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Societal views in October 1st, 1823

In the early 1800s, the United States was entering an era of strong nationalism after ‘defeating’ England in the War of 1812, and after sending out the Monroe Doctrine which stated that the United States was not going to be conquered by other countries. During these times, there was an attempt to end political parties (factions) and bring all politicians to one political side, this was known as the Era of Good Feelings. Due to the Louisiana purchase from France, new states/territories were in the process of being added to the union which meant that the growing United States had to reason how it was going to add current political rules to new territories. As Mississippi was in the process of being added to the union, politicians from the North (North of Ohio River) argued that new states had to join the union as slave-free states, which made politicians from the South angry. Although a compromise was reached, the North and South differing views on slavery and westward expansion were starting to create a divide in the nation which led to the important historical event of the American Civil War. The North and South’s differing views on slavery can be studied deeper and can be traced to cultural and societal norms in the respective regions. To put it simply, differing views on slavery can be boiled down to the North and South placing different amounts of value in human lives. The North places more value on human life than the South does in emotional and societal ways, which is reflected in their perspective on death and progressivism through front pages and poems in newspapers from New York and South Carolina from the day of October 1st, 1823.

Newspapers are a business, and in order to make money aside from advertisements, they must keep their readers happy and intrigued. It is an important job of the publishing company to tailor to their audience and favor the views of the majority. In the 1800s newspapers were very local, so if any of the non-advertising space was to be used, they had to make sure it was something that people were interested in or reflected the values of the local community. During these times, if many people disagreed with something, it was not uncommon for the people to tar and feather or riot. Considering the South’s reliance on slavery and how divisive the topic was, it is not a reach to say that if a Southern newspaper published anti-slavery publications, people in the South would either not buy it, or would tar and feather the publishers. With this in mind, it can be assumed that newspapers at the time published things that reflected the views of most of the community or at least things that weren’t very divisive. We will use this argument/frame of thought as we analyze the chosen newspapers. So, we will assume that something published in a newspaper was a reflection of its consumer base. We will also keep in mind that the way a society perceives death often reflects its perspective and value on life, and provides insight into its cultural, religious, and moral fabric. For instance, funeral practices and mourning rituals offer glimpses into the society's approach to grieving, compassion, and honoring the deceased. Ultimately, the societal view of death serves as a window into a collective psyche and shapes individual coping mechanisms, influencing how people cherish life, form connections, and confront mortality.

To compare the newspapers, we first approach with a general overview of the first page of each, then we focus on poems from the newspapers. The first page of a newspaper is generally considered to be the most important. This is because the front page is the first thing readers see when they pick up the newspaper, and it sets the tone for the entire publication. On the front page, you typically find the most significant and breaking news stories, important headlines, key events of the day, and other critical topics that are expected to grab readers' attention. We begin with looking at the section titles of both and compare. Charleston, South Carolina’s *City Gazette*’s first page section titles consist of: mainly general advertisements, followed by runaway slave bounties, jail sentences, sermons, tax executions, criminal updates and small amounts of personal publications (*City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XLV, no. 14051, October 1, 1823). Considering the first page sets the tone and has the most ‘valuable’ information, Southern newspapers set a tone of greed and violence. Many ads and stories include crimes, slavery, or some type of economic gain for someone. For the North, we look at Ithaca, New York’s *Ithaca Journal* first page which mainly consists of general advertisements like the South’s (clothing, land sales, miscellaneous goods & services). However, the main differences are; no runaway slave ads, little to no tax or jail sentencing posts, many ads focused on gender-neutral education, military education, positive community entrepreneurship and large book sales (*Ithaca Journal* (Ithaca, New York) VII, no. 8, October 1, 1823: [1]). The South was more focused on the free-market, property, and crime, while the North was more focused on positive community building and progressive social change like education for all (women included) and no slavery. The first pages can give a general overview of what was happening and what was found important in during these times. However, a deep dive into personal publications can give specific information on what people thought and felt during these times.

The thoughts and views of the people are a reflection of their surroundings, so we can learn about societal issues from analyzing people’s thoughts. A great way to learn about people’s thoughts is by art and expression like poetry. The skills of reading and writing poetry show a lot about the people of the time. They had to express and understand with emotional intelligence and creativity. They had to delve into the human experience and therefore showed strong empathy and introspection. Finally, they showed a cultural awareness and attention to detail that allowed them to appreciate the ideas and feelings that language can convey. Deep understanding of emotions and empathy. I was even able to focus my analysis on very specific poetry about the death of babies/young kids and the views that people had on the topic and how people were affected by it. The first poem we will analyze is from Charleston’s *City Gazette* where the context of the poem is that it was written by a ‘Lady’ about her friends expressing surprise at her declining an invitation to a ‘May Frolic,’ which is believed leads to the author moving to a different city. We are not given much context, but from the little we are given we can begin to analyze. The poem’s opening lines read “NO promis’d pleasured open’d to my view… My sicken’d senses turn’d from scenes of joy — The mourning mother wept her buried boy ("Poetry." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XLV, no. 14051, October 1, 1823).” From these lines we learn that either the author lost her son and because of that the author sees no ‘pleasures’ in her near future. The author’s friends invited her to a frolicking event and were surprised when the mourning author declined the invitation. From the friend’s surprise and the fact that the author left town, we can learn that the community of that town probably frowns upon declining invitations and places perceived status over people’s emotions. We can see this from the lines “No father waits to tend thee to thy tomb, But as tumultuous crowds around her throng, Thy mother winds her hapless course along ("Poetry." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XLV, no. 14051, October 1, 1823).” These lines tell us that as the family tried to bury the son and grieve in peace, but ‘crowds’ squeezed into the lives of the now childless mother and father, they had no choice but to try and keep living lives as before which we can see in the last lines “Bids her pale lips wear resignations smile, And checks her own, his sorrows to beguile ("Poetry." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XLV, no. 14051, October 1, 1823),” which says that tried to wear a fake smile to please people to try and to help occupy the sorrow of the father. Normally, sympathetic people do not force others to fake a smile or are surprised if a grieving person just wants to be left alone. The evidence of the numerous runaway slave ads and criminal updates, along with a poem that reflected a society of people with no sympathy shows that the South of the US valued individualism, free-market policies, and social status more than sympathy, and love for the community.

Now we will analyze the newspaper from the North. Again we will start with a broad overview of the paper and then dive deeper into specific posts. In the general sense, we will compare only the first pages of the newspapers. This is because the first pages are what people first read, so they more than likely contain the most important information to the community, whether it be the most urgent news or the most popular ads, we can learn a lot from studying the overall content of the first page. Now to look deeper, we will compare a poem about the death of a young person in the northern newspaper to the southern one. The poem is called ''*THE INFANT AND THE ROSE*'' written by someone with the pen name ‘MEMNON.’ No context is given for this shorter and more straightforward poem only that it is in a section called “THE MINSTREL. FOR THE JOURNAL.” and there is another poem in that section that is dated September 1823, so we can assume (since not told otherwise) that both were written recently and are reflection of the current school of thought. From the poem’s content we can learn a lot about northern society. The poem opens with “Beneath that flower an infant laid. I gaz’d on each with wild delight, For both were lovely to the sight ("Poetry." Ithaca Journal (Ithaca, New York) VII, no. 8, October 1, 1823: [4]. Readex: Early American Newspapers).” We don’t learn much about the poem, but a much more artistic and uplifting tone is set than in the southern poem. The poem then reads “... Autumn’s blast Had stript that rose of all its charms… And clasp’d the babe in icy arms. Now where the leafless rose-bush sighs, low in the grave the infant lies ("Poetry." Ithaca Journal (Ithaca, New York) VII, no. 8, October 1, 1823: [4]. Readex: Early American Newspapers).” We learn that the baby died probably due to the cold weather and the ‘icy arms’ can also mean that the caretaker also froze and died. The poem then states how cruel nature can be, how it cuts short the beauty of the flowers and infant and the author cries out to ‘nature’ in grief. However, the poem ends with ‘nature’s’ ‘cheeringly’ reply “They both shall live and bloom again — The one in spring shall grace the grove, And one shall smile in the courts above ("Poetry." Ithaca Journal (Ithaca, New York) VII, no. 8, October 1, 1823: [4]. Readex: Early American Newspapers).” Since this was a published piece, we can assume multiple people saw the poem before production. Since it made it to production, we can assume that editors felt this would be seen in a way that would agree with the reader’s views and emotions. With this in mind, we can (even if lightly) assign the views on death from the poem, to the people of the North because the poem made it to print. Now we can analyze the poem. From the uplifting opening to hopeful and cheerful ending, we can conclude that the north views death and life in a much brighter way than the south. When the author was grieving, they showed that in northern society it is expected for someone/something to console you and give you hope. The personification of nature consoling the grieving shows that it is a customary thing. The southern poem had no mention of consoling. Now, to be fair to the south, their poem was the words of a mourning mother. However if the mourning mother did wrote about death it would make more sense for the poem to be as dark as it is. But, the mother actually wrote on her friends expressing surprise at her declining an invitation. So her dark and sad writings were fueled by the reactions of her friends not the death of her child.

The papers (specifically the poetry) reveal how the Southern US puts more emphasis on economic principles emphasizing individualism, while the Northern US puts more emphasis on progressive social change, ultimately I think it boils down to the nuances in how both sides differ in valuing how sacred human life is. Although not one specific issue, the paper reveals the the differences in how the north and south view the value of a human life. Or place importance on what they care about. Show what they care about and it’s individualism and not progressive social change.

SOUTH: City Gazette (Charleston, South Carolina)October 1, 1823. City Gazette (published as City Gazette and Commercial) (Charleston, South Carolina)February 8, 1823.

NORTH: Connecticut Gazette (published as The New-London Gazette and General Advertiser) (New London, Connecticut)October 1, 1823. Edwardsville Spectator (Edwardsville, Illinois)February 8, 1823.

compares the way in which each paper reveals (or conceals) issues discussed in class as important to the history of the United States (i.e. slavery, economics, the revolution, republicanism, etc).

"[Y historical event] significantly affected [Z person, culture, society] in [A, B, and C ways], which is reflected in [X Document] through [quote chosen for analysis]."