

Constructing the Motherliness of Manoah's Wife in Cecil B. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah* (1949)

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Abstract

[1] Cecil B. DeMille is an unsung auteur and master of the American Biblical Epic who produced and directed *Samson and Delilah* (1949). Historically speaking, this Technicolor testament was a watershed film that sired the rash of 1950s biblical epics, but few are cognisant of the artistic efforts that DeMille had expended to achieve scriptural, religious and emotional authenticity, even for his relatively minor film characters. A good example of this DeMilleian artistry was the engineered motherliness of Manoah's wife (Samson's mother) whom DeMille called "Hazel..." on-screen and "Hazeleponit" off-screen. The critical literature was reviewed and DeMille's cinematic construction of this honoured Israelite woman was explicated. It was concluded that DeMille was a far more subtle biblical filmmaker and knowledgeable gender engineer than has hitherto been acknowledged, and that he had deliberately chosen to accentuate the motherliness of this pious woman for contrasting dramatic effect. Further research into DeMille Studies, pop culture constructions of biblical women, and the interdisciplinary field of religion-and-film was recommended.

Introduction

[2] Cecil B. DeMille¹ (1881-1959), affectionately known as C. B., was a seminal founder of Hollywood who helped create a world class movie centre out of a Californian orange grove that eventually became known as *the* synonym for filmmaking worldwide (Birchard, 2004; DeMille & Hayne, 1960; Edwards, 1988; Essoe & Lee, 1970; Higashi, 1994; Higham, 1973; Koury, 1959; Ringgold & Bodeen, 1969). Not only was DeMille a crucial film pioneer who helped institute "the Age of Hollywood" (Paglia, 1994, p. 12), but this "*auteur of auteurs*" (Vidal, 1995, p. 303) became the master of the American Biblical Epic and was subsequently tagged "King of the epic Biblical spectacular" (Finler, 1985, p. 32), the "high priest of the religious genre" (Holloway, 1977, p. 26) and the "arch apostle of spectacle" (Clapham, 1974, p. 21).

[3] Cecil Blount DeMille was born of mixed religious parentage. His American father, Henry Churchill DeMille, was a Christian who was studying to become a priest of the Episcopalian Church (DeMille & Hayne, 1960, pp. 12-13), while his English mother, Matilda Beatrice (aka "Bebe" or "Tillie") DeMille (nee Samuel), had a "Sephardic Jewish background" (Edwards, 1988, p. 14). Although C. B. identified himself as a Christian, he was proud of his Jewish heritage. As reporter Alice Williamson (1928, p. 67) noted when she visited him at his Culver City studio: "Cecil gives thanks for the few drops of that [Jewish] blood which reddens the veins of most great musicians, many great artists." However, DeMille would have been considered Jewish by his Judaic bosses and community because of the principle of matrilineal descent. This principle afforded Jewish identity upon the fruitful, wholesome union of a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man. "The outcome is that the child takes its Jewish status from its mother, irrespective of the status of the father" (Sorek, 2002, p. 1). This ambiguity in his religious heritage could serve DeMille well in a Christian America with a Jewish-based Hollywood (Gabler, 1988) because, for Christians, he was perceived as a Christian, and for Jews, he was perceived as a Jew.

[4] As Hollywood's leading cinematic lay preacher who used the silver screen as his sermonising tool, DeMille-as-producer-director² earned these accolades with such indelible classics as the 1923 and 1956 versions of *The Ten Commandments*, *The King of Kings* and *Samson and Delilah*. Indeed, his filmic adaptation of the Samson saga based upon Judges 13-16³ was a "watershed film" (Schatz, 1997, p. 394) that had triggered the 1950s rash of biblical epics, and nowadays, "televised DeMille is essentially the Bible for the TV generation" (Brode, 1995, p. 68). This cinematic recasting of ancient biblical characters provides a fertile ground for academic investigation, if for no other reason than to see just how a putative Christian director with a Judaic heritage portrayed Jewish heroes of the ancient world, especially their gender construction and stereotyping.

[5] Why bother? Because his popular films have been seen by millions of people throughout the world over many decades, and thus they have significantly shaped the social consciousness and attitudes toward religion today. As J. Cheryl Exum (1996) argued:

Samson and Delilah offers a good example of cinematic impact on the culture at large. It is not a little-known film; I have seen it at least four times on television in the UK in the past three years. With the kind of promotion television offers, De Mille's Oscar-winning epic has certainly reached more audiences than when it was first released, and through repeated television showings it continues to be influential in forming people's opinions about the biblical story. For all its hokeyness *Samson and Delilah* is a brilliant film (p. 13).

The Scholarly Value of *Samson and Delilah* (1949)

[6] Despite its half-century vintage, *Samson and Delilah*'s reputation has "stabilized into one of camp respectability" (Murphy, 1999, pp. 109-110). Not only is it valued today for being "drama as stylized as Kabuki" (Lopate, 1987, p. 72), but various biblical scholars have also enthusiastically proclaimed its virtues. For example, David Jasper (1999) proclaimed:

In the Hollywood tradition of Old Testament epics...the cinema has occasionally contributed in a significant way to the history of biblical interpretations, perhaps unwittingly and most notably in the figure of Cecil B. De Mille in films like *Samson and Delilah* (1949) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956)...[DeMille] re-reads the text of the Book of Judges midraschically as a love story which shifts the coherent and dehumanizing biblical perspective of Israel's salvation history and replaces it with a *countercoherence* of a Delilah following her heart and remaining true to Samson... (p. 51).

[7] Indeed, Jasper (1999) considered that DeMille's love story-cum-cinematic attempt at repackaging Scripture was not only a service to mainstream scholarship, but a logical outcome of serious cogitative engagement. As he claimed:

...De Mille's film [*Samson and Delilah*] does what art and literature has always in fact done, read the Bible and unpicked its historical and theological consistencies which have defined how religious orthodoxy has

read it, and offered a countercoherence in terms of other priorities (in this case filmic melodrama) which may expose the dangerous assumptions that often underlie our reading of Scripture and the Bible... (pp. 51-52).

Indeed, “although most people’s knowledge of Samson is limited to his relationship with Delilah (16:4-31)...the source of people’s knowledge is as likely to be Cecil B. DeMille’s film *Samson and Delilah* as it is the biblical text” (McCann, 2002, p. 92).

[8] In his directorial attempt to make sense of the Old Testament (OT) and project it onto the big screen, DeMille-the-film-artist had effectively been engaging in what today’s theologians would call a “hermeneutic of creative imagination.” As feminist biblical scholar Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (2001) described this artistic process:

A hermeneutic of imagination retells biblical stories, re-shapes religious vision, and celebrates those who have brought about change. To that end it does more than utilize historical, literary, and ideological-critical methods, which focus on the rhetoric of religious texts and their historical contexts. It also employs methods of storytelling, role-playing, bibliodrama, Midrash, pictorial arts, dance, meditation, prayer, and ritual for creating a “different” religious imagination... (p. 181).

[9] Only DeMille-the-Hollywood-storyteller used commercial feature films as his palette to artistically create his different religious imagination. Not only had DeMille set the standard for the American Biblical Epic genre in that cognitive engagement process, but he also created, reinforced and mirrored multiple gender stereotypes that many others tried to imitate, subvert or appropriate into their filmic efforts (Kozlovic, 2002c). Regrettably, the breadth, depth and range of DeMille’s artistic prowess have not been fully appreciated to date. Nor has the fifty-year-plus *Samson and Delilah* given up all its cinematic secrets, but then as predicted decades ago by Hollywood actor Henry Wilcoxon (1970, p. 276): “True recognition for DeMille’s greatness will come many years after his death [1959].” The time is now right to correct that deficiency and reassess his cinematic efforts in the light that only historical distance can provide.

DeMille Studies Meets Scripture Studies

[10] Much more work is needed to fully reveal and appreciate DeMille’s contributions to the art of biblical epics, which regrettably have been frequently overlooked, dismissed or devalued by critics for a variety of reasons, including Giannetti and Eyman’s (1996, p. 40) claim that: “It is no longer fashionable to admire De Mille.” Yet, serious film scholarship has only just begun to scratch the surface of DeMille studies (Higashi, 1994) and even less academic effort has been devoted to *Samson and Delilah*, although this is slowly changing (Kozlovic, 2002a, 2002b). A good example of DeMille’s creative brilliance as he engaged with sacred texts was his on-screen construction of the motherliness of Manoah’s wife (Samson’s mother). She was scripturally unnamed but DeMille called her “Hazel...” on-screen (i.e., a deliberately truncated name that will be used herein throughout), and “Hazeleponit” off-screen. DeMille employed the diminutive actress Fay Holden to play the small part of this honoured Israelite woman, and despite her limited on-screen time, her characterisation was full of deep and complex theological issues that are mostly unappreciated today.

The Scripturally Unnamed Woman/Wife/Mother

[11] This significant biblical woman is unnamed in the Scriptures. She is variously referred to therein as “the woman” (Judges 13:3, 6, 9, 10, 24), even by her own husband Manoah (Judges 13:11) and by God’s annunciation angel (Judges 13:13). She is also referred to as “his [Manoah’s] wife” (Judges 13:11, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), “his [Samson’s] mother” (Judges 14:2, 3, 4, 5, 6), or “my [Samson’s] mother” (Judges 14:16). Yet, “her name must have been known to Manoah, and presumably, later on to Samson” (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 162). Why the omission of her personal name in Holy Writ? Because this lack was a traditional biblical (androcentric, patriarchal?) means of depowering women by denying them their full narrative force. Yet, according to the Book of Judges (KJV), “her role in the story is as important as that of her husband, Manoah” (Exum, 2000, p. 246), for she behaved as the quintessential mother who “ranks with Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth as a “Mother of Promise”” (Reynolds, 1982, p. 76).

[12] She also “belongs to the category of “good woman”” (Exum, 1995, p. 79) who “represents the noblest kind of Israelite mother...the ideal Israelite wife” (Crenshaw, 1978, p. 70) and thus “the paradigmatic Israelite woman” (Camp, 2000, p. 111) who is “idealized in her nonsexual role” (Exum, 1995, p. 78). Indeed, any suggestion of carnal sex is quickly eliminated from the God-caused end of her barrenness “of what in pagan literature would be a divine-mortal coupling which results in the birth of a super hero. That there is no divine-mortal hanky-panky is stressed by the Hebrew narrator” (Bledstein, 1993, p. 49). So, why did her “good woman” reputation even need stressing? Because some Scripture scholars have seen the faint possibility of personal sexual intimacy between Samson’s mother and the visiting annunciation angel.

The “Good Woman” as a Potential “Bad Girl”

[13] It is interesting to note that “there is no positive indication in Judges 13 that Samson is the natural son of Manoah. He is never referred to as such, nor is there any indication that the birth of Samson was preceded by sexual intercourse between Manoah and his wife” (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 166). During the second divine visit, the annunciation “angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field” (Judges 13:9), which itself was sufficient cause to generate suspicion. As Adele Reinhartz (1993, p. 168) argued, this “is not to suggest that Manoah’s wife was raped by the angel but simply that the idea that they spent time alone together in a field may have raised the suspicion that there was more to their encounter than talk.” This is potentially significant considering that the Hebrew narrator went to the trouble to stress: “but Manoah her husband was not with her” (Judges 13:9).

[14] Secondly, one Rabbinical name for Manoah’s wife was “Zelepni” which translated meant: “the shadow falls on me” (Lockyer, 1967, p. 186), and its potential sexual coupling implications. Thirdly, according to religious tradition, Israelite women are not held accountable for any untoward extramarital sexual encounters. This Mosaic exemption was recorded in Deuteronomy 22:25: “But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then he the man only that lay with her shall die.” In short, rape victims are absolved of criminal punishment but not the perpetrators. So, after the woman-angel encounter in the field, Samson’s mother lived to give birth to a son. Whilst the annunciation angel suffered a form of earthly death when he ascended (was consumed?) in the votive flames not to be seen again (Judges 13:20), presumably, because his divine emissary task was completed and he returned home. However, subtextually speaking, it also conformed to the Mosaic law of death after non-consensual intercourse.

[15] Overall, the “paternity of Samson and the precise nature of the relationship between the woman and the angel ultimately remain ambiguous” (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 168). Avoiding this potential infidelity issue was possibly one good reason why DeMille-the-filmmaker chose not to focus upon the annunciation story (Judges 13), or even mention the God-engineered source of Samson’s birth within *Samson and Delilah*. His Samson was forged in the hero mould, and was definitely a human male of two human parents. As DeMille’s Samson told his Philistine captors after his hair was shorn and his invisible God had stopped shielding him: “My blood will flow as red as yours.” This claim dramatically reinforced Samson’s human biological paternity, and his earthly normalness, even though an extraordinary man. And especially when “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him” (Judges 14:6) and he momentarily turned into a Hebrew Hulk.

Potentially Awkward Offspring Issues and the Biblical Giant Tradition

[16] The phenomenally un-human strength of this ancient Judge (i.e., charismatic leader), his persistent cultural reputation for having a large physique, and the visual fact that DeMille’s Samson (Victor Mature) did *not* look like either DeMille’s small and plumpish mother Hazel... (Fay Holden) or DeMille’s tall and thin father Manoah (Charles Evans) could generate awkward paternity questions. During scriptwriting conferences, DeMille certainly conceived of his Samson as a “great gigantic brute” (Koury, 1959, p. 230) which Victor Mature did *not* convincingly approximate. Therefore, Samson’s obvious physical difference from either of his human parents may have alerted a more biblically literate audience (circa 1950s), and especially because innumerable ministers, rabbis and church people saw this film as legitimate religious education and therefore would be more critical about it.⁴ DeMille went to much trouble to make his Samson look big and strong, thus again raising the embarrassing possibility of a divine-mortal coupling producing offspring in the biblical tradition of the giant Nephilim.

[17] According to Scripture: “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4). Just like Samson who was a man of renown, and who has been graphically depicted as a physical giant in the folkloric Jack-and-the-Beanstalk mould within contemporary fine art, for example, Erte’s serigraph painting entitled *Samson & Delilah* where he literally dwarfs Delilah. Even in contemporary popular culture Samson is considered physically extraordinary. For example, novelist Fay Weldon (1995, p. 80) imagined Samson to be “built like a giant” and whom she considered was the “real Incredible Hulk!” Popular journalist Phillip Lopate (1987, p. 74) saw Samson as a “blind giant.” Conversely, some biblical scholars saw Samson as the ancient world equivalent of Superman (Jost, 1999, p. 118; Lopate, 1987, p. 74), as did DeMille himself (Koury, 1959, p. 216). The possibility of Samson being an angel-human hybrid also jibbed with the biblical tradition of the Anakim. These were “A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims” (Deuteronomy 9:2; see also Deuteronomy 1:28; 2:10, 21) who were “men of a great stature” (Numbers 13:32). They were sometimes described as “the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:33).

[18] As Joan Thomas (1982) argued, these physical giants would have existed in Samson’s biblical time and territory:

The Philistines were used to real giants and their special abilities, for the remnants of the Anakim lived in some of their cities, and it is likely that the future great-grandparents of Goliath were at that very time young children whom they would see playing in the streets of Gath (p. 84).

The city of Gath was one of the members of the Philistines pentapolis, a confederation of five city-states comprising of Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron (Ehrlich, 2001, p. 236). According to Scripture, these giant “Anakims...[were] in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod” (Joshua 11:22), that is, Samson’s geographical stomping grounds.

[19] DeMille had avoided making Samson a physical giant, presumably for practical filmmaking and biblical credulity reasons. For example, Samson would be very hard to miss if he really was a physical giant, especially with numerous Philistine soldiers seeking him. It would also cause severe credulity problems if DeMille was trying to convince audiences that there was no intimate physical incompatibility problems regarding his romantic love affairs with Semadar, Delilah and his other wenching ways. Indeed, the unsuccessful biblical comedy *Wholly Moses!* broached this delicate intimacy issue when Herschel (Dudley Moore) rescued his straying wife Zerelda (Laraine Newman) from New Sodom. She had become an erotic dancer living in sin with the bloodthirsty giant Amok (unseen). A number of failed screen jokes were made out of the situation ranging from implied calculations of Amok’s potential penis size, to showing a pair of Amok’s Y-front underpants, literally the size of a small tent, ostentatiously drying out in Zerelda’s bedroom. No wonder the film bombed and was labelled “wholly awful...a Technicolour turkey” (Donovan, 1988, p. 133). DeMille was certainly not after these kinds of prurient laughs in his more serious biblical film.

[20] However, DeMille was also a director who did not want to disappoint religious traditionalists and so he indirectly acknowledged this biblical giant connection during the Saran’s lion hunt scene. He portrayed the Saran of Gaza’s (George Sanders’) bodyguard Garmiskar (William Davis) as giant-like and wearing a metal hat with a ring of bright brass studs. This DeMillean costume prop had echoed the battle dress of the famous biblical giant, the “Philistine of Gath, Goliath” (I Samuel 17: 23) who had a “helmet of brass upon his head” (I Samuel 17:5). Although Garmiskar simultaneously acted as the Saran’s personal bodyguard, servant and champion throughout *Samson and Delilah*, the Saran specifically called him a “wrestler.” While Samson specifically called him a “warrior,” just like Goliath, the Philistine’s champion warrior (I Samuel 17:4) who would be defeated in battle by young David, another servant of God (I Samuel 17:49-51). Since DeMille’s Samson quickly and effectively beat Garmiskar in their hand-to-hand combat, Samson was thus considered a giant-killer by association and implication, and thus truly the earthly instrument of the Divine.

Textual, Subtextual and Intertextual Reinforcement of the Giant Tradition

[21] During this on-screen fight with Garmiskar, Samson wore no personal armour, thus echoing Israel’s champion David, the young sheep tender (I Samuel 16:11) who likewise wore no personal armour (I Samuel 17: 38-39). David was another of God’s chosen, who under the leadership of King Saul, quickly defeated Goliath using a simple hand-operated device, a stone-throwing sling (I Samuel 17:49). DeMille’s Samson defeated Garmiskar using an even simpler hand-operated device, his bare hands. Interestingly, DeMille’s young Saul (Russell Tamblyn) was also a sheep tender who resembled Samson in clothing and behaviour. During his private conversation with

Samson prior to the idol-toppling in Dagon's unholy temple, Saul offered to help Samson fight his way out using his sling (aka sling shot) cunningly disguised as a headband! These multi-layered DeMille references were examples of pop culture showmanship intertextually fused with biblical authenticity which, no doubt, were missed by the bulk of viewers.

[22] Nor was DeMille without famous artistic company regarding the giant tradition. In the tragic poem *Samson Agonistes*, John Milton created the fictitious character of Harapha, a giant Philistine warrior to give his literary creation colour and depth (Gay, 1995), and one suspects that DeMille may have followed suit for the same reasons. Besides, if a giant character was good enough for the literary giant Milton to employ, it was good enough for the cinematic giant DeMille. Thus, C. B. had tapped into a respectability-through-association tactic that helped enhance his film and epic artistic reputation.

Further Filmic Defusion of the Potential Sexual Infidelity of Samson's Mother

[23] When DeMille had to depict Manoah's wife on-screen, this American narrator-producer-director also defused suggestions of her sexual impropriety by having his Samson verbally acknowledge that both his mother and his father *were* his parents (i.e., no divine-mortal hanky-panky had occurred). For example, when Samson's complaining mother Hazel... called him a "stubborn witless ox" during their private, if heated, conversation in her ancient kitchen, Samson lovingly retorted: "I'm *your son*" [my emphasis] in filmic support of the more vague scriptural claims: "thou shalt conceive, and bear a son" (Judges 13:3, 5), "And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson" (Judges 13:24). DeMille had comically but firmly established the matrilineal side of Samson's paternity whilst simultaneously suggesting that an essential truth was being spoken at this pressing, but loving moment. DeMille then reinforced the patrilineal side of Samson's paternity when his father Manoah arrived on the scene.

[24] Despite Samson's impeccable religious credentials (i.e., divinely chosen, pious parents, miraculous birth, consecrated to God, blessed by God, supported by God), he had disrespectfully insisted upon violating the Danite's endogamy tradition by marrying a Philistine outsider, his Timnath wife-to-be (Judges 14:2-3) whom DeMille made a blonde and called Semadar (Angela Lansbury). As Pilavachi and Borlase (2000, p. 29) put it: "Samson's decision to marry a Philistine woman was a big no-no," especially considering that the Mosaic law recorded in Deuteronomy 7:3 prohibited the marriage of Israelites with foreigners. Not only was the desired Timnath woman a foreigner, but she was a *Philistine* foreigner, a member of the hated rulers of the Israelites whose oppressive yoke was still painfully in effect in premonarchical Israel for at least forty years (Judges 13:1). As Carolyn Pressler (2002, p. 215) argued regarding Samson: "We expect a military hero, an exemplary leader, a model of faith. We get a womanizing adventurer."

[25] When pressed by Manoah, DeMille's Samson resisted him and then showed gross disrespect when he gave him a defiant quasi-command, namely: "*Father!*...Semadar pleases me. Go to Tubal of Timnath and say I will take his daughter to wife." This command clearly voiced the patrilineal side of Samson's paternity and wrapped it inside a powerful negative emotion that DeMille had cinematically implied was the unvarnished truth being spoken at this no nonsense moment. If Manoah was not his biological father, and he was the genuine product of divine-mortal hanky-panky, and Samson was aware of it, then one imagines Samson stating this brute fact at this

confrontational moment. Alternatively, Samson would ignore Manoah, or name his “true” father to undermine Manoah’s authority, especially if he was divinely conceived (it being a form of spiritual and temporal oneupmanship).

[26] The scriptural reference that DeMille based his scene upon did not have the same emotional force as DeMille’s cinematic rendition, nor did it have Samson specifically say “Father.” Rather, the Bible stated: “And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well” (Judges 14:3). DeMille had apparently gotten the emotional tenor of his scene right because even biblical scholars were upset by Samson’s scriptural actions. For example, an annoyed Claudia Camp (2000, p. 115) claimed that Samson was “uppity to his parents to boot!” or as Harris, Brown and Moore (2000, p. 244) put it: “We expected a little more than a spoiled brat who orders his parents around and has no regard for family values.”

[27] DeMille had therefore reinforced Samson’s fully human origins in a clear and undisputed fashion, or as some biblical scholars put it, Samson had a “triadic heritage: divine force, wise woman, foolish man” (Camp, 2000, p. 106). This subtle but delicate paternity issue was so well embedded within DeMille’s common touch, pop culture stylistic that most viewers would have totally missed its theological import. Indeed, scripturally speaking, his mother’s “good woman” reputation is so important to the ancient biblical writer that she is even denied “any hint of sexual pleasure in her task of procreation (the text lacks the typical notice that Manoah “knew” his wife)” (Ackerman, 1998, p. 116). DeMille also avoided the same indelicate issue on-screen, but this is understandable. Exploring the question of her sexual pleasure while conceiving would have been too prurient and inappropriate for DeMille and his target audience, especially under the watchful eye of censors, the Church and suspicious God-fearing people of 1950s America.

[28] The avoidance of potential sexual salaciousness is possibly another reason why so much energy was invested by DeMille into Hazel...’s motherly, idealised, good woman reputation. He certainly achieved this goal via his choice of actress, her physical size, motherly behaviours, dialogue lines and domestic props, especially inside an ancient kitchen, the iconic location of mothers and the generic hallmark of domesticity worldwide. DeMille did not want to besmirch her “good woman” reputation either. If anything, the “ideological motif is the Israelite understanding that a child given to a barren woman is a gift of Yahweh. Yahweh might even be understood to be the child’s metaphorical father” (Ackerman, 1998, p. 192), but certainly not his biological father in this particular instance.⁵

The Virtues of Manoah’s Wife

[29] Of all of the female characters in the Samson saga, Manoah’s wife comes off as the best all-rounder, and is described by biblicists as “a strong and pious Israelite woman” (Pressler, 2002, p. 212). She is alive and life-affirming. She exhibits disciplined, wholesome love. She is a true believer, perceptive and one of God’s specially chosen people amongst a nation of the chosen. Her Samson-related frustrations have the least amount (if not intensity) of pain because she enjoyed Samson the longest. She will now suffer the least (due to her elderly age and sooner death) following the lost opportunities associated with a now impossible Samson future following his betrayal, capture and crushing death in Dagon’s temple (Judges 16:18-31). In the normal course of events, she would have died sooner than Miriam (Olive Deering), Samson’s potential future wife according to DeMille, and therefore grieve the least amount of time (whereas

DeMille's Miriam will have decades of further grieving to come over her lost romantic and domestic opportunities).

[30] This ancient Israelite mother had the honour and delight of giving birth to a holy-chosen child, but she will have no grandchildren (a traditional motherly delight and comfort), whereas DeMille's Miriam will have no children at all from Samson, and therefore no interpersonal delight and comfort. Samson's mother will encounter no sexual frustration because she was married to Manoah and there was no incestuous intimacy between mother and son (the antithesis of good, not perverted motherliness), whereas Miriam will never have any sexual delights from Samson. As a cinematically crafted "good girl" whom DeMille modelled upon the "Virgin Mary" (Koury, 1959, p. 231), there was presumably no pre-marital sex. Unlike Samson who had disreputably engaged with the harlot of Gaza (Judges 16:1), thus earning the scholarly reputation of being a "brawny, bawdy, amoral adventurer" (Pressler, 2002, p. 208). DeMille had mentally conceived of his Samson as a "whoremonger" (Koury, 1959, p. 218), but he did not film this unwholesome sexual encounter, instead, he verbally suggested it. For example, at the beginning of the film, a Philistine soldier incredulously cried out to a defensive young Saul: "Samson!!...He saves his strength for the wenches!" DeMille's reference to "wenches" was also apt for this is an archaic name for "a prostitute" or "to frequent the company of prostitutes" (Hanks *et al.*, 1982, p. 1646). DeMille was being subtle about Samson's sexual indiscretions in the very act of loudly pointing them out to the audience! Overall, this DeMillean "little mother" has the greatest motherly attributes of all four Samson-related women (i.e., Hazel..., Delilah, Semadar, Miriam), which both the Scriptures and DeMille had reinforced in their various craft-like ways.

DeMille and the Naming of the Scripturally Unnamed

[31] DeMille did not formally name Samson's mother on-screen, as opposed to naming her "Hazeleponit" (Ringgold & Bodeen, 1969, p. 342) in off-screen cast lists, just like Rabbinical scholars who have variously named Manoah's wife as: "Hazeleponi" (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 162), "Zelelponi" (Lockyer, 1967, p. 186), "Zlelponi" (Bronner, 1993, p. 93), "Zlelponith" (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 162), "Zelalponit" (Amit, 1993, p. 148), and in *Pseudo-Philo* (Bib. Ant. 42) she is named "Eluma" (Reinhartz, 1993, p. 162). However, DeMille did *start* to name her on-screen in the ancient kitchen scene when Manoah excitedly referred to her as "Hazel..." when she cut him off in mid-stride in an apparently deliberate act of DeMillean engineered ambiguity (i.e., not poor production values).

[32] Why? Because DeMille-as-harmoniser was apparently covering all logical bases cinematically and extra-cinematically using four different approaches. Firstly, by *naming* her (in off-screen cast lists) in accordance with Rabbinical tradition. Secondly, by *not* naming her in on-screen dialogue (or in on-screen cast lists, as opposed to off-screen cast lists) in accordance with Christian biblical tradition. Thirdly, by *starting* to name her in on-screen dialogue in accordance with the tradition of DeMille-as-pop-culture-professional who stressed focusing upon concrete personalities (i.e., no unnamed personalities for important parts). And with the easier linguistic handle of "Hazel..." rather than tongue-tying, archaic sounding names like "Hazeleponit." Fourthly, to apparently smooth over various sacred text discrepancies. As Leila Leah Bronner (1993, p. 93) noted regarding "Zlelponi," the "name occurs in 1 Chron. 4.3 [as "Hazeleponi"] but is given to Samson's mother in *Num. R.* 10.5." At least DeMille's naming effort of "Hazel..." (Fay Holden) for Manoah's wife was a more serious academic nod to Jewish tradition than the apparently plucked-out-of-the-air names of

“Deborah” (Maria Schell) for Lee Philips’ 1984 *Samson and Delilah* and “Mara” (Diana Rigg) for Nicolas Roeg’s 1996 *Samson and Delilah*, even if these two on-screen names also had unrelated religious precedents elsewhere.

DeMille’s Emphasising of Hazel...’s Motherly Status

[33] DeMille had deliberately emphasised Hazel...’s motherly status on a number of occasions, for example, at the oasis love-nest when Delilah quizzed Samson regarding the secret of his strength (i.e., uncut hair). In the course of his willing explanation, Samson replied: “From the beginning my mother taught me so” thereby explicitly calling her “mother” (i.e., her relational status in its more formal form instead of a more affectionate form such as “mum,” “mom,” “mama” etc.). Samson’s answer also: (a) reinforced his educational dependency upon her (i.e., the usual nurturing, motherly role), (b) confirmed his matrilineal paternity (i.e., her biological mother status), and (c) kept his mother a mother by *not* giving her a personal name (or pet name) with which she could escape her social and biological category of motherhood, and in that act DeMille could legitimately claim that he was being scripturally authentic.

[34] Secondly, in an earlier scene when Samson was visiting his mother in her ancient kitchen, he appreciatively said: “Ummm, you’re the best cook in Zorah, little mother.” Thus, tagging his “little mother” as his mother doing what mothers do best in the iconic, archetypal location of mothers, the kitchen. The *Times* film reviewer thought that this particular piece of DeMilleian dialogue was “pure Hollywood” (Anonymous, 1949, p. 36) and by implication pure DeMilleian hokum and thus deplorable. Although the dialogue exhibited DeMille’s common touch trademark as the people’s director, it also correctly embodied one of the thematic essences of the scriptural character, especially Samson’s repeated avoidance of his mother’s personal name. Why did DeMille repeatedly stop Samson from naming his own mother? Presumably, to be consistent with scriptural tradition. As J. Cheryl Exum (1995, p. 79) argued: “this woman’s name is not preserved because she is remembered as a *mother*” that is, not as a woman/person, certainly not independent (like Delilah) since the Bible described her as Manoah’s wife (Judges 13:2), and therefore obediently subjugated to him. DeMille’s ancient kitchen setting was also apt because “the mother of Samson remain[s] clearly ensconced in the traditional domestic role” (Bronner, 1993, p. 95), the kitchen being universally symbolic of feminine domesticity.

Manoah’s Wife in Fine Art and Non-Canonical Texts

[35] The construction of DeMille’s motherliness for Manoah’s wife was certainly deliberate. Her crafted characterisation was in gross contradistinction to many fine arts examples and historical records that DeMille always liked to draw upon as an authenticity advocate. For example, Rembrandt’s painting *The Angel Ascending in the Flames of Manoah’s Sacrifice* depicted this biblical woman as elegant, thin, pious and apparently taller than her husband since her head is higher than Manoah’s although both are kneeling (Bredius & Gerson, 1969, p. 423). Manoah’s wife is usually considered by Scripture scholars to be “a wise woman...courageous and commonsensical in the face of the uncanny” (Camp, 2000, p. 106) and “more perceptive than her husband” (Exum, 2000, p. 246). Conversely, some scholars have considered her husband Manoah to be a “Bozo” (Bledstein, 1993, p. 49), “a schlemiel” and “inept” (Fuchs, 1999, p. 131), “Thick-headed” (Bledstein, 1993, p. 48), “a personality of no special importance, colorless and marginal” (Amit, 1993, p. 148). Therefore, Rembrandt’s engineered height discrepancy and reverential attitude of this honoured woman may have been

deliberately designed to convey her superior spirituality and piousness to complement the scriptural tradition of using “various devices to diminish his [Manoah’s] importance and to represent him as inferior to his wife” (Amit, 1993, p. 147). Interestingly, DeMille did not list the character Manoah or the actor Charles Evans in his on-screen cast list, nor is it in off-screen cast lists (Higashi, 1985, p. 106; Ringgold & Bodeen, 1969, p. 342). During dialogue he was only referred to as “father” (i.e., not Manoah) throughout the film, and so one wonders if DeMille was assisting the biblical wife’s reputation in a similar fashion by not naming him at all but naming her “Hazel...” (on-screen) and “Hazeleponit” (off-screen).

[36] DeMille also eschewed Flavius Josephus’ description of Manoah’s wife in Book V, Chapter 8 of *Antiquities of the Jews*. Here she is described as “a wife celebrated for her beauty, and excelling her contemporaries” (Curtin, 1998, p. 1). Why did DeMille avoid this beauty tradition? Presumably, because it would have clashed with his on-screen characterisation of the ravishingly beautiful Delilah and thus dilute his penchant for deep focus character binarism (Kozlovic, 2002b). And thus distract the audiences’ sexually focused gaze away from Delilah, “Samson’s famous paramour” (Weitzman, 2002, p. 161), “Samson’s lover-betrayer” (Pressler, 2002, p. 222) and DeMille’s primary screen icon of lust as the sexy sorceress of Sorek (Kozlovic, 2002a). Like DeMille’s Delilah, DeMille-the-dramaturge would not tolerate any sexy rivals, especially from a beautiful mother, while at the same time he was also committed to emphasising the motherly qualities of Manoah’s wife, which itself automatically implied sexlessness and homeliness.

DeMille’s Avoidance of the Barren Woman Issue and the Honouring of Ordinarity

[37] DeMille took Hazel...’s domestic, motherly characterisation to the point where he did not refer to her former barrenness (Judges 13:2), whether verbally, visually, directly, indirectly, on-screen, off-screen or voice-over. Nor did he show her being approached and witnessed to by an annunciation angel (Judges 13:3), as Nicolas Roeg had done in his 1996 *Samson and Delilah*. Or in any other way confirm that she was a divinely chosen person who was privileged to observe “the angel of the Lord ascend in the flames of the altar” (Judges 13:20) before eventually giving birth to Samson (Judg 13:24). So, in that DeMille editing process, he had in effect desacralised her and further normalised her mundane motherhood status.

[38] And yet, even by doing that, DeMille had not demeaned her for this was also the consequence of another authentic biblical interpretation of events. As J. Cheryl Exum (1985) argued:

The mother of Samson (Judges 13) differs from the mothers considered thus far in that she does not do anything to affect either her son’s or Israel’s destiny. In a sense, she is the most “ordinary” mother, and yet her story is a wonderful one, which affirms her as a person and as a mother (p. 82).

Therefore, DeMille’s main focus upon Hazel...’s ordinarity was authentic and appropriate, even if he also embellished the Scriptures with his own narrative trajectory, cinematic countercoherence strategy and/or hermeneutic of creative imagination.

[39] Scripturally speaking, this “ordinary” mother was still more honoured than her husband Manoah, which DeMille cinematically reflected by giving Hazel... more on-

screen time, and via better dialogue lines, than Manoah. Structurally speaking, her presence brackets the ancient kitchen scene from beginning to end. When the scene opens upon Samson's broad back, she is heard in the background starting to verbally scold him, and then later, she physically accosts him with her soup ladle. When Samson leaves her kitchen and walks out the door, the last image is of Hazel... worrying about his future (like a traditional Jewish mama) because he had seen a Timnath woman (a foreigner). These actions are traditional motherly concerns about loved offspring. Throughout her scenes, Hazel... spouts pearls of motherly wisdom interspersed with a range of equally motherly concerns. Her prime issue is Samson's correct marriage to one of his own race and faith (and not a foreign, pagan women from their current overlords).

[40] In effect, DeMille had cinematically defended the scriptural status of this ordinary, honoured mother in the same way as the Bible had done "by refusing to let her husband steal the limelight in spite of all his efforts, and by attributing to her a goodly share of theological insight" (Exum, 1985, p. 82). Albeit, variously wrapped in DeMillean motherly virtues, a Jewish mama temperament and homespun kitchen wisdom. Indeed, as Joel Samberg (2002, p. 62) comically noted about *Samson and Delilah*: "Of course, Victor Mature [Samson] eventually does take up with Hedy Lamarr [Delilah], who chops off his hair, rendering him weak and helpless. Before long he is blinded, tortured, and killed. Now there's one Jewish boy who should have listened to his mother!"

Some Speculative Practical Reasons for Avoiding the Miraculous Angelic Events of Judges 13

[41] One strongly suspects that DeMille did not cinematically depict Manoah, his wife and the angelic events of Judges 13, even though it is primarily devoted to her exploits (as opposed to Delilah's exploits in Judges 16:4-20), because Samson and Delilah were the central characters, and their love story was its primary focus (DeMille & Hayne, 1960, p. 364). As the film's title *Samson and Delilah* clearly verifies, it was *not* the story of Manoah's wife and friends, or even of Samson, but of *Samson and Delilah*! DeMille sold the story to Paramount via a sketch based upon "a young man with slim hips and the chest of an all-American fullback, with a scantily clad temptress looking saucily over her shoulder at the Biblical strong man. The wet-lipped executives nodded approvingly at this up-to-the-minute rendition of Samson and Delilah" (Koury, 1959, p. 196). Secondly, one also suspects that as a cost-conscious dramatist, DeMille did not want to waste money on expensive angelic special effects that would have detracted from his two human protagonists. And especially considering that during pre-production DeMille had argued: "Productions are going up to three and four million dollars. I want to do this picture for two million" (Koury, 1959, p. 217), and so something had to go.

[42] Thirdly, if angelic SPX were done, it could have warped the audience's narrative expectations by generating a desire for its holy return (scripturally unfulfilled). This may have generated disappointment and/or raised awkward incredulity questions about why it did not manifest to warn Samson in times of trouble, or protect his parents and the Danites from Philistine persecution etc. Theoretically speaking, if DeMille had established the filmic precedent of divine intrusion into the physical realm, then logically speaking, the audience would come to expect it as a *deus ex machina* plot device. Potentially more worrying, if this SFX angel existed, then why did it not come to Samson's rescue and stop him from being blinded, shackled and dragged off to the Gaza prison house to do the humiliating work of animals (Judges 16:21). Furthermore, why did it not prevent Samson's subsequent sporting torture in Dagon's temple (Judges

16:25), or save him from his eventual crushing death in the collapsing temple (Judges 16:25-30) etc., plus associated dialogue with valid theological underpinnings to justify itself? Fourthly, DeMille may not have wanted to overly complicate the characterisation of his Jewish mother given her relatively minor film role, especially considering that she was a disappointed woman, a privileged woman, a Godly woman, a happy woman, and a sorrowful woman (Lockyer, 1967, pp. 185-188). Scripturally speaking, she suffers a textual death after Samson's failed marriage to the Timnath woman (DeMille's Semadar), and DeMille does not screen her again after the kitchen conference, although he verbally mentions her at the oasis love-nest trap via Miriam.

[43] Fifthly, DeMille's practical decision would have avoided story-telling complications and potential incredulity issues in explaining why Samson did not instantly obey his mother's endogamy marriage wishes regarding non-Philistine women (i.e., DeMille's Philistine Semadar to be rejected in favour of DeMille's Danite Miriam), especially given God's clear thumbprint upon her forehead, Samson's holy mission as a consecrated "Nazarite to God" (Judges 13:7) and his subordination to her (as son) and God (as servant). Interestingly, as Leila Leah Bronner (1993, p. 95) pointed out, although the Bible does not specifically name her, the "rabbis give her a name in the usual midrashic fashion by creating a name that commemorates her encounter with the angel--the signal event of her life." Namely, "Zlelponi, for having turned her face (*pona*) to behold the angel" (p. 93), and thus emphasising the holy specialness of this ordinary woman who was not given a personal name by the Hebrew narrator.

DeMille's Honouring of the Ordinary Good Woman

[44] The correctness of DeMille's engineered ambiguity in not clearly naming her on-screen is scripturally reinforced considering that there are four Hebrew women who were formerly barren and gave birth after God's miraculous intervention, and they *were* personally named. These honoured women were: (a) **Sarah**, Abraham's wife and the mother of Isaac (Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7); (b) **Rebekah**, Isaac's wife and the mother of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-26); (c) **Rachel**, Jacob's wife and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis 30:1, 22-25; 35:16-18); and (d) **Hannah**, Elkanah's wife and the mother of Saul (I Samuel 1:1-28). Even if one limits consideration to just the Book of Judges, which is itself replete with female figurations, Manoah's wife is still not honoured as a person (as opposed to her motherly role), and only "four of these 19 individuals and collective female figures are endowed with personal names (Aschsah, Deborah, Jael, Delilah)" (Brenner, 1993, p. 10).

[45] As J. Cheryl Exum (1995) noted regarding Samson's women:

There are two kinds of women according to this story: the good (safe) woman and the bad (threatening) woman. The good woman is usually placed on a pedestal, as a mother or a virgin. She is idealized in her nonsexual role. The bad woman is defined by her sexuality: she is the sexually available, "wanton" (from the perspective of male ideology) woman, who arouses in men both desire and animosity (men blame *her* for *their* lust) (p. 78).

[46] Manoah's wife easily falls into the camp of good/safe women in this biblical tradition, which DeMille also reflected on-screen. Another reason why DeMille may not have referred to Hazel... 's initial barren state was because, scripturally speaking, it was not really a major issue:

Like other famous mothers, she is at first barren, but there are no indications that she regards her situation as critical. We are not told that she is old, as was Sarah, nor does she complain about childlessness, as does Rachel (Gen. 30:1). She does not pray for a son, as does Hannah (1 Sam. 1:11), nor does her husband pray for her as Isaac prayed for Rebekah. Nor does she take extraordinary measures to obtain children, like Sarah, Rachel, and Leah, who gave their maids to their husbands, or like Rachel, who used aphrodisiacs (Exum, 1985, p. 82).

Consequently, DeMille-the-filmmaker went from the ordinary to the stereotypic in Hazel...’s on-screen characterisation.

Hazel... as Stereotypic Jewish Mama

[47] To emphasise her motherly qualities further, DeMille portrayed her as mature (but not old), small (especially when physically contrasted against Samson and Manoah), plumpish, non-sexual, unerotic, and domestically located as she worked in her ancient kitchen holding a soup ladle and tending to food preparation. She occasionally stirred soup, and had stopped Samson grabbing various snacks (e.g., grapes), while she wore an apron on top of her coarse-looking working clothes. She is also portrayed as worried about her son’s choice of future wife: “What did I tell you. He wants to marry a Philistine!” as she exasperatedly cried out to her husband Manoah. She also expressed motherly concern for his future: “Ohhh Samson, what will come to you on the road you’re travelling?” and she is upset when Samson rejected her choice for his wife-to-be: “You turn away from Miriam who’s everything that’s good in your life!” As Joel Samberg (2000, p. 62) described her, she is a “Jewish mother who whines and complains rather tediously -- and not even about his [Samson’s] hair!”

[48] Indeed, DeMille had Samson’s mother intensely nagging him at home, and in one peak moment of frustration, she broke a soup ladle across his back and then blamed him for it! Interestingly, this scene was the reversed domestic equivalent of “men blaming women for their lust” which now becomes “mothers blaming sons for their frustrations.” The ladle itself is an iconic reference to cooking and motherhood, which visually reinforced her domestic status in tandem with Samson’s previous “little mother” affectation. This scene was echoed again in the barren hills when Samson-the-Philistine-outlaw called young Saul “little mother” because he worried when Delilah’s caravan came to the oasis (just as Hazel... had worried about Semadar). DeMille had thus crafted young Saul as both a mirror of Samson’s mother, as well as a visual and behavioural mirror of Samson himself. Subtextually speaking, the mother and son are as one, which again subtly reinforces the earthly biological paternity of Samson.

[49] Although DeMille’s broken kitchen utensil and accompanying events were not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures, they were in perfect harmony with the domestic mother theme, with Leila Leah Bronner (1993, p. 93) describing Manoah’s wife as “a real *yiddishe mama*.” Indeed, this same “little mother” theme was used in Lee Philips’ 1984 *Samson and Delilah* when Victor Mature, in a role reversal, played Samson’s father Manoah and he remarked: “When I was asked to play the role, I said, ‘If the price is right, I’ll play his mother.’ As it turned out, I was like a Yiddishe mama, anyway, running around yelling, ‘Don’t marry that girl!’” (Ragan, 1985, p. 133). At least DeMille’s character rendition of Hazel... was more accurate because it reinforced the mother-as-a-stereotypical-mother and not her patriarchal husband-as-a-comical-mother-

figure. Although Lee Philips' German-resonating Maria Schell played Samson's mother (called Deborah) in the beautiful, gentle, semi-regal, foreigner mould, she was not as homely, motherly or as memorable as DeMille's Fay Holden. Indeed, Nicolas Roeg's 1996 *Samson and Delilah* had Diana Rigg as his Samson's mother (called Mara) who was also in the beautiful, if noticeably aging, semi-regal mould, but unfortunately her performance was marred by echoes of her leather-clad Mrs Peel role from the 1960s cult TV series *The Avengers*.

[50] On the other hand, DeMille's effort was squarely in the stereotypic Hollywood tradition of Jewish mamas who are loving but exasperating. As Marsha Woodbury (1998) described (and justified) that ethnic stereotype:

The Jewish mother archetype is overprotective, loud-mouthed, and pushy. Part of the stereotype comes from the historical roots of Judaism, the closeness of the family, and the struggle for survival in a new country. The Jewish woman had to manage the family while her husband pursued religion, and consequently developed the strong personality and sharp business skills that make up her stereotype (p. 103).

[51] Scripturally speaking, this classical "good woman" whose role as mother was highlighted and her virtues underscored is deserving of pedestal-mounting status, and especially because of "her willingness to be a channel of God's care for the people. In the story of Samson no other character shows such faith and obedience to God" (Nowell, 1997, p. 76). Indeed, in the ancient kitchen, DeMille's Samson actually grabbed Hazel... with his bare hands and lifted her high into the air as if to mount her on some imaginary pedestal (plus demonstrate Samson's extraordinary strength). Not only had this good Danite mother chosen another good Danite woman for Samson (i.e., the unscriptural Miriam-as-wife-apparent), in doing so Hazel... underscored Miriam's domestic virtue when she claimed: "Miriam's hands are never idle." Hazel... also specifically mentioned the word "good" in the context of expressing Miriam's goodness to emphasise the "good woman" motif by another good woman (i.e., herself). This was another example of DeMille's repetitious, multi-layering predilections, and of course, DeMille needed to emphasise her good, motherly qualities simply because she was to be dramaturgically contrasted to Samson's outside love interests who had no domestic associations, which itself was another biblical strategy employed by DeMille in *Samson and Delilah*. As Carolyn Pressler (2002, p. 212) noted, Manoah's wife "serves as a foil not only to her less perceptive husband but also to the foreign women who will later be Samson's nemeses."

The Choice of Fay Holden as Samson's Mother

[52] What is the effect of the choice of Fay Holden for the part of Samson's "little mother?" Firstly, she was physically small, and so it made Samson look bigger, comparatively speaking, thus enhancing Samson's reputation for hugeness. Secondly, Holden-the-actor was a mother characterisation specialist that DeMille could eagerly capitalise upon. According to Ephraim Katz (1980, p. 569), Holden "was 40 years old by the time she made her screen debut in Hollywood... She played supporting roles in many films, often as a warm, devoted mum. Best remembered in the popular "Andy Hardy" series." For example, *Judge Hardy's Children*, *Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever*, *Life Begins For Andy Hardy*, *The Courtship of Andy Hardy*, *Andy Hardy's Double Life*, *Andy Hardy's Blond Trouble* and *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*. Once again, DeMille had correctly assessed the essence and trajectory of the biblical character. He then projected

that sacred theme into the character's clothing, props, dialogue and interpersonal behaviour, and then hired an actress, little mother Holden, who specialised in the specific quality he was trying to exhibit upon the screen. It was the film character equivalent of vertical integration within the business world, and DeMille was a master of it (Kozlovic, 2002b).

Conclusion

[53] DeMille was a far more subtle filmmaker and knowledgeable gender engineer than has hitherto been acknowledged. He went to great pains to ensure scriptural authenticity in his biblical epics, even if it meant consciously engineering stereotypic gender roles and deliberately choosing to accentuate the motherliness of this pious Israelite woman for dramatic effect. His amateur scholarly efforts added depth and authentic resonance to his films that made his work unique and strangely compelling. Not only was DeMille's deliberately engineered subtly a unique personal signature, a hidden stylistic trademark and an important filmmaking secret, but it was also indicative of a master artist worthy of the auteur tag. This particular skill helped propel DeMille far above his directorial peers and it helps explain both his continued Hollywood success (1913-1959) and his various biblical epic accolades. A closer, more sympathetic examination of DeMille's entire filmic *oeuvre* will provide an invaluable site for the investigation of both religious and gender stereotypes that will undoubtedly yield many more insights and delights unappreciated to date. Further research into DeMille Studies, pop culture constructions of biblical women, and the interdisciplinary field of religion-and-film is warranted, highly recommended, and certainly long overdue.

Endnotes

1. Many scholars have spelled Cecil's surname as "De Mille" or "de Mille" or "deMille" however, the correct professional spelling is "DeMille" (DeMille & Hayne, 1960, p. 6), and so it will be spelled herein throughout, unless being quoted.
2. There is not one DeMille but many DeMilles. His career was so long, complex and multi-faceted that to describe, let alone justify each aspect would be prohibitive. Therefore, neat and concise hyphenated compound terms will be used throughout to help disentangle his various roles, avoid needless repetition and alleviate reader boredom. This same principle will be applied to other characters and descriptive terms herein as appropriate.
3. The Authorized King James Version of the Bible (KJV aka AV) will be used throughout. DeMille frequently used this edition, especially in his early filmmaking days because of audience familiarity with it (Higashi, 1994, p. 180). Bracketed scriptural references will be employed throughout the work to reinforce the film-Bible parallels as appropriate.
4. A similar critical sensitivity and popular inquiring spirit is currently being experienced following the release of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (Rossiter, 2004).
5. Given that Samson is seen by many Christians as a proto Christ-figure (Crenshaw, 1978, pp. 139-140), there is also the potential argument that Samson's father Manoah may not have been his biological father in the same way that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus Christ. This New Testament holy leader was a human-divine hybrid of Mary and the Holy Ghost as recorded in Luke 1:35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (i.e., not the son of Joseph). This additional argument is of course redundant for Jewish scholars.

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Filmography

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Andy Hardy's Double Life (1942, dir. George B. Seitz)
Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever (1939, dir. W. S. Van Dyke II)
The Courtship of Andy Hardy (1942, dir. George B. Seitz)
Judge Hardy's Children (1938, dir. George B. Seitz)
The King of Kings (1927, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)
Life Begins For Andy Hardy (1941, dir. George B. Seitz)
Love Laughs at Andy Hardy (1946, dir. Willis Goldbeck)
The Passion of the Christ (2004, dir. Mel Gibson)
Samson and Delilah (1949, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)
Samson and Delilah (1984, dir. Lee Philips)

Samson and Delilah (1996, dir. Nicolas Roeg)

The Ten Commandments (1923, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

The Ten Commandments (1956, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

Wholly Moses! (1980, dir. Gary Weis)

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