

SPECIAL ISSUE

Ignorance as a Productive Force in Complex Storyworlds: The Case of *Pilgrim's Progress*

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This article aims to show how attention to the history of ignorance can bring to light salient qualities of key texts from the past, and in doing so illuminate not just the history of the book and the history of reading. The eighteenth-century saw a substantial increase in availability of printed material, but most full-length printed books were beyond the budget of the poorest. This market was met by chapbook abridgements of the most popular texts, some of which were considered by the higher ranks to be proper reading for the poor (religious classics) and some which were more controversial (fiction). However, readers on each side of this divide were often ignorant not only of how the other side was reading specific texts, but of the fact that they were not in fact reading the same text at all, since the poor were much more likely to rely on abridgements. I compare two abridgements of a key eighteenth-century religious text, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and show how both converge on a more forward looking narrative technique than the original and on a more level representation of social ranks than the original. An "approved" text for the poor, therefore, by means of ignorance, had the potential to encourage a non-approved attitude towards aesthetic innovation and social rank.

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In "Towards a Theory of Ignorance," Cornel Zwierlein discusses "the creation and processing of meaning" in "groups of texts" that "in their inherent discursive interlinkage, or even just in their material combination ... have semantic potential." The meaning is created because the "selectivity of that semantic potential ... implies and produces ignorance." Both selecting and ignoring texts generate meanings. Zwierlein asks how far the ignoring is "willed or unwilled."¹ In this article, I model one way in which unwilled ignorance could produce meanings in the eighteenth-century "storyworld" of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).

In doing so, I relate the history of knowledge and ignorance to the interpretation of fiction. The history of knowledge has a close relationship with histories of reading and of the book, but this is usually limited to non-fiction. Three chapters of Peter Burke's *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, for example, discuss in depth the history of how books were internally organized, externally classified, sold, bought, and consumed.² Fiction is mentioned only tangentially.³ But knowledge and ignorance of fiction is a powerful engine of the meanings Zwierlein identifies above. Kate Loveman has shown how romans a clef encouraged reading as decoding in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The meanings of these fictions were determined by their readers' ignorance or knowledge of high society and of print gossip.⁴ The knowledge at play here is not that of the book's content. It is the knowledge, or ignorance, of how one's fellow readers interpret that content. The beliefs of readers about other readers matter, because they shape culture and received opinion. Thus, historicizing readers' knowledge and ignorance about one another can provide a better understanding of what people and groups believed about themselves and

¹ Zwierlein, "Introduction," 5, 20–21.

² Burke, *Social History*, chap. 5, 7, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 150, 185, 199.

⁴ Loveman, *News, Novels and Imposture*, chap. 5.

why. These experiences can, as Martin Mulsow has put it, “shape a whole culture,” particularly when that knowledge is “mixed with not-knowing.”⁵

In what follows, I model beliefs about what other people believed in relation to Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* in the eighteenth-century. To do so, I draw on general knowledge about books and reading at the time rather than identifying real life participants. The aim is to illustrate a method and to show how it can contribute to the history of ignorance. Drawing on complex systems theory for the model, I argue that ignorance of others’ experience of a shared cultural system is productive, generating collective meanings with broader cultural implications, and that these are historically situated.

I model this system artificially as a first step, because evidence for who read what and how is not easy to gather systematically. Historians of reading often mix quantitative evidence from publishing and sales with qualitative evidence from specific readers.⁶ But identifying who was *ignorant* of a given text is harder to discern and modelling participants in a system of readers and consumers is a place to start. As Joshua Epstein points out, models of social systems need not be “right,” in the sense of accurate in all their parts and relationships. Their value lies in guiding data collection and raising new questions.⁷

In building the model system, I borrow the concept of “transmedia narratology.” Narratology is the study of narrative structures and affordances in texts and, more recently, other media.⁸ More recent work goes beyond this comparative media approach to identify “transfictional storyworlds.” Here, an unlimited number of texts across different media share elements including characters and fictional worlds.⁹ My model of an eighteenth-century storyworld consists of: Bunyan’s original text, two unauthorized and abridged adaptations, illustrations, and all those with some knowledge of one or more of these elements.

I treat this storyworld and its participants as a “complex system.” Complex systems are not the same as “complicated” systems. In a complicated system “many intricate parts may be difficult to understand, but all the parts can still be identified.” A complex system, on the other hand, as a recent interdisciplinary anthology has put it, is characterized by “ignorance”, by “phenomena that result from the interacting parts of the system.”¹⁰ Simple systems assume an equilibrium state. A system of interacting agents, however, has no underlying equilibrium, making the storyworld defined above a complex system.¹¹

The Role of Ignorance in Complex Social Systems

In the introduction to this issue, Verburgt and Burke suggest that “[s]ome of the uses and effects of ignorance are highly counterintuitive, in that they can be strategic, productive, and even positive.” Ignorance in a complex social system provides a good example. As a recent contribution to evolutionary complex systems has put it:

If knowledge is to be of any use, then it must affect the behaviour of those who possess it. But if they change their behaviour, then the knowledge that they possessed may already be outdated, since it will now be operating in a “different” system. So, learning provides knowledge, but the use of that knowledge creates ignorance.¹²

Echoing Verburgt and Burke, the author, complex systems specialist Peter Allen, argues that complexity science should model an “ecology of ignorance.” He concludes: “It is not just that ignorance is a problem, it also makes things possible.”¹³

Elements of *Pilgrim’s Progress* as a Model Storyworld

John Bunyan (1628–1688) was an itinerant tinker and unlicensed preacher in the 1650s. After the Restoration, he spent many years in prison for preaching illegally. His most famous work, the allegorical *Pilgrim’s Progress From This World to That Which Is to Come* was written at this time, though not published until 1678.¹⁴ The story’s narrator sees the events in a dream, and an early illustration of the dreamer asleep

⁵ Mulsow, “History of knowledge,” 169.

⁶ See for example Grenby’s landmark study, *The Child Reader*, 10–35.

⁷ Epstein, “Why model?,” 12.

⁸ Bal, *Narratology*; Ryan, *Narratives Across Media*; Forceville, “Comfort of Strangers,” 119–35.

⁹ Ryan, quoting Richard Saint-Gelais, “Transmedial Storytelling,” 361–62.

¹⁰ Kahlen et al., *Transdisciplinary Perspectives*. 5.

¹¹ Allen, “Knowledge, Ignorance,” 38.

¹² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³ Medd, “What Is Complexity Science?,” 43–60.

¹⁴ Greaves, “John Bunyan.”

with the protagonist, a man named Christian, travelling on his journey in the distance was reproduced and adapted throughout the eighteenth-century.

Christian lives in the City of Destruction, but guided by a man named Evangelist, he leaves to save his life and soul and sets off for the Celestial City. On the way, he struggles with enemies such as Apollyon, and encounters a range of characters that variously hinder or help him on his way, including Mr Worldly Wiseman, Faithful, and Ignorance. He passes through allegorical locations such as Vanity Fair, the Slough of Despond, and the Enchanted Ground. When Christian and his companion Hopeful finally enter the gates of the Celestial City, the dreamer loses sight of him and the story ends.

Texts

The text of 1678 is a substantial duodecimo of 276 pages and the final, third edition, is nearly 58,000 words long. It was popular from the beginning and, in 1684, an unauthorized duodecimo abridgement of a mere eighteen pages appeared. *The Pilgrim's Progress to the Other World* was published by the ballad seller Thomas Passinger, and attributed to "J.B." in 1684. Nathaniel Ponder, Bunyan's publisher, complained about "ridiculous books" published by "certain ballad sellers," suggesting that the abridgement was not unsuccessful. Though only one copy survives of this publication, popularity among the poor is as likely to manifest itself in the absence of surviving copies as not.¹⁵

The Methodist leader John Wesley produced his own, more substantial abridgement in 1743, indicating the continued popularity of the text, and its status for some as an aid to evangelism. Unlike the 1684 work of "J.B.," this later booklet has survived in multiple copies and editions. It was widely distributed through Wesley's own publishing network.¹⁶

In the middle of the eighteenth-century, all three of these books played a role in the storyworld of *Pilgrim's Progress*. This should not be seen to indicate that abridgements are easily assigned to the poor, while the long originals were the domain of the well-off. Prosperous eighteenth-century readers sometimes chose to read chapbook versions of texts in addition to the expensive and lengthy originals, often abridgements could even be seen as stylistic improvements of the original.¹⁷ Inn keeper's widow Sarah Brooke could afford a full, four volume edition of Richardson's *Pamela* in 1766, but her daughters still chose an abridged *Robinson Crusoe* in 1771.¹⁸ Collectors were another category of prosperous readers who might choose to own and read cheap abridgements as well as the expensive originals.¹⁹

Conversely, some expensive books were read by poorer readers. While the poorest might only have access to abridgements—in fact, three quarters of surviving eighteenth-century copies of *Robinson Crusoe* are abridgements—servants, with or without permission, could sometimes read books belonging to their masters and mistresses.²⁰ Then there is the question of who read which abridgement. The seventeenth-century version of *Pilgrim's Progress* was no longer in print by the mid eighteenth-century, while Wesley's text was subsidized and supported by an extensive distribution network.²¹ Again, it might be tempting to assume that those who could afford cheap new books read the Wesley, while others more often inherited the older version and read copies of that. But the older abridgement likely lived on in second hand sales as well as family bequests, not to mention the shelves of well-off collectors.²² So, although we can assume a general alignment of texts to readers by income, we cannot assign specific social groups of readers to specific editions and texts.

Images

Illustrations could be interpreted independently of the text. For example, *Robinson Crusoe* was thought to illustrate "the art of Patience in Submission to the Divine Will."²³ But, as Abigail Williams points out, the Crusoe of popular culture was likely "the emblematic folkloric adventurer that popped up everywhere in homes, taverns, and coffeehouses," in woodcuts pasted on walls. The same division between the meaning of the text and the meaning of the image applies to *Pilgrim's Progress*. One image recurred in multiple editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*. It shows the dreamer/narrator lying down on his side. His sleeping

¹⁵ Milne, "Miracles."

¹⁶ Rivers, "Evangelical Revival," 539.

¹⁷ Milne, "Miracles," 48.

¹⁸ Fergus, *Provincial Readers*, 68.

¹⁹ Milne, "Miracles," 48.

²⁰ "Entry 32412"; Williams, *Social Life*, 100.

²¹ Rivers "Evangelical Revival."

²² Whyman provides examples of old titles circulating second hand, and of cheap books passed down generations in poor families. See Whyman, *Pen and the People*, 80, 81. James Boswell was one of a number of chapbook collectors.

²³ Williams, *Social Life*, 100.

face confronts the viewer and he dominates the foreground. In the distance, Christian climbs a mountain. Later images preserved this pictorial organization near the front of the book,²⁴ and it is likely that, like depictions of Robinson Crusoe, they were pasted to walls in homes.²⁵ The image focuses on the experience of dreaming or sleeping and on the remote, sparse landscape this dream generated.²⁶ The pilgrim of popular culture, then, may have been, like Crusoe, an “emblematic folkloric” man in a distant dream, rather than an earnest pursuer of godliness.

Public Discourse

Discussions of *Pilgrim's Progress* in the public sphere did not usually distinguish the original from the abridgements. The title itself was widely known; allusions can be found in the theatre as well as print. It was simultaneously endorsed for its piety, and mocked for its popularity with the pious poor.²⁷ Sir Humphrey Polesworth, fictional editor and narrator of John Arbuthnot's “John Bull” pamphlets, and “a member of parliament eminent for a certain cant in his conversation” identifies Bunyan as one of his stylistic sources, claiming to “*have borrowed considerable Ornaments from Dionysius Halicarnasseus and Diodorus Siculus... but I cannot be so disingenuous, as not to own the infinite Obligations I have to the Pilgrims Progress of John Bunyan.*”²⁸ The comic effect relies on Bunyan's incongruity beside classical sources. A “countryman” in John Gay's 1715 *Tragedy of the What D'Ye Call It* is moved to tears by reading merely the title page of “this good book.”²⁹ And a series of poems on the dead of Bunhill burial ground praise Bunyan for the combination of “profit and pleasure” in *Pilgrim's Progress.* The work is the product, the lower-class poet claims, of Bunyan's “inborn” (that is untaught, and therefore ungentlemanly) “Tinker's Rhetorick.”³⁰

In the model storyworld developed here, these critical assessments are reduced to two elements: Public Discourse One and Public Discourse Two. Public Discourse One emphasizes the negative evaluation of the texts as provincial and sentimental. Public Discourse Two emphasizes the positive evaluation as native genius and moral improvement.

Storyworld Participants

I include nine model participants in the storyworld. All are assumed to know the image of the dreamer. Participants with knowledge of one of the three texts are also assumed to have knowledge of the public discourse surrounding the text. All participants are assumed to have the power to change or modify the storyworld by speaking or writing about it.

I	—only the image
I&D	—only the image of the dreamer, and public discourse
P	—primary text only
A One	—first abridgement
A Two	—second abridgement
A1 One & A Two	—both abridgements
P&A One	—primary text and first abridgement
P&A Two	—primary text and second abridgement
P&A One & A Two	—has read all three texts

I consider these participants in the order above, and, in each case, ask:

- What does the storyworld mean to this participant?
- How, if it all, might the participant intervene in the system?
- What kinds of ignorance shape those interventions?

My analyses of texts includes attention to narrative viewpoint. For readers unfamiliar with literary terminology, this is defined as follows: a view from a specific point in the narrative space represented at a

²⁴ Collé-Bak, “Wayfaring Images,” 627–28.

²⁵ Ryan, “Transmedial Storytelling,” 361–88.

²⁶ Collé-Bak, “Spreading the Written Word,” 227–28.

²⁷ Rivers, “Religion and Literature,” 459.

²⁸ Arbuthnot, *Law Is a Bottomless Pit*, preface.

²⁹ Gay, *What D'Ye Call It*, 20.

³⁰ Gutteridge, *The Universal Elegy*, 20.

specific point in the narrative. I also explore the narrator's relationship to the reader. Here, I follow Mieke Bal in seeing the narrator (in this case the "Dreamer" of the story) as "a narrating subject."³¹ This is not always a stable subject, however, as the Dreamer's existence beyond the text is sometimes in the background and sometimes in the foreground. In Bunyan's original, for example, the Dreamer is present in the landscape with the characters.

Finally, my analysis of texts identifies patterns of omission and addition by the two abridgers. I do not approach the abridged texts of *Pilgrim's Progress* as dependents of the primary text (though chronologically that is the case), but treat all three as equally legitimate elements of the *Pilgrim's Progress* storyworld.

Analysis

Participant I: Knows Only the Images

Participant I's knowledge of the storyworld derives only from the image of the Dreamer narrator found in multiple editions. The prominence of the sleeping man in this image, well but not ornately dressed, and the much less well-defined image of a man climbing a hill in the distant background would point to "dreaming" rather than "pilgrimage" as the defining concept.

For this participant, then, the storyworld would be dominated by a man dreaming, and therefore sleeping, during the day, recalling common warnings about the dangers of idleness.³² One way that Participant I could participate in the system is by referring or pointing to the image when upbraiding inferiors for idleness. The image then becomes a freestanding emblem rather than a support for a narrative. The participant's intervention in the storyworld would therefore arise from ignorance of the narrative associated with the image.

Participant I&D: Knows Only the Image and Public Discourse

In addition to knowledge of the image of the dreamer, Participant I&D is aware of the two simplified strands of public discourse created above. The image alone suggests neither a "provincial and sentimental" version of the story nor "native genius and moral improvement." But it does suggest that the story is popular enough to be talked about, and that it is moralizing and potentially moving.

Participant I&D might understand the storyworld as moving and virtuous, but also as uncouth. The image's apparent warning against sleep and idleness would suggest that the story is directed against those most frequently associated with idleness: the poor. This intervention would be shaped by ignorance of the details of the story, but not of the fact that it *is* a story. As a result, their intervention in the system would be at odds with Participant I's treatment of the image as an emblem. It would be shaped, like Participant I's, by ignorance of the story itself, but also by ignorance of how Participant I (who knows only the image) experiences the image as an emblem rather than a narrative.

Participant P: Knows Only the Primary Text

Here, the participant has read the primary text. Since the primary text is the longest and most complex of all the storyworld elements, this participant, and those that follow, have a much richer experience of the storyworld than the first two. I look here at five extracts to illustrate the following elements that generate meaning:

1. Viewpoints change rapidly. The dreamer is situated within the scene of the narrative, not outside it. Christian, on the other hand, is an everyman figure. The dreamer's presence in the narrative could add to the reader's sense of presence in the storyworld.
2. Shifts in viewpoint remind the reader of the dreamer's presence. This could add to the reader's sense of personal investment in the narration.
3. The dreamer is present at the gates of heaven. Christian's story could become the reader's own fate at some point in the future.
4. Christian is situated on a fine border between two social classes, artisan and gentleman. This strengthens Christian's status of everyman. However, it also complicates it by excluding the social extremes of high and low. "Everyman" is therefore implicitly "middling."
5. The figure of Flatterer as a punitive black man violates taboos on race and punishment. Punishment for sin might violate the symbolic order, adding a disturbing element to the storyworld.

³¹ Bal, *Narratology*, 13–14.

³² Jordan, *Anxieties of Idleness*.

1. Bunyan's dreamer narrator is not just a framing device. He makes his presence in the narrative scene clear throughout the text using shifts of viewpoint to and from the protagonist. Here, he explains how Christian encounters Timorous and Mistrust near the summit of the Hill of Difficulty:

[He] went apace till he came to the top of the hill.

Now when he was got up to the top of the Hill, there came two men running against him amain; the name of the one was *Timorous* and the other *Mistrust*. To whom *Christian* said; Sirs, what's the matter you run the wrong way?³³

This description is, in one sense, firmly rooted in Christian's viewpoint. The men run "against him amain" (a naval expression for rapidly reducing topsail to avoid colliding with another ship). As an adverb, "amain" indicates "full force" or "full speed."³⁴ The narration at that point is through Christian's body, potentially threatened by this force. But a second viewpoint is implied by "there came two men," rather than simply "two men came running against him amain." The men are simultaneously situated as "afar" ("there came") and as in the protagonist's immediate bodily space ("against him amain"). This degree of viewpoint change is common in live storytelling, where the body's situation in a shared space can create a shared understanding of the sites of action.³⁵ As a result, readers may feel included in the dreamer's speech as though in a social event.

2. Frequent shifts in viewpoint remind the reader of the dreamer's presence, as demonstrated in the following example. Christian leaves the Palace Beautiful, a place of rest for pilgrims who have climbed the Hill of Difficulty, and, accompanied by his hosts, goes to the Valley of Humiliation:

It is an hard matter for a man to go down into the valley of *Humiliation*, as thou art now, and to catch no slip by the way; therefore, said they, are we come out to accompany thee down the Hill. So he began to go down, but very warily, yet, he caught a slip or too.

Then I saw in my Dream, that these good Companions (when *Christian* was gone down to the bottom of the Hill) gave him a loaf of Bread, a bottle of Wine, and a cluster of Raisins; and then he went on his way.³⁶

As Christian begins to go down the hill, the viewpoint may move with Christian or look down on him. The Dreamer intervenes to take the reader down to the bottom of the hill. As a result, the reader might feel the Dreamer to be a constant companion and not merely a narrative device.

3. When finally approaching the Celestial City, the dreamer is present in the landscape, having to turn his head to see all that is relevant in the scene. He is also invested in the landscape, with desires to go in one direction rather than another:

Now just as the Gates were opened to let in the men [Christian and Hopeful], I looked in after them; and behold the City shone like the Sun, the Streets also were paved with Gold, and in them walked many men, with Crowns on their heads, Palms in their hands, and golden Harps to sing praises withal And after that, they shut up the Gates: which when I had seen, I wished my self among them.

Now while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw *Ignorance* come up to the River side.³⁷

This passage may have reminded readers of their own future journey to the heavenly city.

4. Social rank is both implicit and explicit at various points in the text. Christian is situated on the border of artisan and gentleman. Early on in the story, Christian meets Formality and Hypocrisy as he approaches the Hill of Difficulty. Formality and Hypocrisy appear, at first, to be Christians, but quickly turn out to be unable to go further on the path:

³³ Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 63.

³⁴ Oxford English Dictionary.

³⁵ Soe Lwin, "Dynamics of Narrative Development."

³⁶ Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 87–88.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 274–75.

He [Christian] espied two men come tumbling over the Wall, on the left hand of the narrow way; and they made up apace to him. The name of the one was *Formalist*, and the name of the other *Hypocrisie*. So, as I said, they drew up unto him, who thus entered with them into discourse.

Chr. *Gentlemen, Whence came you, and whither do you go?*³⁸

Christian both starts a conversation and asks an uninvited question. Both of these acts are the prerogative of a gentleman. Formalist and Hypocrisy also behave with the entitlement of those with some social rights, with the privilege of “custom” to walk without permission on the land of “*The Lord of the Country*.”³⁹ This is, therefore, an encounter between equals in rank.

5. Racial consciousness is evinced only in a single episode, one involving Flatterer, but it occurs in a way that associates sin with racialized shameful punishment. Christian and Hopeful are almost within sight of their destination, though they have been warned to avoid treacherous Enchanted Ground. Now, they begin to question their way and, at this point, Flatterer appears:

And as they were thinking about the way, behold a man black of flesh, but covered with a very light Robe, came to them, and asked them, Why they stood there? They answered, they were going to the Celestial City, but knew not which of these ways to take. Follow me, said the man, it is thither that I am going. So they followed him in the way that but now came into the road, which by degrees turned, and turned them from the City that they desired to go to But by and by before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a Net, in which they were both so entangled, that they knew not what to do; and with that, *the white robe fell off the black man's back*: then they saw where they were.

The image of a fine-spoken black man, clad in white, and misleading Christian recalls Lucifer himself; the fallen angel still bright, and still gifted in rhetoric. It also recalls the “whited sepulchers” of the gospels. At the end of this episode, they learn from a mysterious chastiser, discussed below, that Flatterer is “a false Apostle, that hath transformed himself into an Angel of Light.”⁴⁰

But the Flatterer could also be associated with the real black men and women in eighteenth-century England. In Bunyan’s *Holy War*, the great devil attacking Europe is the “King of the Blacks or Negroes.”⁴¹ The black man in *Pilgrim's* case fulfils his role of Flatterer simply by covering his blackness with the whiteness of his robe. His speech is simple, unrheterical, and not obviously persuasive, but afterwards they say that they had not imagined “*that this fine-spoken man had been he*.” The effect is one of disbelief that a real black man could be sophisticated and eloquent enough to deceive two white men. He must have used Satanic power.

What happens next is equally disconcerting. Christian and Hopeful “lay bewailing themselves in the Net” until “At last they espied a shining one coming towards them, with a whip of small cord in his hand.” The stranger explains that the black man was “*Flatterer, a false Apostle*.” Then he “commanded them to *lie down*; which when they did, he chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk.” He “bids them go on their way,” and they “thanked him for *all* his kindness.”⁴²

This is a particularly degrading punishment and an abrupt departure from the rest of the text, where losing their way is usually punishment enough. In the late seventeenth century, when Bunyan was writing, conceptual relationships between Protestantism, Africans, and slavery in the British Atlantic were coalescing in the social construction of bodily difference.⁴³ In England, and in the Caribbean colonies with large African slave populations, whipping was a common but degrading punishment, one not applied to gentlemen. By the late eighteenth-century, whipping in Jamaica was reserved for slaves.⁴⁴ This episode adds a distinctive element to the storyworld. Sin is not just a source of disorientation away from salvation. It requires punishment so shameful that it threatens the symbolic order of racial hierarchy.

P’s experience of the meaning of the storyworld is richer and more intimate than those of I (who knows only the image) and I&D (who knows the image and the public discourse). It may have evoked a sense of personal encounter with the dreamer. It might have recognized Christian’s status as an everyman, experiencing the

³⁸ Ibid., 57.

³⁹ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 222.

⁴¹ Bunyan, *The Holy War*, 5.

⁴² Bunyan, *Pilgrims Progress*, 222–23.

⁴³ Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies*.

⁴⁴ Paton, “The Bodies of Slaves,” 939.

glory of reward and the shameful horror of racialized punishment. Knowledge of the image could reinforce a sense of engagement with the dreamer. Combined with an awareness of Public Discourse One and Public Discourse Two, this means P's experience of the storyworld is conflicted. On the one hand, it is an emotional experience of immediate personal relevance. On the other, it is a public experience where the intimacy and emotion are associated with low social status.

P's participation in the system might involve a general endorsement of the moral benefits identified in Public Discourse Two, combined with either silence over Public Discourse One, or a pre-emptive endorsement of Public Discourse One in order to avoid ridicule.

These interventions would be shaped by ignorance of Participant I (who knows only the image) and Participant I&D (who knows only image and public discourse). P would not know that for those participants the experience of the storyworld is not a prompt to general virtue and devotion, but a specific warning against idleness.

Participant A One: Has Read Only the First Abridgement

Both Participant A One and, as we shall see, Participant A Two experience *Pilgrim's Progress* through a more stable narrative viewpoint and with the presence of the Dreamer much reduced. Participant A One encounters a text with higher clarity, lower moral purpose, and a greater focus on entertainment than the first three participants. Here, a good example is A One's experience of Christian's journey from the Palace Beautiful, a resting place for pilgrims who have climbed the Hill of Difficulty and entered the Valley of Humiliation:

Here [in the Palace Beautiful] he lodged for two nights with Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity, who shewed him many strange things and to whom he related his adventure, who gave him a suit of Armour, and led him down the Valley of Humiliation where they left him.⁴⁵

The narrator is concise, using relative clauses ("who shewed," "to whom he related," "who gave him") to condense several narrative episodes into one sentence. But the narration is also clear insofar as it adopts a viewpoint external to that of Christian himself. This lets the reader take a synoptic view. The relative clauses all relate to a single, clearly identified span of time, "two nights." When a new main clause appears ("and led him down") it indicates the end of this period and a move to a new location. Processing changes in time and location are key to narrative comprehension. The reader therefore should find this easy to understand, despite the length of the sentence.⁴⁶

The narrator is not, as with P, who knows the primary text, a character, in the way that the Dreamer is. Distinctions between social ranks are also reduced:

Then going a little further he met Formality and Hypocrisy who would have perswaded him to have gone with them but he refused it and passed on. Now when he was rid of them he went up a hill called difficulty.⁴⁷

Here it is unclear who initiates the conversation and therefore unclear which parties, if any, were socially superior to the others. The concise but clear style produces a text with fewer striking moments, most notably when it comes to the Flatterer:

[They] were again lead out of the way by the Flatterer & taken in a net, and there had perished had not one of the Celestial guard come by and delivered them, who after he had given them correction set them in the right way.⁴⁸

Both racial and punitive aspects of Flatterer are reduced here in a swift narrative movement through incidents. In the economy of this highly compressed text, the Vanity Fair episode is given more space than others, as Kirsty Milne points out: "Vanity Fair takes up two pages, making it a very long episode in a very short book," one whose appeal likely lies in "the idea of the fair ... and the pilgrims as oppositional figures within it." As Milne continues:

⁴⁵ Transcription of Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, abridged by J.B., in Milne, "Miracles," 55 [10].

⁴⁶ Zwaan and Radvansky, "Situation Models"; Zacks et al., "Segmentation in Reading and Film."

⁴⁷ Transcription of Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, abridged by J.B., in Milne, "Miracles," 54 [9].

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

The chapbook makes the pilgrims seem actively insulting; they are said to have “slighted” the wares on sale, and the men of the fair are characterized as “rabble.”⁴⁹

Participant A One experiences a text that is clear, concise, impersonal, and morally neutral. For this participant, the meaning of the storyworld is rooted in easy entertainment, with few cognitive, emotional or moral demands. This is at odds with both elements of public discourse (sentimental versus virtuous), as well as with the image, with its emphasis on a sleeping man who plays no part in A One.

Participation in the storyworld might require a willingness to impose moral and emotional meanings on A One, meanings that are derived from the storyworld more broadly. Or it could be a willingness to disrupt and challenge the meanings experienced by other participants. Here, the participant’s ignorance of the primary text is decisive. It is the primary text that allows for a reinterpretation of the story world as involving emotion, virtue, shame, and conflict over which of the public discourses to affiliate oneself with.

Participant A Two: Has Read Only the Second Abridgement

Like Participant A One, this participant reads a text with more consistent narrative viewpoints than that of Participant P (who knows the primary text) and a far less prominent role for the dreamer. Here, Christian and Hopeful have entered the celestial city:

Now I saw in my Dream, that these two Men went in at the Gate, and lo! As they entered they were transfigured, and their Raiment was glistening and white as Snow. There were also given to them Golden Harps, wherewith to praise him that sat upon the Throne, and the Lamb that liveth for evermore. It was then said to them, *Well done good and faithful Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord.* Just then *Ignorance* came to the River-side, and got over with little Difficulty.⁵⁰

The narrator is not present in the scene, as he is in Participant P’s text. He is therefore able to take in the whole scene, from the entrance to the transfiguration beyond. The reader is given temporal prompts to assist with changes of location: “As they entered,” “Just then.”

In other respects, Participant A Two experiences a text that differs from the other two. A Two, like A One, reduces the role of social rank distinction in the text. But it retains, and attempts to mitigate, the threat to symbolic order posed by Flatterer. This figure is still “a man black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe.” But P’s plain account that the Flatterer “came to them and asked them, Why they stood there?” is changed. In A Two, the Flatterer “came smiling to them, and lovingly asked, ‘Why do you stand here?’” thus justifying the name of “Flatterer.”⁵¹

A Two omits the pilgrims’ defense that they “did not imagine ... *that this fine-spoken man*” had been the Flatterer that the shepherds had warned of. The narrator remarks instead that “they were speechless.” And the punishment itself is even more abruptly administered in A Two: “he commanded them to lie down, and chastised them sore,” whereas Bunyan adds “to teach them the good way wherein they should walk.” So A Two expands the picture of Flatterer and reduces the account of whipping. Finally, Participant A Two experiences a differently moralized text, one without anti-Catholicism, for example.⁵²

For Participant A Two, the storyworld is one of a remote narrator and a moral lesson, but also one of sustained entertainment, with a fuller account of story than Participant A One. The storyworld meaning associated with this might be a blend of pleasure and moral improvement—entertaining but respectable. In this respect, any intervention from Participant A Two could be comfortably aligned with, and reinforce, Public Discourse Two. A Two’s ignorance, here, would be of the less moralized entertainment of Participant A One, and of the more intense emotions, and less moderate moralizing of P. This would make the meanings of Public Discourse One less intelligible to Participant A Two, as would the image of the Dreamer.

Participant A One & A Two: Has Read Both Abridgements

This participant would experience a consistent storyworld of brief, clear texts with a detached narrative voice. They would also experience conflicting experiences of moral meaning. The storyworld meaning might be characterized by uncertainty. Each text might be aligned with either Public Discourse 1 or Public Discourse

⁴⁹ Milne, “Miracles,” 44–45.

⁵⁰ Bunyan, abridged by Wesley, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 49.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵² On these theological issues, see Rivers, “Religion and Literature,” 459.

2, while the image is not aligned with either. As a result, both the storyworld meaning and any intervention in the storyworld by Participant A One & A Two are likely to be volatile. Ignorance of P, who has read only the primary text, in this case produces an unstable position within the storyworld.

Participant P&A One: Has Read the Primary Text and the First Abridgement

Here, the participant can identify a clear relationship between a primary long text and a short, derivative secondary one. Whatever the participant's preference between these, the storyworld's meaning might be determined predominantly by their response to the longer, authoritative text. Where they found this longer text a moving experience, the storyworld meaning is likely to be closer to that of Participant P. Otherwise, it will be closer to that of A One. An intervention in the storyworld by Participant P&A One could tend toward Public Discourse Two in the first case. Ignorance of I's and I&D's experience of the storyworld would affect this intervention; it might lead to an underestimation of other sources of volatility in the storyworld.

Participant P&A Two: Has Read the Primary Text and the Second Abridgement

This participant would experience much more continuity between the two texts available to them, and therefore a more straightforward storyworld meaning. This could be defined by a clear moral purpose, with some variation in the degree of emotional response by readers. Interventions in the storyworld could be coherent with both Public Discourse One and Public Discourse Two. It would also permit an appreciation of the image as capturing a key emotional experience of P. The experience of these interventions as coherent would be founded on the ignorance of A One's amoral approach to telling the story, and on I's (knows only the image) and I&D's (knows only the image and public discourse) ignorance of the texts.

Participant P&A One & A Two: Has Read all Three Texts

This is the only participant to have a synoptic view of all the elements in the storyworld. For this participant, the storyworld's meaning could be more complex, for example with a sense of textual history and its relationships to public discourse. This allows for meanings of the storyworld as are morally improving, as well as experiences of it as vulgar entertainment. Interventions in the storyworld might involve value judgements on all its elements. For example, the image might be evaluated as misleading, or A One as a travesty, with the participant enjoying the confidence associated with superior knowledge. These interventions would be formed by ignorance of how all the other participants experience the storyworld. In that case, the sense of this participant's authority might lead other participants to feel self-doubt in response to this participant's interventions.

Conclusion

Some caveats should be repeated. This system has been analyzed as though in a frozen moment of stasis, something impossible within a complex system. It is reduced so radically from the real world as to lose contact with the real experience of eighteenth-century consumers of *Pilgrim's Progress*. In my account of each model participant, a number of meanings and interventions were possible; my choice of some rather than others was arbitrary.

My goal was to distinguish between specific kinds of ignorance and their different roles in the complex system of a storyworld. I hope to have illustrated the productive role of ignorance in generating complex social systems at distinct historical moments. Participant I (image only) is ignorant of *Pilgrim's Progress* as a narrative text, for example. This ignorance enables the production of an alternative meaning for that text's illustration, as a pedagogical emblem of the dangers of idleness. I&D's (image and public discourse) ignorance of the content of the narrative gives that pedagogical emblem an extended existence as a narrative of idleness, not just an emblem. Participant A One & A Two introduces volatility into the competition between two public discourses through ignorance of the original text. Participant P&A One & A Two could dominate the system's generation of meaning through the unique status of authority among all the participants. But ignorance of Participant A Two's experience of the storyworld as a place of amoral entertainment, or of I's experience of the storyworld as a pedagogical emblem, means that there may be silent dissent within the system with the potential to break it apart at a future point. Even an exercise in modelling as artificial as this one can illustrate how specific kinds of ignorance produce change within systems and play their part in history.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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