by faith, not by sight." Thus one frequently observes what appear on the surface to be bizarre paradoxes in authors like Benson and Chesterton. Benson, for example, in articles like "A Modern Theory of Human Personality" published in The Dublin Review in 1907, stretches himself to adduce a psychology of human behavior that squares with the scientific facts, only to deliver a paper on "Mysticism" the very same year. Similarly, among the many paradoxes in Chesterton's Orthodoxy, his use of the word "rational" itself gives one pause. On the one hand, he claims he must accept the dogmas of Christianity because he is "a rationalist" who "like[s] to have some intellectual justification for [his] intuitions." Only pages later, however, Chesterton uses the term "rationalist" with obviously negative connotations: "It is we Christians who accept all actual evidence—it is you rationalists who refuse actual evidence being constrained to do so by your creed." Chesterton, as is nearly always the case, is far more playful than Benson; and Chesterton's project, of course, is to demonstrate how Christians have actually trumped agnostic intellectuals by proving themselves more rational than the rationalists. Still, a kind of via media is evident in both authors—an attempt to retain both reason and
intuition, rational and phenomenological knowledge—and to avoid slipping too far in either direction. Or perhaps more accurately, the Catholic viewpoint is not so much a mere balance as it is a passionate embrace of both extremes simultaneously which leads to an even greater balance. Chesterton makes the same argument in regard to Christian virtue in a chapter aptly titled, “The Paradoxes of Christianity:” “Everywhere I began to find that . . . duplex passion was the Christian key to ethics everywhere. Everywhere the creed made a moderation out of the still crash of two impetuous emotions.” The apparent paradoxes between reason and emotion are paradoxes only to Enlightenment or Romantic extremists. Moreover, Benson’s and Chesterton’s insistence on a balance of these two extremes is nothing more than a plain embrace of what the Catholic Church had advised for centuries concerning the relationship between passion and intellect.

Both the Revivalists and the Romantics also displayed a fascination with the medieval past. Critics, however, tend to talk about the Catholic and Romantic longing for the past in terms of “nostalgia.” Sonnenfeld, for instance, writes: “It was as poets and dreamers that Catholic novelists viewed history, transmitting a vision, a memory of a story-book past that was surely never as glorious as their nostalgia intimated.” Similarly, Lord Acton, the great nineteenth-century British historian and one of the first to consider the relationship between Romanticism and the Catholic Revival, noted the propensity for the Romantics to favor imagination at the expense of an investigation that was methodologically sound: “It is the note of the Rom. School that it put imagination and constructiveness before analysis and criticism and that it was always wrong.”

For the most part, however, the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival did not value the past merely for its own sake, simply because it was different than the confused
modern world in which they lived. They did not seek the trappings of the past, but the
genuine Catholic spirituality that had produced it. In contrast to this, writes Alexander,
the Romantics struggled "to revive the shrunken culture of the non-Catholic world by
contact with a Catholic culture without any disposition to reaffirm belief in the
supernatural principle that had produced that culture."\(^{52}\) Whereas some Romantics
merely slipped imaginatively into the past as an escape from the degradation of the
modern world, the Catholic Revivalists sought to transmute the orthodoxy of the Middle
Ages into the present, and they did so with an intense and pointed energy, not the weak-
kneed sentimentality of which they are sometimes accused.

Moreover, in their battle for spiritual significance, some Romantics constructed
esoteric, solipsistic belief systems—personal models of spirituality through which they
endeavored to revitalize their worlds.\(^{53}\) Blake's claim that the source of all religions is
"the true Man. . . he being the Poetic Genius" in "All Religions Are One" is a prominent
example of the Romantic rejection of orthodoxy in favor of individualized religious
paradigms.\(^{54}\) Shelley, too, in his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," calls "the names of God
and ghost and Heaven" nothing but "Frail spells" (27-9), revealing a similar distaste for
institutional faith. The authors of the Revival, on the other hand, undertook to apply the
old orthodoxy to a new world; or more to the point, to argue that the old orthodoxy had
never ceased to apply at all. In his preface to The Dawn of All, Benson expresses his
faith in an "ancient thought...which has stood the test of centuries, and is, in a very
remarkable manner, being 'rediscovered' by persons more modern than the
modernists."\(^{55}\) And Chesterton writes at the beginning of Orthodoxy:

I freely confess all the idiotic ambitions of the end of the nineteenth
century. I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the
age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. I did strain my voice with a painfully juvenile exaggeration in uttering my truths. And I was punished in the funniest way, for I have kept my truths: but I have discovered, not that they were not truths, but simply that they were not mine. When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be original; but I only succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion. The man from the yacht thought he was the first to find England; I thought I was the first to find Europe. I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy.  

Romantics like Blake and Shelley, then, lacking a solidified belief in a concretely defined supernatural entity who transcends and guides history, were compelled to view the past sentimentally as a better time when art and mystery were alive and well in the population at large. The Revivalists, in contrast, though they occasionally sugarcoated elements of the past, avoided a purely sentimental remembrance of it. Instead, their belief in a steady, unbroken line of orthodoxy, and most importantly, their united belief in a real presence behind that orthodoxy, allowed the Revivalists to point to the past as a model of what could be, and permitted them to claim the supernatural power to call it into being. They didn't so much escape into the past, as they attempted to argue that the spiritual foundations of the past were still with them in the present. "How can we say that the Church wishes to bring us back into the Dark Ages?" inquires Chesterton. "The Church was the only thing that ever brought us out of them." The Revivalists believed in the staying power of the Church. Though it might suffer temporary setbacks, the Church will always emerge again unbroken:

The world was swarming with sceptics, and pantheism was as plain as the sun, when Constantine nailed the cross to the mast. It is perfectly true that afterwards the ship sank; but it is far more extraordinary that the ship came up again: repainted and glittering, with the cross still at the top.
This is the amazing thing the religion did: it turned a sunken ship into a submarine. The ark lived under the load of waters; after being buried under the debris of dynasties and clans, we arose and remembered Rome.  

Benson displayed a similar confidence in the unity and vitality of the Catholic Church:

We are told occasionally by moralists that we live in very critical times, by which they mean that they are not sure whether their own side will win or not. In that sense no times can ever be critical to Catholics, since Catholics are never in any kind of doubt as to whether or no their side will win.

None of this means, of course, that the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival were at all times utterly free of any sentimentality or idealism regarding the past. On the contrary, Benson, for one, occasionally slips into a more strictly "Romantic" attitude. His idealized portrait of sixteenth-century monasticism in The King's Achievement is but one example, a decision for which he came under a considerable degree of critical fire. But even in Benson one sees an effort to present history with a measure of objectivity. A prime example of this is Benson's descriptions of the executions of the Catholic Edmund Campion in By What Authority? and the Protestant Bishops Ridley and Latimer in The Queen's Tragedy. One might expect Benson to have glorified the death of Campion over that of Ridley or Latimer, but although it is no secret where Benson's sympathies lie, he depicts the executions of all three men with equal pathos and narrative interest. In fact, the entire novel The Queen's Tragedy, though it characterizes Mary Tudor ("Bloody Mary") in a semi-favorable light, is nevertheless one grand effort for a Catholic to grapple with a suspect period in English Catholic history. Benson does not shy away from contentious issues, but rather works to face them directly.
Finally, both the Romantics and the Revivalists considered themselves to have a kind of vatic burden to bear a message of social and spiritual rejuvenation through art. There is a parallel between the ministerial approach of the Revivalists and the Romantic vision of the poet as prophet. Blake claims to dine with the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, implying his own affiliation with the prophetic line, and Shelley declares that "Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called in earlier epochs of the world legislators or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters." The Romantics, though they shared certain similarities which literary historians have seen fit to deem "Romantic," were essentially lone prophets, each one broadcasting a brand of redemption founded on his own esoteric version of reality. *Contra* the Romantics, the Revivalists encouraged a return to orthodoxy, to the traditional and timeless truths of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the Romantics had a much greater sense of their own prophetic roles, a kind of hyper-developed fascination with their own importance as truth-bearers. In its most extreme form, this trait culminates in poets like Shelley with arguably melodramatic lines like, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!," in which Shelley compares himself with the crucified Christ ("Ode to the West Wind" 54). This kind of martyr complex is largely absent from writers like Benson, Chesterton, and Belloc. The Revivalists did firmly believe in their message of redemption and their responsibility for spreading it, but nowhere does one get the feeling that they are guilty of the corresponding elevation of the self so often attributed to the Romantics.

In the end, then, while there are a number of similarities between the Romantics and the Revivalists—the Catholic Literary Revival was "stimulated by Romanticism" in its
early stages, and a “Romantic” strain remained with the Revivalists even into later stages—there were nonetheless significant differences between the two movements.

Both were interested in a type of spiritual revival, but offered drastically different means of catalyzing it. Both were attracted to the past, but approached it in slightly different ways. And both had a developed social consciousness which they sought to express through art; but even here important differences existed. Both movements were, in a sense, revolutionary, but Benson and the authors of the Catholic Literary Revival were perhaps the more astonishing in that they were bold enough to suggest that the most Romantic and revolutionary thing one could do was to return to a forgotten truth that had really been present all along.
Chapter Notes


2 Janet Grayson, Robert Hugh Benson: His Life and Works (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 133.

3 Ibid., 154.


5 Benson did not think himself equipped enough to handle a formal faculty position relating to English Literature.


7 Grayson, Life and Works, 147. Ford later used the notes he received from Benson in his novel The Fifth Queen and How She Came to Court.

8 Ibid., xiv.

9 Grayson, Life and Works, xiii.


11 Martindale, Life, I, vi.


13 See Swift’s discussion of Greene’s (mis)appropriation of John Henry Newman’s remarks on the impossibility of Catholic literature, especially 114-115.


16 Ibid., xix.


19 Interestingly, J.R.R. Tolkien, another Catholic writer from the mid-twentieth century, does not reflect this approach. This may be one of the reasons why Tolkien's works have found a much larger and more diverse audience than any of his fellow Catholic (or Anglo-Catholic in the case of Lewis) authors.

20 It should be noted at the outset that "art for art's sake", as has been frequently pointed out, is itself a type of propaganda. Still, its ideas exercised a great deal of influence, either directly or indirectly, on modernist aesthetics. It was also a trendy idea in Benson's day—one which he rebelled against, at least for the most part. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of Benson's response to Aestheticism.

21 One strange but not untrue criticism was leveled at Benson in early discussions of his work; namely, that the priests in Benson's novels are frequently foolish and inept. Martindale affirms Benson's early dislike and even distrust of Catholic priests even once he had become one himself. For a literary discussion of Benson's novels reflecting this view, see John Dawson, "The Priest in R.H. Benson's Novels," The Month (Dec. 1917), 512-19.

22 "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

23 Qtd. in Joseph Pearce, Literary Converts: Spiritual Inspiration in an Age of Unbelief (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 75.


25 The recent focus on tolerance seems to have resulted in an interesting phenomenon hitherto unknown in society. In the past, tolerance has suggested that it is a virtue to accept the fact that others may differ from one's own viewpoint. It did not, however, preclude one from speaking his viewpoint boldly and with zeal. Nor did it greatly
influence the understanding that Absolute Truth existed in some form and could be
discerned. Nowadays, however, at least in popular culture, the emphasis on tolerance
appears to have contributed to a growing relativism, as well as a general discomfort
among some people about expressing their views at all.

Donald Read (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 114.

27 Ibid., 126.


29 Janet Oppenheim, The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England,

10 In some cases, people actually attempted to blend Christianity and Spiritualism.
Oppenheim classifies Spiritualists into two camps (though she problematizes this general
division): Christian spiritualists and non-Christian spiritualists. See Oppenheim, Other
World, 63-110.

31 Calvert Alexander, The Catholic Literary Revival: Three Phases in Its Development
on Alexander’s discussion of the historical roots of the Catholic Literary Revival in the
discussion that follows. Alexander’s study is particularly helpful in assessing the early
stages of the Revival; however, as it was published in 1935, it lacks the benefit of
hindsight in analyzing the later phases of the Revival. As a result, Alexander’s study
grows considerably less useful as it progresses chronologically.

32 Sonnenfeld, Crossroads, 4.

33 The word “revolt” somewhat inaccurately suggests the creation of something new in
reaction to the current state of things. Revivalist authors, however, were returning to an
old order (albeit in a fresh way) that they perceived as never having been quite
destroyed. Thus “counter-attack” seems a more precise term. See also note 42 below.

34 Issac Kramnick, introduction to The Portable Enlightenment Reader, (New York:

35 Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, eds., Shelley’s Prose and Poetry (New
York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), 93. All references to Shelley’s poetry are
taken from this edition.

36 Alexander, Catholic Literary Revival, 22.

37 Ibid., 28.
This point is especially important when one considers that critics like Harold Bloom have suggested that the Romantic Revolution was fundamentally a Protestant one. Bloom writes: “Though it is a displaced Protestantism, or a Protestantism astonishingly transformed by different kinds of humanism and naturalism, the poetry of the English Romantics is a kind of religious poetry, and the religion is in the Protestant line, though Calvin or Luther would have been horrified to contemplate it.” (Harold Bloom, introductory essay to *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971], xvii.) Since the word “Protestant” inherently suggests a breaking away from an established standard (in this case Catholicism), Catholics by definition, no matter how reactionary or revolutionary they appear in relation to whatever secular trends they may be denouncing, can never truly share more than a superficial similarity with revolutionary movements like Romanticism. Chesterton’s “Romance of Orthodoxy” is revolutionary in its emotional impact and unique presentation of orthodoxy, but it is still, at bottom, a return to the old. (Chesterton was still a Protestant when he wrote *Orthodoxy*, but I believe that it nevertheless reveals his affinity for the Catholic tradition; and at the very least, it certainly does not contradict that tradition.) Protestants (and Romantics) on the other hand, can divide and rebel against one another indefinitely, but all new sects are still “Protestant” in that they are deviations from the central fixed standard of Catholicism.


Ibid., 26.

Robert Hugh Benson, “A Modern Theory of Human Personality,” *The Dublin Review* (July 1907), 78-96. It is noteworthy that Benson concludes the article in a quintessentially Edwardian manner with an almost pleading tone for the reconciliation of science and faith: “May it not be our hope, then, that after a few more mutual explanations Science may come to understand that the Church does not reject the fruit of her labors, but welcomes them? Is it too much to hope that when Science has advanced yet a few steps more she may have come to Faith with the human soul newly discovered in her hands?” (95).


Ibid., 159.

Ibid., 95. See also the entire chapter, pp. 81-103, in which Chesterton develops at length this idea of Christianity as a home for ostensibly irresolvable paradoxes.


Robert Hugh Benson, preface to *The Dawn of All* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1911).

Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 5.

Ibid., 156.

Ibid., 155.

Benson, preface to *Dawn*.

Benson was most vehemently attacked by historian G.G. Coulton. See Coulton, “The Truth about the Monasteries,” *Contemporary Review* 89 (Apr. 1906), 529-538.


CHAPTER 2

CONFRONTING THE PAST: BENSON’S HISTORICAL NOVELS

In a sense much more striking still, however, the Christian must find that religious thought is inextricably involved in historical thought.
—Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*

When you are criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them.
—Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*

There is still a certain Christian flavor even in those parts of western society most nearly denuded of the Faith—a mould of mind, an ethical habit—still a spark that may be kindled into flame anew. If Catholics will be wholly loyal to their own timeless principles and—without timidity or apology, but with all the militant confidence that should flow from a realization that they and they alone represent the one continuous mind and central historical tradition of our civilization—go forward to grapple with the modern world, assimilate what is good in it, and order all of it, then the remaining spark may indeed be fanned into such a flame that the sun itself would be paled.
—Ross J.S. Hoffinan, *Restoration*

Of the nineteen books published by Robert Hugh Benson between 1904 and 1914, five of them were historical novels, and a sixth book professes to be the transcript of an archival source dating back to the fourteenth century. ¹ Taken in sum, nearly one-third of Benson’s creative energy was devoted to the artistic rendering of history; however, Benson’s historical novels have often been dismissed as unworthy of any sustained
critical attention. Oddly enough, such verdicts are frequently due more to the a priori assumptions of given critics concerning the nature of historical novels as a genre than to thorough considerations of the novels themselves. John R. Aherne, for example, argues that Benson's historical novels are weak because "most of the characters are historical personages, a severe limitation on development of character, essential to the novel." In the same vein, Hugh's own brother, A.C. Benson, writes: "Moreover, I have a particular dislike of all historical novels. Fact is interesting; but I do not care for webs of imagination hung on pegs of fact. Historical novels ought to be like memoirs, and they are never in the least like memoirs; in fact, they are like nothing at all, except each other."³

But to ignore Benson's historical novels as mere vapid specimens of literature is to overlook an important point—their contribution to a larger revival in historical interest on the part of Catholics during the Edwardian period. This chapter will evaluate two of Benson's historical novels, his first and his last—By What Authority? and Oddsfish!—and their characteristic themes in the context of this larger interest in history. While sharing many of the same concerns that his fellow Revivalist historians did, Benson opted to express these concerns through the medium of the novel rather than through the writing of "official" histories. This creative strategy allowed Benson a great deal of freedom in uniting history and theology, and it also succeeded in making digestible for the populace at large complex and controversial themes which, at the time, would have been considered subversive and "revisionist."
In an essay entitled, "About Historians," originally published in 1936, G.K. Chesterton writes, "I am happy to say that there seems to be a real revival of interest in history." In reality, however, a "revival of interest in history" had been materializing among Catholic authors for quite some time prior to 1936, with Chesterton himself as a primary contributor. Abbot Gasquet and Dom Bede Camm led the charge at the conclusion of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, continuing the work begun by John Lingard and John Henry Newman in the early years of the Victorian period. Hilaire Belloc, trained as an historian at Oxford, transported Catholic historical scholarship outside the cloistered halls of Oxbridge with works like *Europe and the Faith*, *The French Revolution*, *Characters of the Reformation*, and a four-volume *History of England* targeting the general populace. Additionally, Belloc published numerous essays on history and historiography in popular journals with titles like "Catholicism and History," "History Is With Us," "The Need for True History," "On the Method of History," "On the Reading of History," and "On a Method of Writing History." Beyond his essays, Belloc wrote a substantial number of historical biographies treating figures from Milton to Napoleon. Strongly influenced by his friendship with Belloc, Chesterton also authored numerous biographies, as well as *A Short History of England*, and essays like "On the Writing of History," "On Turnpikes and Medievalism," and "About Historians." The rising interest in Catholic historicism was extended by Christopher Dawson in the post-Edwardian years and finds a comprehensive and nuanced expression in the works of Herbert Butterfield, Professor of History at Cambridge, in the mid-twentieth century.
Indeed, the growth of Catholic historicism in Edwardian England was contemporaneous with an increased attention to history at large. In 1906, for example, the Historical Association was formed by a tiny group of scholars in Britain and was devoted to the pursuit of history. Ten years later, they published their first issue of *History*. Moreover, the sheer number of books published in the field belies the Edwardian concern with the past. In 1909, 913 books were published in the subjects of history and biography—the most published in this category in a single year dating back to 1870. Only the categories of Theology, Fiction, and Arts & Sciences outweighed those in history. 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1915 saw even greater increases in historical publications. 1906 saw the publication of Albert Schweitzer’s *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, undoubtedly an offspring of the Higher Criticism which professed to locate the “real” Jesus of history apart from the supernaturalism of the New Testament. In 1908, Ernest Baker authored *History in Fiction*, an overview of historical fiction organized according to each novel’s setting, beginning with the Neolithic period and proceeding through the nineteenth century. Such a work, as Anthea Trodd observes, “was characteristic of the Edwardian period, and it is difficult to imagine its publication later.” General histories became the vogue, like H.W.C. Davis’s survey of the Middle Ages and *The History of the Freedom of Thought* by J.P. Bury, Chair of Modern History at Cambridge. In 1919, H.G. Wells completed *The Outline of History*, a tome which aspired to cover the whole of human civilization in a kind of universal narrative. History, it seems, was everywhere.

Into this historicist mêlée ventured Robert Hugh Benson with a rather unique weapon of choice—the historical novel. In August of 1907, Hilaire Belloc wrote a
letter to Hugh’s brother Arthur, expressing his interest in Hugh’s talent for historical novels and seeing in him a powerful opportunity for conveying the truth about the Reformation to the English people:

I will send books, as you suggest, to your brother. I have met him once or twice, and liked him enormously. His historical work has always seemed to me unique. It is quite on the cards that he will be the man to write some day a book to give us some sort of idea what happened in England between 1520 and 1560. No book I ever read has given me the slightest conception, and I have never had time to go to the original stuff myself. This is the most interesting of historical problems after the transformation of Gaul in the ninth and tenth centuries.\(^\text{12}\)

It is somewhat unclear from Belloc’s statement whether he intends Hugh to write an official book of history, or whether he hopes Hugh will craft another historical novel treating Tudor England. (Hugh’s major “historical work” up to that point had been almost entirely historical novels—by 1907 he had published *By What Authority?*, *The King’s Achievement*, and *The Queen’s Tragedy*, as well as *The History of Richard Raynal, Solitary.* ) Whatever the case, Belloc’s most provocative statement is that Benson’s “historical work has always seemed to me unique.” This evaluation is precisely the point at which an assessment of Benson must begin, and it is this uniqueness that calls for closer scrutiny.

On the whole, Benson was quite a success as an historical novelist. The historical novel is itself an interesting brand of story. It aims to combine actual historical events with fictional episodes in a seamless whole. It must remain true to the larger facts of the past while also providing the reader with a degree of narrative interest. Because the historical novel is such a hybrid of fact and imagination, questions of veracity inevitably come to the fore. To what degree can one believe an historical novel? Which events really happened, and which are authorial fabrications? Is it possible for a novelist to
achieve the perfect balance between historical reality and a good story? Will not an artist invariably favor a captivating plot over the interests of “dry” history? Is not any artistic vision of the past bound to skew historical truth in the smallest of ways? For the careful novelist, however, this balance appears attainable. For the artist who is first of all the careful historian, seeking in all cases to purge his work of historical inaccuracies and anachronisms, it is indeed possible for historical truth to be conveyed with narrative interest. In fact, the addition of small imaginative episodes to the larger historical narrative may actually work to bring the broad historical picture into clearer focus.

Historical fact brings order to fiction, and in return, fiction breathes an otherwise absent life into dry historical facts. For the twenty-first century reader, envisioning the details of sixteenth century England and the dissolution of the monasteries under Thomas Cromwell may prove impossible. But by creating the fictional characters of Ralph and Chris Torridon and dropping them into the religio-political fray impacting sixteenth-century England, Benson brings the chaos of the past alive in a new way. As he describes the internal struggles of Chris in deciding whether to leave the monastery and acknowledge the authority of King Henry VIII over the Church, the larger historical struggle is magnified and vivified in a way which might otherwise be missed. The political battle for authority is distilled to the personal level as the reader observes the inner turmoil of a single individual as he is forced to decide to whom he will give his obedience; and consequently, the reader can identify with this political and spiritual tug-of-war and partake of it more fully, glimpsing briefly what the impact of sixteenth-century politics must have been on the mind of a faithful monk.
Furthermore, art has a power over readers that plain history sometimes does not. Few readers can resist the enchantment of a story; but it is more than common for people to complain about the dullness of history books, overloaded with facts, figures, and analyses. In the historical novel, however, the facts are presented, but they are presented with all the suspense and living color of a story. Herbert Butterfield recognizes and testifies to the power of historical novels to convey history to the reader in a unique way:

It is not exactly that history and fiction should dovetail into one another to produce a coherent whole; it is not simply that the story of the Popish Plot can be rounded off by a piece of invention, or the tragedy of Mary Queen of Scots depicted more fully and with more connectedness by the interspersion of imaginary episodes; but it is rather that in the historical novel history and fiction can enrich and amplify one another, and interpenetrate. They can grow into one another, each making the other more powerful. And they can make a special kind of appeal to the reader.\textsuperscript{13}

Thus the historical novel, when done well, can illuminate history in ways that “official” histories oftentimes cannot. Art frequently reaches people on a level to which academic prose fails to penetrate.

The historical novel also demonstrates a flexibility in handling themes that rigid historical methodologies disallow, a flexibility of which Benson took full advantage. An historical vision, for example, attuned to the actions of God in history or to the developing hand of Providence may be excluded from “sensible” historical scholarship on the grounds that such things cannot be substantiated empirically. For Benson, throughout the entirety of history God could be found “at His work and at His labor till the evening.” “To one who has a grasp of Catholic history,” wrote Benson, “it is simply enchanting to see how the purpose of God runs through it all.”\textsuperscript{14} To claim that through history one can see “how the purpose of God runs through it all” is to find oneself at the

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juncture of fact and faith. That a certain event occurred at a given time and in a given way may be established as fact; that the same event was part of the unfolding purpose of some supreme being can only be arrived at through faith. Here, however, is where Benson’s artistic rendering of history comes to the aid of his historical vision. The novelist, in contrast to the strict historian, has a good deal more freedom to incorporate such a vision of history. A novelist may stay true to the historical facts, and yet suggest through his art a particular interpretation of those facts that may not be acceptable in other venues. Hence, Benson can depict the reign of Charles II and his conversion to Catholicism with a good degree of historical accuracy while at the same time suggesting symbolically to readers that this conversion was the result of genuine spiritual forces—that it was the will of God. Art, like religion, includes within its sphere the pursuit of knowledge so often barred from the domain of purely empirical investigation.\(^{15}\)

Not surprisingly, some Revivalists stressed the power of a more artistic approach to history, calling for a more “picturesque” form of history writing. The Edwardian Revivalists frequently emphasized the notion of imaginative investment in the past—what Butterfield would later designate the “sympathetic imagination.”\(^{16}\) In typical fashion, the Revivalists took a Romantic concept and altered it according to their own purposes. Whereas the Romantics were sometimes accused of sacrificing historical accuracy to flights of the imagination, the Edwardian Revivalists sought to achieve a balance. They desired both truth and imagination, bound together in a harmonious whole. Throughout Chesterton and Belloc’s writings, for instance, are calls for a sort of history writing that is more exciting and less bland. Belloc envisions a new, more “living” approach to history writing:
Hence must arise a second or new method peculiar to those rare and probably ephemeral stages in the come and go of human affairs which we call "highly civilized": a method which should attempt a perfect resurrection of the distant past in its detail and atmosphere, and a presentation of it so living by a combination of minute information and an exact order in the marshalling of that information as shall give the reader life in the past. He meets dead people, as he would meet a living character. Their particular actions fit in with their general aspect and with all that they are as complex human organisms. Their institutions seem naturally to flow from the way they live and think and act.17

Belloc's call for a new type of history is based first and foremost on meticulous scholarship, and yet his desire for a presentation of history "so living" can only be achieved by an act of the imagination. This kind of history "reads more like what we are accustomed to see in journalism or in a novel than in history."18

Chesterton takes Belloc's vision a step further, underscoring the need for imaginative energy in the handling of the past:

There are three ways of writing history. The old Victorian way, in the books of our childhood, was picturesque and largely false. The later and more enlightened habit, adopted by academic authorities, is to think they can go on being false so long as they avoid being picturesque. They think that, so long as a lie is dull, it will sound as if it were true. The third way is to use the picturesque (which is a perfectly natural instinct of man for what is memorable), but to make it a symbol of truth and not a symbol of falsehood. It is to tell the reader what the picturesque incident really meant, instead of leaving it meaningless or giving it a deceptive meaning. It is giving a true picture instead of a false picture; but there is not the shadow of a reason why a picture should not be picturesque.19

Here, Chesterton clearly rejects the unadulterated Romanticism he claims existed in many nineteenth-century historians who were heavy on raw fancy and light on fact. Truth, of course, is indispensable, but that truth need not be expressed in a colorless, insipid fashion. A balance can be achieved, a balance which Chesterton later clarifies with a concrete example. Writing of an historical battle, one historian "narrates it with the topographical clarity of a military history; but he cannot prevent it sounding like a
boy's adventure story." Both Belloc and Chesterton articulate the desire for a marriage of historical fact and imaginative presentation.

In anticipation of certain post-modern emphases, Benson extends this idea of imaginative presentation by stressing the role of the imagination as a psychological faculty in the reading and writing of history: "The historian cannot interpret events rightly unless he is keenly and emotionally interested in them; the sociologist cannot interpret events adequately unless he personally knows something of passion." Unless an historian makes a volitional act of commitment and love toward the human events that he desires to interpret—which, in turn, is fundamentally an imaginative act being that the events themselves are not immediately present—accurate interpretation proves impossible. Any hope of unity or meaning in the historical narrative, by extension, is also impossible, since (and here again one must note the Romantic influence) it is the imagination that, in Coleridge's famous phrase, enacts the "reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities." The Romantics had earlier stressed the imagination as humankind's foremost faculty for apprehending and experiencing the world and making meaning out of it, and here Benson asserts a similar notion regarding the discovery of meaning in history. Consequently, historical truth is itself at least partially dependent upon the imagination. In an article on the "theology of history" in *The Everlasting Man*, critic Joseph Schwartz also draws a similar conclusion about Chesterton's emphasis on the place of the imagination in the interpretation of history. For Chesterton, like Benson, the imagination is necessary to discover the larger patterns of meaning in history. There is a need for an "everlasting enthusiasm for the object."
The fact that Catholic authors were foregrounding the role of the imagination in writing history and calling for a more imaginative form of historical narrative is not unusual in light of their ministerial approach. Chesterton's “picturesque” history would theoretically, at least, be more enjoyable to read, thus making it more accessible to the population at large. This communicability was a valued aspect of the Revivalists' view of art. People must understand their history aright, and in order for this to occur successfully, Catholic historians would have to remain true to the facts while simultaneously meeting the population at its own level by offering an attractive package that people would truly desire to read.

Benson boldly answered the call of his fellow Revivalists for a more picturesque and palatable form of history by presenting it as art in the form of the historical novel. He worked hard to balance historical precision with an imaginative presentation. Indeed, his attention to historical detail was indefatigable. Benson took great pains to rid his historical novels of any anachronisms and inaccuracies, and if inaccuracies were discovered *ex post facto*, he promptly admitted them publicly. Hence, while Benson shared the same concerns as his co-religionists, he chose a different and potentially more effective means of reaching the general public.

*By What Authority?* and Revivalist Historicism

Benson's first true novel, *By What Authority?*, is something of a behemoth. Its sheer length invests it with a sort of epic quality, as does its treatment of a period in English history so central to the country's sense of national pride. Indeed, Benson's intent is clearly to locate historical answers for some of the problems facing his own twentieth-
century society. A number of well-known historical events—including the issue of the Papal Bull releasing Britain’s Catholic subjects from the spiritual authority of Queen Elizabeth, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the trial of the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion—form the backdrop to Benson’s story of the religious struggles of two neighboring families. One of these families, the Maxwells, is a longstanding and respected Catholic aristocratic family who now faces persecution under the reign of Elizabeth for its religious sympathies, including heavy fines and imprisonment. The family is comprised of Sir Nicholas and Lady Maxwell, their two sons James and Hubert, and Lady Torridon, the sister of Lady Maxwell and an ex-Benedictine nun who was ousted from her convent during the dissolution of the monasteries under Thomas Cromwell. The other family, the Norrises, is a Puritan family headed by Mr. Norris, an intellectual working on a scholarly book on the Eucharist. Mr. Norris’s wife has long since passed away, and he is left to raise his two children, Anthony and Isabel, by himself. Oddly enough, despite their religious differences, these two families share many pleasantries. Anthony and Hubert are good friends, regularly hunting together on the moors around their houses, and Isabel spends a great deal of time visiting with Lady Maxwell and Lady Torridon. A number of famous historical personages also have roles in the story to greater and lesser degrees, with appearances by the poet Sir Philip Sydney, Queen Elizabeth, and Edmund Campion. Sir Francis Drake and his piratical exploits, though not appearing firsthand, are nevertheless frequently alluded to throughout the text and play a role in the story indirectly. The novel is about one-third history, one-third theological debate, and one-third old-fashioned adventure and intrigue.
The basic story line is as follows: The action begins not long into the reign of Queen Elizabeth. England is fearful of an impending Spanish attack, and tempers are flaring regarding the religious sectarianism that has inflicted England since King Henry VIII. Early in the story, a budding romance between Hubert Maxwell and Isabel Norris is already evident, but their religious differences stand between them. Despite her cold Puritanism, Isabel’s “love for the Savior was ever romantic and passionate,” and she is troubled by the hatred bred of religious discord: “Why cannot we leave one another alone, and each worship God as we think fit?” she asks Hubert one evening (26). On a visit to London, however, Isabel receives her first taste of worship outside of the stark Puritan creed when she visits St. Paul’s Cathedral. It is also during this trip that she and her brother first witness Queen Elizabeth as she parades through the streets of London.

Soon after her return from London, Isabel is introduced at the house of the Maxwells to a close family friend, Mary Corbet, a Catholic lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth. Mary is a bold, outspoken girl, wholly dedicated to the Catholic faith and finding Protestants to be “all hot and hard and glaring” (52). In a rather brash manner, Mary Corbet asks Isabel and Anthony to take her to see the Anglican church in the village. Much to the chagrin of Mr. Dent, the somewhat feebleminded rector, Mary backs him into a corner with her spirited denunciation of the iconoclasm of Anglicanism and the way the Anglicans have ruined the parish church by removing all vestiges of its Catholic heritage. Despite Mary’s effrontery, however, Isabel and Anthony are attracted to Mary and a friendship is begun.

Shortly thereafter, a mysterious rider arrives from London. He is a Catholic emissary of sorts, and Sir Nicholas, fancying himself a master spy, stupidly contrives to
call him “Mr. Stewart” and to give him lodging. A purveyor of Catholic devotional materials, Mr. Stewart is traveling illegally. Marion, the gregarious and self-righteous wife of the Anglican rector, Mr. Dent, gets word of Mr. Stewart’s visit and reports him to the authorities. On the night that Mr. Stewart is scheduled to leave, the authorities arrive at the Maxwells’ house and arrest Mr. Stewart and Sir Nicholas, hauling them off to prison. Anthony witnesses the taking of Mr. Stewart, and Isabel witnesses the forgiveness of Lady Maxwell as she chastises the people of the village for throwing the conniving Marion into a pond, inviting the humiliated rector’s wife into her own home.

Mr. Norris, perhaps fearing his daughter’s growing attachment to the Catholic Maxwells, decides to send Isabel to visit a Puritan community in Northampton. This visit, meant to reinforce the truth of Puritan dogmas, turns out to be a negative experience. While at Northampton, Isabel listens to a sermon preached by Dr. Carrington, a friend of her father’s with heavily Calvinist leanings. As she listens to the fiery sermon,

it was all so miserably convincing: her own little essays of intellect and flights of hopeful imagination were caught up and whirled away in the strong rush of this man’s argument; her timid expectancy that God really was Love, as she understood the word in the vision of her Saviour’s Person,—this was dashed aside as a childish fancy; the vision of the Father of Everlasting Arms receded into the realm of dreams; and instead there lowered overhead in this furious tempest of wrath a monstrous God with a stony Face and a stonier Heart, who was eternally either her torment or her salvation. (121)

Predictably, the harsh Calvinism of Carrington is no comfort to Isabel, and she is forced to reassess her own understanding of Christianity. Isabel’s experience with the sermon is followed by a stringent and vacuous Communion service which further exacerbates her already growing sense of doubt regarding the efficacy of Puritanism. To make
matters worse, Isabel receives news of her father's death shortly before leaving Northampton. Strangely, Mr. Norris leaves the care of Isabel to Lady Torridon, who moves into the Norris house to take care of Isabel.

After the death of his father, Anthony travels once more to London to assume a position as Gentleman of the Horse for the Archbishop of Canterbury. While there, he develops an affection for the old Archbishop, and he also renews his acquaintance with Mary Corbet. Working at Lambeth instills in Anthony a growing sense of nationalism and pride in his country. However, at the request of Lady Maxwell, Anthony visits an incarcerated Catholic friend of the Maxwells, a Mr. Buxton, with whom he discusses the universality of the Catholic Church versus the limiting (from Buxton's viewpoint) provincialism of the Anglican fellowship. Buxton wins the rhetorical victory, and Anthony is left pondering the constraints of the English Church.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Hubert and Isabel continues to grow. All expect that they will be married as soon as Isabel converts to Catholicism—an event that seems likely at any time. Mistress Torridon—the mystical contemplative of the story (Benson always seems to have one)—seeks to answer Isabel's numerous questions about Catholic doctrine. Isabel's interest in the Catholic Church is clearly growing, and the conversations between the girl and the old nun "were sufficient to show Mistress Margaret, like tiny bubbles on the surface of a clear stream, the swift movement of this limpid soul that she loved so well" (161). Hubert, however, announces that he has signed on with Sir Francis Drake to sail the seas as a defender of the Crown. After Hubert is some time at sea, Mistress Torridon receives a shocking letter from him declaring that he has converted to Protestantism, thinking that this will be good news to
Isabel and that the marriage can proceed unobstructed. Isabel, though, has seen the truth of the Catholic faith and makes a courageous decision to give up Hubert and submit to the Church.

Simultaneously but separately, Anthony has begun on his own path to Rome. He gains access to the trial for alleged treason of Edmund Campion, the Jesuit missionary to England, and is amazed by his intellectual acumen, his gentle demeanor, and his inner confidence in the truth of his position. When Campion is sentenced to death, Anthony attends the execution, but significantly, “He had come, he knew, to see not an execution but a martyrdom” (215). Not long after, Anthony is lured into betraying his old family friend, James Maxwell—who has now become a Catholic priest. An ex-servant of the Maxwell’s, Joseph Lackington, has risen up the hierarchy in service to the queen and maintains a passionate hatred for Catholics. Thinking he is actually saving James from capture (Catholic priests educated on the continent were not allowed in England by law), Anthony actually contributes to James’s arrest. James is then racked and thrown into the Tower to await his punishment.

Anthony, feeling guilty, contacts Mary Corbet and manages to gain an audience with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth to plead for James’s life. Anthony has become quite a gallant young man with all the charms of the courtier, and he acquits himself well with Elizabeth. Elizabeth agrees to set James free, banishing him from England. Anthony’s own journey toward Catholicism continues as well. As it turns out, Mary Corbet is a dear friend of Mr. Buxton, and through this mutual friendship Anthony is able to arrange a retreat at Mr. Buxton’s country house. Here, in hopes of finding the truth amidst the religious pluralism of the day, he agrees to embark on the spiritual exercises of St.
Ignatius in an effort to put himself at peace. Anthony does so under the direction of Father Robert, who later turns out to be the famous priest Father Persons, author of the "Christian Directory." Not surprisingly, Anthony, like his sister, decides to submit to the Catholic Church, arriving at the conclusion that "long he had lived in the cold and the dark!" and that he had been "saved from freezing by the warmth of grace that managed to survive the chill about him" (321). And upon doing so, Anthony decides that he must become a priest.

Anthony returns home to tell his sister that he has become a Catholic, only to find that she herself has already done the same. There is celebration at the Maxwells at the news of both Norris children coming to the faith, and Mistress Torridon declares with joy to Anthony and Isabel, "You look like a pair of lovers" (325). This, in fact, is true—both are now lovers of Christ and His Church. Isabel chooses to accompany Anthony to seminary on the continent since traveling with a woman will afford him an added degree of protection.

A great deal occurs in the meantime while Anthony and Isabel are in France. Hubert distinguishes himself in the service of Francis Drake, and subsequently marries another woman after being rejected by Isabel. He then takes over his father's estate. On the national level, the Spanish Armada is defeated by the English, and there is celebration among both Protestants and Catholics all around. Eventually, Anthony and Isabel return from the continent to begin their ministry in England. Because of laws against Catholic priests, however, Anthony is in constant peril of his life. After some time as Mr. Buxton's chaplain, as well as some time traveling to the furthest corners of England saying Mass, Anthony himself falls into the hands of the authorities and is thrown in
prison. In the process of his capture, Mary Corbet, who had briefly become a member of
Anthony’s traveling party, is accidentally killed when a man opens fire on Anthony,
hitting Mary instead. Anthony rides back to help Mary, and while administering the last
rites, he is apprehended by the priest-hunters.

Due to his smooth performance during his previous audience with Elizabeth and
because he was a friend of Mary’s, the Queen requests a meeting with Anthony. During
the meeting, Elizabeth offers to pardon Anthony if he will renounce the Catholic faith.
Anthony struggles momentarily when he thinks of the pain of the rack, but in a moment
of pure faith, he refuses the amnesty offered by the queen and is therefore doomed to
death. Anthony is racked and dies in his cell. The novel ends with a new day dawning
(literally and figuratively) as Isabel walks out of Anthony’s prison cell. “The glory in
her eyes was supreme,” and the reader feels that, despite Anthony’s death, both Isabel
and Anthony are victorious in the eyes of God.

*By What Authority?* is a Catholic historicist *tour de force*, embodying most of the
major themes proclaimed by Revivalist historians during Benson’s day. Most
prominently, the novel is emblematic of the Revivalist thesis that the sixteenth century is
a critical turning point in English history and the source of much of the modern
fragmentation of society—spiritually and culturally. After more than three centuries of
Catholic oppression in England (Catholic civil rights were not restored until 1829), a
majority of the English citizenry had rather uncritically embraced the notion that the
Reformation had been a decisive victory in favor of progress in the course of British
history. In contrast to this dominant view, the Revivalists held to an interpretation of the
sixteenth century as a period of social and spiritual disintegration when the religious and cultural fabric of the nation had begun to unravel.

It should be noted at the outset that in many ways, the historical arguments of the Revivalists were ahead of their time. It would take another 50 or more years before major historians began to lend credence to the interpretations advanced by Edwardian Catholic historians, and even longer before many of their arguments were embraced widely. Revivalist views of history clearly formed a minority in Edwardian England. Since the sixteenth century, Catholics had endured harsh oppression and a lack of civil rights, suffering through the famous penal laws. Catholics had watched as their materials of devotion had been made illegal, their priests hunted down, their churches taken over by Protestants, and their fellow Catholics executed for alleged treason to the Crown. Numerous regulations had been instituted which regularly found reason to fine and imprison Catholics all over England. Catholic civil rights were legally restored in 1829, and the Catholic population had been on the rise since the mid-nineteenth century. A religious census in 1851 estimated the total number of Catholics in Britain to be approximately 900,000. By 1891, Catholics were figured at 1,357,000, and by 1913 at just over 1,793,000. But Catholics still constituted a minority in a country whose religious population was largely Anglican and Nonconformist, and whose general population was becoming more secularized all the time. This is significant in that while the ministerial approach of the Edwardian Revivalists was grounded in a spiritual belief concerning the fallen nature of humankind and its need for redemption, it is not unlikely that the vehemence with which these authors prosecuted their viewpoints was catalyzed by a sense of minority status. The vast majority of the English at the turn of the
twentieth century unconsciously embraced the Reformation as a positive moment in the history of the world. Fighting against this powerful current were the Catholic Revivalists—driven by a sense of purpose and motivated by a belief that they were the last hold-outs of a lost and glorious European order—presenting a "revisionist" view of the Reformation as a regrettable moment of national apostasy.

The essence of the Revivalist viewpoint finds its most concise and intelligent expression in a compelling work published in 1931 by Herbert Butterfield called *The Whig Interpretation of History*; and though obviously post-Edwardian, he nevertheless captures the main thrust of his predecessors' arguments. In this seminal work, Butterfield treats "the tendency in many historians to write on the side of Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present." Butterfield cuts to the core by problematizing the unrecognized but pervasive underlying assumptions of many historians to read into history their own myths of development; and by extension, to misread the past as a mere function of the present. Thus, for whig historians, the Reformation is good because from the point of view of progress, it seems to have lifted humanity out of the oppression of the Dark Ages. It was a landmark event in the evolution of humankind. Inherent in Butterfield's argument is the further idea that, for whig historians, the past is somehow less valuable than the present since it represents an earlier stage in humanity's development; or perhaps more precisely, the past is valuable only in reference to what succeeds it. Our primary interest in the Dark Ages, the whig historian suggests, is the manner in which it brings greater glory to the Renaissance and Reformation by playing
the foil. Understanding the Dark Ages is important insofar as it shows us how far we’ve come.

The seeds of Butterfield’s more mature argument are present in the thought of the Revivalists. Chesterton, for instance, writes:

For though today is always today and the moment is always modern, we are the only men in all history who fell back upon bragging about the mere fact that today is not yesterday. I fear that some in the future will explain it by saying that we had precious little else to brag about. For, whatever the medieval faults, they went with one merit. Medieval people never worried about being medieval; and modern people do worry horribly about being modern.

To begin with, note the queer, automatic assumption that it must always mean throwing mud at a thing to call it a relic of medievalism. Chesterton, like Butterfield, questions the notion that what is old is necessarily of poorer quality than that which is new. He addresses the issue even more cleverly in his novel, *The Ball and the Cross*. The story of an impending duel—originally staged after Evan Maclan, a Catholic, smashes the window of John Turnbull’s (an atheist) printing shop for an article blaspheming the Virgin Mary—*The Ball and the Cross* is an allegory of the conflict between strict rationalism and faith. In the midst of one of the many arguments between Maclan and Turnbull, Maclan notes the importance of the past to true progress:

No, the great Freethinker, with his genuine ability and honesty, does not in practice destroy Christianity. What he does destroy is the Freethinker who went before. Freethought may be suggestive, it may be inspiring, it may have as much as you please of the merits that come from vivacity and variety. But there is one thing Freethought can never be by any possibility—Freethought can never be progressive. It can never be progressive because it will accept nothing from the past; it begins every time again from the beginning; and it goes every time in a different direction. All the rational philosophers have gone along different roads, so it is impossible to say which has gone furthest.
Thus, the past is not only valuable, but it is also indispensable for true progress to occur. One must value the Middle Ages not simply because society has emerged from them, but because they may still hold something even more valuable—a timeless truth of some sort—upon which a nation may continue to build. Many, claimed Chesterton, believed “that we have got all the good that can be got out of the ideas of the past,” but in fact, “we have not got all the good out of them.”

Benson takes this idea that authentic progress must be rooted in the past one step further by linking it explicitly with the past of the Catholic Church. Real progress, argues Benson, can only occur under the tutelage and guidance of Catholicism.

Mr. Charles Devas, in his brilliant book, The Key to the World’s Progress, points out by an argument too long to reproduce here that, so far as the word progress means anything, it denotes that kind of development and civilization which only makes its appearance, and only is sustained under the influence of Catholicism. . . . [The book] is also of service in indicating the probability that that same religion should accompany and inspire progress in the future as it has in the past.

The whig interpretation of history, believed the Revivalists, was everywhere the dominant one, and much of the time and energy devoted by Catholic authors to the writing of history was aimed at exposing whig fallacies regarding the Middle Ages and the Reformation. A recurring theme in the writings of all the Edwardian Revivalists was that it was Catholicism that had made Europe what it was socially, culturally, politically, spiritually, and intellectually, and that the advent of the Reformation had begun the decline that resulted in the confusion and helplessness they perceived in society around them. This thesis is expressed most succinctly in a line from Belloc’s general history, Europe and the Faith: “Europe will return to the Faith, or she will perish. The Faith is Europe. And Europe is the Faith.” For Belloc and the Revivalists, the European unity
maintained by the Roman Empire, along with the Empire's sense of vitality and its establishments, had been saved and retained by the Catholic Church. In contrast to other prevailing interpretations of the time which posited either that Catholicism had ruined the Roman Empire or that the Empire had been overrun by barbarous Germans (which, thought Belloc, were strangely reminiscent of nineteenth century Protestants), Belloc presented Catholicism as the deliverer and redeemer of Europe.

Understandably, Belloc was especially concerned about the state of Britain in a post-Catholic world. As John P. McCarthy explains it:

Belloc devoted a good part of his...writing efforts to presenting a distinct view of English history, emphasizing its essentially Roman and Catholic roots and viewing the Reformation and its aftermath as a departure from the foundation rather than as the logical climax of inherent tendencies as the prevailing popular historical consciousness was then holding.39

Indeed, in an article entitled, "How England Was Made Protestant," Belloc exposes what he calls the "Elizabethan myth":

Official history represents the great religious revolution of the period 1560-1603 as having the nation behind it. It represents it as the action of the English people, spontaneous and congenial to the English character. After Elizabeth's accession a remnant called "the Catholics" are represented as having formed an exceptional body which rapidly dwindled, and England is presented as anti-Catholic well before the middle of Elizabeth's reign.

This view, contends Belloc, is that which all English "get in [their] novels, newspapers, school books, university lectures, and, worst and most dangerous of all, [their] examination papers." In short, it is the view that permeates the Edwardian English culture, and it is a dangerous view,

For if men believe that their fathers were by nature opposed to the Faith and welcomed the change, as they are commonly taught, they will get a conception of their own selves entirely false. They will not know "the pit
out of which they were digged.” They will not know the stuff out of which they are made.\textsuperscript{40}

Belloc here exhibits a belief in the power of history to effect social and moral changes in people. Once the English people understand the truth of history—in this case, that the Reformation and subsequent suppression of Catholics in England was not the innocuous event that most historians would have one believe—then a more complete conception of national and personal identity can be forged. People will “know the stuff out of which they are made.” “In a word, it is better to have no history at all,” warns Belloc, “than to have history which misconceives what were the general direction and the large sweeps of thought in the immediate and the remoter past.”\textsuperscript{41}

Chesterton mirrors Belloc’s views in \textit{A Short History of England}, though he projects himself as a bit more broadminded than does Belloc, acknowledging both the positive and negative effects of the Reformation. In his introduction, Chesterton discusses these effects, asserting that in many ways modern human beings fail to match the overall vigor and completeness of their medieval progenitors:

A fair statement of the transition from the Middle Ages would, I think, be something like this. With that change the world improved many things, but not in the one thing needful; the one thing that can make them all one. It did not become more universal; it became much less universal; for it only picked up and polished the fragments of a shattered universe. In other words, the improvement was the sort of improvement which is seen when medicine becomes purely specialist or football becomes purely professional. The medieval man was really ruder and more ineffective in many ways; but his outlook on life was really larger and more human. . . . Thus the Reformation intensified religion into sects; but it was no longer possible to reconcile men through religion. . . . In a hundred ways human beings had lost the conception of a complete humanity.\textsuperscript{32}
Benson clearly, and not surprisingly, shared his fellow Revivalists’ distaste with the
whig interpretation of history, as well as a belief that the source of Christendom’s
present troubles in England could be traced back to the sixteenth century.

The modern thinkers take their rise, practically, from the religious
upheaval of the sixteenth century. At that period of Christendom the
establishment of the principle of Nationalism in religion struck the first
blow against the idea of a final revelation guaranteed by an infallible
authority; for the substitution, as a court of appeal, of a written Book for a
living voice could only be a transitional step towards the acceptance by
each individual, in whose hands the Book is placed, of himself as the
interpreter of it. Congregationalism followed Nationalism, and
Individualism (or pure Protestantism) Congregationalism; and since both
the Nation and the Congregation disclaimed absolute authority, little by
little there came into existence the view that “true” religion was that
system of belief which each individual thought out for himself; and, since
these individuals were not found to agree together, “Truth” finally
became more and more subjective; until there was established the most
characteristically modern form of thought—namely, that Truth was not
absolute at all, and that what was true and imperative for one was not true
nor imperative for another.43

This passage can really be viewed as a kind of rough outline for the historical context of

By What Authority?. The passage is also a concise summary of the basic viewpoint of
the Catholic Revivalists en masse. There existed little difference between the various
Revivalists in their interpretation of the events of the sixteenth century.

Throughout his novel, Benson presents the quintessential Revivalist view of the
Reformation as an event that had weakened England, not strengthened it, and in doing
so, challenges customary notions of the Reformation as a moment of national progress.
Mary Corbet, as she asks Isabel and Anthony to tour the Anglican church with her,
comments sarcastically on the effects of the Reformation when she finds the church is
locked:

“Come, my child,” she said, “and you too, Master Anthony, if you can
spare time to escort us; and take me to the church. I want to see it.”
"The church!" said Isabel, "that is locked: we must go to the Rectory."
"Locked!" exclaimed Mary, "and is that part of the blessed Reformation? Well, come, at any rate." (53)

In contrast to this, the pure Catholicism of the people of northern England is almost idyllic:

It was pleasant, too, to go, as they [Anthony and Isabel] did, from great house to great house, and find the old pre-Reformation life of England in full vigor; the whole family present at Mass so often as it was said, desirous of the sacraments, and thankful for the opportunities of grace that the arrival of the priest afforded. (391)

This romantic relic of a Catholic past lives its edenic existence apart from the inchoate religious state of England; and here one sees the same belief in the intrinsic power and robustness of the rustic, medieval Catholic present in Chesterton’s _A Short History of England_. Although Benson attempts to give certain elements of Protestantism their due throughout the novel, there remains little doubt that, in the end, Benson is about the business of constructing a Revivalist vision of history. Catholicism is what made England what it was, and to suggest that its abandonment was a good thing is unthinkable, both for Benson and his staunch Catholic character, Sir Nicholas:

What especially he could not get off his mind was that this was the Old Religion that was proscribed. That England for generations had held the Faith, and that then the Faith and all that it involved had been declared unlawful, was to him iniquity unfathomable. He could well understand some new upstart sect being persecuted, but not the Old Religion. He kept on returning to this. (70)

And so does Benson. Again and again the reader is led to see the Reformation not as a moment of glorious human advancement, as the whig historian would have it, but as an aberration that ran contrary to a European order that had been in place for nearly 1500 years.

Nor is the Reformation a moment of English advancement either.
Thus, in every department, in home and foreign policies, in art and literature, and in religious independence, England was rising and shaking herself free; the last threads that bound her to the Continent were snapped by the Reformation, and she was standing with her soul, as she thought, awake and free at last, conscious of her beauty and her strength, ready to step out at last before the world, as a dominant and imperious power.

(140)

Thus believes Anthony Norris until his meeting with Mr. Buxton, who convinces him that only the Catholic Church can provide true Christian unity as Christ encouraged—“one visible kingdom, gathered out of every nation and tongue and people” (173). Only by returning to the Catholic faith will England avoid the division and confusion that was already beginning to taint her existence. “Europe will return to the Faith,” said Belloc, “or she will perish.”

The central theme of Benson’s novel, embodied in the title—By What Authority?—also deserves close scrutiny. Through his exploration of this theme, Benson aims to pinpoint the historical source of the liberal inclusiveness which he perceived in the Edwardian Church of England, as well as the Edwardian trend towards individualistic, self-devised systems of truth. For Benson personally, the lack of a central authority in the Anglican Church was a main factor in his own conversion to Rome. Subsequent to his conversion, the issue of authority became one of his main tenets in arguing for the truth of Catholicism. In a 1907 article entitled, “The State of Religion in England,” Benson addresses this lack of central authority in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England, a group Benson denotes as the “Ritualists”:

The Ritualists, that is to say, while acknowledging that the sweep of the Church’s range must ever whirl wider and wider, covering this ground and that which in primitive ages was outside her province, suffer from this fatal and irremediable defect, that they have no immovable central authority from which the whirling may be controlled. They acknowledge neither Canterbury nor Rome as their fixed pivot; they have too much
knowledge for one and too little for the other; and the result is that their organization covers indeed a quantity of ground...but it swings loosely here and there at random, and is at one time Tractarian and severe, at another Ultramontane and Belgian; at one time Roman, and another Sarum; there is neither rest nor security; they have no certain guides.44

Benson discusses two other “schools” of religious thought outside of the Catholic Church in England, and concludes that they all represent a “failure to meet modern questions”; and as a result, the English people display “an attitude of bewilderment” about religious issues.45 Add to this the hodgepodge of individualized “secular religions” abounding in Edwardian Britain, and the confused mindset of the English population is increasingly apparent.

*By What Authority?, then, is Benson’s fictional treatment of the source of England’s religious “bewilderment.” Without the Catholic Church to provide the country with spiritual and cultural unity, people are left to wander aimlessly in search of truth. Protestant Christianity is unacceptable because it is the very source of the individualism that Benson detests. Even the bumbling Anglican rector, Mr. Dent, seems to grasp the ominous effects of jettisoning the Old Faith:

But it seemed rather to such sober men as the Rector that the principle of authority had been lost with the rejection of the Papacy, and that anarchy rather than liberty had prevailed in the National Church. In darker moments it seemed to him and his friends as if any wild fancy was tolerated, so long as it did not approximate too closely to the Old Religion. (79-80)

Instead of the desired freedom, implies Benson, the suppression of Catholicism succeeded only in opening the floodgates of relativism, and social and spiritual anarchy. Anthony, too, must come to terms with what a loss of central authority means for him spiritually. In a conversation with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anthony repeats a prophecy made by Mr. Buxton about the future of Anglicanism.
Anthony could not help thinking of Mr. Buxton's prediction that the Church of England had so repudiated authority that in turn her own would one day be repudiated.

"A Papist prisoner, your Grace," he said, "said to me the other day that this would be sure to come; that the whole principle of Church authority had been destroyed in England; and that the Church of England would more and more be deserted by her children; for that there was no necessary centre of unity left, now that Peter was denied." (210)

Here again, the hero of the story touches upon the major theme of the novel—the loss of spiritual authority would mean the unraveling of truth itself.

Benson's examination of authority in the novel is a complex one operating on many levels. On a basic level, questions of authority are always concerned with some kind of spiritual authority and its relationship to a temporal kind of authority. Still, the different manifestations of this conflict are not homogenous. There is the spiritual conflict between Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Puritanism with their varying doctrines of salvation, worship, and church government. On the abstract level, one sees this in the way that Benson packs his text full of direct theological discussion, only occasionally cloaked loosely in dialogue. These episodes are too numerous to treat at length, but a single instance in which the narrator examines the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism is sufficient to convey the tone of the remaining examples in the book. It is here quoted at length:

The arguments for Catholicism burned pitilessly clear now; every line and feature in them stood distinct and hard. Catholicism, it appeared to her [Isabel], alone had the marks of the Bride, visible unity, visible Catholicity, visible Apostolicity, visible Sanctity—there they were, the seals of the most High God. She flung herself back furiously into the Protestantism from which she had been emerging; there burned in the dark before her the marks of the Beast, visible disunion, visible nationalism, visible Erastianism, visible gulfs where holiness should be: that system in which now she could never find rest again glared at her in all its unconvincing incoherence, its lack of spirituality, its adulterous union with the civil power instead of the pure wedlock Spouse of Christ.
She wondered once more how she dared to have hesitated so long; or dared to hesitate still. (178)

There is an essential difference between Catholicism and all other forms of Christianity to Benson, and this kind of theological digression by the narrator is a common feature of the novel as Benson attempts to establish the Catholic Church as the only supreme authority in spiritual matters.

This abstract level underlies the individual one; and therefore, the reader witnesses this conflict of authority in the spiritual journeys of Isabel and Anthony, especially in that of Anthony. Anthony begins as the son of a Puritan minister, distant even from the Anglo-Catholic wing of the English Church. He then takes a job at Lambeth Palace, moving more solidly into the center of the Anglican Church. Finally, however, Anthony perceives the truth of the Catholic Church and faithfully goes to his death in Her name.

Also on a personal level, human beings are forced to choose between the authority of the self and the authority of God, another favorite Bensonian theme. Isabel, for example, must choose between her human love for Hubert and her love for God.

And then on the other side all her human nature cried out for Hubert—Hubert—Hubert. There he stood by her in fancy, day and night, that chivalrous, courteous lad, who had been loyal to her so long; had waited so patiently; had run to her with such dear impatience; who was so wholesome, so strong, so humble to her; so quick to understand her wants, so eager to fulfil [sic.] them; so bound to her by associations; so fit a mate for the very differences between them. And now these two claims were no longer compatible; in his very love for her he had ended that possibility. (179)

Isabel, of course, makes the proper choice in Benson’s view, sacrificing her dreams for Catholicism just as Anthony later sacrifices his very life.

This primary spiritual conflict plays itself out in a number of further ways. In sixteenth-century England, the spiritual struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism
had distinct political dimensions, for, as the narrator puts it, “What was true of politics was also true of religious matters, for the two were inextricably mingled” (140). There is therefore the battle for temporal allegiance between the mandates of the Pope and the laws of Queen Elizabeth. This tenuous relationship between conscience and queen, church and state, is represented symbolically early in the novel as Anthony and Isabel watch the procession of Queen Elizabeth through the streets of London. Immediately preceding the queen’s entourage is another parade—this one of a condemned heretic (“He said Jesus Christ was not in heaven” [39]) on his way to the gallows. The mischievous crowd of onlookers takes up the mocking chant, “Way for the King’s Grace! Way for the King’s Grace!” Men form lines around the transgressor’s cart “like gentleman ushers” in parody of this “red-robed king of anguish” (39). The stark contrast between the downtrodden heretic, beaten bloody by the whip of the hangman, and the pomp and circumstance of Elizabeth’s caravan is dramatic. The state clearly has the power and means to impose its will upon the bodies of men in an attempt to influence their consciences. This juxtaposition of faith and politics foreshadows for Anthony and Isabel the conflict they themselves will have to resolve. Moreover, this scene is laced with irony as it is a poignant embodiment of the very confusion of authority that the novel interrogates. On the one hand, this man is representative of the individualized belief systems that are permitted to prevail in the absence of a central religious authority; on the other hand, however, Elizabeth, as an increasingly Protestant queen, would theoretically value this man’s freedom of choice in matters of faith. Paradoxically, though, Elizabeth (as the figurehead of the state) executes this man nonetheless. This very rich scene signifies the futile and contradictory struggle to maintain order in the
absence of true authority. The crowd's parody of royal majesty only further suggests that perhaps Elizabeth herself is little different than the heretic that forms the vanguard of her train.

The political aspect of the religious controversy manifests itself time and again throughout the novel as various characters endeavor to decide their loyalties to God and/or country. Mr. Buxton and the converted Anthony regret the impact that the failed Spanish invasion will have on the place of Catholicism in England. "'The national spirit is higher than ever,' [Mr. Buxton] said, 'and it will be the death of Catholicism here for the present'" (382). The Catholic characters throughout the story declaim the rising tide of nationalism in England time and again as a threat to the trans-national unity of the Catholic Church. Here, again, is a common Revivalist theme. The Revivalists often bewailed the negative effects of overgrown nationalism. As McCarthy points out, nationalism became one of Belloc's favorite punching bags. For Belloc, nationalism was "a sort of murder of Christendom," the institution of a secular authority in place of a religious one. Nationalism, in turn, "interferes with the universality of Catholicism," and in doing so, "lends to national ends functions which are essentially religious, such as the teaching of morals, the presentation of true history, . . . [and] above all the general education of the young."46

At the same time that Belloc and his co-religionists gloried in the trans-national unity of the Catholic Church, however, they were also patently English in nature. The indisputable focus of their energies was England. It is significant, for example, that all of Benson's historical novels treat English history alone, and both Belloc and Chesterton invested themselves wholeheartedly in the study of England's past. Also present in
Belloc’s writings is the idea that part of history’s function is to bolster the social fabric of society. Belloc writes, for instance, that “upon the right reading of history the right use of citizenship in England to-day will depend.” Elsewhere he argues: “A society whose history is neglected grows weak. A society whose history is false becomes diseased.” The Revivalists, then, seem to have displayed a kind of tempered national pride. They were patriotic, but they were not provincial.

Consequently, Benson seems at pains in By What Authority? to vindicate Catholics from the charge of being unpatriotic. Despite the fact that Spain is a Catholic country, Catholic characters like Sir Nicholas do not readily embrace the coming of Philip as savior of England. Benson offers here the balanced view that nationalism is dangerous primarily when it transcends one’s loyalty to God and Church. Hubert, Anthony’s foil in the novel, is the foremost example of this. Although he converts partially to win the hand of Isabel, he refuses to return to Catholicism based more on the spirited sense of patriotism he gains as a result of his adventures with Sir Francis Drake. Drake, a national hero, is Protestant; therefore, Protestantism is good enough for Hubert. Concurrently, though, patriotism is acceptable when it is subjected to the guidance of God. Again, Benson and the Revivalists, while being vehemently pro-Catholic, were also passionately English through and through.

One final facet of Benson’s treatment of authority in the novel is especially pertinent to the subject of the present chapter—namely, the authority the Church is able to offer in interpreting history. When By What Authority? was published in 1904, Catholic historians were embroiled in bitter ongoing debates with non-Catholic historians regarding the actions of the Catholic Church in history. Secular and Protestant historians
painted a picture which presented the Catholic Church as a corrupt and oppressive institution. Catholic historians, in turn, were bent on saving the Church's image. Predictably, a battle of history ensued which led to accusations of poor methodology and scholarship on both sides. For example, non-Catholic historian G.G. Coulton (who would later take Benson to task for *The King's Achievement*) laments what he believes to be the horrendous falsifying of history at the hands of Catholics merely to win converts. In an essay revealingly titled, "Catholic Truth and Historical Truth" (implying that the two are somehow mutually exclusive), he writes:

> Some converts think to find their justification in the sober verdict of history. This, after all, is the real and final battle-ground between rival faiths. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said our Lord; and, while some will always be guided by random prejudices, others by unsubstantial speculations, the most convinced adherents of any religious system will always be those who feel it truest at present because they know it to have been most fruitful of good in the past. This the modern Romanist frequently recognizes; and here again he finds a terrible temptation in his traditional claim to a more exclusive possession of the truth than is possible in this mortal world. The logic of his Church...drives him into a corner in which ruin hangs above him by a single thread; and the exaggerated sense of his danger hypnotises not only his intellectual but too often his moral faculties. The same cruel sense of inward weakness behind the imposing bastions of the past: the same lurking disbelief in the power of his own “truths” to wither and destroy, in every honest mind, the “errors” which he attributes to all other denominations—these, which drove him in the past to fire and blood, drive him too often in our more peaceful days to the most flagrant violations of history. 

Catholics such as Belloc, on the other hand, believed that without Catholicism as a guiding light, history could not be interpreted accurately. Thus, Belloc ripostes:

> Nor is this misfortune [the inability to see continuity in the history of Europe] from which the non-Catholic historian suffers a positive and therefore a malicious thing. There is but rarely deliberate mis-statement. There is not commonly present a distinct and analysable bias, but what we get from the 2nd century to the 16th is a sort of disorder: the magnifying of small things at the expense of the great: the lending to
European society of motives which that society had not, and often of motives which no society could ever have had: the telescoping up of many generations so that the factor of time is obscured or eliminated, and in general a complete moral distortion of the story to be told.51

In the two passages here excerpted, Belloc perhaps appears to treat the matter with a bit more kindness and gentility, claiming that the non-Catholic historian’s errors are not willful and therefore “malicious,” but that such historians are handicapped nonetheless. (Here again one sees where faith affects interpretation of the facts.)

Benson also weighs in on this issue in *By What Authority*? While observing the trial of the Jesuit Edmund Campion and struggling with his own issues of faith, it suddenly dawns on Anthony that history can be used to support both the Protestant and Catholic claims to divine truth. Such an epiphany, in turn, is capable of driving one quite easily to the abandonment of history altogether as a vehicle for truth, much as it had done for so many of the skeptical historians of the nineteenth century.52 Anthony therefore finds himself teetering on the precipice of total skepticism until he realizes that in the Catholic Church is found an authority equipped to place history in perspective, to bring meaning to the narrative as a whole.

[Anthony] himself was far from easy in his mind. He had been studying Campion’s “Ten Reasons” more earnestly than ever, and was amazed to find that the very authorities to which Dr. Jewel [the Protestant interrogator] deferred, namely, the Scriptures interpreted by Fathers and Councils and illustrated by History, were exactly Campion’s authorities, too; and that the Jesuit’s appeal to them was no less confident than the Protestant’s. That fact had, of course, suggested the thought that if there were no further living authority in existence to decide between these two scholars, Christendom was in a poor position. When doctors differed, where was the layman to turn?.... For the first time he was beginning to feel a logical and spiritual necessity for an infallible external Judge in matters of faith; and that the Catholic Church was the only system that professed to supply it. (198)
History must be safeguarded by the authority of the Church, for it is only through the lens of the Church that it can be interpreted accurately. This, too, is the explanation for Belloc's claim, quoted earlier, that "the presentation of true history" is, at base, "a religious function," not a national one, as well as his hint that the non-Catholic historian inevitably suffers from a bias in his reading of the historical narrative.

Without a doubt, *By What Authority?* is a classic example of Revivalist historicism in novel form; but the novel goes one step further by positing an implicit critique of prevailing Edwardian readings of history that prioritized determinism over free will—specifically, Marxism and Darwinism. The appeal of Socialism during the Edwardian era is a well-established fact. Various forms of Socialism attracted many of the great minds of the time, including G.B. Shaw and H.G. Wells, not to mention the thousands of less distinguished Englishmen who answered the call of this attractive secular religion. Darwinism, too, exerted a powerful influence on the minds of those living in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was a concept that was transferred readily from the field of biological science to sociology and even, in some cases, fields as apparently unrelated to science as ecclesiology, and as a result, it penetrated many diverse regions of the Edwardian consciousness. Inherent in the doctrines of Socialism and Darwinism is a specific interpretation of history; in fact, without its unique interpretation of history, Socialism and Darwinism would cease to exist. Both of these systems lean heavily towards a deterministic version of history. Whereas Christianity works to reconcile the forces of free will and determinism in the course of history, both Darwin and Marx proffer historical visions in which humankind progresses apart from
the conscious will of individuals. Marx, for instance, writes in Part I of *The German Ideology*:

**Ideology:**

The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imaginations, but as they really are; i.e., as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

Thus Marx emphasizes the conditioning forces of history operating independently of the will of individuals. Paradoxically, Marx seems to allow an element of will to enter his vision when it comes to initiating his version of the apocalypse—the socio-political revolution that will liberate mankind from class oppression—but on the whole, both Marx and Darwin favor a view of history that depicts man as part of a larger machine.

It is significant, too, that in both of these systems of thought, God is conspicuously absent from the equation.

The vast majority of Benson's novels and other writings, in contrast to the prevailing mechanistic determinism of Marx and Darwin, give great weight to the faculty of the will in human psychology. As one critic recently put it, Benson was literally "obsessed by the will." His works are peppered with references to the workings of the will, and it is not unlikely that Benson's "obsession" was a reaction to the increasing number of philosophies during the period that abolished the element of human choice in the cosmic system. This attention to the will takes on added significance in the context of historical novels since it suggests something about the author's conception of history. In this case, of course, Benson's insistence on freedom of the will in the course of past events reflects his subscription to a Christian version of history. Intrinsic to Christianity's conception of history is its distinctly linear progression. Human history originates at a definitive
point in time ("In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth") and terminates at a specific point of time in the future—the apocalypse. Thus, if the human drama is moving towards a designated consummation—if there exists a telos—there must ipso facto be an element of determinism present in history. Concomitantly, however, Christians have traditionally affirmed the reality of free will, and as a result, the Christian view of history is a type of hybrid of free will and determinism. Much as a person is able to move freely through the various cars of a train while the train is perpetually advancing towards its destination, human beings, posits Christianity, are free to make individual choices while the overarching movement of history itself progresses to a predetermined end. God exercises His will while concurrently permitting us to exercise ours.

In By What Authority?, Benson underscores the power of the human will by placing his main characters in situations in which their entire environment would seem to mitigate against the choices they finally make. Isabel and Anthony Norris, for example, children of a commanding Puritan father, products of an age in which the current of the nation (at least the nation which Benson depicts) appears to be forgetting the Old Faith at an alarming rate, nevertheless make individual commitments—unaided by one another—to the highly unfashionable Roman Catholic Church. Anthony, with a sinecure in the household of the highest Anglican clergyman in the land, laboring happily under the power of a vibrant nationalism, chooses to reject his worldly ambitions, his secure existence, and his financial support in order to convert to Catholicism. In the end, even as Queen Elizabeth offers him a personal pardon, he freely chooses to go to his death rather than renounce his newfound faith. Likewise Isabel, in the face of her earthly
love's conversion to Protestantism, still decides to follow through with her submission to Rome. Examples abound in the novel of characters making free choices even as the world around them is pitilessly pushing them in a different direction. Even Hubert, who to Benson would have represented a negative decision against the truth, nonetheless makes a free choice to embrace Protestantism in the face of zealous disapprobation from his family. Everywhere Benson affirms the reality of free choice in the human being in the context of the historical narrative, and in so doing, tacitly refuses the deterministic outlook of popular philosophies of history.

From the standpoint of its clear articulation of Catholic historicist tenets, *By What Authority?* is a fine specimen of the Revivalist historical project. As one reviewer put it, "The story is strongest on the historical side. As a picture of those days of change and bewilderment and terror, it is so very good that we are at a loss to recall any other work of fiction which surpasses it in this respect." As for the artistry of the novel, one may begin by acknowledging Benson's own criticism of the book some years after its publication:

I have formed a great many criticisms upon that book now. It is far too long; it is rather sentimental; it is too full of historical detail; above all, the mental atmosphere there depicted is at least a century before its time; men did not, until almost Caroline days, think and feel as I have represented them thinking and feeling in Elizabeth's reign. In two points only am I satisfied with it: there is, I think, a certain pleasant freshness about it, and I have not as yet detected in it any historical errors. I was absurdly careful in details that were wholly negligible with regard to general historical truth.

With admirable humility, Benson has offered some accurate criticisms of his own novel. It is, in truth, too full of historical detail. At numerous points in the narrative, Benson interrupts the flow of the novel to insert sections that amount to little more than straight
historical summary. Though they give necessary background for the main events, they are dry and, as he admits, overly long. Moreover, one senses in these passages a distinct shift in authorial voice. When the main narrator suddenly pauses to become a dry twentieth-century historian looking back on the period, the unity and coherence of the novel is disrupted. Other shifts in authorial voice are also evident. Benson clearly intends the novel to be a comment on the state of Edwardian England vis-a-vis the religio-political history of Elizabethan England. In fact, at two points in the book (at least), the narrator steps in to make explicit connections between the past and his own present state of affairs, reminding the reader of the parallels that exist. At one point, the narrator discusses Anthony’s confusion regarding the “religious controversy” of his day, making two links to the present—one explicit and one not so explicit.

Anthony now settled down rather drearily to the study of religious controversy. The continual contrasts that seemed forced upon him by the rival systems of England and Rome (so far as England might be said to have a coherent system at this time) all tended to show him that there were these two sharply-divided schemes, each claiming to represent Christ’s Institution, and each exclusive of the other... Of course, an immense number of... arguments circled round this—in fact, most of the arguments that are familiar to controversialists at the present day. (289; italics mine)

The same arguments with which Anthony struggles in Benson’s fictional sixteenth century are the very arguments with which the people of the Edwardian time period struggled. Questions of authority which had begun in the sixteenth century with the undermining of the Catholic hegemony had led to an even greater state of religious pluralism in Edwardian England. In an effort to make this point, Benson here collapses the distance between himself and his implied author in order to ensure that the reader catches the significance. This narrowing of authorial distance occurs repeatedly, and it...
is here represented further by Benson's use of the phrase "at this time." Indeed, Benson utilizes this phrase again and again throughout the course of the novel, never fully allowing the reader to forget the author's presence. These authorial intrusions continually invite the reader to consider the similarities and differences between the fictional time of the story and the contemporary milieu in which the novel is being read. To modernist critics, such authorial intrusions weaken the effect of the novel. On the other hand, intrusions of this sort have become almost commonplace in contemporary post-modern fictions. (Once again Benson appears to have anticipated later aesthetic developments.) Moreover, such intrusions also have the effect of convincing the reader that it is Benson himself that is speaking throughout the text. It fits in well with the ministerial approach of the Revivalists and their mission to aid in the redemption of modern society.

The novel is also, at times, "episodic" in nature, a fact noted by C.C. Martindale. It is full of unnecessary digressions having little to do with the plot or major themes, and which therefore detract from the underlying unity of the book. At two points in the story, for example, Benson allows a minor character to spend multiple pages relating supernatural tales—at times they are plain old-fashioned ghost stories—to the major characters. Though they reinforce the presence of the supernatural in the novel, they do so in a manner that fails to fit the atmosphere of the story as a whole. Here, Benson clearly permitted his own love for ghost stories to seep into a plot that was not designed to hold them.

Still, despite these basic flaws, Benson has succeeded in making his characters attractive and lively. He is especially good at depicting the psychological turmoil of
Isabel and Anthony as they struggle within themselves to locate religious truth. Indeed, although throughout his novels a great majority of his protagonists decide in favor of Catholicism, Benson is able to make the frustration, confusion, pain, and ultimate joy of conversion psychology come to life in his characters. (His portrayal of Algy Banister in *The Conventionalists* is particularly memorable in this regard.) Benson has also done a masterful job depicting Queen Elizabeth. One observes in her a flaring temper and a soothing love of her subjects, a commanding presence and a woman fearful of her image. Her dialogue with Anthony when he visits the court for the first time to plead for James Maxwell’s life is witty and sharp. In short, Benson has succeeded in making Elizabeth human, a feat he would repeat in *The Queen’s Tragedy* with Elizabeth’s half-sister, Mary. Elizabeth is not a caricature or a stock image of royalty, nor is she vehemently anti-Catholic as it might have been easy for Benson to color her. She is a woman, a queen, a friend, a ruler, a caretaker, and even a pawn. The only major character that seems slightly overdrawn is Mary Corbet. She is an incredibly strong woman, even captious at times. Her verbal assault on the rector, Mr. Dent, exudes a singular aggressiveness that is difficult to fathom for a woman of the sixteenth century. Moreover, as a critic would later comment in reference to another female character in Benson’s next historical novel, Mary appears to move around with an amazing degree of freedom, especially for a lady-in-waiting to the queen. Mary is really more of a transplant from the twentieth century than a genuine sixteenth-century woman.\(^{63}\)

Of course, some critics would unquestionably point to this novel as a prime case of Bensonian propaganda. Through his many flat theological discussions, as well as through the actions of his hero and heroine, Benson is plainly intending to show his...
readers the insupportability of rival systems of faith. All in all, if one can stomach some
periods of dry historical summary and theological exchange in addition to some tedious
tangents, the novel, on the whole, makes for interesting reading. The characters are
vivid and generally well drawn; and Benson succeeds in capturing the trappings of the
age quite well. There is, as he said, a "pleasant freshness" to this epic of Revivalist
historicism.

Oddsfish! and Christian History

Benson’s Oddsfish! is, in many regards, his most mature historical novel. It was also
his last, published posthumously in 1914 shortly after his death. It is not a perfect novel
by any means, for it, too, suffers from some minor flaws. As critic George Shuster
observes, "There is a characteristic and regrettable weakness of structure, together with a
very conventional subordinate narrative. The author’s talent for description leads him
into paragraphs of detail which do not bear upon the issue, and his failure to give the
women in the story reality makes such love interest as enters rather banal." Shuster
represents a common view, and though many of his observations are justified, it is
arguable that Oddsfish! succeeds in other, more compelling ways. Benson revised
Oddsfish! six times over a period of ten years, and even then he wasn’t happy with the
final draft. This incessant revision, it seems, may have assisted in curbing some of the
artistic weaknesses which occasionally taint some of Benson’s other novels, thereby
improving the success of this one.

Oddsfish! remains Benson’s strongest embodiment of the Christian view of history,
picking up where By What Authority? left off. It manages to resolve convincingly that
paradox between free will and determinism, between man's will and God's will, intrinsic to the Christian historical paradigm. The resolution is achieved largely through the use of symbols—one of the essential vehicles available to human beings for representing the divine. Oddly enough, aside from a few notable exceptions, many of Benson's novels are symbolically weak. They lack a coherent symbolic system for conveying subtle and often spiritual meaning. *Oddsfish!*, however, though far from being a symbolist work, or even an incredibly complex one for that matter, nevertheless avails itself of symbols and is the better for it.

*Oddsfish!* is also successful in its resolution of another of the fundamental dilemmas of Christian historicism—how to interpret the hand of God in the sequence of historical events. Christians maintain a particular theology of history—an approach to the historical narrative governed by a belief that at certain points in the past, terrestrial events were touched by the hand of God and time was touched by eternity. The central example, of course, is the Incarnation of Christ in which the Word was made flesh and the eternal God condescended to submit to the bondage of time in the form of mortal man. Thus, say Christians, the divine will manifests itself in the guise of historical events. And as a result,

a religion which, might otherwise have been too diaphanous—too subtly compounded of mere spirit and light—comes to us as a thing with a geographical location, with a place in the historical scheme of things, and with many of its truths condensed, so to speak into historical events. It comes to us with its central idea of divinity made incarnate in a personality more human than the human one.\(^5\)

Furthermore, this theology provides a key for comprehending the whole of the historical narrative, a guide by which human beings, as finite creatures, might decipher the divinely encrypted meaning of the story. As Joseph Schwartz explains,
History is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be contemplated. Since it is drama/play/story/narrative . . . , it can be interpreted and understood. The actor in the drama is, of course, man as he reveals himself in his activities and experience—moral, religious, political, social—and in art, his signature. When we say, as we always do, what does all this mean, we are seeking a philosophy of history. We are ambitious; we yearn to see the whole and the patterns which only looking at the whole will reveal.®

It is here, however, that one again finds oneself at the critical nexus of history and faith. Christians, Jews, Moslems, and Buddhists may all agree that a man called Jesus walked the earth; what they will not agree on is his divine status. The academic historian is confined to verifiable facts, and therefore historical facts alone can never fully affirm any brand of religious belief. What is required is an element of faith to interpret the whole. *Oddsfish!* triumphs as an effective resolution to this dilemma of faith and facts, and it does so partly due to the fact that it is a novel and not an official history, and partly due to Benson's wise narratological decisions.

In addition to these strengths and despite Shuster's criticism that the women in the story fail to have any reality,® Dolly Jermyn, the female love interest in *Oddsfish!*, proves at the very least to be a woman of her time period, unlike Mary Corbet. The characters are well constructed, especially Charles II, and the plot full of suspense and intrigue. Finally, *Oddsfish!* is arguably the most gentle and least propagandistic of Benson's novels. This is not surprising considering the fact that it is the only historical novel to treat a time period other than the contentious, immediately post-Reformation Tudor or Elizabethan ones. *Oddsfish!*, by contrast, focuses on the reign of Charles II and Restoration England.

The story begins when Roger Mallock, a "very well-educated young gentleman" preparing to take monastic orders, is summoned to the Vatican for a conversation with
the Pope. There is some question as to whether the contemplative life is truly Roger’s vocation, and so the Pope sends him to the court of King Charles II in “diplomatic service of the Holy See” (7). There is something distinctly supernatural about this encounter, for as Roger and the abbot that had escorted him there leave the presence of the Pope, their faces are “all suffused... for there was something strangely fiery and keen and holy about Innocent” (8). Their radiant faces recall Moses descending Mt. Sinai with the Judaic Law in hand after communing with Jehovah.

When Roger arrives in England, he meets his cousin Thomas Jermyn and Thomas’s daughter Dorothy, also known as Dolly. Slowly over the course of the novel, Roger and Dolly fall in love and eventually become engaged. In time, Roger is also taken into the confidence of King Charles II through a pledge of services reminiscent of Kent in King Lear:

“So you are come to serve me,” [Charles] said presently, “in any way that I will; and you will serve me only that you may serve your master better. And what wages do you want?”
“None that Your Majesty can give,” I said.
“Better and better,” said Charles. “Nor place, nor position?”
“Only at Your Majesty’s feet.”
“And what if I kick you?”
“I will look for the halfpence elsewhere, Sire.” (29)

Through such plain devotion, Charles develops an affection for Roger. Roger initially serves the king politically. He becomes a kind of secret agent, working surreptitiously to uncover plots on the king’s life. Through a series of adventures, Roger discovers the plans for an assassination attempt on the king’s life, and as a result of his input, the plan is thwarted. However, due to some important papers written in cipher that Roger had mistakenly hidden away, Roger himself comes under suspicion as being a double agent.
A failed attack is made on Roger's life while attending a drama at the theater, and in the process his fiancée Dolly is accidentally murdered.

But Roger also serves the king spiritually, and this forms the main thematic thrust of the novel. Early in the novel during a private conversation with Roger, Charles admits his Catholic sympathies in spite of his obvious moral shortcomings ("Charles' private life stank in the nostrils of God and man" [27]):

"There be three kinds of religion in my realm," he said. "The Presbyterian and Independent and that kind—for I count those all one, and that is no religion for a gentleman. And there is the Church of England, of which I am the head, which numbers many gentleman, but is no religion for a Christian; and there is the Catholic, which is the only religion, so far as I am acquainted with any, suited for both gentleman and Christians. That is my view of the matter, Mr. Mallock." (59-60)

Despite his Catholic sympathies, however, Charles refuses to pardon the Jesuits in the famous Titus Oates trial—a trial which Roger himself attends. Charles is torn between his personal attraction to Catholicism, the dangerous anti-Catholic political sentiments in his already unstable kingdom, and his unwillingness to relinquish his clandestine, immoral liaisons. Near the end of the novel, Charles takes ill, and Roger does him his greatest service of all by smuggling a priest into the bedchamber of the king so that he is able to make his final confession and receive Extreme Unction. The king dies reconciled to the Church, and Roger returns to the cloister assured of his vocation as a monk.

Like By What Authority?, the novel is an effective example of the reconciliation of free will and determinism, but it also succeeds in providing a Christian interpretation of historical events that is plausible to the reader. Benson’s use of a framing device, beginning with a commission for Roger from the Pope and ending with Roger’s reflections on his adventures from the monastery, confirms the presence of Providence
throughout the novel. The Pope’s instructions for Roger are somewhat ambiguous from the start. Roger “will have no every heavy mission given to [him] at first; [he] must mix freely with the world and use [his] wits and see what is best to be done” (7). All he need do is report back to the Pope periodically. This ambiguity, however, actually works to strengthen the reader’s sense of divine Providence. On the one hand, the reader has no idea exactly what might or even what is supposed to occur during Roger’s tenure at the court of Charles; the future is undetermined and open to Roger’s success or failure. And yet the very fact that the Pope himself, Christ’s Vicar on earth, enlists Roger’s services adumbrates a higher plan behind Roger’s adventures. God, via the Pope, possesses a plan of which Roger is a part. In the epilogue to the novel, Roger considers his experiences and reflects directly on the role Providence played:

To what purpose, I ask myself, was that part of my life designed by Divine Providence? For what did I labour so long, when all was to come to nothing? For what was I to learn the passion of human love, if but to lose it again? For what was I to intrigue and spy and labour and adventure my life, for the cause of England and the Catholic Church, when all a year or two later was to fall back, and further than it had ever fallen before, into the darkness of heresy? There is but one effort in all those years of which I saw the fruition, and that was the conversion of my master upon his deathbed. (334)

After thirty years, the purpose of many of his exploits is still vague to Roger; and yet, one purpose is abundantly clear: Roger was sent to England to assist in the conversion of the king. (Roger is the narrator and hero of the story, but Charles is unmistakably the center of the book.) But as is so often the case when it comes to discerning the role of divine Providence in both personal and general history, the precise participation of God can only be seen in retrospect. The epilogue acts as a kind of historical interpretation of
all the pages that had preceded it, and plainly Roger sees in his adventures the hand of God.

The novel’s first-person narration also enables this kind of Augustinian interpretation of history to appear plausible._oddfish!_ is the only one of Benson’s historical novels to be narrated in the first person, and by using this device, Benson places the onus of interpretation on the hero, thus appearing to distance himself from the hermeneutical act. History thus becomes inextricably linked to personal memory. This subtle maneuver saves Benson from the trap of having to declare omnisciently with exactitude the mechanisms of divine intervention in history, and yet still renders feasible Roger’s Christian heuristic. Through the illusion of first person—a kind of narrative legerdemain—we as readers are led to see through Roger’s eyes the hand of God at work in history without feeling direct coercion on the part of Benson himself.

God’s will is also manifested through symbols and symbolic acts. On the final night that Charles II is seen in public before he dies, a bizarre episode occurs as he attempts to exit.

I watched him go to the door with his hat on, all the other gentlemen uncovered and bowing to him, and him nodding and smiling in very good humour, though still limping a little. And my heart seemed to go with him. At the door, however, he stopped, for a strange thing had happened. As my Lord Ailesbury had given the candle to the page who was to go before them, it had suddenly gone out, though there was no draught to blow it. The page looked very startled and afraid and shook his head a little. Then one of the gentlemen sprang forward and took a candle from one of the cressets to light the other with. (300-1)

Surely this extinguishing of the candle is a bit heavy-handed as a symbol for many modern readers, yet it clearly points to the action of divine Providence in terrestrial
Charles’s earthly life is drawing to a close, and this candle episode portends the near future.

More subtle, and therefore perhaps more successful, is Benson’s use of clocks and timepieces throughout the story, especially in connection with Charles. In reality, Charles II was an adamant supporter of science, and as a result, he acquired numerous clocks over the length of his reign. Benson appropriates this minute historical detail for his own symbolic purposes. At the conclusion of Roger’s first meeting with the king, Charles mentions the “clockwork businesses” and his lack of time for chatting with Roger: “Well, I have no time at present, Mr. Mallock, as you can see for yourself. But I will not forget you, if I want you” (31). There is a certain irony in the king’s statement, for indeed he does not have much time, though not in the way he means. By the end of the novel he will be dead, and hanging in the balance is his soul. Significantly, the king’s personal room is filled with “innumerable clocks” (174). After Dolly is murdered, Roger becomes disillusioned with the lying and conniving he has had to do for the king, and decides to leave the king’s services. Charles appeals to Roger to stay, offering him whatever rewards he pleases. Roger, however, insists he must go, and seconds after declaring his intent to leave, “the clocks began to chime, one after the other, for it was eight o’clock, and [Roger] heard them at it, too, in the bedchamber beyond” (297). “Thirty or forty” clocks scream out in symbolic protestation as Roger, the king’s only committed Catholic servant, prepares to leave. It is a critical point in the king’s spiritual journey, and the clocks, in a cacophony of chiming, register this crucial moment from beyond. The next night, the king’s last in public, Roger observes that the
gallery is adorned with "at least five or six chiming clocks that the King had given to Her Grace" (298-9).

After the king falls ill and is consigned to his bed, Roger plants himself outside of the king's bedchamber, listening intently for any indication of the king's health. He notes that it is "about eleven o'clock" when he "first heard His Majesty's voice". Some time later, Roger hears "the sudden chiming of all the clocks that were in the bedchamber" (306). These continual references to time and clocks work to intensify the reader's suspense, while also reminding one that the king's own time on earth is limited. Significantly, it is while waiting in the antechamber that Roger realizes that it was to aid in the king's conversion that he had been sent to England: "This conviction, I suppose, had always been with me that it was for this that in God's Providence I had been sent to England; at least, even in the moment that I had left my house and run down the gallery, there it was all full formed and mature" (305). Roger realizes his mission literally "in the nick of time." Time and again throughout this climactic section, the clocks seem to echo the divine will: The king's end is predetermined, it is fast approaching, and Roger must act quickly to bring redemption to Charles. As Roger enters the king's chamber to beg Charles to allow him to fetch a priest, the "clocks were all chiming four" (313). Shortly thereafter, Roger has a renewed passion to help this dying king to salvation. There arose in him "a fierce, overmastering ambition to accomplish one more task that was the greatest of them all and to get salvation to the man who had again and again flouted and neglected me, whom yet I loved as I had never yet loved any man" (315).

Roger finds a priest, sneaks him into the king's room, and the priest administers the last rites before the Anglican bishops can arrive. Once again, Roger notes the presence
2 of "at least half-a-dozen clocks whose ticking was very plain in the silence" (328).

Later, when the king has been reconciled to the Church, Roger rejoices that "he was not altogether too late, thank God!", and he finds it "near incredible that [he] should in very truth be here at such a time, and that [he] should have been, under God’s merciful Providence, the instrument of such an affair" (329). In his epilogue, Roger recounts with amazing accuracy (considering that nearly thirty years have passed) the exact times of important events leading to the king’s final demise. At "about six o’clock," the king asked the curtains to be drawn, the clocks chimed again, and he asked one of them to be wound (336). At seven o’clock, "breathlessness came on [the king] again and he was compelled to sit up in bed", and it was "a little before noon" that Charles passed away (337). Throughout the final pages there is a masterful interweaving of the clock motif with Roger’s evolving sense that Providence has been guiding him all along. In a sense, then, the clocks symbolize the divine will at work in the life of the king. The king’s end is determined, and it is up to Roger and Charles himself whether the necessary means of salvation will be gotten in time. What on one level is a mere historical detail (Charles liked clocks) works in Benson’s narrative on a secondary and more meaningful level by intimating the presence of Providence throughout.

Yet, even as Providence is symbolized and alluded to throughout the novel, the element of free will is still present and strong. Charles’s end may be set, but his spiritual decision is not, as is evidenced by Roger’s intense fear that a priest will not be brought in time. In fact, one might conclude by noting with Chesterton that for any narrative to work effectively—for there to be any degree of suspense and narrative interest—the reader must accept, at least partially, the premise of free will:
The point is that a story is exciting because it has in it so strong an element of will, of what theology calls free will. You cannot finish a sum how you like. But you can finish a story how you like. When somebody discovered the Differential Calculus there was only one Differential Calculus he could discover. But when Shakespeare killed Romeo he might have married him to Juliet's old nurse if he had felt inclined. And Christendom has excelled in the narrative romance exactly because it has insisted on the theological free will.

One must believe that characters have a choice to make and that those choices made will affect their lives in a significant way. Thus, *Oddsfish!* is a fine example of an artistic rendering of Christian history that works quite well.

As Shuster points out, the novel has its weaknesses. There are some crude metaphors, some unnecessary digressions (Benson seems particularly fascinated with describing in detail hiding holes built for priests), and even a misquotation of Scripture. Still, *Oddsfish!* makes for exciting reading: It is a "'thriller' in the best 'cops and robbers' tradition." Its characters are, on the whole, well drawn, and the hero of the story undergoes meaningful development throughout the narrative, deciding to return to the cloister with a firmer conviction regarding his vocation. Dolly, unlike Mary before her, is believable as a woman of the seventeenth century. And perhaps most importantly, *Oddsfish!* is a perfect example of the way in which Benson, by choosing to render history as art, was able to venture into territory disallowed by his co-religionists' more "official" approach to the subject.

This chapter has advanced a basic but important thesis: Benson was a fundamental part of the Revivalist historicist movement, and he was unique in that he availed himself of the power of art to accomplish his ends. While he shared with his fellow Revivalists certain notions about history, he stands out for his creative approach to these notions. Indeed, anecdotal evidence would seem to support the idea that there was something
compelling about Benson's choice to depict history artistically. Another of Benson's
historical novels, *Come Rack! Come Rope!*, says Janet Grayson, "did more than any
other work of fiction of the time or since to change Anglican attitudes about the cruelties
of the English Reformation." From the overwhelming popularity of Benson's novels at
the time, it seems safe to assume that his vision of history succeeded in widely
influencing the English population and the way in which they viewed their history.
Chapter Notes

1 The novels are, in order of publication, *By What Authority?* (1904), *The King’s Achievement* (1905), *The Queen’s Tragedy* (1906), *Come Rack! Come Rope!* (1912), and *Oddsfish!* (1914). The medieval romance is *The History of Richard Raynal, Solitary* (1905).


3 A.C. Benson, *Hugh: Memoirs of a Brother* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1915), 177. One is struck here by the lack of depth displayed by both critics. Aheme seems entirely unable to imagine the historical novel as a breed of its own, with rules that may vary slightly from other types of novels. Cannot one admire the insights and artistic nuances a writer brings to the characterization of an historical personage? Is this not a kind of art in its own right? Rather than enforcing a rigid standard of originality for the historical novelist, might one not judge instead the novelist’s ability to honor the historical facts about a character while simultaneously bringing the character to vivid life before the eyes of the modern reader? Ironically, Arthur hints that the historical novel is a separate class of fiction when he writes that historical novels “are like nothing at all, except each other,” but he seems unprepared on a personal level to revise his taste accordingly. In fact, it is arguable that a conception of historical novels as subject to rules different than those which govern other types of novels is the first key to one’s ability to enjoy them fully.


6 Of course, many of the tenets of Revivalist historicism are now being embraced by scholars at large. Though Benson, Chesterton, and Belloc targeted a popular audience as opposed to a scholarly one, scholars are now echoing many of the theses expressed earlier by the trio and other Catholic historians. See note 26 below.


9 See Francis A. Schaeffer's brief discussion of how this book fits into rationalistic
trends of the period in How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western

10 Anthea Trodd, A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature (Calgary: University of

11 Benson did, in fact, have ample company. Baker's A Guide to Historical Fiction
shows nearly twenty novels treating the reign of Elizabeth published in the Edwardian
Period alone, and innumerable more in the decade preceding the dawn of the twentieth
century (Ernest A. Baker, A Guide to Historical Fiction [New York: Burt Franklin,
1969], 46-55). Many of these novels, however, are species of juvenile fiction; and of
those that are not, many of them are basic romances—simplistic costume pieces with
little to say about the period politically, religiously, or culturally. Benson, therefore, is
unique in his combination of adventure and serious spiritual messages.

12 Qtd. in C.C. Martindale, The Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, vol. 2. (London:
Longmans, Green, and Company, 1916), 45.


14 Qtd. in Martindale, Life, II, 308.

15 This is not to suggest, however, that art and empirical methods of investigation are
mutually exclusive. They can be, and often are, complementary. Empirical
investigation is precisely what gives substance to the art in an historical novel; but while
availing themselves of empirical methods whenever possible, art and religion also claim
to supersede the knowledge gained by empirical means.

16 Butterfield writes: "It is easy to forget that in the art of the historian there is the
exhilarating moment, the creative act. It is by no means the historian’s duty to whittle
himself down to a mere transparency, and simply to transcribe information with
colourless, passionless impartiality" (Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of
of the Historian," for a detailed discussion of the role of imaginative sympathy in
historical investigation.

17 Hilaire Belloc, "On a Method of Writing History," The Dublin Review 149 (1911),
146-7.

18 Ibid., 152.

19 G.K. Chesterton, "On the Writing of History," in Generally Speaking (1929; reprint,
Robert Hugh Benson, “Catholicism and the Future,” Atlantic Monthly 106 (Aug. 1910), 168. In many ways of course, post-modernism is itself a version of Romanticism taken to its extreme conclusions. Whereas the Romantics emphasized an imaginative investment in the past in order to more fully understand the contemporaneous concerns of a period, post-moderns emphasize the inability of any writer to transcend his own subjective perspective. Thus, the subjectivity inherent in the Romantic ideology is pushed to the limit by post-modernists.


Qtd. in Joseph Schwartz, “The Theology of History in The Everlasting Man,” Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature 49 (Fall 1996), 59. See the whole article, pp. 57-66, for an excellent discussion of Chesterton’s “theology of history.”

Martindale writes: “In speaking of his historical novels, I shall find it easy to emphasize the minute care in research and quite scholarly effort after accuracy he displayed” (Life, I, 195). Later, Martindale reiterates his assessment of Benson’s fastidious attention to historical detail: “His own books, of course, were frankly pro-Catholic, only, he would argue, he never distorted the evidence or invented it. He never hesitated to discard his own historical work when he came to think it was inadequate” (II, 225).

Robert Hugh Benson, By What Authority? (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1906), 22. All further citations are noted parenthetically in the text.

This detail is highly autobiographical for Benson. He, too, utilized the exercises of St. Ignatius on his path to conversion.

In a recent article, for example, Karen Bruhn notes that only “a generation ago” the view that the English population did not readily accept Protestantism immediately and “clung with some tenacity to Roman Catholic beliefs and practices” would have been considered “revisionist.” Karen Bruhn, “Reforming Saint Peter: Protestant Constructions of Saint Peter the Apostle in Early Modern England,” The Sixteenth Century Journal: The Journal of Early Modern Studies 33 (Spring 2002), 34. See especially note 2.


Butterfield, preface to *Whig Interpretation*, v.


The notion that Catholic authors would disparage the Reformation may seem, at first, painfully obvious. However, we must remember that the prevailing view was that of the whig historian. Therefore, I am seeking here to emphasize the counter-cultural impulses of the Revivalists and the particular arguments they used to justify their attitudes.


Benson, "Catholicism and the Future," 166.


Ibid., 481.
Qtd. in John P. McCarthy, "The Historical Vision of Chesterbelloc," *Modern Age: A Quarterly Review* 26 (Spring 1982), 179. This quotation is post-Edwardian in nature, but we see this distaste for nationalism in Revivalists like Benson in the Edwardian period proper.


Belloc, "Writing History," 144.

In Benson's *The Dawn of All*, for example, though the world has achieved a Catholic utopia, individual nations still exist (which the narrator spends the majority of the story touring). Individuality within unity is the clarion call of this novel and of the Revivalists in general.


Lord Acton, the famous British historian, was preoccupied with the effects of the critical revolution in historical scholarship that occurred during the nineteenth century. New, more rigid methods of data collection together with the opening of a number of European archives, led to a revolution in historiography. Old histories were being revisited by contemporary historians and questions had arisen concerning their fundamental veracity. When taken to the extreme, many of the new nineteenth-century methodologies easily induced a kind of rabid skepticism. Acton noted the "impatient, restless, storming scepticism" of such historians, and observed the manner in which this skepticism tended to lead to a subversion of trust in history itself: "Some gave it [the pursuit of history] up and rejected history," he recalled (qtd. in Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1966], 76).

Ironically, Robert Hugh Benson of all people felt no qualms about applying Darwinian evolution to the model of the Church Body: "Whether or no a man may accept Darwin’s conclusions, it is impossible for him not to see that all Almighty God’s noblest works in creation are those that contain the principle of life, and that life, while unchanging in its essence, manifests itself in the gradual perfecting of its outward form" ("State of Religion," 479). Moreover, as Mark Noll has observed in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), European Christians did not express the same immediate fear of evolution as American Christians did (see pp. 179-181). It seems to me (if one does not exist already) that a study of some early applications of Darwinism to theology and/or ecclesiology would prove a profitable piece of scholarship.
Additionally, both Marx’s and Darwin’s versions of history reverberate with earlier Enlightenment notions of progress. One important difference, however, is that while Marx imagines a definitive consummation—the socialist state—Darwinian progress can presumably continue indefinitely.

The anti-supernaturalism of both of these systems of thought was, of course, one of the main reasons, if not the main reason, that the Revivalists denied their validity so thoroughly. Both systems, too, expunged free will as a fundamental component of the human being. Still, in the background of these philosophies lurks the ghost of a particularly perverse variety of whig historicism. Marxism and Darwinism inherently abhor the past as a period of lesser existence out of which humankind has thankfully evolved; such a belief was something that the Revivalists themselves abhorred in return.


Review of By What Authority?, by Robert Hugh Benson, Catholic World 81 (June 1905), 403.


See, for example, three other selected instances on pp. 47, 333, and 389.

Wrote Martindale: “Considered as a story, doubtless the book is overloaded and episodic” (Life, I, 361).


Of course, Shakespeare also represents his heroines as moving around with a good deal of freedom, often in time periods even earlier than the Elizabethan era. Juliet, for example, who, as a young girl one would think would be restricted in her movements, is nevertheless capable of a clandestine rendezvous with Friar Lawrence. Lady Macbeth, though less mobile, would be an example of a headstrong woman who operates with an advanced degree of autonomy. Still, it seems to me that historical novels carry with them a more stringent requirement for verisimilitude. Though, as has already been observed, historical novels are full of fiction, I believe that the more effective historical novelist is the one who can make a character come alive while still retaining the basic characteristics of a person from the time period. Mary Corbet, in my opinion, is slightly overdrawn in this respect.


Significantly, Benson began the first draft of *Oddsfish!* while in seminary at Rome, not long after the publication of *By What Authority?*. See Martindale, *Life*, I, 71.

Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1954), 120.

Schwartz, "Theology of History," 58.

It is said that a contemporary reviewer of Benson's works commented that the women in Benson's novels are there only to help or hinder the conversion of the male protagonists. I, along with nearly every other critic that has studied Benson, agree wholeheartedly with this statement.

Robert Hugh Benson, *Oddsfish!* (1914; reprint ed. with a foreword by Anne Freemantle, New York: All Saints Press, 1962), 3. All further references are cited parenthetically in the text.

St. Augustine had offered a theo-historical interpretation in *The City of God*, reading historical events in light of his knowledge of God's Word.

This device invites us to consider a whole host of strange events that might otherwise undermine the credibility of a third-person narrator. See pp. 258-9 for an account of a miraculous healing of the king's hand.


When proposing to Dolly, Roger says, "Scripture tells us that a woman must leave her father and cleave to her husband." The reference is to Genesis 2:24, the correct version of which reads: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Anne Freemantle, foreword to *Oddsfish!*, xi.

CHAPTER 3

CONFRONTING THE PRESENT: BENSON AND AESTHETICISM

Et tout le reste est littérature.
—Paul Verlaine, Jadis et Naguère

Oscar Wilde said that sunsets were not valued because we could not pay for
sunsets. But Oscar Wilde was wrong; we can pay for sunsets. We can pay for
them by not being Oscar Wilde.

—G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

Any mature representation of imagined form, any mature endeavor to
communicate such representation to another human being, is a moral act—where
‘moral’ can, unquestionably, include the articulation of sadism, of nihilism, of
the bringing of unreason and despair. ‘Art for art’ is a tactical slogan, a
necessary rebellion against philistine didacticism and political control. But
pressed to its logical consequences, it is pure narcissism.

—George Steiner, Real Presences

Writers of the Edwardian Era found themselves in the wake of a unique movement in
the history of art known as Aestheticism, a doctrine that has come to be embodied in the
quaint axiom, “art for art’s sake”. Proponents of this philosophy, including Oscar Wilde,
Walter Pater, and Aubrey Beardsley, sought an art in which pure aesthetic form
transcended moral considerations. The traditional formula “To please and to instruct”
was reduced to pleasure alone. Beauty, for the aesthetes, could and did exist apart from
morality, and the aesthetes pursued it passionately. As a young Cambridge student in
the 1890’s, Robert Hugh Benson was exposed to the dogmas of Aestheticism at the peak
of their popularity. Over time, Benson developed a disdain for Aestheticism and its

95
theories. In 1907, he published a work entitled, *The Sentimentalists*, which traced the fall and redemption of a quintessential 1890’s aesthete. *The Sentimentalists* was Benson’s effort to confront head-on a fashionable movement that he deeply distrusted as being contrary to Christian principles. Ironically, however, Benson nurtured a taste for decadent writers like the Frenchman J.K. Huysmans, and the Englishmen Frederick Rolfe and Walter Pater. He savored their books time and again, and he praised them to friends. Benson even exhibited signs that he himself was being lured by an Aestheticism he claimed to reject. While the message of the *The Sentimentalists* is clear, Benson’s complex relationship with the artistic theories of the fin de siecle is murkier. This chapter will explore the two primary dimensions of Benson’s confrontation with Aestheticism and seek to discover a resolution to these seemingly contradictory impulses.

A Strong Repulsion: *The Sentimentalists* and Benson’s Rejection of Aestheticism

Aestheticism, in many ways, finds its roots in Romanticism, though it is a kind of perverted form of Romantic thought that many English Romantics, especially early ones like Wordsworth and Coleridge, would not have recognized. The Romantics were fond of categorizing the artistic process in terms of preternatural inspiration—an unknown, ineffable power visits the artist and moves him to write. The author is at least partially passive in this process and does not himself fully understand the source of his inspiration. Echoing the *daemon* and the Epic Muse of Ancient Greece, the artist experiences a kind of ecstatic possession by an Other who grants him the boon of poetry. (One sees here, too, the connection with the poet as prophet idea.) Wordsworth’s
“correspondent breeze” (*The Prelude*, 1850, l.35), Coleridge’s “one intellectual breeze” (*The Eolian Harp* 47) and Shelley’s “invisible influence, like an inconstant wind”¹ are all variations of this belief in inspiration apart from the poet’s own act of will.² “A man cannot say, ‘I will compose poetry,’” argues Shelley.³

This Romantic theory of quasi-divine inspiration, when (mis)appropriated by later neo-Romantic disciples, seems frequently to result in a peculiar type of extremism in which art produced by the conscious will of the artist is decried as weak and inauthentic. The “unpremeditated song” is valued more highly than the work of art developed in light of a specific purpose and in accordance with pre-established rules. Questions of purpose in the psychology of the artist seemed inevitably to gravitate towards questions of purpose concerning the art itself. Shelley’s “A man cannot say: ‘I will compose poetry’” mutates into Keats’s “we hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us.”⁴ If true art pours forth from the preternatural or subconscious impulses of the artist, then one cannot and should not burden such art with issues of social responsibility nor expect it to be anything other than what is dictated by the mystical impetus of the artist himself. Such thinking, in its most radical manifestation, culminated in the Aestheticism of the end of the nineteenth century and the proverbial “art for art’s sake.” All art, claimed Oscar Wilde, is entirely useless. The purpose of art is, quite simply, to be art.

The ministerial approach of Benson and his fellow Revivalists stands in vehement contrast to the doctrines of Aestheticism. Benson, Chesterton, and Belloc wrote with a purpose and believed in the efficacy of art as a tool of ministry and communication to a wider public. In a public lecture delivered on February 8, 1914 at Cathedral Hall, Westminster, Robert Hugh Benson addressed the topic of “The Modern English Novel.”
The exact transcript of the speech is unavailable, but a summarized account appears in *The London Times* of the following day. In the lecture, Benson proclaimed, “Every writer has a gospel to preach, for nobody wrote without a desire to produce some effect upon those who read.” Benson makes it absolutely clear, in direct opposition to Aestheticism, that the best art is actually that which reflects a clear purpose and message. C.C. Martindale offers a helpful assessment of Benson’s understanding of purpose in art:

> Since the “really Real” is spiritual, and the spiritual is purposeful, therefore the best art, as expressive of the best and most real life, is the most purposeful, and “art for art’s sake,” is, in the ordinary meaning attached to that dictum, which implies that the artist paints or writes or gesticulates purely from unpurposeful impulse, an idle saying.

Chesterton shares Benson’s apparent disdain for pure Aestheticism, preferring instead art which communicates clearly with the reader:

> The artist is a person who communicates something. . . . But it is a question of communication and not merely of what some people call expression. Or rather, strictly speaking, unless it is communication it is not expression. . . . The artist does ultimately exhibit himself as being intelligent by being intelligible. I do not say by being easy to understand, but certainly by being understood.

Thus, Benson and Chesterton did not consider art that had a clear purpose to be poor art. In fact, they considered purpose and general communicability to be an indispensable characteristic of genuine art.

Oddly enough, however, the Revivalists’ theory of art with a purpose was not unique to them during the Edwardian period. A great volume of literature at the turn of the twentieth century would be considered, by certain modernist critical standards, “propagandistic.” The scientific romances of H.G. Wells contained clear social messages, as did many of the dramas of George Bernard Shaw. Even a few of the novels...
of Joseph Conrad can be viewed as engaging in polemics. With the influence exerted by
Aestheticism during the last decade of the nineteenth century, it is little wonder that
numerous Edwardian artists sought to recuperate a purposeful art. Consequently, to
accuse Robert Hugh Benson of propaganda (as critics often do) is, in one sense, merely
to situate him historically.

It is important to note, too, that the theory of a purposeful art appears indicative of
Christian artists like Benson regardless of time or place. When an artist entertains the
belief in his own responsibility to a higher power, propositions such as “art for art’s
sake” and the understanding that art is merely for the sake of the artist seem to ring
untrue, at least in their unqualified forms. St. Paul writes in the Epistle to the
Colossians, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the
Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (3:17). Admonitions like this
one exert a powerful pressure on the conscience of the Christian artist. Art is not a
selfish act; rather, it is a consecrated one. It carries with it not only social responsibility,
but personal responsibility to God as well. Aside from this theological approach to art,
centuries of tradition offer the Christian artist admirable examples of art with a purpose.
The Bible, for one, is a collection of stories, poems, and letters that Christians interpret
as conveying clear messages about God, man, and the world. Of course, there are ways
of expressing one’s purpose that may be more artistic than others, as Chesterton appears
to suggest in the passage quoted above. An artist may mean well and his message may
be viable, but he may still execute his technique poorly. (Furthermore, the distinction
between the Catholic author and the author who happens to be Catholic remains salient.)
Mauriac and Greene seem to hint that if one is overly purposeful, or at least if one is purposeful in the wrong ways, it can lead to bad art.

Echoes of the tension between Aestheticism and the Edwardian Revivalists can be heard in the now famous James/Wells dispute. A thoroughgoing evaluation of the James/Wells dispute would be complicated, and it would exceed the bounds of the present study; however, a few general comments on the subject and its relationship to Revivalist theories of art are here in order. The debate between Henry James and H.G. Wells concerned the nature of the novel itself. Simply put, was the novel a means of engaging pertinent social issues with an eye to shaping the future, or should the novel be practiced as a form of high art? The flipside of this question concerns the role of the author in composing a given work. Should the author be free to urge the reader in a certain direction, or should the author concern himself solely with crafting the most refined aesthetic object possible? As is well known to students of literary history, H.G. Wells argued for the former ideas, Henry James for the latter. For Wells, novels were “the only medium through which we can discuss the great majority of the problems which are being raised in such bristling multitude by our contemporary social development.” Moreover, Wells believed in what he termed a “governing conception,” an over-arching idea that gave form and purpose to a novel. James, in contrast, considered life to be “all inclusion and confusion” and art to be “all discrimination and selection,” and as a result, the goal of the artist is to focus on the art itself. As is also well known, James largely won the dispute, and the repercussions of his victory have influenced theories of the novel ever since.
In an article on Chesterton’s relationship to the James/Wells dispute, John Coates observes that Chesterton’s conceptions of art were more akin to Wells’s than to James. Coates notes that “Chesterton’s insistence on the ‘plan of the idea that is straight like a back-bone and pointing like an arrow’ has very much in common with Wells’s notion of a governing conception.”\textsuperscript{15} Chesterton’s belief in the necessity of communication on the part of the artist also substantiates Coates’s claim. Furthermore, Wells believed in “putting ideas into readers heads,”\textsuperscript{16}—such a thing could not be prevented. This, in turn, echoes Benson’s belief that “nobody writes without a desire to produce some effect on those who read.” It is not surprising that Benson revered Wells as “that amazing genius,” due largely to the fact that Wells had a clear goal in his novels and pursued it directly.\textsuperscript{17} Clearly, then, Benson and the Revivalists held to a conception of art that eventually fell into general disfavor with the defeat of Wells and the triumph of James. (The Revivalist emphasis on a broad communicability also contrasted sharply with the modernist techniques of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Ezra Pound whose oftentimes esoteric literary experiments, while taking the elite critical world by storm, have failed to produce a corresponding wideness of appeal in the population at large.) But the James/Wells dispute also reminds one that the Edwardian Period marks a definitive shift in the theory of the novel.

Other aspects of Benson’s own theory of art also contrast greatly with the principles of Aestheticism. Another brief but cryptic insight into Benson’s aesthetics is found in his book, Papers of a Pariah. In this collection of essays cast in a fictional framework, Benson adopts the persona of “one who regards the Catholic Church from without, not from within, though with a favorable eye.”\textsuperscript{18} Paradoxically, the book becomes a kind of
apologetic for the Catholic Church and its dogma *vis-à-vis* the thoughts of a religiously inclined non-Catholic. In an essay “On the Dulness of Irreligious People,” the persona writes: “Now we have not been talking about religion (nor even about art, which I hold to be a kind of religion in solution)” (15). It is tempting to mistake this statement as yet another permutation of what had become a nineteenth century truism; namely, that art, in the absence of orthodox religion, was capable of acting as a substitute for lost faith. Art, dreamed Matthew Arnold, might be the new salvation. However, in light of Benson’s seeming opposition to the religious reverence towards art practiced by the aesthetes, this proves highly unlikely. One explanation recalls the earlier discussion of purpose in art. Art is religion in solution because art is a poignant means of embodying, illustrating, and symbolizing divine truths. In good art, one can see, and even experience, the truths of God. This explanation can be extended, though, to include a more generalized and mystical view of beauty. Benson seems to have in mind the Christian (and subsequently Romantic) notion that in beauty, one can glimpse and partake of the divine. “He had no difficulty,” writes Martindale, “in ‘precipitating’ the divine” from the beauty around him. In a letter to a friend, Benson writes:

I will tell you frankly that I am amazed at your moral poise, and admire it myself. You have an extraordinary love of beauty, and do not seem to find it perilous. You walk on the very knife edge, and do not seem to be giddy.... I like enormously the picture of a man who has a very keen perception and is yet pure. Of course, I think that many people cannot follow that way; it is too strait, but I have not the smallest doubt that it is the highest way, and have known quite enough people who do follow it.

The perception of beauty, together with moral purity—a freedom from overindulgence—is to him a pathway to truth.
William Blake expressed the mystical aspect of beauty long before Benson claimed it as his own: "To see a world in a grain of sand:/ And a heaven in a wild flower:/ Hold infinity in the palm of your hand:/ And eternity in an hour" ("Auguries of Innocence" 1-4). Quite tellingly, Benson chose these lines as the epigraph to the opening story of his first book, The Light Invisible. The book is a collection of short vignettes set in the fictional framework of Benson’s discussions with a mystically-oriented priest to whom "Divine Truth... presented itself in directly sensible forms." Benson purports to have recorded his conversations with the priest "so far as [he is] able" (vii). In the first of the stories, "The Green Robe," the priest begins by theorizing about the analagous relationship between artistic and mystical perception. It is quoted here at length:

"No," he said presently, "it is not faith that I mean; it is only an intense form of the gift of spiritual perception that God has given me; which gift indeed is common to us all in our measure. It is the faculty by which we verify for ourselves what we have received on authority and hold by faith. Spiritual life consists partly in exercising this faculty. Well, then, this form of that faculty God has been pleased to bestow upon me, just as He has been pleased to bestow upon you a keen power of seeing and enjoying beauty where others perhaps see none; this is called artistic perception. It is no sort of credit to you or me, any more than is the color of our eyes, or a faculty for mathematics, or an athletic body.

"Now in my case, in which you are pleased to be interested, the perception occasionally is so keen that the spiritual world appears to me as visible as what we call the natural world. In such moments, although I generally know the difference between the spiritual and the natural, yet they appear to me simultaneously, as if on the same plane. It depends on my choice as to which of the two I see the more clearly." (4-5)

This passage is indispensable to understanding Benson’s view of art for two reasons. First, to Benson the artist is one who is temperamentally predisposed to a certain form of heightened perception—one who sees and enjoys beauty “where others perhaps see none.” Such an idea is not a particularly novel one; in fact, it is a thoroughly Romantic one in many respects. Contrary to strict neoclassical views of art in which an artist can
be fashioned through hard work and scrupulous attention to established rules, artistic perception is to some degree inherent in the psyche of the artist. Second, and perhaps more importantly, is the vibrant sacramentalism of the priest's description. This sacramentalism is foundational to all of Benson's work. According to the sacramental system of the Church based on the Incarnation of Christ, God not only transcends His creation, but is also immanent in it. Therefore, the beauty of the natural world is a window to the divine because in some inexplicable, mystical way, the natural world is actually infused with the supernatural. Though slightly different, the artist is analogous to the mystic because both perceive divine reality in intensified ways. Parallels to the Romantics are, of course, evident; however, whereas the Romantics, in many cases, pursued an amorphous mysticism with an ambiguous end (one thinks here of the unnamed demiurge of Shelley's "Mont Blanc"), Benson's sacramental art and mysticism are directed towards the Christian God. Thus, art is once more consecrated by its very real interaction with a very real God. As Janet Grayson observes, for Benson, "Fiction conveying a religious idea was tantamount to a sacramental and as such was conveying truth as nothing else could." It is, of course, difficult to reconcile such a doctrine with Aestheticism.

Benson's sacramentalism is important also in that every act of description by the Christian artist becomes a kind of extended meditation on God. Benson's novels are rife with lengthy and sensuous passages of description, especially about nature, which some critics have claimed distract from the flow of the novel as a whole. Many read like poetic digressions from the main narrative—lyrical interludes of charm and beauty. But while they may disrupt the smooth flow of the novel, these descriptive passages
reinforce the presence of the supernatural in that novel and, by extension, in the world at large. The presence of God is revealed through an artistic rendering of His natural creation.

Again, however, one sees in Benson the Romantic love of beauty balanced by the counter-Romantic reaction to its extreme form. Though he believes that writers like Blake, and Keats with his “Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,” are hinting at something genuine and right, he is unwilling to accept these concepts as the final word and seems anxious about slipping into aesthetic extremism. In the same letter quoted above, Benson continues by touting the dangers of servile submission to beauty, and offers instead the simple faith in the revealed truth of the Catholic Church. It is worth quoting at length:

For sheer dull morals I take my orders, as I take my faith, from the Catholic Church. Don’t you? I have a kind of passion for dull facts; I admire a man who lives in uninspiring duty as immensely as I admire an OX; and I deny with all my power that a man’s sense of beauty is identical with that heavenly thing; hence while certainly the Beautiful is the Good, one’s own conception of the Beautiful is not at all the same as one’s own conception of the Good, still less with Good itself. Therefore, I disagree profoundly with those who say that what they think to be beautiful is bound to be right.

On the other side, I am sorrier than I can say, and without a TOUCH of superiority, for the man who is led wrong by beauty. He is like leaves—I cannot bear to see such a whirling fall; and how many there are! They fly so exquisitely on rosy wings far above me; and then, without warning, they are in the mud flats. If only they will understand that they are in the mud, and that they are ugly and shattered—oh, what won’t I do?—muddy myself, suffer shame—anything. But I despair when they insist on looking at their broken wings and saying how lovely they are; when they declare there is no mud, and that the mud itself is lovely too, or that it is better to fly and fall than not to fly.26

For Benson, the only true and fixed standard of Good is the revealed doctrine of the Church, for these, he would argue, are objective and divine. He admits that in a kind of
Platonic way, "the Beautiful is the Good"; however, earthly perceptions of beauty are highly subjective and therefore should not be conflated erroneously with that which is objectively (because dogmatically) right. Moreover, beauty itself can sound a kind of siren-song for the unwitting traveler, luring him down a path which eventually terminates in a skewed perception of the world, where one insists that "the mud itself is lovely too." One perceives in this caveat a protest against not only the dangers of Aestheticism, but also against the Decadence commonly associated with it.

Benson's most powerful statement against the excesses of Aestheticism is his novel, *The Sentimentalists*, published in 1906. The novel is the story of a certain *poseur*, Christopher Dell, who is reformed spiritually and psychologically through the harsh intervention of a secretive mystic, John Rolls. Dell, an embellished composite of Frederick Rolfe (with whom Benson developed a friendship) and two other men Benson knew at Cambridge, is an aesthete in every way, a dandy in the line of Oscar Wilde:

> Beyond the single candle on the white and crumby table-cloth, stood a man a year or two older than himself and a couple inches taller; one hand was hidden in a buttoned-up Chesterfield coat, the other, with a silver ring upon it, rested with finger-tips on the cloth; a bowler hat with a caved-in top lay beside a knotted black-thom near his hand. The man's face, as Dick saw it in the candlelight, was smoothshaven and long; he had a long nose that appeared slightly pressed into his thin cheeks; his black hair was neatly parted in the middle; his full-lipped mouth and projecting chin seemed tilted in a kind of tragic appeal, and his sharp black eyes looked at him under half-lowered lids.

Benson takes great pains to portray Chris as the aesthete extraordinaire. His mannerisms are repeatedly compared to those of an actor. He eats, for example, "as a suburban actor would eat... with dramatic swiftness" (8). He is guilty of "glaring theatricality" (11) and "had all the faults of an overdrawn portrait; there was not a movement of his that was not an exaggeration" (20). “There was a glimmer of footlights about his
personality” (22). Chris carries a copy of Boccaccio with him at all times (7), and he suffers from neuralgia, depression, and headaches—other odd but common features of decadent heroes like Huysmans’s Des Esseintes in A rebours. Moreover, there is an androgyny or effeminateness about Chris, a sexual ambiguity stereotypical to decadent protagonists. He is “an effeminate ass” (22), and Benson later compares him to “an hysterical woman” (61). Chris is described as a Roman Catholic “at heart” (124), but he is also quick to come to the “defense of the truth of all religions.” Chris’s religious synergism knows no bounds as he keeps “a white bust of Hermes with a red lamp before it” just across the room from “a blue lamp before the image of the Mother of God” (12). He is intelligent, cranking out articles about his travel experiences to pay the bills, but idiosyncratic, too. He is capricious and non-committal about the important things in life, and painfully serious about the unimportant. He harbors a mysterious past in a Paris workhouse, and there are hints of sexual deviance as well. Benson even alludes to Oscar Wilde directly as Chris asks, “‘Who was it who said that nature imitates art?’” (55).^  

Chris, in the traditional fashion of the aesthete, also has his way with women, and in the course of the story, he falls in love with and becomes engaged to a respectable but whimsical girl, Annie Hamilton, the daughter of a conventional English country family. When Annie’s mother discovers Chris’s sordid history, however, she forces the couple to break off the engagement. Dick Yolland, a Catholic priest and friend of Chris, begs Mrs. Hamilton to extend God’s forgiveness to Chris and to allow the relationship to continue. She is unwilling to do so, and in a climactic moment verging on melodrama, Chris renounces God in a fit of anger and depression. “‘Who is God? God?’” screams Chris, falling to his knees (162).
Chris retreats into a private world of frustration and self-pity. Dick yearns to help his friend, so in an effort to rehabilitate Chris, Dick introduces him to Mr. John Rolls, a strange mystic who lives in isolation in a large and lonely country house complete with Gothic touches ("It has galleries, a court, a moat, a King's room, a Queen's room; it had a hall, but that's gone; and it has a ghost" [130]). As it turns out, Mr. Rolls has a troubled past of his own, having contributed to the death of his wife through his own immoral behaviors. Rolls determines that in order to cure Chris of his spiritual malady, Chris must be "broken to pieces" (186). Previous attempts to reform Chris have failed because, argues Rolls to Dick Yolland, "innocence and love are not sufficient" (192). Rolls agrees to take Chris on as a servant, and in his characteristic way, Chris romanticizes his role as assistant gardener as an opportunity for raw primitivism, a chance to work the soil. Chris believes that he is "a child of nature, spoilt by the miserable conventions of an artificial society" (268-9), and in keeping with his continual posturing, Chris carefully devises a new role for himself:

Yes! he had composed his new attitude at last; it all fitted in beautifully; he was to be an exquisite recluse, speaking in a low voice, looking with deep regretful eyes, understanding men and things, realising the hollowness of life and the joys of the interior spirit; a silent intimate of this distinguished old man [Rolls]; pointed out to visitors as a man with a history—a history preserved as it were in lavender—whispered about in corners, perhaps even at Hinton. (225)

Chris cannot escape his performative tendencies, even when he understands that he has been brought to Rolls's house as "a patient" and "a psychical convalescent" (224). Chris, of course, is emblematic of Aestheticism as a whole, and in passages like this one the reader fathoms the implications of embracing this philosophy uncritically. Chris has opted for an artificial version of himself so many times—he has repeatedly privileged
social form over his own personality—that there exists little truth at the core of his
being. All that remains for Chris is the opportunity to create a new role for himself as
circumstances change. He is the masks he wears and nothing more. Art has prevailed,
but at what cost to Chris?

This idea is reinforced throughout the novel by Benson’s continual attention to
mirrors. Frequently, Chris pauses to gaze at himself in a mirror. Chris “pos[es] a
moment before a tall glass” while out shopping (19), and moments later when riding
home in a hansom cab, he is “eyeing himself in the corner-glass with that peculiarly
solemn and mask-like expression of the male sex before a mirror” (20). John Rolls’s
house is also full of mirrors and mirror-like objects. The moat is “as still as a mirror—a
mirror of bewildering green and blue and rose” (180), and “an oily mirror of rosy sky”
(191). At Rolls’s estate, Chris resides in a small room with “a looking glass” (202); and
in one of the key scenes in the book, Chris stumbles into another room where “he found
a tall mirror, iridescent and dusky with age”. In a moment of true vulnerability, Chris
peers into the mirror and begins to question his identity:

[Chris] posed before it for a few moments, advancing first one foot and
then the other, folding his arms, letting them drop languidly, staring with
an infinite variety of expressions into the eyes of his own ghostly replica.
“Who are you?” he cried softly at last. “You stranger from the land of
dreams! From where do you come? whither are you going? What is the
true soul—the very self—behind those—er—which shadowed eyes?”
He leant forward till the melancholy face touched him with the icy
smoothness of old glass; then he grew slightly ashamed, and just a little
frightened. (222)

On one level, the presence of mirrors throughout the text provides Chris with numerous
opportunities to gaze at himself admiringly, thus emphasizing his intrinsic vanity. But
on another level, the mirrors act as symbols of Chris’s inner duplicity. Which is the real
Chris, the projected image or the corporeal being casting the image? Chris himself is not sure as he lurches forward, almost hoping for a tangible, sensory solution to his identity crisis but bumping his head on the glass instead. For Chris, who has concocted as many identities as there are reflections when one stands between two mirrors, “the true soul”, “the very self” seems lost forever.30

After a month of working for Rolls, Chris has had enough of what he perceives to be Rolls’s unkind and undeservedly servile treatment of him, and he begs to be let go.

Striking back with sheer force, Rolls confronts Chris with razor-sharp language:

“You had better go back to your women and your beast’s life, and forget that you ever thought yourself a man. It is probably the only thing you can do now. Perhaps you will have learnt not to brag; that is one lesson at any rate. You can go back and write your stuff, if you want; but you will not forget this—that you are not man enough to hold a spade. Or you may blow your brains out and go to hell; I should expect that of you. It would be characteristic; I wonder you have not done it before; I should have thought you feeble and stupid enough for it. You can take your choice.” (272)

Chastised, Chris—with a mysterious robot-like obsequiousness—remains with Rolls; but he is eventually driven to the breaking-point. Late one night in a fit of despair, Chris attempts suicide, but he is prevented at the last moment by the waiting Rolls and Yolland.

Chris is redeemed through Rolls’s spiritual therapies, and at the end of the novel, a transformed Chris attends a garden party in honor of the marriage between Annie and her new husband, Lord Brasted, thereby exhibiting his own newfound forgiveness. In order to emphasize Chris’s redemption further, Benson employs a creative narrative technique. He writes about the party in first person from the point of view of one of the
guests attending. An “I” emerges, an unidentified character with no knowledge of
previous events, to offer a new description of Chris:

He stood there waiting until the two men had spoken a word or two, and
then he stepped forward, smiling. I notice then how very pleasantly his
face lighted up, and how very white his teeth were. He looked like an
actor, and yet he was not at all theatrical in his bearing. (327)

This comparatively objective point of view has the effect of reinforcing Chris’s
rehabilitation. Even a person entirely unaware of Chris’s history declares him “not at all
theatrical in his bearing,” which is precisely the mark of redemption for which the reader
has been waiting. Chris has ceased performing, and the outward image being projected
coincides with a healthy inner-self.

Benson’s characterization of Chris is so stereotypical (a fact which he readily
admitted) and the contrast at the end of the novel so complete, that the message of The
Sentimentalists is clear: The life of the aesthete is empty and purposeless; and by
extension, so is the philosophy behind it. This theme is underlined by the disease
metaphors that run throughout the book. A brief glance at selected chapter titles is
enough to indicate Benson’s feelings regarding Aestheticism and Decadence: “An
Attack of Feverishness,” “Infection,” “A New Disorder,” “The Hospital,” “The
Operating Table,” “A Recovery.” All of these titles are metaphorical since—aside from
Chris’s stereotypical neuralgia—infecions, hospitals, and surgeries never appear
literally in the text. Chris’s disease is a spiritual one for which only a spiritual cure will
suffice. In a letter dated October 8, 1907, Benson writes in regard to The
Sentimentalists:

I am getting both praise and blame. I wrote it deliberately with a view to
a certain class of poseur whom I come across continually—wanting to
show them what wicked idiots they are. I do agree that, apart from the
supernatural, their reformation, psychologically speaking, is impossible. But by grace they are cured again and again.\textsuperscript{31}

Chris Dell reappears in the sequel to the novel, \textit{The Conventionalists}, where he himself has become a kind of mystic in the line of John Rolls, helping Algy Banister to find his own vocation as a Carthusian monk. Chris has developed into an eloquent and mature spiritual guide, "an old inhabitant" of mystical realms of experience "knowing all about it, perfectly familiar... with unexplored woods and paths."\textsuperscript{32} His vocation is to live in Rolls's house, "to do his little jobs, and say his prayers" (131). Benson's depiction of a spiritually advanced Chris in \textit{The Conventionalists} broadcasts his message of God's redemptive grace perhaps louder than anything in \textit{The Sentimentalists} alone could do.

\section*{A Strange Attraction?: Another Side to Benson's View of Aestheticism}

Benson's distrust of Aestheticism would appear plain and straightforward were it not for a peculiar and almost paradoxical attraction that he exhibited towards the movement, and especially towards a number of authors frequently considered to be quintessentially decadent—specifically, Walter Pater, Frederick Rolfe (who enjoyed masquerading as Baron Corvo), and the French author, J.K. Huysmans. Benson continually lauds these authors in his letters and stories, and regularly re-read certain of their works with pleasure. Naturally, Benson read a host of other writers and admired many; but these three authors seem to receive special and continued consideration in Benson's mind. Thus, despite Benson's seeming rejection of Aestheticism, he nevertheless entertained a somewhat bizarre attraction to decadent writers. The question, of course, is why? Why did Benson feel himself drawn to writers with whom he was unable to identify in so
many ways? Even more singular is the fact that Benson's books show little, if any, direct similarities with the canon of authors he held in such high esteem. If Benson had no intention of adopting techniques similar to those of the authors he admired, what was it about their books which drew him irresistibly?

With one of these three writers, Frederick Rolfe, Benson actually sustained a brief and turbulent friendship. Benson was a huge admirer of Rolfe's controversial novel, *Hadrian VII*, the story of an unknown Englishman who ascends to the papacy. Once Pope, the Englishman makes a number of idealistic and sweeping changes, much to the chagrin of a calcified and closed-minded Catholic hierarchy. The novel is highly autobiographical and egotistical, with the main character reflecting many of Rolfe's own characteristics. Moreover, it is written in a typically decadent style, a prose of saccharine flamboyance and almost impenetrable density: "There are few more nerve-shattering spectacles than this of a lithe and graceful young gentleman in scarlet behaving, without any warning, exactly like a monkey on a stick, manifesting the same startling desendent and ascendent angularity, the same imperturbable inevitable intolerable agility." Similar sentences plague the entire work. Benson was swept away by this work, keeping it on his nightstand by his bed at all times; and as a result, Benson wrote a rather flattering letter to Rolfe praising him for his book. Out of this letter came more letters, and out of these letters, a brief friendship ensued which included a bike tour across England and the occasional exchange of ideas and manuscripts. The two even talked of collaborating on a book about St. Thomas of Canterbury. The friendship eventually dissolved in a series of anger-filled
correspondences. Still, Benson admired Rolfe's *Hadrian VII* a great deal, declaring it to be a book he always wanted by his side.

The other two writers, Pater and Huysmans, though Benson's affiliation with them was only by way of their works, also exerted a profound influence on Benson’s mind. Particularly, Benson loved Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean*, writing home from seminary in Rome to have his copy sent to him. Benson also adored Huysmans’s *La Cathédrale* and *St. Lydwine of Schiedam*, and eventually suffered through his earlier “satanic” novels like *La Bas*. Huysmans, like Rolfe, also wrote in the turgid, almost mind-numbing style associated with many of the decadent writers. Pater’s style is slightly more accessible, though it, too, is thick and complex at times. Benson’s works share none of the characteristics of these novels. He did not attempt to emulate the style of Rolfe, Huysmans, or Pater. And yet, Benson displayed a lifelong fascination with these decadent works. What exactly was the attraction?

On the one hand, Benson’s attraction to these three writers can be accounted for by the writers’ own interest in Catholicism. *Hadrian VII*, though misunderstood by and controversial to many Catholics, nevertheless emphasizes the power of the Church to reform the world, a theme which Benson himself reiterated time and again. As for *Marius*, the novel concludes with Marius dying in the arms of Catholics in Rome, implying a desire for the Catholic Church if not an outright commitment to it. Benson surely recognized this ending as a symbol of the desire in every human being for reconciliation with God and Church. Likewise, Benson undoubtedly applauded Huysmans’s gradual journey towards Catholicism, even if, in the words of T.S. Eliot in reference to Baudelaire, he “entered through the back door” of Decadence and Satanism.
On the other hand, one still wonders if Aestheticism did not, at certain times in his life, exert a greater influence over Benson's imagination than he himself would care to admit. In the personal letter quoted above, for example, in which Benson ostensibly cautions his friend against the dangers of beauty, he himself becomes rather carried away with spinning his own beautiful image:

> On the other side, I am sorrier than I can say, and without a TOUCH of superiority, for the man who is led wrong by beauty. He is like leaves—I cannot bear to see such a whirling fall; and how many there are! They fly so exquisitely on rosy wings far above me; and then, without warning, they are in the mud flats.²⁷

One mustn't overlook the poetry here. Even when declaiming an unhealthy addiction to beauty, Benson is beckoned by it himself. He is at once attracted to and unsure of the power of beauty. Certain biographical details would also seem to indicate a latent attraction to Aestheticism as a possibility. When residing at the Cambridge Rectory in 1905, Benson took pains to decorate his room in what many considered to be outrageous taste. Janet Grayson describes the quarters of the priest:

> The sitting room was done in garden colors, hung with jungle green canvas, rumored to be Gobelins. Everywhere were bowls of lilies and roses and poppies and walls covered with art-nouveau and photographs of friends; tall wooden candlesticks and Madonnas dripping with Rosaries and moonstones; a mahogany writing desk with piles of letters fallen over as if left in haste, and a big oak chest he tried but failed to cover with scarlet leopard skin, which now lay in a heap at its side. The floor he laboriously stained making the boards look like oak. He was proud of the results, and said so.

This description of Benson's room hardly seems the likely abode of a Catholic clergyman. Many claimed that his decorative style was too decadent, though he promptly denied it.²⁸ Still, despite Benson's denial, it is difficult to dismiss the indulgent tendencies of such eclectic decor.
One recent study by Ellis Hanson posits an implicit connection between Decadence and Catholicism. On the one hand, “Roman Catholicism is central to both the stylistic peculiarities and the thematic preoccupations of the decadents. When they defined their own styles... the decadents often emphasized Christianity and the spiritual quality of language... Huysmans defines his conversion to decadence as an essentially Roman Catholic revolt against the materialism of his age.” Hanson’s argument here seems to be a basic restatement of the not uncommon argument that the decadents and aesthetes, in keeping with their own Romantic roots, adopted much of the rhetoric of orthodox Christianity in their battle against a prevailing naturalism in literature. Slightly more provocative is Hanson’s suggestion that the Catholic Church itself incorporates an element of Decadence which, in contrast to the iconoclasm and puritanical impulses of Protestantism, attracted writers like Wilde, Pater and Huysmans to Rome:

Catholicism is itself an elaborate paradox. The decadents merely emphasized the point within their own aesthetic of paradox. The Church is at once modern and yet medieval, ascetic and yet sumptuous, spiritual and yet sensual, chaste and yet erotic, homophobic and yet homoerotic, suspicious of aestheticism and yet an elaborate work of art. For English decadents Christianity was the last hope of paganism in the modern world. In the Crucifixion they found the suffering of a great criminal and individualist... They discovered grace in the depths of shame and sainthood in the heart of the sinner. In chastity and the priesthood they found a spiritualization of desire, a rebellion against nature and the instincts, and a polymorphous redistribution of pleasure in the body. In the elaborate stagecraft of ritualism they celebrated the effeminate effusions and subversions of the dandy. Under the cowl of monasticism was a cult of homoerotic community.

This recognition of the paradoxes in Catholicism, indeed of the very “paganism” of Catholicism, was acknowledged by Benson. “I desire to be a pagan,” declared Benson while reading Marius the Epicurean. He cherished Rolfe’s paganism, for “all sound Catholics are that.” Even in The Sentimentalists—Benson’s alleged antidote to
Aestheticism—he talks of "Catholic paganism": "He [Chris] remembered the curious thrill [of Rome] with which he realised the splendid Catholic paganism of it all" (134-5).

However, Hanson's study fails to apply to Benson and the Edwardian Revivalists in some important ways. First, authors like Benson, Chesterton, and Belloc receive little, if any, attention. Second, though the study by its very title, Decadence and Catholicism, purports to be an examination of the cross-pollination of these two modes of thought, Hanson seems more interested in decadents who flirted with Catholicism (Huysmans, Pater, and Wilde) than with Catholics who may have flirted with Decadence. Catholics like Benson admitted the pagan elements of Catholicism and even celebrated their presence in the Catholic faith as evidence of Catholicism's redemptive and assimilative powers within cultures. In a letter drafted while in Rome, Benson writes: "Marius has arrived safely, and I have flown through the first volume. It is extraordinary how out here one feels that all that was good in the old religions has been taken up and transformed in this." Rather than struggling to abolish all vestiges of paganism, early Catholic fathers simply adopted aspects of the pagan faith and redeemed them for their own Christian purposes. Benson clearly rejoiced in and savored the aesthetic pomp and circumstance of the Catholic Church—he was a ritualist at heart—but he scoffed at the decadent and immoral behavior commonly associated with Aestheticism proper.

Thus, as Grayson proposes, "Hugh's aestheticism was the ritualist in him speaking, and little more than that." When it comes to Benson's odd attraction to writers like Rolfe, Pater, and Huysmans, it seems more likely that he commended what he took to be their Catholic longings, while at the same time, he appreciated the beauty of their observations. Huysmans was "an artist anyhow!" Benson once wrote, and he was a
true artist because he found beauty where no one else could, and because in the end, that beauty led Huysmans to the threshold of the divine. When treated this way, beauty expressed the good, the right, the higher reality. When swallowed in large, gluttonous, unthinking gulps, beauty could lead one astray. This is what Benson himself came to realize in the course of his flirtation with Aestheticism. Evelyn Waugh writes about Benson: “Superficially he was an aesthete, but the Catholic church made little aesthetic appeal to him... What he sought and found in the church was authority and catholicity.” 46 Waugh’s description of Benson as a superficial aesthete is accurate, but he drastically underestimates the artistic richness of the Church and the pressure it exerted on Benson’s imagination. Though Benson did not become a Catholic because of the beauty within the Church, he was grateful for the perspective on beauty the Church granted him, and he savored the Church’s pageantry to the end.
Chapter Notes


2 Coleridge does, in fact, admit the role of the will in the composition of poetry: “The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of the man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, *first put in action by the will* and understanding and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, controul (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities” (*Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. George Watson [London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1975], 173-4; italics mine except for Latin). Thus, Coleridge sees the will as having a primary part to play in the poetic faculties, though even he acknowledges that the control exerted by the will is “gentle and unnoticed.”


8 See Donald Read, *The Age of Urban Democracy, England, 1868-1914*, rev. ed. (London: Longman, 1994), 418. According to Read, even some of the “old-fashioned” critics of the day were concerned about the decline in “serious literature.”

9 I believe we see here yet another difference between the Romantics and the Edwardian Revivalists. The difference is perhaps best revealed in the form of a question: To what degree does the submission of an artist to a higher authority affect his/her art? The Romantics were accountable to no one but themselves, whereas Christians, at least theoretically, are accountable in their actions to God. George Orwell claimed that
Christian artists were unduly hampered by their inability to think outside the box of orthodox Christianity, but an artist like Chesterton would seem to cast doubt on this statement.

10 A number of concise and helpful summaries of the dispute exist, as well as some more detailed analyses. See, for example, John Coates, “The Ball and the Cross and the Edwardian Novel of Ideas,” The Chesterton Review 18 (Feb. 1992), 49-81; and Anthea Trodd, A Reader’s Guide to Edwardian Literature (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), 101-107.

11 Naturally, we should note the implicit assumption here that “high art” and direct social commentary are in some way mutually exclusive. See Wayne C. Booth’s chapter in his The Rhetoric of Fiction, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 67-86, dealing with the modernist notion that “All authors should be objective.”

12 Qtd. in Trodd, Edwardian Literature, 106.


14 Qtd. in Ibid., 52.

15 Ibid., 54.

16 Qtd. in Ibid., 51.


19 One must be wary, of course, of immediately assigning this utterance to Benson himself, especially when Benson reminds the reader in his preface that he “must confess [him]self unable to sympathize” with the some of the fictional writer’s thoughts (vii). Still, Martindale, for one, appears comfortable in this case with treating the thoughts of the persona as being one with those of Benson. Two considerations would seem to justify this. First, there is typically little distance between Benson himself and his implied author in many of his novels (one of the main criticisms leveled against Benson and perhaps the primary source of the charges of propaganda); thus, even though Benson tries to distance himself from his persona, it is easy to doubt the sincerity of his claim. Second, and more compellingly, the statement generally coincides with what else is known about Benson’s theories of art. Therefore, it appears safe to follow Martindale’s lead and to attempt to explicate this short but highly suggestive utterance that art is religion in solution.

Qtd. in Ibid., 318.


Robert Hugh Benson, The Light Invisible (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1904), vii. All further quotations are noted parenthetically in the text.

Grayson, Life and Works, 142.

For example, Grayson writes: “A plot-line is frequently sacrificed to long descriptive passages, beautifully crafted, but distracting.” Ibid.

Qtd. in Martindale, Life, II, 318-9.

See Grayson, Life and Works, 92, n. 5.

Robert Hugh Benson, The Sentimentalists (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1906), 4. All further citations are noted parenthetically in the text.

It is also interesting that when Mrs. Hamilton is looking for something to read, she chooses Walter Pater’s Renaissance.

The reflections of the “blue and green and rose” in the mirror-like moat also embody the tensions of Wildean Aestheticism. Does nature imitate art or does art imitate nature?

Qtd. in Martindale, Life, II, 58.

Robert Hugh Benson, The Conventionalists (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1908), 130. All further citations are noted parenthetically in the text.


Grayson, Life and Works, 82.

Ibid., 89-90. Rolfe satirized Benson in his Desire and Pursuit of the Whole with a character named Bobugo Bonsen.

Ibid., 59.

Qtd. in Ibid., 318-9.

Ibid, 84-5.

Ellis Hanson, Decadence and Catholicism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 5.
40 Ibid., 7.


42 Qtd. in Ibid., 82.


44 Grayson, *Life and Works*, 93, n. 9.

45 Qtd. in Martindale, *Life*, II, 336.

CHAPTER 4

CONFRONTING THE FUTURE: BENSON'S LORD OF THE WORLD

Writers who travel into the future, good or bad, are all delightful.
—Hilaire Belloc, "On Fantastic Books"

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
—W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The king shall act as he pleases. He shall exalt himself and consider himself greater than any god, and shall speak horrendous things against the God of gods. He shall prosper until the period of wrath is completed, for what is determined shall be done. He shall pay no respect to the gods of his ancestors, or to the one beloved by women; he shall pay no respect to any other god, for he shall consider himself greater than all.

—The Book of Daniel 11:36-7

In 1910, G.K. Chesterton published a sociological piece entitled What's Wrong with the World. One particularly memorable chapter, "The Fear of the Past", speaks of the Edwardian obsession with the future. Chesterton writes:

The last few decades have been marked by a special cultivation of the romance of the future. We seem to have made up our minds to misunderstand what has happened; and we turn, with a sort of relief, to stating what will happen—which is (apparently) much easier. The modern man no longer preserves the memoirs of his great-grandfather; but is engaged in writing a detailed and authoritative biography of his great-grandson . . . . This spirit is apparent everywhere, even to the creation of a form of futurist romance. Sir Walter Scott stands at the
dawn of the nineteenth century for the novel of the past; Mr. H. G. Wells stands at the dawn of the twentieth century for the novel of the future.¹

Though not entirely hostile to this growing love affair with the future, neither does Chesterton find it to be completely healthy. “The modern mind,” argues Chesterton, “is forced towards the future by a certain sense of fatigue, not unmixed with terror, with which it regards the past. . . . And the goad which drives it on thus eagerly is not an affectation for futurity. Futurity does not exist, because it is still future. Rather it is a fear of the past; a fear not merely of the evil in the past, but of the good in the past also.”² Chesterton himself distrusted this headlong rush towards futurity—“we have not got all the good out of” the ideas of the past³—but he nonetheless perceptively documents a very real passion for futurity during the Edwardian Era.

This interest in futurity contributed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the popularization of numerous types of fiction set in the future. H.G. Wells, especially, wrote prolifically, turning out scientific romance after scientific romance, many of which are set in the distant future. In The Time Machine, for example, published in 1895, Wells catapults his hero ahead more than 800,000 years to the year AD 802,701. He followed this novel with a host of other futuristic adventures, including Anticipations (1901), “A Dream of Armageddon” (1901), The Discovery of the Future (1902), The Food of the Gods (1904), In the Days of the Comet (1906), The War in the Air (1908), and The World Set Free (1914). Other forms of futuristic fiction also appeared. A rise in utopian fiction and the emergence of the dystopic novel at the end of the nineteenth century paralleled Wells’s massive output of futuristic science fiction.

Indeed, Wells’s early novels, The Time Machine and The War of the Worlds, were essentially dystopic in spirit and “harboured a fundamental mistrust of the mechanistic-
Though, as numerous critics have pointed out, Wells’s vision of the future gradually shifted towards a more optimistic perspective, dystopic fiction caught on widely, leading to the two great dystopic works of English literature—Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *1984*. Even another, more lowly class of pop fiction belies the Edwardian enchantment with the future. As rumors of war became increasingly common, the so-called “invasion novel” attracted the attention of English citizens. Invasion novels, unlike Wells’s *Time Machine*, did not look to the distant future, but rather to the near future, portraying frightening scenarios in which England is attacked and occupied by foreign armies, mostly from Germany. Nevertheless, these novels employed some of the same devices used in other forms of futuristic fiction, including the extrapolation of current events to their extreme ends. Whether Edwardians were truly afraid of the past as Chesterton suggested, or were simply carried away by the spirit accompanying the dawn of a new century, it is clear that a great number of Edwardians exhibited a strong fascination with the future and what it might contain.

Adding to this corpus of futuristic fiction were two novels by Robert Hugh Benson, *Lord of the World* and *The Dawn of All*. Of all Robert Hugh Benson’s novels, only *Lord of the World* is readily available today. Originally published in 1907 and purporting to take place some time around the year 2000, *Lord of the World* relates the rise of the Antichrist and the subsequent persecution of the Catholic Church. *Lord of the World* clearly owes a great debt to the dystopic novels of the time, and the specific influence of H.G. Wells is also evident. But in other ways, *Lord of the World* may also be termed an
"apocalyptic novel" in that it draws not only on the dystopic and science fiction traditions, but on the Christian eschatological heritage as well.

Benson’s novel is currently enjoying a newfound popularity, likely due to the widespread attention garnered by the best-selling *Left Behind* series written by evangelicals Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Indeed, the *Left Behind* series is the latest in a long line of fundamentalist books and films depicting the end of the world that extends back to the early twentieth century. The apocalyptic furor brought on by the popularity of these books has driven many readers to rediscover Benson’s novel; yet the circumstances of this rediscovery lead to some potentially sticky interpretive traps. For the past 70 years, apocalyptic fiction has been successfully dominated by premillennial fundamentalists like LaHaye and Jenkins. With such complete supremacy often comes a significant adjustment in popular expectations of a given genre. Readers approaching Benson’s novel for the first time may be tempted erroneously to superimpose their own predetermined hermeneutic templates for evaluating and understanding apocalyptic fiction. But while even the most uncritical reader cannot escape the clear Catholic bias of *Lord of the World* (in Benson’s fictive future, “Protestantism is dead”), the real pitfalls lie not in the superficial differences between Benson’s novel and other popular twentieth-century portraits of the end times, but rather in the subtle underlying differences arising both from Benson’s Catholic eschatology and his personal inventiveness. Strangely, there is much that premillennial fundamentalists might find familiar in Benson’s novel, for Benson anticipates some of their themes and characterizations; but there lies beneath *Lord of the World* a great deal more that distinguishes it from the barrage of twentieth century apocalyptic fiction that followed it.
In fact, *Lord of the World* bears only a stock resemblance to the mass of popular apocalyptic literature written—mostly by Protestant fundamentalists—throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Benson’s novel proves to be a rather bizarre admixture of science fiction, theology, Edwardian culture, and parable. While it draws roughly on traditional elements of Christian eschatology, its fundamental purpose lies not in forecasting the future but in commenting critically on the present. Accordingly, Benson creates a vision of the end times that differs significantly from what one usually encounters in other twentieth century novels of the apocalyptic genre. A good portion of this chapter, then, will be an attempt at classification. What exactly are the multifarious strands that converge to make *Lord of the World* what it is? To answer this question, it will be helpful to approach the novel by examining two of its more distinctive aspects. First, this chapter will examine Benson’s depiction of Julian Felsenburgh, the Antichrist character in the novel. Second, this chapter will attempt to pinpoint Benson’s eschatology and purpose in writing the novel (for the two are related), particularly as they apply to the rather ambiguous ending of the book.

*Lord of the World* is Benson’s most enduring novel. The story, of course, depicts the rise of Antichrist in the world, his subsequent rule, and what is perhaps the earth’s ultimate destruction. At the same time, the book traces the concurrent decline of the Catholic Church as a result of the Antichrist’s advent, and the struggles of a few faithful to sustain hope in a rapidly changing world. The novel begins with a prologue in which two Catholic priests, Father Percy Franklin and Father Francis, pay a visit to an elderly Mr. Templeton. The exact year is unspecified, though one gets a sense that the story
takes place sometime around the turn of the twenty-first century. Mr. Templeton, who is "over ninety years old", rarely leaves his underground house "some forty feet below the level of the Thames embankment." The environment of this subterranean abode, though not entirely unpleasant, is wholly artificial and practical. The room in which the priests sit is painted a shade of green "prescribed by the Board of Health" and is lighted with "artificial sunlight." The temperature of the room is controlled with precision so that it is exactly 18 degrees Centigrade. The furniture is "constructed...according to the prevailing system of soft asbestos enamel welded over iron, indestructible, pleasant to the touch, and resembling mahogany." An electric fire burns in the room as well, and hydraulic lifts transport visitors up to the street level where they can catch volors—a kind of flying machine akin to airplanes (in 1907 mass air transit was still the stuff of science fiction)—that will take them to their destinations with incredible speed.  

Mr. Templeton proceeds to narrate for the two priests the main historical events that have occurred over the course of the twentieth century. In 1917, says Mr. Templeton, the Labour Party pushed their socialist agenda on England and eventually managed to institute a communist state: "The new order began then; and the Communists have never suffered a serious reverse since" (xi). The Established Church, continues Templeton, was abolished in 1929, ten years after the abandonment of the Nicene Creed, and the House of Lords soon followed in 1935. A Free Church arose for a time, but was unable to withstand renewed attacks by German Higher Criticism in the 1920's. The Free Church grew progressively more liberal, rejecting the infallibility of the Scriptures and the divinity of Jesus, and so, too, slipped into non-existence. Eventually, all England was divided between the supernatural Catholics and the materialistic communists. New
Poor Laws contributed to the downfall of the Monarchy and the Universities, and in the ‘50’s and ‘60’s, the *Necessary Trades Bill* nationalized all professions, an Education Act ingrained “dogmatic secularism”, and capital punishment was eradicated (xiv). Marx’s doctrines were fully embraced in 1989, and England just managed to become a part of “the final scheme of Western Free Trade” (xv).

Earlier wars led to a great deal of geographical reconfiguration as well. America prevented England from taking part in the “Eastern War”, and so Britain lost the colonies of India and Australia. Powerful in her own right, America proceeded to annex Canada. At the time of the story, the world is divided into three great regions—the Eastern Empire, spanning from the Ural Mountains to the Bering Straits; Europe, including western Russia and Africa; and the American Republic, consisting of North and South America and the Pacific Islands. As for religion, all that remains is Catholicism, Humanitarianism, and a handful of small Eastern sects. “Protestantism is dead,” and “practically all Christians who have any supernatural belief left” have recognized the need for a central authority to guard against “disintegration”. These, then, have flocked to the Catholic Church. Humanitarianism, Catholicism’s great foe, is “becoming an actual religion in itself, though anti-supernatural. It is Pantheism; it is developing a ritual under Freemasonry; it has a creed, ‘God is Man,’ and the rest. It has therefore a real food of a sort to offer to religious cravings” (xvii). The secular religion of Humanitarianism is now in the majority (it has spread all over Europe and America), and Catholic freedom of expression has been regulated accordingly. Only Rome and Ireland remain as unadulterated Catholic strongholds. The world has accomplished under the auspices of democracy what, according to Templeton, should have been
accomplished under the guidance of the Catholic Church—namely, the abolition of an over-developed sense of nationalism. As a result, a European parliament is about to be ratified, and Esperanto is already prevalent as a trans-national language.

The primary narrative begins with a discussion between Oliver Brand, an English government official, and his wife Mabel. A possible invasion is threatening Europe at the hands of the Eastern Empire, motivated it seems by religious fanaticism, and an unknown American by the name of Julian Felsenburgh has been sent with other American diplomats to help negotiate peace between Europe and the East. No one seems to know who this Julian Felsenburgh is, but Oliver surmises that he must be a competent linguist since he has addressed at least five crowds already. Oliver and Mabel, especially Oliver, are also ardent Humanitarianists: “God, so far as He could be known,” thinks Oliver, “was man” (7). Oliver maintains a powerful hatred of the “superstition” of Catholicism, vehemently opposing the fact that Rome and Ireland have been left to Catholics.

Out on an errand one morning, Mabel observes a tragic vehicul accident. She is listening to the screams of the victims when suddenly Father Franklin pushes through the crowd to minister to the dying souls. Moments later, however, the “ministers of euthanasia” also arrive to put the wounded out of their misery, and Mabel’s heart seems comforted by this. Still, she finds it difficult to forget the image of the priest bending over the dying people with crucifix in hand. She shares her religious discomfort with Oliver when she returns home, but he reminds her that Christianity is superstitious nonsense. She is content with his explanations of the ridiculous nature of faith and retires to her room to rest.

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Shortly thereafter, Father Francis relinquishes his faith in favor of Humanitarianism. Father Franklin attempts to persuade him to remain within the Church, but Francis insists on leaving Catholicism forever. At the same time, details about the mysterious Felsenburgh continue to circulate. A group of English priests discusses him over dinner one night. Some claim Felsenburgh is a Freemason, while Percy tells of meeting an American Senator who noted Felsenburgh's "extraordinary eloquence" and his "quite unusual methods" (33). Biographies and photographs claiming to be genuine representations of this elusive character turn up on newsstands everywhere, and despite Felsenburgh's relative obscurity and unknown origins, everyone appears to be talking about him.

Some days later as Oliver Brand is addressing a crowd of people gathered in Trafalgar Square to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Poor Laws Bill, Oliver is shot at by a Catholic assailant. The Catholic is immediately trampled and strangled to death by the infuriated crowd. Oliver, however, sees his own willingness to suffer for the cause as vindication of the communist spirit. Though religious folk of earlier days had warned that communism was incapable of inspiring nobility in people, Oliver's shooting has helped to prove them wrong. Meanwhile, news of Felsenburgh continues to pour in. He has taken control of proceedings in the East, and after attending a conference in Paris, Oliver calls home to tell Mabel that Felsenburgh has succeeded in bringing peace to the East. Oliver then invites Mabel to come and join him in London, for Felsenburgh will be visiting there shortly.

Unbeknownst to Oliver and Mabel, however, Oliver's aging mother, raised a Catholic and recently taken ill, decides to be reconciled to the Catholic Church. Despite
the fact that a Catholic had recently tried to assassinate her son, Mrs. Brand calls for
Percy Franklin to make her submission. Oliver and Mabel catch him in the house, but
Mrs. Brand convinces her son to allow the reconciliation to proceed. Later that night,
Percy witnesses the arrival of Julian Felsenburgh in London. He enters the city
triumphantly flying on a volor, seated in a single chair as on a throne. Massive crowds
that had moments earlier been near hysteria in anticipation are suddenly struck dumb
with a profound silence as Felsenburgh, the bringer of peace, hovers overhead. The next
morning, a newspaper account tells more fully the events of the preceding night, and
even goes so far as to make explicit the parallel between Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem and
Felsenburgh’s entry into London.

Not long after Felsenburgh’s advent, Percy Franklin takes a trip to Rome. There, he
finds “an extraordinary city. . . .—the one living example of the old days. Here were to be seen the ancient inconveniences, the insanitary horrors, the incarnation of a world given over to dreaming. The old Church pomp was back, too” (111). This antiquarian Rome, with all of its high art and human imperfection jumbled together, is clearly meant to provide a stark contrast to the pragmatic, sterile environments of the rest of the world. While in Rome, Percy meets the Pope, known affectionately as Papa Angelicus, to whom he reports on events in England. Percy also witnesses the Pope saying Mass, with all of its splendor and pageantry. Immediately after the Mass concludes, however, news reaches Percy that “Felsenburgh is appointed President of Europe” (135).

Meanwhile, back in England Humanity-Worship is proceeding at lightning speed.
Because man has fundamental spiritual urges that cannot be long ignored, ceremonies are to be established which allow for formal worship of the God in all men. The
apostate Father Francis, familiar with ritual from his Catholic days, volunteers to lead
and organize this new religion of Humanity. The year will be divided by four main
celebrations—the Feast of Paternity, the Feast of Maternity, the Feast of Life, and the
Feast of Sustenance. Francis, speaking to Oliver Brand, rejoices that in Felsenburgh
there is at last a tangible Savior, "'One that can be seen and handled and praised to His
Face! It is like a dream—too good to be true!'" (155).

As plans for the Feast of Paternity go forward, Father Percy Franklin is declared
Cardinal-Protector of England in the wake of the previous Cardinal’s death. At
Christmas, he is summoned to Rome to attend the Pope at the Christmas Mass, and while
there, he receives an inside tip that Catholics back in England are plotting to destroy the
Abbey where the next Feast of Life will take place the following day. Frantic with fear,
Percy rushes back to England by volor that same evening. While crossing the Alps late
that night, the smooth flight of the volor is disrupted by a huge rumbling outside and
overhead. After some tense moments, Percy and his fellow Catholic priests discover that
they have just passed an army of two hundred volors. The Catholic plot has been
discovered, and the mass of volors are on their way to destroy Rome in retaliation.
Rome is utterly decimated, and as a result, the floodgates are opened in England and the
systematic persecution of Catholics begins.

Mabel, her religious tensions soothed for the time being by Humanity-Worship, now
becomes discouraged when she realizes that this new religion has not brought the Peace
it had promised. The adherents of her new religion, it turns out, "were no better than
Christians, after all, as fierce as the men on whom they avenged themselves" (207).
Almost entirely disillusioned, Mabel even considers suicide as a viable option. The next
day, however, at the Feast of Maternity, Mabel is present when Felsenburgh himself speaks and is swept away by his electrifying charisma. At the conclusion of the feast, a mass of “ten thousand voices hailed Him Lord and God” (228).

As the end of the story approaches, Percy is made Pope after Rome and all its hierarchy is destroyed. He escapes to Nazareth, hiding there while he struggles to gather the remnants of the dying Church. The new Pope, out riding at sunset one night with a priest, pauses to ask the priest the name of a particular area. The priest ominously replies that it is Megiddo—“‘Some call it Armageddon’” (244). Back in Europe, Felsenburgh convinces the masses that there remains only one impediment to ultimate Peace—the existence of small factions of Catholics here and there. As a result, the oppression and persecution of Catholics is stepped up. At last, a newly appointed Cardinal betrays the location of the new Pope, and Felsenburgh orders a fleet of volors to Nazareth to eliminate the Supreme Pontiff and to eradicate Catholicism forever. The ending is somewhat ambiguous; however, this much can be said: Just as the Pope is saying Mass, the fleet of volors arrives with the intent to destroy the Pope and the College of Cardinals. And with that, the book concludes.

Julian Felsenburgh: Antichrist

Divinity scholar Bernard McGinn has asserted that “Benson’s picture of Antichrist can be judged the most serious Catholic presentation of the Final Enemy in the twentieth century.”13 This is saying quite a lot, considering that the novel was published within the first decade of the twentieth century. (Benson, it seems, was one of the first English writers to conceive of the notion of depicting the Antichrist through the medium of a
Benson's portrait of Julian Felsenburgh as Antichrist is a complex combination of Christian tradition and personal inventiveness. In many ways, too, Benson prefigures elements of the Antichrist that would later become conventional at the end of the twentieth century in the works of premillennial fundamentalists.

Felsenburgh is introduced early in the novel as a conversation piece between Oliver and Mabel Brand. As McGinn points out, Benson does not interest himself in the psychology of the Antichrist throughout the novel. At no time does the reader enter the mind of Felsenburgh; instead, Benson relies on fictional newspaper accounts and the testimonies of characters like the Brands to create an atmosphere of awe and mystery surrounding the Antichrist. Discussing a possible invasion from the East, the Brands speculate about this elusive arbitrator who has only recently emerged onto the public stage in an effort to soothe national tensions:

"I don't understand in the least," she said. "Who is this Felsenburgh, after all?"
"My dear child, that is what all the world is asking. Nothing is known except that he was included in the American delegation at the last moment. The Herald published his life last week; but it has been contradicted. It is certain that he is quite a young man, and that he has been quite obscure till now."
"Well, he is not obscure now," observed the girl. (4)

Oliver and Mabel do not even know this strange man's first name. "'Has he any other name?'" asks Mabel. "'Julian, I believe. One message said so,'" Oliver replies (5).

Again and again throughout the narrative, questions are raised as to the true identity and origins of Felsenburgh. In a similar conversation between priests later in the novel, one priest inquires: "'Who is this Felsenburgh?'" "'He's a mystery,'" another retorts (33). Later, Percy Franklin struggles to discern which of three separate photographs claiming to be Felsenburgh is the genuine item (34-5). And despite the fact that Felsenburgh is
constantly speaking to crowds ("This is at least the fifth crowd he has addressed") marvels Oliver [5]), he speaks directly in the novel only once; and even then he merely utters a few lines (226). All of this contributes to a feeling that, with Felsenburgh, we are peering into the unknown and the unexplainable. He is shrouded in an eerie sort of mystery throughout the book, a fact which creates in the reader not only a sense of narrative suspense, but also a sense of uncanny supernaturalism. Who is this odd person that commands such authority?

This effect is intensified by a common Bensonian device—the attention to silence. In all of Benson's novels, silence often speaks louder than words. Benson regularly attends as much to the gaps in conversation as he does to the words themselves, and to the absence of sound in a given circumstance as to its presence in others. Although his use of silence signifies different things at different times, frequently Benson directs the reader's attention to silence in order to indicate the presence of something deep and ineffable, sometimes evil. Rudolph Otto writes of such a phenomenon in his classic tome, The Idea of the Holy: "But in neither the sublime nor the magical, effective as they are, has art more than an indirect means of representing the numinous. Of directer methods our Western art has only two, and they are in a noteworthy way negative, viz. darkness and silence." Silence, continues Otto, "is a spontaneous reaction to the feeling of the actual numen praesens." In Lord of the World, Benson repeatedly emphasizes Felsenburgh's power to create a kind of magical silence through his presence alone. A newspaper account of Felsenburgh's entrance into London notes this strange ability. Immediately after Felsenburgh ascended to the podium,

"Then occurred a curious incident. The organist aloft at first did not seem to understand, and continued playing, but a sound broke out from the
crowd resembling a kind of groan, and instantly he ceased. But no cheering followed. Instead *a profound silence dominated* in an instant the huge throng; this, by *some strange magnetism*, communicated itself to those without the building, and when Mr. Felsenburgh uttered his first words, *it was in a stillness that was like a living thing.*” (88; italics mine)

The newspaper reports that moments later the “strange heart-shaking silence fell again. Many were weeping silently, the lips of thousands moved without a sound” (88-9).

Wherever Felsenburgh travels, the same silence follows him. One expects the raucous crowd to hail their coming savior with shouts of acclamation, but instead they are struck dumb by a “profound silence. . . that was like a living thing.” Clearly, Benson uses such descriptions of silence to point to the otherworldly quality of Julian Felsenburgh and to spark in the reader a feeling of discomfort and fear.

Benson also employs a technique common in conventional preternatural tales of all kinds in order to hint at the underlying character of Felsenburgh. Immediately after being reconciled to the Church and asking Father Franklin for Holy Communion, Mrs. Brand spontaneously redirects the conversation to Felsenburgh, repeating the question that nearly everyone in the novel at some point seems to ask:

> “Who is this man?”
> “Felsenburgh?”
> “Yes.”
> “No one knows. We shall know more to-morrow. He is in town tonight.”
>
> She looked so strange that Percy for an instant thought it was a seizure. Her face seemed to fall away in a kind of emotion, half cunning, half fear. (70)

Father Franklin attempts to reassure Mrs. Brand after she inquires whether Felsenburgh can “harm” her, “But the look of terror was still there.” The priest wonders if “the old woman” is “out of her mind,” but also admits that even to him the name of Felsenburgh “seemed. . . sinister” (70). As it turns out, Mrs. Brand has had a terrifying dream about
Felsenburgh, which she relates to Father Franklin. In the dream, Mrs. Brand is a child wandering in a great house, all the while burdened by an inexplicable sense of fear. It is dark, and she approaches a door with a light below it. Inside she hears talking, but she is paralyzed as she senses that behind the door is Felsenburgh, and she dares not enter the room (71).

The dream is highly symbolic, of course, and reverberates with a number of biblical echoes—most prominently, the images of the child as a simple seeker of truth and light as a metaphor for that truth. (Benson also invests Mrs. Brand’s dream with some Gothic touches—a lone woman wandering through the darkness of an old house—in order to further create a sense of dread and apprehensiveness regarding Felsenburgh.) Interestingly, however, Benson alters the normal biblical pattern of the little child emerging from the darkness of sin and confusion into the light of God’s truth. In Mrs. Brand’s dream, there is a light behind the door, but she prefers to remain in the darkness of the hallway rather than embrace the light of Felsenburgh’s room. The dream, then, provides a key to understanding Felsenburgh’s role as the Antichrist. He appears to have the truth, but behind his pleasing exterior lies death and destruction. The devil is indeed disguised as an angel of light. By approaching the Antichrist indirectly through dreams and other secondhand accounts, Benson succeeds in creating an emotional tension in the novel. Merely insinuating the depths of evil which lurk below the refined facade of Felsenburgh is far more disturbing to readers than would be a flat and forthright acknowledgement of demonic power.

This sense of duplicity with which Benson endows Felsenburgh is a key element of his characterization, an element that has become almost commonplace in later twentieth-
century apocalyptic novels. Felsenburgh appears on the surface to be an astonishing specimen of purity and goodness, but underneath, perceptible only to Christians like Percy Franklin, lies a fount of evil and horror waiting to bubble over. The Antichrist’s outward gifts are numerous. Felsenburgh possesses stupendous oratorical skills, for example. Oliver notes that “He must be a good linguist” (5), and Percy speaks of his “extraordinary eloquence” (33). In fact, as one newspaper puts it, he is “probably the greatest orator the world has ever known. . . . All languages seem the same to him; he delivered speeches during the eight months. . . . in no less than fifteen tongues” (86-7).

Felsenburgh, too, has commanding charisma. “He was the kind of figure that belonged rather to the age of chivalry: a pure, clean, compelling personality, like a radiant child” (35). All of Felsenburgh’s power “lay in His personality. To see Him was to believe in Him, or rather to accept Him as inevitably true” (232). Oliver struggles to explain Felsenburgh’s magnetism after his first public appearance in England, telling Mabel that “It is just personality” (102). Felsenburgh is also the most successful politician ever, singlehandedly averting war with the East: “Mr. Felsenburgh had accomplished what is probably the most astonishing task known to history” (86). And, not surprisingly, in order to achieve such great things, he must exhibit “the most astonishing knowledge, not only of human nature, but of every trait under which that divine thing manifests itself” (87). The mere repetition of words like “astonishing,” “extraordinary,” and “greatest” is enough to demonstrate the superhuman qualities of Julian Felsenburgh, at least in the eyes of all but the few remaining Catholics.

Many of the characteristics present in Benson’s portrait of Felsenburgh had recently begun to emerge in popular considerations of the Antichrist throughout the decades.
surrounding the novel's publication. In 1884, Sir Robert Anderson, head of investigators at Scotland Yard and author of *The Coming Prince*, a popular premillennial treatise bolstered by voluminous historical facts and calculations, claimed the Antichrist would be a “transcendent genius.” Likewise, Isaac Haldeman, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Manhattan, in 1910 cast the Antichrist as a smooth politician, an eloquent public speaker, a military mastermind, and an effective economist. However, it was not until the later twentieth century that many of these speculations about the Antichrist's outstanding abilities truly gained momentum. In 1967, for example, John F. Walvoord, president of Dallas Theological Seminary and author of *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*, described the Antichrist as “a brilliant man intellectually and a dynamic personality.” Hal Lindsey, author of the best-selling *The Late Great Planet Earth*, suggested that the Antichrist would possess “superhuman psychic powers, brilliance, and strong personal magnetism.” Another popular Protestant author, James Boice, speculated that the Antichrist would have “the oratorical ability and youth of a Kennedy, the intelligence of an Einstein, the moral stature of a Ghandi, as well as the administrative and military ability of an Eisenhower or MacArthur.”

Thus, in many ways Benson prefigured developments in Antichrist thought and characterization that would later be popularized by premillennial fundamentalists in their fiction and non-fiction. Whereas pre-twentieth century portrayals had often emphasized the diabolism of the Antichrist, Benson was one of the first novelists to represent the “Final Enemy” as an attractive, charismatic, eloquent man capable of drawing the masses to himself.

Benson also prefigured later twentieth-century apocalyptic novels with his depiction in *Lord of the World* of the convergence of all religions (with the notable exception of
Catholicism and certain Eastern sects) into a single religious system, Humanitarianism.

Humanitarianism is, in essence, humankind's worship of itself. It is a kind of pantheism in which God is understood to be present in every individual.

It was, in fact, the Catholic idea with the supernatural left out, a union of earthly fortunes, an abandonment of individualism on one side, and of supernaturalism on the other. It was treason to appeal from God Immanent to God Transcendent; there was not God transcendent; God, so far as He could be known, was man. (7)

The world religion of Humanitarianism, guided by Julian Felsenburgh, develops into "a kind of Catholic anti-Church" (xx) in which peace and "Universal Brotherhood" reign supreme. Felsenburgh creates a religio-political order that has succeeded where Catholicism should have. Such a notion of Antichrist's influence does have a rudimentary biblical precedent. Daniel 11:42, for example, states that "He will extend his power over many countries." On the whole, however, the idea of a world order governed by Antichrist is an emphasis of later twentieth-century Protestant writers. Lindsey, for instance, predicted that the World Council of Churches and "liberal Judaism" would occupy primary positions in the merger of all major world religions. Another fundamentalist prophecy writer, Hilton Sutton, argued in 1981 that "All of the man-made religious orders of this world are headed into one massive religious system."

And as might be expected, apocalyptic novelists picked up on the trend. One apocalyptic novel, aptly titled 666, even portrays liberal Catholics and liberal Protestants joining forces to establish the "Church of the World." Hence, once again Benson proves to be one of the first novelists in the apocalyptic genre to depict a religious world order under allegiance to Antichrist.
Additionally, Benson’s link between technology and the Antichrist represents in embryonic form an idea that would be developed in later apocalyptic writings of the Atomic Age. In many ways, Benson’s science fictional inventions—volors, aerial bombardment, houses of euthanasia, instant messaging—are part of a larger Wellsian trend that was popular during the Edwardian Period. At the same time, however, Benson creatively marries these technological wonders to the Antichrist, a theme that has been touted vigorously in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For example, Billy Graham, the famous Protestant evangelist, has stressed television as a probable conduit for the eloquent lies of the Antichrist. The traditional mark of the beast, 666, has become associated with everything from credit cards to barcodes to microchip implants, as apocalypticists—in a scenario akin to a kind of Orwellian nightmare—have emphasized the mass control over individuals that will be exercised by the Antichrist through technology. Other writers have predicted that the Antichrist will manipulate computer technology to bolster his rule, while still others have suggested that the Antichrist will actually be a computer himself. And as one might expect, some have argued that nuclear weapons will play a role in the Antichrist’s hegemony. Though clearly Benson did not foresee all of these technological advancements, *Lord of the World* does envision the Antichrist availing himself of mass communications and bombing campaigns to maintain control of his kingdom. The high speed of volors allows Felsenburgh to travel around the world settling disputes in rapid fashion. Moreover, Oliver Brand is described as a politician “who was asked to speak in Edinburgh one evening and in Marseilles the next” (2). Though not like traveling from London to New York in a day, it nevertheless hints at a world made smaller by the
introduction of reliable mass transit. Volors can also be conscripted to deliver huge payloads of bombs, enough to destroy a city like Rome in a single night attack, a power which Felsenburgh does not hesitate to appropriate for his own ends. Instant message machines, somewhat like faxes, enable news of the Antichrist’s dealings to reach the Brands with lightning speed, and Percy Franklin first discovers that Felsenburgh has succeeded in bringing peace to the East via a large “Government signal board” in the public square which broadcasts the news in “monstrous letters of fire” (66). Although the science fictional aspects of the novel are minimal, they nevertheless look forward to a more developed connection between science and the Antichrist in future apocalyptic novels.

Benson’s Antichrist also displays some personal innovations that were fresh at the time, but have not been readily adopted by later apocalyptic novelists. Most notably is Felsenburgh’s origin in America. Traditional Antichrist speculations, due largely to the fact that for 1400 years the existence of America was unknown, pointed to Eastern or European origins for the Antichrist. One popular patristic idea linked the Antichrist with the Jews. Many Church fathers, Hippolytus among them, argued that the Antichrist would emerge from the tribe of Dan, basing their claims on the tribe’s omission in Revelation 7:5-8. The Roman Emperor Nero was also a popular candidate for the Antichrist in the early Church. Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202), a rather unorthodox abbot given to eschatological musings, informed Richard the Lionheart, who was en route to the Crusades, that the Muslim leader Saladin was the Antichrist and that Richard would succeed in vanquishing him. Premillennial writers after Benson (and after World War II) tended to claim European origins for the Antichrist. In typically detailed
fashion, fundamentalist prophecy writers argued that the Antichrist would rise from humble European origins to assume leadership of a ten-nation conglomerate (derived from the ten horns of the beast in Daniel 7) on his way to universal power. Many such authors saw the development of the Western European Union in 1948, followed by NATO and the European Economic Community, as the initial steps towards the formation of the Antichrist's kingdom on earth. Unlike writers either before or after him, Benson portrays the Antichrist as emerging from obscurity in the small American state of Vermont (102). Only the stress Benson places on this obscurity of the Antichrist's origins finds either a precedent or a later manifestation. An American Antichrist from Vermont is entirely Benson's idea.

Benson draws on a number of traditional aspects of Antichrist theology as well. Perhaps most significantly, Benson goes to great lengths to construct an Antichrist that is literally anti-Christ—an inversion and perversion of Jesus Christ's own characteristics. In doing so, Benson is not only handling the word Antichrist concretely, but also appropriating a long history of Antichrist speculation. Hippolytus, for example, believed that the Antichrist would be the negative mirror of Christ in every way. Since Christ descended from the tribe of Judah, Hippolytus argued that the Antichrist would also descend from a Jewish tribe. Hippolytus further claimed that the Antichrist would bear the labels lion, lamb, and man, and would assemble his own corps of apostles just as Christ did. Benson, following such leads, incorporates into the character of Felsenburgh some clear parallels with Christ. Felsenburgh, for instance, is repeatedly said to be free of any crimes:

Felsenburgh, it seemed, had employed none of those methods common in modern politics. He controlled no newspapers, vituperated nobody,
championed nobody; there were no monstrous crimes alleged against him. It seemed rather as if his originality lay in his clean hands and his stainless past—that, and his magnetic character. (35)

A newspaper later champions Felsenburgh, also mentioning his ostensible purity:

"Finally, in America, where this extraordinary figure has arisen, all speak well of him. He has been guilty of none of those crimes—there is not one that convicts him of sin—those crimes of the Yellow Press, of corruption, of commercial or political bullying which have so stained the past of all those old politicians who made the sister continent what she has become. Mr. Felsenburgh has not even formed a party. He, and not his underlings, have conquered." (87)

As Christ was free of sin, so is Felsenburgh; or, at least it appears that way. Felsenburgh is also said to be ""Not more than thirty-two or three"" years old (102), the age traditionally considered to be that of Christ at the time of his death; and just as Christ entered Jerusalem triumphantly riding a colt, Felsenburgh, in a chapter felicitously named "The Advent," enters London on a volor to the joy of the crowds. However, one of Benson’s most subtle and compelling bits of detail about Felsenburgh concerns "his grasp upon words and facts; ‘words, the daughters of earth, were wedded in this man to facts, the sons of heaven, and Superman was their offspring’" (230). In some complex way, Felsenburgh has succeeded in uniting reality and language, the Platonic ideal to the linguistic artifact. This detail seems to resonate with Jesus as the Logos, the Word of God. At the moment of creation when God issued the divine fiat, creating the world ex nihilo, form and content, word and material reality, were co-existent. The signifier and the signified were, in a sense, one. In some mysterious way, claims the first chapter of the Book of John, Christ was not only present at the creation, but was also the Word itself, later the Word made flesh. Benson appears to play off of this great mystery of the Logos by suggesting a similar relationship between word and fact in
Felsenburgh. For Julian Felsenburgh, words and facts are somehow mystically "wedded".

Felsenburgh is continually described using messianic rhetoric, too. The apostate Father Francis, preparing for the Feast of Paternity with Oliver Brand, rejoices: "Oh! to have a Savior at last! . . . One that can be seen and handled and praised to His Face! It is like a dream—too good to be true!" (155). And in perhaps the most poignant of all such passages, Felsenburgh is praised by a biographer as the one deserving of "all those titles hitherto lavished upon imagined Supreme Beings" (232):

He was the Redeemer too, for that likeness had in one sense always underlain the tumult of mistake and conflict. He had brought man out of darkness and the shadow of death, guiding their feet into the way of peace. He was the Saviour for the same reason—the Son of Man, for He alone was perfectly human; He was the Absolute, for He was the content of Ideals; the Eternal, for he had lain always in nature's potentiality and secured by His being the continuity of that order; the Infinite, for all finite things fell short of Him who was more than their sum. (233)

Felsenburgh is truly the Antichrist, for he is hailed by all but the Catholics as Christ Himself, when in reality he threatens to lead people astray.

But surely the oddest aspect of Benson's characterization is Felsenburgh's uncanny likeness to Father Percy Franklin, the future Pope. Repeatedly throughout the novel, Catholics and non-Catholics alike note the bizarre similarity of appearance between Father Franklin and Julian Felsenburgh. When Oliver and Mabel, after returning from Felsenburgh's London triumph, catch Percy ministering to Mrs. Brand, Oliver is stunned by the likeness between the priest and Felsenburgh: "That [finding Percy Franklin], too, had been a shock to him; for, at first sight, it seemed that this priest was the very man he had seen ascend the rostrum two hours before. It was an extraordinary likeness—the same young face and white hair" (93-4). Near the conclusion of the novel when Percy is
elected Pope, a German Cardinal alludes to a possible supernatural significance in the likeness: "The German had even recurred once more to the strange resemblance between Percy and Julian Felsenburgh, and had murmured his old half-heard remarks about the antithesis, and the Finger of God; and Percy, marvelling at his superstition, had accepted, and the election was recorded" (236). This strange likeness underscores symbolically Felsenburgh as the Antichrist whose ideas and methods run contrary to those of God. Since the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, Felsenburgh’s mysterious physical verisimilitude to Percy again demonstrates the Antichrist’s external similarities to the Son of God.

Benson’s picture of Felsenburgh also draws upon another long tradition regarding the Antichrist. Historically, there has been a double emphasis in the use of the term antichristos, a concept which originated in the First Epistle of John and was developed at length by various patristic writers. In 1 John 2:18, for example, the apostle writes: "Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour." Here, "antichrist" is used in two distinct, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, senses. John seems to point to the Antichrist, a specific person yet to come who, according to Christian tradition, will seek to persecute the Church in the end times; but he also uses the term Antichrist to refer to those Christians who have turned their backs on the faith. In their destructive attitude, these apostates appear to prefigure in some way the Antichrist of the future. As The New Catholic Encyclopedia notes, “Christian interpretation has traditionally regarded the Antichrist as a person; it is, however, far from certain that the personification is intended to point to an individual at all, much less to any specific person.” Patristic theology later reflected this two-sided understanding of Antichrist.
Many Church fathers focused on the personal and individual nature of the coming Antichrist. The *Didache*, a first century Christian manuscript, described a “world tempter” who will arrive claiming to be the Son of God and performing all types of “signs and wonders.” Ireneaus called him a “sinner, murderer, and robber.” However, other early writers concentrated on the second sense of the term, directing their energies more towards the *antichristos* already in the world—those apostates and heretics who stand against the Church. Tertullian, for example, applied the term to the backsliders of his day, as did Cyprian and Origen (though all three also distinguished this use of the term from the Antichrist yet to come). Augustine handled the notion of Antichrist in a similar fashion in *The City of God*, referring both to a particular person as well as to the collective power of evil at work in society.

Benson treats the concept of Antichrist in this double sense in *Lord of the World*. On the one hand is Felsenburgh, the Antichrist and opponent of God. On the other hand, Benson denounces in his novel what he considers to be the anti-Christian trends of Edwardian society—specifically, the rise of communism and the destruction of individualism; the decline of the supernatural in favor of the mechanistic; the spread of liberal theology; and the undue emphasis on God Immanent (pantheism) as opposed to the necessary balance between God Immanent and God Transcendent; in short, all the forces of modernism. These forces, too, suggests Benson, can aptly be termed *antichristos*, for they contradict the teachings of Christianity. Moreover, Benson beautifully weaves together the two senses of the term by representing Felsenburgh as the “Incarnation” of Humanitarianism, or God in man. Thus Felsenburgh is viewed as the capstone or pinnacle of the trends which have coalesced to form what comes to be
known as Humanitarianism, the anti-Church: ""He is probably the first perfect product of that new cosmopolitan creation to which the world has laboured throughout its history"" (87). Or, as Mabel concludes in rapturous devotion: "God was man, and Felsenburgh his Incarnation!" (221). Quite literally, Felsenburgh represents all that in Benson’s view is contrary to Christianity.

Only as the end of the novel is imminent does the evil side of Julian Felsenburgh manifest itself more fully. By the conclusion he looks more like a Nietzschean Übermensch than a smooth-talking, crime-free, peace-making savior of man. A biography documents his axioms: ""No man forgives. . . he only understands."" ""It needs supreme faith to renounce a transcendent God."" ""A man who believes in himself is almost capable of believing in his neighbor"" . . . ""To forgive a wrong is to condone a crime,"" and ""The strong man is accessible to no one, but all are accessible to him"" (230-1). Most people, however, fail to see the danger in statements like these and are swept away by the charisma of the Antichrist until the very end. Only the Catholic remnant, led by Percy as Pope, continues to systematically denounce the policies of Felsenburgh, but destruction proves to be the ultimate result. Mabel, too, comes to some sort of recognition of Felsenburgh’s duplicity, but only too late. In a moment of disillusionment, she euthanizes herself, and ""Then she saw, and understood"" (290).

Benson’s Antichrist is a compelling figure of subtle diabolism, incorporating elements of the Antichrist tradition, prefiguring emphases yet to come in later apocalyptic writers, and exhibiting a bit of Benson’s own personal inventiveness. Felsenburgh is attractive and horrifying, inspirational and cruel, and commanding and
 petty all at the same time. As Percy Franklin concludes, “It was possible to hate Felsenburgh, and to fear him; but never to be amused at him” (231).

**Purpose and Eschatology: Coming to Terms with Benson’s Ending**

Almost from the moment of its publication, the ending of *Lord of the World* has caused considerable consternation among people of all creeds. One reason for the confusion is the ambiguity of the closing scene. Critics have differed as to what actually occurs in the final few pages of the novel. Is the Church obliterated once and for all by Felsenburgh’s fleet of volors? Is the entire world destroyed or just the Church? Does the *parousia*—the second coming of Christ—actually take place? Are the faithful somehow rescued? Is the ending of the novel an accurate reflection of Benson’s own eschatology? These are just some of the questions that have plagued critics since the novel’s publication in 1907. As one deeply frustrated reviewer complained: “We do not pretend to follow Mr. Benson in these somewhat incoherent imaginings. We gather that the book ends with the end of the world. Judged as fiction, it shows that an emotional brain of a distinctive character is behind the writing.”

The last line of the novel, if taken literally, seems to indicate that the end of the world is exactly what Benson intended by the final scene: “Then this world passed, and the glory of it” (322). Other details would tend to support this interpretation. When elected Pope, for example, Percy Franklin adopts the name of Silvester, the last saint in the Christian year. Symbolically, then, Benson seems to imply that Franklin is the last of the Popes. A personal letter composed by Benson in June of 1907 also appears to indicate that the novel is meant to portray the end of the world:
I HAVE FINISHED ANTICHRIST. And really there is no more to be said. It just settles things. Of course I am nervous about the last chapter—it is what one may call perhaps just a trifle ambitious to describe the End of the World. (No!) But it has been done.*

Thus Benson himself describes the final chapter as the "End of the World." The problem, however, in the words of another reviewer, is that Benson's "imagination balks at the final cataclysm, and puts it all into the simple sentence quoted above" ("Then this world passed, and the glory of it."). Benson, unlike the authors of later twentieth century apocalyptic novels who are given to describing graphically the particularities of parousia and persecution, refuses to depict in detail what may or may not occur immediately prior to or just after the passing of this world. One recent critic has suggested that Christ does, in fact, return to collect His followers: "The ending is unclear, but apparently God manifests Himself, and the faithful are taken up into heaven." However, this critic's wording sounds dangerously akin to the premillennial dispensationalist doctrine of the Rapture—an idea which Benson, as a Catholic, would likely have disparaged. (Here, too, one sees the danger of interpreting Benson's novel in light of contemporary apocalyptic novels.) If the second coming does occur, the reader does not witness it firsthand. Nor does the reader glimpse the destruction of Felsenburgh and Humanitarianism. Not even the final demise of the Church is narrated directly, though Benson takes the reader up to the moment immediately before the bombs drop, thereby giving one a greater sense of the Church's impending doom than of anything which may be threatening Felsenburgh's political position. But there is no visible deus ex machina at the conclusion of the novel.

Despite the sparsity of details, it nevertheless seems clear that the papacy and the Catholic hierarchy are destroyed. The Pope (Percy) does issue instructions to warn the
faithful in the nearby village of the coming doom so that they might avoid it (311), but
since he has summoned all Church officials to Rome to celebrate the Mass, there is little
doubt that the leadership of the Catholic Church is obliterated. Based on this
catastrophic conclusion, there appears to be an essential pessimism inherent in Benson’s
eschatology. Far different from the popular premillennial novels of the late twentieth
century which are, at least for the faithful, essentially utopian in nature (the true
Christians are usually removed via the Rapture before any of the suffering begins⁴⁴),
Benson alludes to the total destruction of the Church governing body and the Pope
himself. Not only do the Christians fail to avoid persecution, but by all earthly standards
they are also utterly defeated. Not surprisingly, many have had trouble with Benson’s
seeming pessimism in Lord of the World pertaining to the plight of the Church. One
particularly disenchanted reader, a person that C.C. Martindale, Benson’s biographer,
identifies as “not a Catholic,” wrote an impassioned letter to Benson expressing his
hopelessness:

Hitherto I have clung as I best know to hope in Christianity, but those
chapters seem just to have struck heaven out of my sky, and I don’t see
how to get it back. . . . I have watched the tendency of the suppression of
Christian teaching and dreaded its consequences, but always fled to the
hope that the truth would prevail. Only when I found you, a guardian of
the faith, forsaking hope, except in cataclysm, did my frail shield break
down.⁴⁵

Catholics, too, however, questioned Benson’s supposed eschatological pessimism. A
reviewer in the June 1908 issue of Catholic World articulated the concern clearly and
even went so far as to offer readers a palliative for Benson’s pessimism in the form of a
recent article in The Dublin Review:

The most interesting question that the book raises in one’s mind is: Does
Father Benson really entertain this gloomy view on the outcome of the
present conflict between faith and unbelief? And, if so, does he represent any widespread opinion? Some ancient exegeses which have declined in favor seem to guide him in his casting of the Church’s horoscope; and he seems to have overlooked the text that there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. If any reader should become infected with Father Benson’s pessimism, we recommend as a tonic Dr. Barry’s article in the Dublin Review for April, where the conviction is expressed that the Church Universal possesses the divine vitality which will enable it to adjust itself to the approaching conditions, and we “need not despair of its leavening with true life the democracy that is looking for guidance, that will not always groan beneath monopolies, nor dream of Socialist utopias bounded by the grave.”

At least one recent critic has attempted to identify those “ancient exegeses which have declined in favor” that allegedly guided Benson “in his casting of the Church’s horoscope.” E.F. Bleiler suggests that Benson followed the Prophecies of St. Malachy, a fourteenth century source that predicts the destruction of Rome after a period of great trials for the Church: “In the last persecution of the Holy Roman Church, Peter of Rome shall be on the throne, who shall feed his flock in many tribulations. When these are past, the City upon the Seven Hills shall be destroyed, and the awful Judge shall judge the people.” Lord of the World does, in fact, seem to share this detail about the destruction of Rome with the Prophecies of St. Malachy. However, neither Benson nor his biographers ever refer to St. Malachy’s prophecies as a source for the novel, and while there is indeed at least one basic similarity between the prophecies and the novel, there are also some significant differences. Moreover, a simpler explanation may exist. Benson’s eschatology in the novel is not inconsistent with the doctrine embodied in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism also speaks of the Church’s final persecution:

Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the “mystery of iniquity”
in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh.\textsuperscript{50}

The *Catechism* refers as well to the inevitability of the Church’s “final Passover”:

The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God’s victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God’s triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.\textsuperscript{51}

At the very least, then, Benson’s eschatological vision in *Lord of the World* does not contradict the doctrines of the Catholic Church. (In fact, one wonders whether the author of the article in *The Dublin Review* did not risk falling into this trap.) At the same time, however, while Benson works within the wisdom of the Catholic Church, it is arguable that the novel was never intended to express a complete and finely-tuned eschatological vision. Though Benson obviously construed his novel in Christian terms, he did not set out to prophecy the details of the end times with any sort of futuristic precision. Instead, Benson’s purpose in writing the novel—in keeping with his ministerial approach—was to call people to repentance and reform, both social and individual, in the present. In fact, underlying his novel is not the pessimism of which Benson has been accused, but what might be described as a controlled optimism, a belief that if his warnings were heeded, society could change for the better. In this way, *Lord of the World* once again differs dramatically from its later Protestant cousins.

A key element to interpreting Benson’s motives behind *Lord of the World* is contained in his terse preface to the novel. He writes:
I am perfectly aware that this is a terribly sensational book, and open to innumerable criticisms on that account, as well as on many others. But I did not know how else to express the principles I desired (and which I passionately believe to be true) except by producing their lines to a sensational point. I have tried, however, not to scream unduly loud, and to retain, so far as possible, reverence and consideration for the opinions of other people. Whether I have succeeded in that attempt is quite another matter.52

Benson here purports to employ what is essentially a foundational technique of science fiction writers—extrapolation. His goal is to analyze the forces and movements he observes in the society of his own day and to extrapolate them to their logical ends. One famous reader of the novel—Sir Oliver Lodge, the esteemed Edwardian scientist—perceptively categorizes the book along these lines in a personal letter to the author: “I took the book as a parable... not as a prophecy.” Later Lodge writes, “It is the most strongly anti-modernist encyclical I have seen—not excepting the authoritative one that emanated from Rome.”53 This interpretation is surely what Benson had in mind. Lord of the World was intended to be not a concrete prediction of future events, but rather a commentary on the danger of present ones and their possible ramifications for future epochs. The Socialism, liberalism, and solipsism of Benson’s day are his true targets. Indeed, Benson seems to have adopted Lodge’s terminology for the preface of his other futuristic novel, The Dawn of All, a kind of answer to Lord of the World written to appease those people who had interpreted Benson’s first apocalyptic effort less sagaciously than did Lodge.

In a former book, called Lord of the World, I attempted to sketch the kind of developments a hundred years hence which, I thought, might reasonably be expected if the present lines of what is called “modern thought” were only prolonged far enough; and I was informed repeatedly that the effect of the book was exceedingly depressing and discouraging to optimistic Christians. In the present book I am attempting—also in parable form—not in the least to withdraw anything that I said in the
former, but to follow up the other lines instead, and to sketch—again in
parable—the kind of developments about sixty years hence which, I
think, may reasonably be expected should the opposite process begin, and
ancient thought (which has stood the test of centuries, and is in a very
remarkable manner, being “rediscovered” by persons more modern than
modernists) be prolonged instead.54

The very fact that he saw it fit to compose another novel depicting a contrasting
futuristic state is enough to reveal that in Lord of the World Benson was not interested in
proffering a rigid eschatology. Moreover, in the preface to The Dawn of All, Benson
seems at pains to stress that his earlier effort was also a parable and that it should be
treated as such. And like all parables, the importance lies in the underlying moral and
not the outward forms in which it is expressed. Benson also emphasizes in the same
preface that Lord of the World examined what might happen in the future, a small but
important qualification which demonstrates where his intentions truly lay.

The idea of Lord of the World as parable contradistinguishes it from later apocalyptic
novels of the premillennial breed. Though most premillennial novelists (unlike their
non-fiction counterparts) surely do not claim that every minute detail in their visions of
the future is absolutely accurate, many nonetheless hold that the basic sequence of
events portrayed in their novels is intended to be eschatologically correct. In some
ways, premillennial apocalyptic fiction works like an historical novel in reverse.
Specific events which are taken to be true based upon a literalist reading of Scripture are
mixed with fictional characters and subplots to create a brand of literature which is both
fiction and non-fiction together.55 Though Benson does not contradict Catholic doctrine,
neither does he purport to predict the future with theological stringency. Of course, a
great deal of the difference here derives from the basic distinction between Catholic and
fundamentalist Protestant eschatological speculation. Whereas Catholics have embraced
Augustinian amillennialism as an official position, a view which interprets Scripture figuratively (the 1,000 years of Revelation is occurring right now), fundamentalist Protestants are largely premillennial, interpreting Scripture more literally (the millennium will be an actual, futuristic 1,000 years of Christ's reign on earth).

Amillennialism has tended to downplay attempts to discern with fastidious accuracy the details of the end times, while premillennialism has occupied itself in scripting the end with as much meticulousness as possible. Benson expresses this comparative lack of interest in eschatological minutiae through the thoughts of a simple priest near the end of the novel:

This was a very simple man, in faith as well as in life. . . . As to the end— he was not greatly concerned. It might well be that the ship would be overwhelmed, but the moment of the catastrophe would be the end of all things earthly. The gates of hell shall not prevail: when Rome falls, the world falls; and when the world falls, Christ is manifest in power. For himself, he imagined that the end was not far away. . . .

Of more subtle interpretations of prophecy he had no knowledge. (246-7)

This passage, perhaps, solves the mystery of Benson's ending. When the world ends, Christ returns, even though Benson does not narrate the *parousia* in all its glory. But the passage is also critical in that it reflects a basic difference between Benson's eschatology and that embodied by much contemporary apocalyptic fiction. Benson sticks to basic doctrines of the end and does not claim precise knowledge of other futuristic events.

Even more importantly, underlying premillennial novels is a profound pessimism about the future of the world. Inherent in premillennialism is the notion that the world is in the midst of an irrevocable decline and nothing we do as individuals can repair or avert the approaching cataclysm. The only response, then, is to share the Gospel with as many people as one can in order that they may be counted among the sheep and raptured.
away prior to the period of tribulation. Hence, premillennial novels typically utilize the devices of fiction in an effort to call people to make a personal choice for salvation.

Tim LaHaye writes: "Our loved ones and friends... need a warning today. God will thunder judgment upon this generation... It is high time we Christians recognize that we are in the warning business." Similarly, another apocalyptic writer in 1974 expressed it thus:

Christians can relax, if we wish. The rapture will take us off this sinking ship, and we'll be spared further grief. But... we can do better than that. ... If believers can show the world a united, triumphant front in these troubled times, it may just cause some of the world to think. They may want to know why we are as we are, and we surely can tell them.®

*Lord of the World* certainly contains this call as well, but in addition to a personal prompting the novel includes a social one. *The Dawn of All* presents us with a Christian social utopia, a nearly perfect world, a world that "may reasonably be expected should... ancient thought be prolonged instead." Premillennial writers would admit no such possibility for social change on a lasting scale. In *Lord of the World*, Benson employs a technique that would later be fashionable in Modernist and Existentialist literature:

Present the audience with a vision of what should not be in the hopes that people will marshall all of their energy to create a world that should be.

Benson's purpose behind *Lord of the World* is not to forecast an exact future for the world, but rather to comment on present trends in an effort to enact changes. This stands in stark contrast to much later apocalyptic fiction which aims to predict the end in detail and focuses more on a personal response as opposed to a personal and social one. Benson is far more interested in exploring the idea of *antichristos* as an embodiment of diabolical forces at work in the contemporary world (in this case Modernism) than in
claiming that these particular forces will inevitably lead to a specified end about which he possesses detailed knowledge. Consequently, one must be wary of applying to Benson's novel the same hermeneutic that one might bring to fundamentalist novels like the Left Behind series.

Lord of the World is a frequently misunderstood, but exciting and thought-provoking novel. Quite deservedly, it is in the process of being rediscovered by fans of apocalyptic fiction, but we must be careful to approach the novel on its own terms. While it shares some similarities with the mass of premillennial fiction produced at the end of the twentieth century—certain characteristics of the Antichrist and an "historicist" apocalyptic approach that claims to see the final demise in the present circumstances—it is also vastly different in purpose and outlook. In many ways, too, the novel was far ahead of its time in its fictional representation of the Antichrist, predating the first real wave of apocalyptic fiction by at least two decades. Benson weaves together Christian tradition and personal innovation to arrive at an Antichrist that is at once subtle and compelling; and in doing so, he once again reveals his capacity for originality and creativity in delivering a message that is, at base, thoroughly traditional and conservative.
Chapter Notes


2 Ibid., 53.

3 Ibid., 56.


7 The word “apocalyptic” has become an increasingly tricky one as it has taken on a variety of meanings. Derived from the Greek *apokalyptikos*, meaning “to uncover” something hidden, the words apocalypse and apocalyptic have traditionally been associated with the Revelation of St. John in the Bible. *The Oxford English Dictionary* notes that, by extension, the word apocalyptic came to mean any sort of writing that was “revelatory” or “prophetic.” The word has sometimes been used to refer to any writing that incorporates a supernatural element (see, for instance, Leland Ryken, *The Apocalyptic Vision in Paradise Lost* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970], 3 for an example approximating this last approach). And of course, popular conceptions of the word connote writings that depict the end of the world, whether they operate from a scientific or religious foundation. I will use the word in this way, and I will occasionally substitute the word “eschatological”, which can be seen as an approximate synonym for apocalyptic. However, the term eschatological is also more scholarly—a bit more exact in nature—referring to the systematic study of the “end times”. Apocalyptic conjures up notions of cataclysmic destruction, and since this fits Benson’s novel well, I will use it most often. We should also make an important distinction between the term apocalyptic as applied to books of the Bible and the term as applied to literature in general. For people of faith, at least, when used in connection with the Bible, the word apocalyptic suggests prophecies that are divinely inspired and are thus approached in ways that differ (at least in most cases) from those that are clearly fictional in nature. Ambiguity arises, of course, when fictional works base themselves upon the Biblical apocalyptic books. See the discussion near the end of this chapter, pp. 149ff., for some comments on the interpretive implications of such approaches, especially as they relate to *Lord of the World* versus other apocalyptic novels.
A new edition was published in 2001 by St. Augustine's Press. Though far from being conclusive evidence, perhaps even more telling, however, is the fact that the UNLV library recently ordered a copy for its collection.

Some of these books, like the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1998ff.), are clearly intended to be fictional (although the dividing line becomes fuzzy at a certain point) since they are written in novel form. Others, like Hal Lindsey's best-selling *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), John F. Walvoord's *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), and Charles Dyer's *The Rise of Babylon: Sign of the End Times* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991) claim to be more systematic studies of Biblical prophecies. Frank Peretti's hugely popular *This Present Darkness* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1986) and its sequel *Piercing the Darkness* (1989), though not depicting the end times directly, are nevertheless closely allied with fundamentalist concerns about the devil and his role in the everyday workings of the world. Apocalyptic movies include *A Thief in the Night* and its many sequels (released during the 1970's), as well as the recent *Left Behind* movie.

Premillennialism is a doctrine that holds that the millennium spoken of in the Book of Revelation will be a literal 1,000 years in which Christ will reign on earth. When combined with dispensationalism, as it often is, premillennialism also accepts the idea of a Rapture when all believers will be “caught up in the air” to meet Jesus. Premillennialism is accepted by a number of evangelical Christians with fundamentalist backgrounds, but it is by far a minority position in Christendom at large. For a complex constellation of reasons which exceed the scope of this chapter, the vast majority of apocalyptic novels written during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been penned by premillennial fundamentalists, often premillennial dispensationalists. Much of this chapter will be an attempt to delineate the ways in which Benson's novel differs from the bulk of premillennialist fiction. Incidentally, most Christians (including mainline Protestants and some evangelicals) accept the official Catholic position known as amillennialism, descending from Augustine. Amillennialism interprets the Scriptures figuratively, suggesting that the millennium spoken of in Revelation is the present Age of the Church.

The concept of underground living is clearly a nod to Wells’s *The Time Machine* in which the Morlocks also reside underground.

Robert Hugh Benson, *Lord of the World* (1907; reprint, Long Prairie, MN: Neumann Press, 1999), ix–x. All further citations are noted parenthetically in the text.

Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 269. Indeed, while the concept of Antichrist has continued to fascinate Protestant fundamentalists since the 1800's, Catholics have been noticeably less interested in engaging in systematic thought about the Antichrist; and until recently, there has been a significant dearth of Catholic literary representations of the "Final Enemy." Benson's novel, then, participates in what has
largely been a Protestant conversation in recent times—or more precisely, a Protestant fundamentalist conversation. Lord of the World also finds itself in a unique position among other Antichrist novels since it predates the golden age of the genre by nearly two decades. Paul Boyer marks the 1930's as the inception of the "prophecy novel" among premillennial fundamentalists (When Time Shall Be No More [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992], 106).

14 McGinn points out, however, that certain Russian novelists preceded Benson by a matter of a few years. See Antichrist, pp. 263-9.

15 McGinn, Antichrist, 269.


17 Ibid., 69.

18 In one of the smallest but most paradoxical and profound lines of the novel, Benson writes: "the Spirit of the World had roused Himself, the sun dawned in the west" (8). Felsenburgh hails from the west (America), and to Mabel and Oliver he is the sun bringing light to the world (a clear Christ image—see discussion later in the chapter). However, the image of the sun dawning in the west contradicts the normal physical world. Thus, we get the sense that the entire world of the story is inverted. Felsenburgh and his ideas seem correct, but they're really contrary to all that is good and right.

19 All qtd. in Boyer, When Time, 279. As Boyer also observes, the notion of the Antichrist's charisma and eloquence is based on a few brief words in Daniel declaring that the Beast would wield "a mouth speaking great things."

20 Antichrist novels were largely a twentieth century invention, but one thinks here of the demonic aspect of many medieval pictorial representations of the Antichrist.

21 This quotation is taken from the New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984).

22 Boyer, When Time, 278.

23 Ibid., 279.

24 Ibid., 281-3.

25 Thomas Menges, in a footnote to his article on Benson's Lord of the World, mentions that Christendom has traditionally believed the Antichrist would come from the West: "Nach traditioneller christlicher Auffassung kommt das Heil (=Jesus Christos) aus dem Osten, das Böse aus dem Westen. (Man denke nur an die Ostung romanischer oder
gotischer Katehralen, an deren Westseite sich Gerichtsdarstellungen befinden.)
Felsenburgh kommt aus Amerika: "Der Weltgeist hatte sich erhoben, die Sonne war im
Westen aufgegangen." ["According to the traditional Christian interpretation, salvation
(Jesus Christ) comes from the East, evil from the West. (One thinks simply of the
Romanesque architecture or Gothic cathedrals, to whose west sides are located
representations of judgment.) Felsenburgh comes from America: "The World Spirit had
arisen, the sun had arisen in the West" (Thomas Menges, "Trauwt Nicht Jedem, Sondem
Prüft die Geister": Apokalyptik und Wissenschaftsglaube in Robert Hugh Bensons
Roman "Der Herr der Welt," Inklings-Jahrbuch 11 [1993], 102, n. 6); translation mine.]
Unfortunately, Menges does not cite a source or sources for this claim. Similarly, one
might also cite the tradition present in English poetry in which the west is frequently
representative of death. See, for example, John Donne's "Good Friday, 1613. Riding
Westward." Regardless of whether Menges is correct or not, the idea of the Antichrist
hailing from America placed the origins of the enemy further west than had previously
been suggested (however, see note 30 below).


27 See McGinn, Antichrist, 45-50.

28 Boyer, When Time, 51. Joachim was wrong of course.

29 Ibid., 276.

30 One main exception to this might be the Illuminati scare of the 1700's when Thomas
Jefferson was declared by some to be the Antichrist. Here, then, is one example of an
Antichrist with American origins. See Philip Jenkins, "Naming the Beast:
connection between freemasonry and the Antichrist is also reflective of anti-Illuminati
forces in the Church.


32 In a letter composed during the period when Benson was drafting Lord of the World,
Benson even mentions the idea that his Antichrist would "be born of a virgin," an idea
he failed to utilize in the final draft of the novel. See C.C. Martindale, The Life of
66.

33 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without
him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the
life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not
overcome it. . . . And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his
glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-5, 14).
We might note incidentally, too, that by establishing such a strict set of contrasts throughout the novel between Catholicism and Humanitarianism and between the Pope and the Antichrist (despite their odd physical similarities, which actually says more about the masquerading qualities of the Antichrist), Benson firmly disallows any notion of the Pope as Antichrist, a tradition that had been strong since the Reformation and was still powerful enough in the nineteenth century to occupy Newman’s thoughts.


This also points to another aspect that Benson has in common with many twentieth-century prophecy writers. Benson takes a definite “historicist” apocalyptic approach as opposed to a “futurist” one. The historicist viewpoint emphasizes trends already in society as leading to the advent of the Antichrist, while the futurist trend focuses on the distant future, thereby de-emphasizing attention to particular current events.


Qtd. in Martindale, Life, II, 74.

W.M. Payne, “Recent Fiction,” The Dial 45 (August 1908), 89.

Edward James, “Rewriting the Christian Apocalypse as a Science-Fictional Event,” in Imagining Apocalypse: Studies in Cultural Crisis, ed. David Seed (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 51. One line spoken by Pope Silvester could possibly be interpreted as an allusion to the second coming: “‘I have had a vision of God,’” he tells his assembled cardinals. “‘I walk no more by faith, but by sight’”(312). The Pope may, in other words, have witnessed the parousia in a vision. However, the line may just as well be interpreted to mean that the Pope has had a vision of Christ in Heaven, the Christ he is about to meet upon his death. Consequently, one might still read the ending as the destruction of the Church alone and not Humanitarianism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church denounces any form of millenarianism: “The Antichrist’s deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within written history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the ‘intrinsically perverse’ political form of secular messianism” (Catechism of the Catholic Church: With Modifications from the Editio Typica [New York: Doubleday, 1995], 194).
Again, precision is necessary here. Within premillennialism there also exist three different views regarding the timing of the Rapture. **Pre-tribulationists** believe that the faithful will be raptured before the suffering begins. **Mid-tribulationists** believe that it will happen sometime during the suffering. And **Post-tribulationists** believe that the Rapture will occur only after the period of persecution. By far, however, most late twentieth century Protestant apocalyptic novels are **Pre-tribulationist**, many actually beginning their stories with the Rapture itself and then detailing the fate of those who remain.

**Qtd. in Martindale, *Life*, II, 75-6.**

**Review of *Lord of the World*, by Robert Hugh Benson, *Catholic World* 87 (June 1908), 398.**

**Everett F. Bleiler, *Science Fiction: The Early Years* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), 55.**


One significant difference between *Lord of the World* and the *Prophecies of St. Malachy* deals with the relationship between the Church and city of Rome. Newman, in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, goes to great lengths, following St. Malachy’s prophecies, to distinguish between the Church of Rome and the City of Rome. Hoping to dispel the Protestant claim that the Pope and the Catholic Church constitute the Antichrist, Newman points to the fact that the distinction between the Church and city is a critical one and concludes that “it was not the Church, but the old dethroned Pagan monster, still living in the ruined city, that was the Antichrist” (Newman, *Apologia*, 114, footnote to line 28). In Benson’s novel, however, the Church and the City are clearly one. Rome the city is Rome the Church. Hence, if Benson did follow St. Malachy’s prophecies at all, he did so only loosely.

**Catechism**, 193-4.

**Ibid., 194.**

**Robert Hugh Benson, preface to *Lord of the World*. The italics in the quotation are mine.**

**Qtd. in Martindale, *Life*, II, 80.**

**Robert Hugh Benson, preface to *The Dawn of All* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1911).**

**Many premillennialists are highly preoccupied with working out precise details of the end, including specific countries that will take part in the Antichrist’s regime, specific**
events which must occur before the Antichrist can arise, the specific number of years the reign of the Antichrist will last, and the specific sequence of events leading up to the Final Judgment.

56 Qtd. in Boyer, *When Time*, 300.

Perhaps the most ironic misunderstanding of the novel is related by Philip Jenkins in an article for *The Chesterton Review*: "I was amused to see that my own university library catalogues this ultimately apocalyptic work in its 'utopian' collection, presumably on the basis that its prophecies sound heartening!" ("Naming the Beast", 490). This points, I think, to the necessity for the reader to have some understanding of Christian theology in order to interpret the novel accurately. A truly uninitiated reader, like the one apparently in charge at Jenkins's university library, would otherwise have no basis for discerning the evil Benson aims to caution us against—a sign of the subtlety of Benson's Antichrist.
EPILOGUE

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Who says that fictions only and false hair
Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?
Is all good structure in a winding stair?
May no lines pass except they do their duty
Not to a true, but painted chair?

—George Herbert, “Jordan [I]”

The work of a Beethoven and the work of a charwoman become spiritual on
precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly
“as to the Lord.”

—C. S. Lewis, “Learning in War-Time”

The journey homewards. Coming home. That’s what it’s all about. The journey
to the coming of the kingdom. That’s probably the chief difference between the
Christian and the secular artist—the purpose of the work, be it story or music or
painting, is to further the coming of the kingdom, to make us aware of our status
as children of God, and to turn our feet toward home.

—Madeleine L’Engle, Walking on Water

Robert Hugh Benson was a charismatic preacher and novelist. When he preached
and when he published, people flocked to hear and read him. As Janet Grayson has
speculated, Benson’s decline in popularity over the past decades is due, at least in part,
to his absence from the public stage. Whereas a kind of celebrity status successfully
masked his faults as an artist while alive, his works failed to withstand closer critical
scrutiny once the fire of public passion had cooled.¹ Artistically and technically, he was
inconsistent. His feverish love of writing sometimes drove him to compose too hastily
and therefore sloppily. But one area in which he was always consistent was the message
he brought to his readers. Robert Hugh Benson was above all a Christian artist, writing with a divine mandate to communicate the truths of Christianity in a palatable form to the masses that needed them most.2

But as we have seen in the preceding pages, Benson was also, in many ways, an author with a flair for originality. He was not afraid to try new things. He led a sort of "revisionist" historical charge, and he did so in the form of vivid and exciting art. Through his historical novels, Benson challenged the prevailing historical, religious, and political assumptions of his day, and he made alive to his readers a turbulent past that demanded careful reconsideration. Benson also criticized the fashions of his own contemporary milieu directly, denouncing Aestheticism and Decadence and their implications for the moral, spiritual, and artistic welfare of his readers. At the same time, however, Benson recognized that the beauty which aesthetes claimed for themselves was first of all God's beauty, and when approached properly, it could be a source of true joy and inspiration. And in perhaps his most creative and risky venture, Benson experimented with a genre that has since become astonishingly popular—apocalyptic fiction. In many ways, Robert Hugh Benson was far ahead of his time.

Though it is unlikely that a large-scale "Benson Revival" will occur anytime in the near future, a good number of his works and ideas certainly deserve greater study and more widespread attention. My own study has regrettably only scratched the surface of this complex and intriguing personality, and it is perhaps fitting to conclude by offering some questions for further investigation. Due to the limited scope of this study, two major areas of Benson's work have not been discussed. First, an examination of Benson's myriad supernatural and preternatural tales, contained in his two collections

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*The Light Invisible* and *A Mirror of Shalott,* would undoubtedly prove a profitable venture. Many have described Benson as a “mystic”, and indeed, Benson does show an intense inclination, especially in these two works, towards all things mystical.

Concurrently, Benson exhibited a vivid interest in what might be considered Occult practices, including necromancy, Spiritualism, telepathy, ghosts, and haunted houses, among others. This interest, of course, was distinctly Edwardian in nature, and as such, Benson was part of a larger trend in Edwardian England that included Christians and non-Christians alike. Benson’s cautionary novel about raising the dead, *The Necromancers,* is a particularly compelling assessment of many of these Occult practices. *The Necromancers* is also interesting in that it reflects the Edwardian preoccupation with investigating the supernatural through scientific means, a movement represented most prominently by the founding of the Psychical Research Society. But while Benson belies a familiarity with this approach in his novel, he also seems to subvert it in some ways, affirming the existence of a knowledge and a reality beyond the bounds of empiricism. What exactly were Benson’s attitudes toward science and supernaturalism? Even more thought-provoking is the way in which Benson’s purpose behind writing such mystical tales may, in part, have some bearing on recent post-modern discussions concerning the nature of faith and knowledge. By affirming the existence of an “unknown”—a reality which can never be fully apprehended—Benson points to the necessity of faith as a fundamental component of knowledge. Still other questions remain to be answered in relation to Benson’s fascination with mysticism and the Occult. What connections and distinctions, if any, can be made between Benson’s mystical tales and his so-called Occult tales? Which tales fit into which categories?
How does Benson balance his Christianity with his interest in demonic forces? What were Benson's purposes in writing about the Occult? Can these tales be linked in some way to his ministerial approach? How do Benson’s tales relate to other tales of a similar kind written during the Edwardian period? In what ways do they relate to earlier Romantic tales of the supernatural? From my own perspective, some of Benson’s supernatural tales, especially those contained in *A Mirror of Shalott*, are among his best specimens of writing. Could it be that Benson was most successful as a writer of good old-fashioned ghost stories?

A second major area of investigation not included in the present study is Benson’s psychological novels. Perhaps somewhat weak as prolonged character studies, these novels nevertheless offer revealing insights into the issues and concerns facing Edwardian English culture. Moreover, they are written from a kind of “minority” perspective that has often been overlooked by mainstream critics occupied only with the incipience of modernist literature. Some of these novels touch upon realms of human emotion and experience that have been largely ignored by the vast majority of critics. *The Conventionalists*, for example, the sequel to *The Sentimentalists*, offers a poignant exploration of conversion psychology as Algy Banister struggles internally to come to terms with his faith and his vocation. Many of Benson’s descriptive passages detailing Algy’s religious struggles are powerful and insightful. Additionally, *The Conventionalists* would provide the opportunity for another interesting examination of narrative technique and authorial distance since Benson rather boldly includes himself as a character in his own novel.
Aside from these two broad areas of study, other questions linger regarding Benson as well. Benson was a productive essayist for one, writing articles on everything ranging from the place of Catholicism in England to apparitions of the dead. A study of these essays would likely yield helpful insights into Edwardian culture and the thought of Benson himself. Benson was also a prolific apologist, authoring five works in defense of Catholic doctrine. An assessment of his apologetic works, perhaps comparing them to other popular authors of apologetics like C.S. Lewis, would be an interesting project. A study of Benson’s historical novels in light of modern scholarship might also prove enlightening. As we have seen, Benson’s historiography in many ways prefigured more recent developments in the field of British history. Similarly, a comparative study of Benson’s historical novels with others treating identical time periods would also illuminate Benson’s place in the historical fiction tradition, as well as the tradition as a whole. And finally, a more comprehensive examination of Benson’s place in the Catholic Literary Revival would be fruitful, particularly a study that focused on the differences between Benson and the other Revivalists. I have chosen to emphasize the similarities here, but there are important differences to be explored, too. Why, for instance, despite likenesses in perspective, has Chesterton proved more durable as an object of sustained critical attention than has Benson?

As one can see, Robert Hugh Benson remains an untapped reservoir of Catholic Edwardian thoughts and ideas. Though he will surely never be ranked among the great English novelists, there is much about his works that reward a careful student. He was a passionate writer, unafraid to engage the fashionable intellectual trends he witnessed all around him, committed to calling people back to a truth and a tradition he was convinced
held the timeless answers to humankind's complexities and frustrations. Whether recreating the mystery and pageantry of the past or venturing into the unknown future, Robert Hugh Benson did it all for the glory of God.
Epilogue Notes


2 Grayson writes about Benson’s feelings on the subject of his novels: “Divine truths could not be grasped by the modern anti-Christian mind as a set of propositions; they must be presented indirectly in scenes and attitudes that would not cause them to be rejected out of hand—in concrete images that stick in the imagination, not in abstract ideas that do not” (Ibid., 141).

3 Robert Hugh Benson, The Light Invisible (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1904); and A Mirror of Shalott: Being a Collection of Tales told at an Unprofessional Symposium (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1907).


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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Chad P. Stutz

Home Address:
709 Nectarine Ct.
Henderson, NV 89014

Degrees:
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Wheaton College

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Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Richard Harp, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Timothy Erwin, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Edwin Nagelhout, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Catherine Bellver, Ph.D.