

Knuckles, Bruised and Broken: Developing a Humanistic Philosophy in *Doctor Who* (2005-)

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Imagine, for a moment, a wall. The wall is massive, spanning the entire side of a vast but empty room. Jagged and luminous, the barrier is innumerable thick, made of a material even stronger than diamond. The room itself is naked; the dim light from the wall reflects off the surface of the polished stone floor, filling the space with a lackluster glow. Now imagine this room to be a prison, one so impressionable upon the psyche that it perverts itself into prison of the mind, a prison of the self. The only way out of this agonizing purgatory is to break through the wall. Beyond that wall is the truth. Beyond that wall is home. To break through the wall, then, is to define an identity, to discover something that has been sought after for a lifetime. The question, of course, is obvious: is it even possible to get through it? And if so, then how?

Introduction: What or Who is *Doctor Who*?

This situation is one in which the Doctor, the titular character of the long-running British science-fiction television show *Doctor Who*, eventually finds himself in. The show follows the Doctor, an alien “Time Lord” from the planet “Gallifrey,” as they travel through space and time, bringing human companions along with them. The program often deals with themes of fear, morality, and humanistic compassion, among many others. Humanism, as it is referred to here, is defined as “a philosophical position that values human life, needs, freedom of choice, [and] humane action” (AllSides Red Blue Dictionary). The use of pronouns, too, when it comes to talking about the Doctor is notably complicated; the Doctor, as an alien, has the ability to

“regenerate” right before they die, resulting in every cell in their body changing as they become an entirely new person with an entirely new body and personality. Because of this constant state of change that surrounds the character, as scholar Greg Littmann notes in “The Friends of a Time Lord” (part of Courtland Lewis and Paula Smithka’s essay compilation book *More Doctor Who and Philosophy: Regeneration Time*), “one of the few constants in the Doctor’s personality throughout [their] regenerations is [their] need for friends” (Littmann).

While the Doctor has had thirteen incarnations identifying themselves as a man, the current incarnation of the character—the 13th Doctor (played by Jodie Whittaker, who is not considered here because her run as the character is still in progress)—identifies as a woman. This unique plot device has resulted in a multitude of identity crises for the character, but it is also what has kept the show on the air for so long. *Doctor Who* began in 1963 with William Hartnell cast as the first incarnation of the Doctor; the show ran until 1989, when it was abruptly and unceremoniously cancelled. This era of the show (in addition to a 1996 TV movie) is often referred to as “Classic Who.” The show was revived in 2005 and has been on the air ever since, this period being referred to as “New Who.” In between Classic Who and New Who, taking place entirely offscreen, is the pivotal “Time War,” a conflict in which the Doctor fought (Chapman). The dark and sinister changes that result from the Doctor taking part in this war is something that is explored throughout New Who, acting as a catalyst for character development as the Doctor confronts their guilt in the face of regret. The decimating events of the Time War and the Doctor’s participatory role within them result in the character losing sight of a personal philosophy with which they can identify, instead choosing to adopt an ambiguously alien moral system similar to nihilism. Nevertheless, the human relationships that the Doctor forms throughout their New Who lifetimes act as their bridge to humanity, reigniting within the

character a sense of purpose as they themselves grow to embrace a fundamentally humanistic philosophy that presents viewers with a largely optimistic view of what it means to be human.

The 9th Doctor: Darkness, Cowardice, and the Road to Self-Acceptance

With the revival of the show in 2005, viewers are immediately introduced to Christopher Eccleston's 9th Doctor, an iteration of the character so tied down by guilt and self-loathing that his actions reflect an underlyingly dark and nihilistic moral code. In just the second episode of this first series, the Doctor's new and murky ambiguous ethical system is put directly on display when he stands silently by as the murderously evil Lady Cassandra dies, doing nothing to stop it. Instead of helping her—someone in need, despite of the things that she has done—he just stares. In his glare he deems her guilty, choosing to watch her die rather than try to prevent it. In this way, he acts as Cassandra's metaphorical executioner, sentencing her to death when it is well within his ability to save her. "Everything has its time and everything dies," he says, defending his actions ("The End of the World"). The Doctor, in that moment, sees something in Cassandra that he recognizes in himself. In his potent and ceaseless disgust, he makes a judgement that reflects exactly how he feels about the man he now is. With his actions in this episode (or, more accurately, the lack thereof), the Doctor demonstrates his belief that Cassandra's life, her malevolent behavior, and his actions to try to stop her are all completely meaningless. At the end of that same episode, the Doctor reveals why: "my planet's gone. It's dead. It burned...I'm the last of the Time Lords. They're all gone. I'm the only survivor" ("The End of the World"). The Doctor fought and killed in a war to defend his own people and ended up being the only one to survive. The psychological effects of that are certain to be completely devastating. Yet, the truth (as it is revealed to the viewer in a later episode) is that the Doctor did not just fight in the Time War but was the one to end it. The Doctor made a choice on the very

last day of the Time War to kill every single being involved—allies and enemies alike. He was the one who made Gallifrey burn. He was the one who massacred everyone, including the children. And he was the only one who survived (“Dalek”). The 9th Doctor, as the viewer is introduced to him, is a man whose core ethical principles are now rooted in his everlasting hatred of himself, in his lack of belonging and acceptance. It is only when he meets his human companion that his philosophy begins to develop into a more humanistic one.

It is in this first New Who series—the only one featuring the 9th Doctor—that the show introduces human companion Rose Tyler (Billie Piper), a character that comes to represent for the Doctor hope and humanity. Rose and the Doctor quickly form a strong emotional attachment in spite of what he did during the Time War. In the same episode where he watches Cassandra die, the Doctor reveals to Rose that “I’m left travelling on my own 'cos there’s no one else,” to which she replies, “there’s me” (“The End of the World”). This is the first real instance of Rose emotionally reaching out to the Doctor, telling him that she is there for him. In this crucial moment, Rose invites him to connect with her on a deeper level, despite his hatred of himself. It is once the Doctor lowers his walls, once he lets her in, that she accepts him and shows him the value of having someone—specifically a human—to connect with. In this way, the Doctor begins to associate feelings of hope, love, and compassion with the concept of being human.

Even though Rose teaches the Doctor to find joy in saving people again—something that she works to do throughout the entirety of this first series—that is not to say that the Doctor does not continue to struggle with his self-perception and scarily nihilistic moral system. In the episode entitled “Dalek,” the Doctor and Rose stumble upon a hidden museum of alien artifacts owned by someone who somehow found a living Dalek—a disturbingly evil and hateful blob-like creature encased in a cold metal killing shell. The Daleks are the race that the Time Lords

fought against during the Time War and were introduced way back in 1963, the concept behind them inspired by Nazi ideology (Masters). Again, the true scope of the Doctor's darkness is revealed when he smashes the Dalek with a sledgehammer, screaming "why won't you just die?" He does this because he learns that he was not the only one to survive Time War; this Dalek made it, too. The Dalek eventually escapes, massacring everyone inside the museum one by one. At the end of the episode, the Doctor, carrying an enormous weapon, stands across from the Dalek, Rose the only thing standing in between them. The Doctor wants to kill it, pointing out that it has slaughtered hundreds of innocent people. Rose responds by saying that the Dalek is not the one holding the gun. She then goes on to ask him what he is changing into, making him look inwards to see what he has really become as a result of his dark experiences. The Doctor eventually puts down his weapon, convinced by Rose's appeal ("Dalek"). In this way, Rose acts as the Doctor's anchor to humanity, convincing him not to kill the Dalek in a plea of compassion. It is not that the Doctor is evil; rather, as Christopher Gadsden notes in his essay "Every Lonely Monster Needs a Companion" (also a part of Lewis and Smithka's compilation), "what we have is a man who loves the good as much as ever, but simply can't see the good" (Gadsden). Rose has made the Doctor realize that there is a fundamentally wide separation between what he wants to represent and wholeheartedly believe in—kindness—and what he actually does—darkness; however, he begins to see Rose as his way back. Rose becomes the Doctor's closest connection he has made since the War, so much so that her deeply humanistic beliefs begin to affect the Doctor himself.

The finale of this first series displays the true scope of the Doctor's growth, showing how he has changed during his time with Rose. Towards the end of this two-part finale, the Doctor is faced with a choice: he can blow up a space station filled with thousands of Daleks (who

somehow survived the war), killing them once and for all, or he can choose to not blow it up, sparing everyone else on the ship—including a substantial group of humans. This is a dilemma that intentionally parallels the choice that the Doctor made during the Time War—to, with the simple push of a button or flip of a switch, commit an act of genocide. The Dalek Emperor, who the Doctor is facing off against, then proceeds to ask him a question that further defines the parameters of this choice: “what are you, coward or killer?” Yet, the Doctor consciously changes his mind, making the opposite decision that he did during the Time War. “Coward,” he responds. “Any day.” Here, the Doctor begins to choose life rather than death, hope rather than the ultimate form of destruction. Later, he does not even hesitate to sacrifice himself for Rose when her life is put in peril, bringing himself to the brink of death (“Bad Wolf”/“The Parting of the Ways”). In these episodes, the Doctor passes the ultimate test of growth: when faced with the same decision that he made before—one that he ultimately regrets—he changes his mind, factoring in what he has learned from Rose about what it means to act with humanity. When Rose’s life is in danger, too, the Doctor is happy to save her even if it means the death of this version of themselves. It is when the Doctor is actually dying, however, that he shows the true value of this growth. “Before I go, I just want to tell you, you were fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. And do you know what? So was I” (“The Parting of the Ways”). With this line, the Doctor proves to Rose and to himself that he is beginning to, even if it is just a little bit, accept who they really are, grounding themselves in some form of self-acceptance. Here, the Doctor is saying that he is proud to be trying to find out who they really are and what they truly believe in, thanking Rose for her part in helping him do so. The 9th Doctor ends his life having saved an entire space station full of humans, demonstrating his newfound understanding of the value of a life. He has also sacrificed himself in order to save someone he cares about, arguably the ultimate demonstration of humane action.

Nevertheless, all of these characteristics of humanistic development that he has undergone stem from the experiences that he has had with Rose.

The 10th Doctor: (Not) Being Human

To some degree, the 10th Doctor (played by David Tennant) is an iteration of the character ironically representative of a step backward in terms of embracing a humanistic philosophy. Throughout his three series (plus a multitude of specials), the 10th Doctor tries extremely hard to be something that he is not—a human—rather than allowing others to embrace him for who he really is. This version of the Doctor carries himself under the veneer of humanity, acting like the charming young man that he knows Rose will be drawn to. Perhaps this is why so many viewers identify David Tennant's Doctor as their favorite (Comtois). Regardless, the Doctor cannot help but reject anything that identifies him as fundamentally alien, twisting the 9th Doctor's final proclamation of self-acceptance into a form of vanity that rejects any description of who he really is or how he really feels. The true nature of this veil that the Doctor uses to shroud himself in is revealed in one episode where the Doctor is ambiguously referred to as "a wanderer....the man without a home. The lonely god," a description which visually perturbs him ("New Earth"). On the surface level, the Doctor is in no way lonely; even though it takes Rose a little while to accept this new version of them, he and Rose grow even closer throughout the second series. In turn, however, with serving Rose as a symbolic representation of humanity, the Doctor begins to increasingly identify with being human. Yet, the Doctor remains the last of his kind, something that he refuses to admit even to himself. In short, as the Doctor acts under the guise of humanity, he cannot help but lose sight of who he really is, preventing him from developing humanistically.

A good indication, therefore, of the Doctor's development in terms of his humanistic philosophy is how he acts when his connection to humanity is severed. In his aforementioned essay, Gadsden goes on to claim that "if you've watched a season or two, you know that the Doctor needs his companions in order to safeguard against emotional and moral meltdown...when the Time Lord dares to travel alone, the chances of an ethical train-wreck increase exponentially" (Gadsden). Thus, in the finale of this second series, when Rose gets trapped in a closed off parallel universe, seemingly separated from the Doctor forever ("Doomsday"), the result is an emotionally devastated and dangerous Doctor. With Rose gone, the Doctor is now effectively on his own, mourning the loss of someone he loved even if he never got the chance to say it. In this sense, he is now both literally and metaphorically lonely, a state that he somehow must process at the same time as dealing with a planetary crisis during the 2006 Christmas special. During this episode, which introduces future series four companion Donna Noble (Catherine Tate), the Doctor traps a malicious alien and her children inside a flooding building, standing there completely unphased as he watches them die ("The Runaway Bride"). This chillingly nihilistic action situates the Doctor in a similar place to where he was before (and in the early days of) meeting Rose, when he did the same thing to Cassandra. In other words, after losing Rose, the Doctor has fallen back on the crutch of his ambiguous moral code. It is Donna who eventually snaps him out of this dark trance, telling him that "you can stop now." Later, at the end of the episode, the Doctor offers to have Donna travel with him as his new companion, an offer that she ultimately ends up refusing. "That place was flooding and burning and they were dying, and you were stood there like, I don't know, a stranger." She does say one more thing to the Doctor before he leaves, though. "Just promise me one thing. Find someone." The Doctor replies to this by flatly stating that "I don't need anyone," a statement to

which Donna responds by saying, “yes, you do. Because sometimes, I think you need someone to stop you” (“The Runaway Bride”). Donna, despite not having known the Doctor for long, catches a glimpse of his darkest self and recognizes that he has to have someone—a human—to keep him from becoming cloudily amoral. She understands that the Doctor, while completely well-intentioned, needs someone to stop him from acting on this darkness, someone to ground him to humanity because he does not yet understand what it means to be a humanist. Thus, the 10th Doctor has not yet developed his own humanistic philosophy to the point where he can act this way without using his companions as a bridge.

Nonetheless, even as the Doctor finds his new companion in the form of Martha Jones (Freema Agyeman), his own self-involvement continues to stunt his humanistic growth. Throughout his time with Martha, the Doctor frequently ignores her even as she begins to develop feelings for him, instead choosing to wallow in self-pity after losing Rose. This dynamic culminates in the two-parter “Human Nature”/“The Family of Blood,” in which the Doctor actually physically becomes human. As he and Martha are being chased by an alien family (the Family of Blood) with a very short lifespan, the Doctor decides that the only way to effectively hide is to biologically mask himself. Using a “Chameleon Arch,” he rewrites his biology as a Time Lord, making himself into the human John Smith instead. Becoming human, he claims, is the only way to get the Family off his scent because they can smell his long lifespan—that is what they are after. John Smith is therefore not a Time Lord but a man and has no idea that he was ever the Doctor. An entire life story has been fabricated for him; he has even been set up with a job, teaching at an English soldier academy for boys in the year 1913. Martha, meanwhile, is forced to masquerade as a maid for the school; the Doctor’s lack of consideration for how his actions affect her are obvious as she has to deal with both racism and sexism throughout the

story. On top of this, the Doctor even tasks Martha with the job of watching over him and changing him back into a Time Lord if necessary, something that John Smith later realizes the true implications of, saying that “your job was to execute me.” The Family, meanwhile, finds the Doctor’s general location and brutally slaughters several local people as they continue their hunt (“Human Nature”/“The Family of Blood”). Indeed, it is possible that the Doctor chose to become human because it was the only way to hide from the Family. This, he seemingly implies, is the “kinder” option as opposed to just killing them. However, it is even more likely that there was part of him that had been looking for an opportunity to use the Chameleon Arch just because he wanted to know what it felt like to be human. In the end, the choice about whether to live as John Smith or die so the Doctor can save the day is up to John Smith himself. “I’m John Smith,” he says. “That’s all I want to be. John Smith, with his life, and his job, and his love. Why can’t I be John Smith?” (“The Family of Blood”). Notably, this line can be read in two ways: one as Smith saying it, and the other as the Doctor. The Doctor desperately wants John Smith’s life; it is evident that he wants to be human very badly despite the fact that he cannot and can never actually permanently do so. By temporarily doing it, though, he is frantically trying to fill the large, human-sized hole that Rose left within him. Eventually, John Smith chooses to “die” so that the Doctor can save the day, confronting the Family and blowing up their spaceship. “He never raised his voice,” narrates a member of the Family. “That was the worst thing. The fury of the Time Lord. And then we discovered why. Why this Doctor, who had fought with gods and demons, why he’d run away from us and hidden. He was being kind.” The “kindness” that the Doctor shows the Family (at least, from this point on) is a dark and perverted one, sentencing them all to live forever in separate but eternal prisons (“The Family of Blood”). In short, this story functions to question the Doctor as the ultimate authority to decide between what is right

and what is wrong. Kevin S. Decker, the author of *Who Is Who?: The Philosophy of Doctor Who*, elaborates on this point, saying that “the Doctor’s role as the ultimate outsider complicates the evaluation of his moral choices” (Decker). Technically, eternal life *is* what the Family wanted, but to some degree, it seems like the truly kinder option in comparison to sentencing them to a state of never-ending imprisonment would just be to kill them. He does, in a way, act with kindness here, but that kindness is violently grotesque, nihilistic, and, counterintuitively, involves factoring himself into the equation as the most important variable. In these episodes, the Doctor is selfish; never, at any point in the story, did the Doctor put anybody first besides himself. *He* is the one that wanted to be human, and as a result, many innocent people died because of that. At some point along the way, he lost himself in the complexity of his veil, the intricacy of his mask. As a result of this, the Doctor is quick to bring out his inner darkness, regardless of his connection to Martha. Because, in this story, when he is challenged morally, emotionally, and existentially by the Family of Blood, it is not the Doctor who answers this challenge but rather “the lonely god.” And, when he gets angry at them, they do not end up facing the wrath of a kind man but rather the “fury of [a] Time Lord.” It is in this third series that the Doctor falls, taking a massive step backward in terms of his development into a kind and compassionate humanist; even his connection to Martha, his human companion, is unable to stop him from reverting to his dark and nihilistic self.

That is not to say, however, that the 10th Doctor is incapable of moving forward in regards to finding his humanistic (but not human) self. At the end of the third series, Martha amicably leaves the Doctor, prompting Donna from “The Runaway Bride” to join him as his new companion. The Doctor and Donna quickly establish an extremely close but completely platonic friendship, reinspiring within the Doctor the desire to save people again. Donna reminds the

Doctor just how good it feels to be the man who helps rather than the man who hurts. One strong example of this is in one episode that takes place in Pompeii during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, when the Doctor is convinced that he has to leave without saving a single person for the sake of not disrupting a “fixed point in time.” Donna, teary and heartbroken, pleads with him, appealing to his humanity by saying, “just someone. Please. Not the whole town. Just save someone.” The Doctor eventually complies, going back to save a family that he and Donna had grown close to during the course of the episode despite the ramifications that this might have on time (“The Fires of Pompeii”). In this situation and throughout the fourth series, Donna acts as the Doctor’s anchor to what it means to be human, literally begging him to go back and save someone in an act of humanity. If Donna had not been there to remind him of the value of a human life, then the Doctor would have abandoned that family and left them there to die. Here, he learns that saving a life is more important than prioritizing the rules of time, something that goes directly against his innate Time Lord philosophical instinct. Donna is in this way his bridge to humanity, and through her he is able to find his purpose again. In short, Donna reminds the Doctor of the lessons that Rose has taught him about humanism but also works to expand upon them, too. While, during the course of many episodes, the Doctor tends to get sucked into the overarching plot, Donna gets personal with her fellow characters, reaching out to them with a moving blend of compassion and empathy. This is something that the Doctor takes note of as he begins to understand that one does not have to be human to act with humanity, regardless of his ever-present desire to be human.

As the 10th Doctor again loses every one of his metaphorical ties to humanity, this time leaving behind all of his past New Who companions—Rose in the parallel universe, Martha living her own life, and Donna forced to forget the Doctor for her own safety—the Doctor’s

development pertaining to humanism is once more put to the test. In the special “The Waters of Mars,” the Doctor travels to the future, completely on his own, to a human base on Mars. At some point during the episode, he remembers that the base ends up exploding, inspiring a new age of space exploration dedicated to the crew who perished in the explosion. Despite this, motivated by his admiration for Captain Adelaide Brooke (Lindsay Duncan), whose future granddaughter is destined to pioneer this new age of space travel, as well as by the rest of her crew and his recognition of their lives as valuable, the Doctor decides to abandon the rules that generally restrict him. This leads to him screaming that “there are laws. There are laws of time. Once upon a time there were people in charge of those laws, but they died. They all died. Do you know who that leaves? Me! It's taken me all these years to realize the laws of time are mine, and they will obey me!” Eventually, after saving as many of the remaining crew members as possible and thus interfering with a fixed point in time crucial to the future of the human race, the Doctor says to Adelaide that “for a long time now, I thought I was just a survivor, but I'm not. I'm the winner. That's who I am. The Time Lord Victorious.” Adelaide stands her ground, telling him that “this is wrong, Doctor. I don't care who you are. The Time Lord Victorious is wrong.” Knowing the importance of her death in inspiring her granddaughter—something that the Doctor told her—Adelaide realizes that without it, humanity will never be motivated to travel the stars. So, as she returns home, she kills herself, resetting history to the way that it should be. The Doctor is shocked by this, realizing the true sum of his actions as he admits to himself that “I've gone too far” (“The Waters of Mars”). While the Doctor is admittedly quite scary as the Time Lord Victorious, his actions during this episode are motivated solely by his desire to save the people on the Mars base. He may have “gone too far,” but if this is now the Doctor at their darkest, then even then they prioritize saving lives. This is a dramatic step forward for the

character, as their darkest moments in the past were defined by complete inaction in the face of a life or lives in peril. The exact moment that Captain Adelaide Brooke dies, the Doctor learns a very valuable lesson, one that will come to shape how he understands humanism in all of their future incarnations: power is not the path to kindness—compassion is. The only way they can get there, it seems, is to keep developing relationships with their companions, to keep learning. Says Gadsden, “the presence of a companion checks the corruption caused by the Doctor’s immense power” (Gadsden). In his final episode, while on the brink of death, the Doctor decides to visit each and every one of their previous New Who companions to say goodbye. He even visits Rose before she knew him, just so that he could see her one last time (“The End of Time: Part 2”). With the death of the 10th Doctor, the character gives up hope of ever truly becoming human. But, that does not mean that they give up hope in becoming a *humanist*. Thus, in his final episode, the 10th Doctor learns to choose love and compassion, learning also to drop his veil—even if it is just a little; both of these choices take their inspiration from the relationships that he has formed with his human companions so far.

The 11th Doctor: Family, Growth, and Fish Fingers and Custard

The 11th Doctor (played by Matt Smith) represents for the character an exponentially more alien version of themselves, channeling his innate otherness into the alluring traits of quirkiness and awkwardness that, while not necessarily exhibiting a fully accurate representation of the Doctor’s truest self, still allow for a more authentic glimpse at who they really are. If one imagines a spectrum of the Doctor’s “alienness,” with a human-like Doctor on the one side and a raw, alien Doctor on the other, then the 11th Doctor would, so far, be the closest there has been in New Who to the more alien side. In general, across all three of his series (but specifically in the fifth), the 11th Doctor is commonly characterized as strange and whimsical, painting him more as

a figure in a magical fairy tale rather than the ancient, lonely alien that he really is. From his very first episode, the way that he goes about channeling his intrinsic alienness into bizarre idiosyncrasies is made evident when the Doctor, after trying a multitude of foods in an attempt to satisfy his post-regenerative craving, settles on a weird but eccentric combination of “fish fingers and custard” (“The Eleventh Hour”). That is not to say, however, that the 11th Doctor completely reveals to his companions his innermost understanding of themselves; while the Doctor claims to be over 900 years old, this version of himself, much like the 10th Doctor, is quite young. Matt Smith was only 26 years old when he was cast as the last of the Time Lords, the youngest actor to ever play the character (Wicks). The presence of this underlying dichotomy between how old the Doctor actually is versus exactly how old he appears to be still implies the existence of a veil, though by displaying more aspects of just how alien he is, this veil is made out to be less thick than it was for both the 9th and the 10th Doctors, paving the way for the 11th Doctor to establish more genuine connections with his companions.

For the 11th Doctor, these relationships that he forms with his original companions eventually grow to become familial ones (both literally and metaphorically), marking the existence of what are arguably the character’s strongest ties to humanity to date. The Doctor is initially joined by primary companion and best friend Amy Pond (Karen Gillan), who later brings along her husband Rory Williams (Arthur Darvill) to travel along with them. River Song (Alex Kingston), the Doctor’s future wife, sometimes joins this “crew” in their adventures; it is this group that he grows extremely close with, all of them having some degree of varying understanding about who he really is. The idea of this being the Doctor’s family is even toyed with as an overarching plot of series six, when River is revealed to be the future daughter of Amy and Rory, thus making the Doctor technically their son-in-law. Every single member of this

“family” shows the Doctor love, kindness, and respect, something that he responds to by trying to mirror in his own actions. Nonetheless, it is Amy who the Doctor remains closest with, her belief in him pushing him to be kinder and to act more and more out of love. In this way, Amy acts as the Doctor’s most potent bridge to humanity, constantly encouraging him to embody the aspects of humanism that have long escaped him. When her life is jeopardized during the middle of the sixth series, then, how the Doctor reacts is quite indicative of where his progress is in terms of developing humanistic beliefs of and on his own. After Amy is kidnapped in a massive ploy to try to kill the Doctor, the Doctor and Rory angrily track down her location to a galactic military base, eventually having to confront an entire army. Despite the fact that the Doctor’s anger is justified—his best friend has just been kidnapped and is being held hostage all in an effort to try to get to him—the way that he raids the base is completely nonviolent, prompting him to be referred to as a “good man” multiple times throughout the episode. Yet, the Doctor also steadfastly refuses to accept this title, claiming instead that “good men don’t need rules. Today is not the day to find out why I have so many” (“A Good Man Goes to War”). The events of this episode communicate that there has been a dramatic amount of growth within the Doctor, specifically in the effort to find the humanism that they so desperately seek. Even without Amy next to him telling him to stop when he needs to and to be kind when he does not, the Doctor puts in a sincere effort to get her back without hurting a single person in the process—even those who are trying to kill him. This greatly demonstrates the Doctor’s newfound understanding of the value of a life and what it means to carry himself with humane action. Indeed, while he is dark and angry, he is not inhumane or nihilistic, marking an extreme difference between him and the darkness of his previous incarnations. Nevertheless, the Doctor is still being held back by his hatred of himself, incapable of finding self-forgiveness for his actions during the Time War. As a

result, he is unable to wholeheartedly accept the title of “good man” and therefore fully believe in the humanism that he tries so badly to practice. This is because there is a distinct and important difference between doing something just because it should be done and doing it because it is something to be believed in, and humanism as a philosophy demands to be believed in.

Nevertheless, in a lot of ways, the Doctor’s initial relationship with Amy makes it so that he does not have to believe in this humanism but instead just act upon his understanding of it. Amy sees the Doctor as a hero, a savior, rather than who he really is. In an essay included in the book *The Language of Doctor Who: From Shakespeare to Alien Tongues* (compiled by Jason Barr and Camille D. G. Mustachio) called “The Doctor and Amy Pond,” author Michael Billings elaborates on this dynamic, claiming that “the relationship between the Eleventh Doctor...and Amelia Pond...is a dialogic between the hero and the author...the Doctor exists and is defined through Amy Pond’s story” (Billings). This belief that Amy has in him—tying back to the theme of fairy tales—is what the Doctor tends to fall back on as reassurance, especially because he does not find the same belief within himself. All of this changes, however, during one episode in the sixth series where the Doctor, Amy, and Rory face off against a monster that feeds off of faith. In order for Amy to survive, the Doctor must convince her to let go of her unwavering belief in him. “Forget your faith in me,” he tells her. “I took you with me because I was vain. Because I wanted to be adored. Look at you. Glorious Pond, the girl who waited for me. I’m not a hero. I really am just a madman in a box. And it’s time we saw each other as we really are” (“The God Complex”). In this critical moment, both the Doctor and Amy let go of this vision of him as the archetypal “hero.” It is a moment of extreme catharsis for the characters, as they come to see that “the Doctor” should not be romanticized or idealized but instead seen as who they really are. It is

once the Doctor accepts this that he is finally able to find some inclination of self-acceptance (similar to the 9th Doctor's experience) and more genuinely connect with humanistic ideals, realizing that while he is not a "hero," that does not in any way stop him from trying to be.

The fact that he makes this discovery with Amy and Rory by his side makes it even more tragic when he ends up losing them both in the same episode ("The Angels Take Manhattan"). While the Doctor typically becomes dark and nihilistic after losing their companions, this time, the 11th Doctor instead chooses to become a lonely hermit, refusing to help save anyone ever again. "The Doctor doesn't help people," admits one of his friends assisting him in his isolation. "Not anyone, not ever. He stands above this world and doesn't interfere in the affairs of its inhabitants. He is not your salvation, nor your protector...He was different once, a long time ago...but he suffered losses which hurt him. Now he prefers isolation to the possibility of pain's return" ("The Snowmen"). The Doctor has given up after losing his family, the people that he cared for most in the entire universe. He had found love and acceptance and lost it just as they always do. It only took one single instant for his whole connection to humanity to evaporate. So, he does not have the capacity nor the energy to open himself up again to the outside world. He has come as close as he has ever been to connecting with humanism, but lost it again as the overwhelming pain of losing his friends overshadows what they have taught him.

It takes meeting his new companion Clara Oswald (Jenna Coleman) to bring the Doctor back somewhere close to where he was before, clinging to the kindness that he once tried so hard to act upon. Clara and the Doctor's relationship quickly becomes a flirtatious one, making the Doctor feel both special and wanted again. Yet, the Doctor still continues to house self-hatred for the things that they have done in the past. In "The Name of the Doctor," it is revealed that the Doctor had an extra incarnation—the War Doctor (played by John Hurt)—in between his 8th and

9th incarnations; this is the incarnation that actually fought in the Time War and did the atrocious things that he cannot help but regret. The Doctor has buried this incarnation so far within themselves that Clara only finds out about it when she enters his timestream to save him. The 11th Doctor, interacting with his past self, listens as the War Doctor tries to justify what he did, claiming that “what I did, I did without choice...in the name of peace and sanity,” referring to his decision to burn Gallifrey. The 11th Doctor responds to this hatefully, saying, “but not in the name of the Doctor” (“The Name of the Doctor”). The fact that the Doctor has subconsciously buried this version of themselves shows just how much self-hatred they possess, as they cannot even recognize an entire life which they have lived. This leads into the 50th anniversary special, “The Day of the Doctor,” where everything that is known about the character is challenged. In this episode, it is revealed that the War Doctor, with the help of the 10th and 11th Doctors, did not actually blow up Gallifrey but rather trapped it in a pocket dimension where it could be kept safe. Notably, it is Clara who convinces the three Doctors to save Gallifrey instead of burning it, acting as the new link to humanity. But, because the three Doctor’s timelines intersected so complicatedly, all of their incarnations between the War Doctor and the 11th Doctor (Matt Smith’s Doctor now being able to remember the truth) will go on believing that they blew up Gallifrey, committing genocide. Before they part, however, the 11th Doctor tells the War Doctor that “you were the Doctor more than anybody else...on the day it wasn’t possible to get it right” (“The Day of the Doctor”). The Doctor has now accepted themselves as much as they possibly can; they still fought and killed in the Time War, but he now recognizes that the person who did that was still the Doctor, that Gallifrey—his home—is still out there somewhere because they never burned it. They were never the one who killed the Time Lords, nor were they the one who killed the children. They were always the Doctor. In this essential episode, the Doctor comes to

see that self-acceptance is the true path to humanism—that is what they have been missing. “We all change, when you think about it,” the Doctor remarks as he, one episode later, is about to regenerate. “We’re all different people all through our lives. And that’s okay, that’s good, you’ve got to keep moving, so long as you remember all the people that you used to be...I will always remember when the Doctor was me” (“The Time of the Doctor”). With the Doctor’s new understanding of self-acceptance, they remove their veil, letting their true alien identity bleed completely through their newly regenerated self.

The 12th Doctor: Midnight on the Clock of Selves

The 12th Doctor (played by Peter Capaldi) is unequivocally the most alien version of the character that there has ever been in New Who, presenting himself without any kind of veneer other than themselves. Returning to the idea of a spectrum measuring the Doctor’s alienness, then just as the 10th Doctor represents one end of the spectrum—the human side—the 12th Doctor serves as the boundary for the other, alien side. In other words, the Doctor cannot get any more alien than Peter Capaldi’s rendition. The 12th Doctor is also significantly older than all past New Who incarnations; Capaldi was 55 years old when he was cast as the character, unlike the younger Christopher Eccleston, David Tennant, and Matt Smith (Jackson). Thus, by not making any attempt whatsoever to hide the truth about his age and nature, the 12th Doctor remains the truest version of the character in New Who. This is something explored in the first episode of the eighth series—Capaldi’s first—in which Clara has trouble accepting the 12th Doctor because of just how different he is. Clara, in conversation with one of the Doctor’s friends about his regeneration, explains that “you said [he] renewed...he doesn't look renewed. He looks older.” The Doctor’s friend, Madame Vastra (Neve McIntosh), says that the reason the Doctor looked young was “the oldest reason there is for anything. To be accepted.” She tells Clara that “he is

the Doctor. He has walked this universe for centuries untold, he has seen stars fall to dust. You might as well flirt with a mountain range...the young man disappeared, the veil lifted. He trusted you. Are you judging him?" Indeed, the Doctor is no longer the "dashing young gentleman friend" that Clara knew him to be. But, truthfully, that was never who they were either. The Doctor took a risk to show her and everybody else their truest self. They have spent so long as somebody else, however, that, as Madame Vastra points out to Clara, "the Doctor needs us, you more than anyone. He is lost in the ruin of himself, and we must bring him home" ("Deep Breath"). As this version of himself, the Doctor is much colder, more logical, and more calculated in everything that he does. He is not in the business of expressing empathy, even when someone dies, but will do everything in his power to save those that remain. It is not that the Doctor does not feel things; rather, he just struggles to express how he feels because he knows that if he does, it could result in him experiencing pain again. In this way, the Doctor is still withholding from connecting with others after the loss of Amy and Rory. Having masked themselves for so long with so many different identities, the Doctor, throughout this eighth series, struggles to find his footing as himself. Nevertheless, as the Doctor continues this journey of self-discovery, he finds more and more that the fundamentals of his identity—factoring in their experiences with all of their companions throughout New Who—lies in saving people. With this realization, he again opens himself up to true human connection, experiencing this in his friendship with Clara. The Doctor no longer helps people because he knows that he probably should. Now, he does it because he knows that it is right. "I'm the Doctor, and I save people," he proclaims in an episode of the ninth series ("The Girl Who Died"). The 12th Doctor evolves into an extraordinarily kind man, showing forgiveness even in the face of insane brutality. Trying to talk down a murderous alien (rather than threatening to kill her) who is moments away from

extinguishing the entire human race, the Doctor begins by telling the alien that “you're all the same, you screaming kids. You know that? Look at me, I'm unforgivable. Well, here's the unforeseeable. I forgive you. After all you've done, I forgive you.” The alien claims that the Doctor could never understand their plight, to which he responds by saying that “I don't understand? Are you kidding? Me? Of course I understand. I mean, do you call this a war? This funny little thing? This is not a war! I fought in a bigger war than you will ever know. I did worse things than you could ever imagine. And when I close my eyes I hear more screams than anyone could ever be able to count! And do you know what you do with all that pain? Shall I tell you where you put it? You hold it tight till it burns your hand, and you say this. No one else will ever have to live like this. No one else will have to feel this pain. Not on my watch!” The Doctor explains that he came to this understanding by “[letting] Clara Oswald get inside my head. Trust me. She doesn't leave,” and the alien is eventually talked down (“The Zygon Inversion”). The Doctor, in this speech, uses the ultimate human plea: the plea for kindness. Yet it is Clara who has motivated the Doctor to act with such kindness, something that even he realizes. She has allowed him to develop into someone that they have always wanted to be. By releasing his raw, uncensored self to the universe, the Doctor is finally able to take huge steps in finding the humanistic belief system that he has so long been looking for a way to encapsulate, all with Clara by his side to aid him.

Nonetheless, by being their wholly unfiltered self, the Doctor simultaneously forgets that when he experiences loss, the true scope of their darkness reemerges, preventing him from fully adopting the humanistic philosophy that he is so close to achieving. In the first of the ninth series' three-part finale, Clara is marked for death after trying to act too much like the Doctor and independently taking charge of a dangerous situation. The Doctor, reactionarily, approaches

the person responsible for the mark and demands that “you will save Clara, and you will do it now, or I will rain hell on you for the rest of time...I can do whatever the hell I like. You've read the stories. You know who I am. And in all of that time, did you ever hear anything about anyone who stopped me...The Doctor is no longer here! You are stuck with me. And I will end you, and everything you love.” While the Doctor’s threats are objectively terrifying, no one can prevent Clara’s death and the Doctor once again loses his best friend, the only person who ever truly understood this version of them and who made him feel like themselves (“Face the Raven”). Once again, the Doctor has allowed moral ambiguity and nihilism to emerge as his underlying philosophy, resorting to darkness in a panicked last-ditch effort to save Clara. With this, Clara has become just another example of the Doctor’s pain. She has become nothing more than a memory. And yet, the Doctor must quickly move on as he is forcibly teleported away, leading into an episode that, of all of the New Who stories, most poignantly showcases the Doctor as a fundamentally humanist-seeking character (“Face the Raven”).

In the next episode, “Heaven Sent,” the Doctor gets teleported into a shifting labyrinthian castle, alone, where he becomes a prisoner with no means of escape. “In more than fifty years of adventuring,” Gadsden notes, “the Doctor has only had nine televised adventures without a regular companion” (Gadsden). This is one of those episodes. Still struggling with his overwhelming grief from the loss of Clara, the Doctor tries to hold himself together enough to find a way out. He soon discovers, however, that he is being slowly chased all throughout the castle by a monster quite purposefully named “the Veil.” The Veil represents everything that the Doctor has tried to rid themselves of: their anger, their grief, their pain, and the past illusions of themselves. The Veil is a representation of how the Doctor has kept themselves hidden; it is no mistake that it is the “monster” of the story, taking the shape of a nightmare that the Doctor had

when they were a child. It is always behind him, always chasing him. The only way to stop the Veil, the Doctor discovers, is to make a confession. This makes sense, as if the Veil is indeed a metaphorical embodiment of the Doctor's self-deception, then telling the truth would be the only way to stop it. Even then, making a confession does not stop the Veil forever, as it always comes back. Eventually, after spending a lot of time in the castle, the Doctor discovers Room 12, and it is there that he finds a wall made of a substance stronger than diamond. Labeled "Home," the wall seems to be the only way out of the castle. Suddenly, the Doctor remembers: "always then. Always then. Always exactly then! I can't keep doing this, Clara! I can't! Why is it always me? Why is it never anybody else's turn...I can't keep doing this. I can't! I can't always do this! It's not fair! Clara, it's just not fair! Why can't I just lose...I can remember it all. Every time. And you'll still be gone. Whatever I do, you still won't be there." The Doctor remembers that this is not the first time that he has seen the wall. This is not the first time that he, this version of himself, has been in this castle. He has faced the Veil many, many times, and he always loses. Looking for motivation, he imagines Clara telling him that "Doctor, you are not the only person who ever lost someone. It's the story of everybody. Get over it. Beat it. Break free...Doctor, it's time. Get up, off your arse, and win!" With that, the Doctor gets up and, with the Veil right behind him, he punches the wall. Then he punches it again. The Doctor punches the wall until the Veil comes up right behind him and kills him. Dying slowly, he crawls back to the teleporter and burns himself up just to make a new copy of himself in the teleporter, one that will do it all over again. And the only time that he ever remembers is when he reaches Room 12. Hundreds, thousands, millions, billions of versions of the Doctor keep getting up, keep punching the wall, over and over again. "I'm going to get out of here," the Doctor says to the Veil, "and find whoever put me here in the first place, and whatever they're trying to do, I'm going to stop it...but it might take me a little

while.” With every punch of the wall, the Doctor makes a little more progress until, one day, with a passageway large enough for him to fit through, he breaks through it, the light from the broken wall shattering the Veil to pieces. Going through the wall, the Doctor escapes the castle’s purgatory and finds himself on Gallifrey, his home, for the first time in all of New Who (“Heaven Sent”). The wall itself, like the Veil, is a symbol, representing the Doctor’s emotional barriers that he puts up so that no one can “get in.” Nevertheless, this episode takes the stance that these walls have an adverse effect on the Doctor, too, as he himself is unable to “get out.” With every “incarnation” of the Doctor (represented by the “burning” of the self, which is symbolic of regenerating), he chips away at the wall, no matter how long it takes. All the while, the Veil—the burdens and regrets of the Doctor’s past—try to bring him down. The wall is also symbolic of what stands between the Doctor and adopting a humanistic ideology. It is Clara, or at least his imagined version of her, who convinces him to get up and keep fighting, to keep chipping away at the wall that separates him from the person they want to be. This is very important, as even though it seems like it was Clara who bridged the Doctor to the perseverance of the human spirit, *he* was the one imagining her, meaning that he did it all himself. And he does it. He “wins.” He drops his emotional barriers and lets the truth show. He lets go of his inner darkness, his inner nihilism, and finds his home. And, most importantly, he finds humanism on the other side. All he had to do was “break free.”

“Heaven Sent” ultimately sets the stage for the greatest test of the Doctor’s newfound humanistic philosophy, taking place in the finale of the tenth series. Throughout this series, the Doctor fosters a close friendship with new companion Bill Potts (Pearl Mackie), but she loses her in the finale. The 12th Doctor, meanwhile, now dying, must move on as he prepares an entire human colony on a spaceship for an oncoming violent invasion. The Doctor does not have to

stay. It would not be hard for him to just turn around and leave. To let himself grieve. But here, on this random spaceship, on this random day, he sees people in need and therefore recognizes the need to be kind. “Winning? Is that what you think it's about?” the Doctor declares. “I'm not trying to win. I'm not doing this because I want to beat someone, or because I hate someone, or...because I want to blame someone. It's not because it's fun and God knows it's not because it's easy. It's not even because it works, because it hardly ever does. I do what I do because it's right! Because it's decent! And above all, it's kind. It's just that. Just kind. If I run away today, good people will die. If I stand and fight, some of them might live. Maybe not many, maybe not for long. Hey, you know, maybe there's no point in any of this at all, but it's the best I can do, so I'm going to do it. And I will stand here doing it till it kills me. You're going to die too, some day. How will that be? Have you thought about it? What would you die for? Who I am is where I stand. Where I stand is where I fall...why not, just at the end, just be kind?” (“The Doctor Falls”). If humanism is defined as a philosophy that values human lives, needs, action, and freedom of choice, then with this simple speech the Doctor has displayed a profound understanding of all aspects of that philosophy. Logically, there is no reason to stay. But he is doing it for no other reason than because it is kind. Because he should. “The consequences of the Doctor's actions,” claims Decker, “affect both him and those he defends as they resound through time” (Decker). The Doctor's “actions,” in this case, encompass compassion, meaning that he is spreading that compassion all throughout the universe. The character, ironically enough, now encompasses the best of humanity—even though he is not even human. Their experiences with their companions have taught them that there is nothing more important than kindness, an ideology that he was only able to establish with their encouragement to accept themselves. The only way to truly be good, the Doctor claims, is to act “without hope, without witness, without

reward.” He has no expectation of regenerating, understanding that this is where he dies once and for all. But he accepts that, knowing that his death will have served to save people. This attitude is a far cry from the personal philosophies all of the past New Who incarnations of the character. The Doctor has, as he proves here, achieved a humanistic philosophy. And while he is lucky enough to eventually regenerate, that does not take away from the fact that his actions did not factor that in as an option (“The Doctor Falls”). In the end, the 12th Doctor acted with utter kindness and compassion, even without his companions standing next to him telling him to do so. He did it all on his own, showing that humanism is now truly what he identifies with and believes in. Even with his last speech, on the verge of regeneration, the Doctor addresses his future self, telling them to “always try to be nice, but never fail to be kind” and to “laugh hard, run fast, be kind” (“Twice Upon a Time”). If one imagines a clock, with all of the different incarnations of the Doctor representing a corresponding time as well as an indication of the progress of truly believing in a humanistic philosophy, then the 12th Doctor would represent midnight. He has done it. And while it was at first his companions pushing the hands of the clock, counting down the seconds, hours, and minutes it would take to get them there, in the end it was the Doctor who counted down to midnight. The Doctor has developed dramatically from the self-loathing, morally ambiguous alien that they used to be. While they are still a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey, an alien, they are more than that, too. They are a humanist.

Conclusion: Stronger Than Diamond

Imagine, again, the wall. Intimidatingly big and unfathomably dense, it towers over the entire rest of the room. It is, however, the only means of escape; there is no other way. So, how is one supposed to get through it? According to the Doctor, it can only be done one punch at a time. The Doctor would say that it can only be done with knuckles, bruised and broken, rapping

against the wall over and over again. And again. And again. If the wall is stronger than diamond, that means that one's spirit must be, too. With every incarnation in *New Who*, the Doctor goes about chipping away at their own wall, motivated by their relationships with their companions to break through and find the humanism waiting for them on the other side. To quote Gadsden one last time, "the Doctor's ability to care for other beings and act in their best interests is grounded in his relationships to his companions" (Gadsden). In this way, *Doctor Who* as a show presents its viewers with the idea that being human is defined by aspects of kindness and compassion that one can choose to embody, even if they are far from believing in humanism where they are now. So go ahead. Punch the wall. See what lies on the other side.

Works Cited

“A Good Man Goes to War.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Peter

Hoar, performances by Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, Arthur Darvill, and Alex Kingston, series 6, episode 7, BBC Studios, 4 Jun. 2011.

In this episode, the Doctor and Rory struggle to rescue Amy after she is kidnapped by a military force that is just trying to get to the Doctor. The Doctor calls in as many favors as he cans, recruiting his friends to help him in his rescue mission. Nonetheless, the episode watches as the Doctor grows in anger but simultaneously works to make sure that his mission is a peaceful one. The Doctor struggles with his own morality throughout the episode, too, hence the episode’s title. In short, this episode proves that the Doctor has had significant growth in his reaction to his companions being threatened or the idea of potential loss. Rather than respond with pure darkness and nihilism, he responds with pacifism and peace. This marks a great difference between the 11th Doctor and his previous New Who incarnations, providing a fundamental baseline for describing this development.

“Bad Wolf.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by Joe Ahearne, performances

by Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper, series 1, episode 12, BBC Studios, 11 Jun. 2005.

This episode is the first part of the finale of the first series, and it sees Rose’s life put in peril. The Doctor, Rose, and new companion Captain Jack Harkness land on a space station that seems to be promoting different types of game shows and reality television. In fact, they awake

in a random one of these shows, each of them in a different one. The Doctor escapes his, looking for Rose, who ultimately gets kidnapped by the somehow alive Daleks, who are actually in charge of the operation. Mentioning this episode functions to establish the “set up” for the Doctor proving that he has changed under the guidance and connection of Rose. This episode is the one which establishes that the spaceship is full of humans and therefore establishes the stakes of the Doctor’s “choice” in the next episode. In short, the two episodes go hand-in-hand, this one providing a basis for the development that is displayed in the next one.

Barr, Jason and Mustachio, Camille D.G. “The Language of Doctor Who: From Shakespeare to Alien Tongues.” *The language of Doctor Who*, The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2014.

This source, while focused primarily on the language that is used in *Doctor Who*, also provides a really good reference for how this language builds to establish certain things about the show. Whether that it a certain framework through which something is viewed or overall characterization, this source is great to have for understanding these things. Specifically, though, this source does a really strong job of describing the relationships that the Doctor has to their companions (Amy) and how that relates to the language of the show. Jason Barr, one of the compilers of this book, works as an English instructor at Blue Ridge Community College and Camille D.G. Mustachio, the other compiler, works as an instructor of English at Germanna Community College. They are both huge *Doctor Who* fans and would thus want to do right by it in their work.

Chapman, James. “Doctor Who through the Ages.” *HistoryExtra*, Immediate Media Company Limited, 2015, www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/doctor-who-history-facts/.

This is a very important source that I reference in my paper. I use it in the introduction to give context to readers that might know little to nothing about *Doctor Who*. Therefore, the way that I frame this information is extremely important, as is the way in which I get this information. The article outlines the history of the show, dating all the way back to the Classic Era. According to his biography at the end of the article, James Chapman, the author, is a professor of film studies at the University of Leicester and authored a book in 2006 also about *Doctor Who*. The article itself contains a lot of information written by someone who clearly admires and respects the show.

Comtois, James. "David Tennant Narrowly Tops Jodie Whittaker in Poll of Favorite Doctors among Doctor Who Fans." *SYFY WIRE*, SYFY WIRE, 22 Sept. 2020, www.syfy.com/syfywire/david-tennant-favorite-doctor-who.

This article as a source allows me to reference the fact that David Tennant tends to be a fan favorite Doctor among *Doctor Who* fans. This is important in establishing the screenshot of the 10th Doctor that I give in the paper, trying to get readers to understand exactly who the character is and what he stands for. The fact that the article relates favoritism in the show to the other iterations of the character also allows for comparison between who is most beloved and who is not. James Comtois, according to the website, is a playwright and a reporter who has been a longtime fan of the show. Like the other authors I reference, a liking of the show indicates an obligation to do right by it when writing about it, securing it as a reliable source.

"Dalek." *Doctor Who*, written by Robert Shearman, directed by Joe Ahearne, performances by Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper, series 1, episode 6, BBC Studios, 30 Apr. 2005.

This episode is critical to establishing the "new" character of the Doctor. That is, the

episode is essential to understanding how the Time War has affected the Doctor, his psyche, and his personal philosophy. It should be noted that this episode has a special importance in that it is a part of the first series of the show (after the revival) and narrates the return of an iconic villain. In terms of the plot, this episode finds the Doctor and Rose land the TARDIS in some kind of underground museum located in Utah in 2012. The museum appears to be a collection of alien artifacts and is completely private; later, it is revealed that the museum is owned and operated by Henry van Statten—the man who “owns the internet.” To summarize a quite complicated story, van Statten is housing a Dalek—a deadly and purely evil alien that lives inside a terrifyingly comical metal shell—in his museum, which causes a lot of turmoil for the Doctor, as the Time War was fought against the Daleks. The Dalek eventually breaks free and starts massacring everyone, interacting with the Doctor as it goes. This episode is very effective in drawing parallels and comparisons between the Doctor and the Dalek, showing how the Doctor has changed from the character that has already existed for a long time. In this way, the episode is an excellent source.

Decker, Kevin S. *Who Is Who? : the Philosophy of Doctor Who*. I.B. Tauris, 2013.

This is a book that focuses on the different philosophical principles that are present throughout *Doctor Who*'s history as a show. Kevin S. Decker, the author of the book, homes in on different aspects of the Doctor and the show in general and makes philosophical commentary about these things. For example, one section of the book focuses on what it means that the Doctor is the last of his kind while another focuses on the philosophical and moral implications of time travel. This is also the way in which the book is set up: relatively anthologically, almost like a series of essays about the different philosophical themes present in the show. As for Decker's qualifications to write such a book, he is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and

Associate Dean of the College of Arts, Letters and Education at Eastern Washington University. He is also a longtime fan of *Doctor Who* and therefore brings with his writing an obligation to do right by his analysis of it.

“Deep Breath.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Ben Wheatley,

performances by Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, series 8, episode 1, BBC Studios, 23 Aug. 2014.

This is Peter Capaldi’s first episode at the 12th Doctor. The episode finds a group of robots trying to make themselves human by cutting out pieces of humans and adding them to themselves. The Doctor, still dealing with regeneration, is joined by Clara and his group of friends in Victorian London in order to stop these robots. Clara, throughout the episode, struggles with accepting this new Doctor, something that likely mirrors some of the viewers’ own experiences with this new 12th Doctor. Nevertheless, she is persuaded to stay with him, realizing that he is still the Doctor. This is a very meaningful decision as it shows the Doctor the first degree of acceptance of his truest self, which is notably done by his human companion. The episode works to establish the Doctor as struggling with finding himself and now logical, cold, and relatively heartless. These changes as well as the aspects of the identity crisis and its way of introducing Capaldi’s Doctor make it a very important mention.

“Doomsday.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by Graeme Harper,

performances by David Tennant and Billie Piper, series 2, episode 13, BBC Studios, 8 Jul. 2006.

This is the episode where the Doctor and Rose get separated. After a simultaneous Dalek and “Cyberman” invasion, the Doctor scrambles to keep the Earth safe, eventually realizing that he can suck the Daleks and Cybermen into a void similar to our concept of oblivion and hell. Doing so, he finds that he and Rose are also being sucked in, so they hold on as best as they can. Rose, though, cannot hold on for long, and eventually lets go. She is saved by an alternate universe version of her father who they have been interacting with, though, and is brought to that other universe just as the gates between them close. This leaves the Doctor and Rose stranded on either side of this universal “wall,” unable to get to each other. A brutal moment for fans, this causes the Doctor to become very sad and frantic in the next episode as he struggles to cope with his feelings. In establishing the timeline of companions as we move through New Who, it is important to mention how the Doctor’s companionship with Rose ends, thereby making it obligatory to mention this episode.

“Face the Raven.” *Doctor Who*, written by Sarah Dollard, directed by Justin Molotnikov,

performances by Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, series 9, episode 10, BBC Studios, 21 Nov. 2015.

This episode finds the Doctor suffer one of his biggest losses of all time. The Doctor and Clara investigate a tattoo that mysteriously appeared on the necks of one of their friends. The tattoo, somehow, seems to be counting down. Eventually finding a street (“Trap Street”) hidden among the others, they find that the street houses a bunch of disguised alien refugees, and that their friend supposedly killed one of these aliens. This resulted in him being sentenced to death; in other words, the tattoo is a countdown to his death. Clara finds out that the “mark” can be passed on but not cheated entirely, and so in an act of what she thinks is genius, she convinces

her friend to pass the mark onto her to buy them time. This, however, ends up backfiring as the mark can no longer be passed on, meaning that Clara is doomed to die. The Doctor begins to angrily freak out, screaming threats as Clara tries to calm him down. Clara then, with bravery, dies in front of the Doctor. Nothing changes on his expressionless face as it happens, perhaps because he is unable to accept it. It is eventually revealed that this was all some kind of trap in order to get the Doctor to the street and teleport him inside a trap to get him to make confessions. This leads into “Heaven Sent” and the castle. Establishing the parameters of Clara’s death as well as showing its impact on the Doctor shows just how much his connections with his companions impact him.

“Heaven Sent.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Rachel Talalay,

performances by Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, series 9, episode 11, BBC Studios,
28 Nov. 2015.

“Heaven Sent” is perhaps the most explorative episode about the character of the Doctor. With this, it is important to highlight that Peter Capaldi’s 12th Doctor is, for the majority of the episode, the only character on screen. This happens for a very specific reason, as his best friend and long-term companion Clara Oswald has just died in the previous episode. In “Heaven Sent,” the Doctor is imprisoned in a castle with shifting walls and corridors, stuck in an endless time loop that leads him to try to break through a wall harder than diamond by punching through it. All the while, he is being chased by a monster (the Veil) and struggling with Clara’s death and his grief. Each time the Doctor reaches the wall and punches it, he is killed by the Veil but survives just long enough to make it to the teleporter and bring himself back into the castle as a copy of when he arrived. This is where the time loop comes into play. This episode is very revealing of the character because at this point the Doctor has lost everything: his only friend, his

own life (multiple times), and even his sense of self. And yet he keeps going, keeps trying to break through the wall. Considering his motivation for this makes the episode a great source for talking about the character.

“Human Nature.” *Doctor Who*, written by Paul Cornell, directed by Charles Palmer,

performances by David Tennant and Freema Agyeman, series 3, episode 8, BBC Studios, 26 May 2007.

This episode is the first part of a two-parter in which the Doctor becomes human after trying to avoid the Family of Blood. The episode primarily serves to set up the events in the second episode, which more heavily explores themes, ideas, and questions surrounding the Doctor that may not have come up before. In this way, the episode is very important, as it establishes the Doctor’s desire to become human even when he knows he cannot and also brings to rise new ideas within the show that were not previously there. The episode also shows that the Doctor does not really consider Martha in his decision to become human, further proving that he is very self-involved and vain.

Jackson, Matthew. “Peter Capaldi Explains Why No One Can Be Too Old to Play The Doctor.”

SYFY WIRE, SYFY WIRE, 9 Dec. 2013, www.syfy.com/syfywire/peter-capaldi-explains-why-no-one-can-be-too-old-play-doctor.

This article functions as a source which informs me about how old Peter Capaldi was when he was cast to play the Doctor. I use this information in the essay to convey that Capaldi is older than his New Who predecessors, thus signifying a difference in character. The article provides this information as well as a context from when the decision to have Capaldi play the character

was announced. Matthew Jackson, who wrote this article, is a pop culture journalist for SYFY WIRE and has been so since 2011. His work is displayed all over their website and he covers a variety of topics and news.

Masters, Tim. "How Did Doctor Who Reflect the Real World?" *BBC News*, BBC, 22 Nov. 2013, www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-24848815.

This is the source I use to give reference to the Daleks. The Daleks are a very important part of the history of *Doctor Who* and the show in general. To many people, the first thing that comes to their minds when they think of the show is a Dalek. It was very important to establish the Daleks as evil and therefore reference how the idea behind them was rooted in Nazi ideology, as this establishes the stakes of the Time War and also sets up other instances in the paper where I talk about Daleks. Tim Masters, the author of this article, relates Daleks to the real world while also establishing their historical relevance. He is a reporter for the BBC and a long time *Doctor Who* fan. Overall, the source, coming from the BBC, is both important and credible.

"New Earth." *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by James Hawes,

performances by David Tennant and Billie Piper, series 2, episode 1, BBC Studios, 15 Apr. 2006.

This episode, while not a fan favorite, still provides some important characterization of the Doctor. In this episode, the first in which the 10th Doctor travels with Rose somewhere, the Doctor and Rose land on New Earth, a future human planet named after the original one. On this planet they enter a hospital because the Doctor has been summoned there and discover a massive conspiracy to get medicine, one that is very morally questionable. Nevertheless, it is actually

how one character describes the Doctor that makes the episode important to mention, as this description goes to show the viewer what this new 10th Doctor will stand for and what he will represent. As the Doctor is described as “lonely,” it establishes themes and ideas that he will struggle through throughout his entire time as the character, thus being important to mention in setting the stage for this.

Smithka, Paula, and Lewis, Courtland. “More Doctor Who and Philosophy.” *More Doctor Who and Philosophy*, Open Court, 2015.

This book provides me with something that some of the other books I am using as sources also give me: multiple anthological chapters all dealing with different themes about *Doctor Who*. However, what makes this source different (and even more useful than the others) is that it was written in 2015, a more recent publication that will therefore include more things that have recently occurred within the show. This is really important because it gives me an academic reference for when I am talking about more recent doctors. Meanwhile, each of the chapters focus on a different lens with which to view the show and its history, while some talk about specific episodes or actions that the Doctor has taken. In general, this source seems to be slightly more accessible than others in terms of its language and analysis; nevertheless, that is not to diminish from the scholarly way in which the book goes about its analysis. Paula Smithka, one of the people who compiled the book, is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern Mississippi. Courtland Lewis, the other compiler, teaches at Owensboro Community and Technical College and writes and edits books. The source is both credible and valuable to use in my own analysis of *Doctor Who*.

“The Angels Take Manhattan.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Nick Hurran,

performances by Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, Arthur Darvill, and Alex Kingston, series 7, episode 5, BBC Studios, 29 Sept. 2012.

In this brutal episode, the Doctor, Amy, Rory, and River struggle against an invasion of Weeping Angels in Manhattan in the 20th century. Rory's life is periodically endangered, but they eventually find a way out. At the end, though, Rory is teleported back in time by the single touch of a Weeping Angel and is unable to get back to the Doctor. This prompts Amy to let the Angel touch her so that she can be with Rory, even if it means that she will lose her time period and the Doctor. She says goodbye to the Doctor tearfully and lets the Angel touch her. The Doctor then finds Amy and Rory's names on a gravestone; he can never see them again. This episode is very important because it displays how the Doctor's relationships all tend to lead to a deeply saddening feeling of loss. And yet, they engage in these relationships anyway, because they know that they are the only thing that keeps them who they are. As the Doctor loses Amy and Rory, he loses a part of himself and thus struggles throughout the rest of his time to manage with this loss.

“The Day of the Doctor.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Nick Hurran, performances by Matt Smith, David Tennant, John Hurt, and Jenna Coleman, 50th anniversary special, BBC Studios, 23 Nov. 2013.

The 50th anniversary special of *Doctor Who* is, without a doubt, one of the most infamous episodes of the show ever made. Steven Moffat, the writer of the episode, needed to find a way to pay homage to 50 years of history; he does this by making the entire episode essentially a character study of the Doctor while also providing a groundbreaking story for the future of the show. This episode is extremely important in discussions of “New Who” because it is the only

time that there have ever been multiple Doctors on screen together at the same time (that is, since the 2005 revival). The ways that they interact with each other is thus very telling of the character as a whole, and it provides a means for direct comparison of how the Doctor develops over time.

“The Doctor Falls.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Rachel Talalay,

performances by Peter Capaldi, Pearl Mackie, John Simm, Matt Lucas, and Michelle Gomez, series 10, episode 12, BBC Studios, 1 Jul. 2017.

This episode finds the Doctor helping a human colony on a spaceship even though he knows that they are doomed, as is he. In the previous episode, the Doctor lost companion Bill Potts and now, dying and basically alone, he stands with these people on this ship for no other reason than because it is kind. The Doctor, in this way, has completed their journey of finding humanism, as they are now able to demonstrate humanistic qualities and beliefs without a companion by their side. However, the episode also goes to show that it is the Doctor’s companions who got them there, even showing them in a montage as the Doctor is on the brink of death. In the end, the Doctor’s actions in his episode justify the idea of a completed arc of humanism.

“The Eleventh Hour.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Adam Smith,

performances by Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, and Arthur Darvill, series 5, episode 1, BBC Studios, 3 Apr. 2010.

This episode is the first of Matt Smith’s era of being the 11th Doctor. The episode establishes him as much different than the 10th Doctor but still the same person, growing to

establish continuity between the two incarnations. Matt Smith had a very hard job ahead of him, as David Tennant was beloved by almost all *Doctor Who* fans, many of whom were skeptical about Smith because of his young age. Yet, this episode shows that Smith is quite capable in the role. In the actual episode, the Doctor lands in young Amy Pond's backyard, eventually coming back years later when she is grown up by accident. It is then that he must deal with an alien invasion looking for a prisoner, all under tight time pressure. The episode introduces the 11th Doctor, Amy Pond, and Rory Williams all at the same time, demonstrating to us that these new characters will play important roles in the future of the show. The episode also characterizes the 11th Doctor as quirky and weird, showing that he channels their alien energy into these facets of his being.

“The End of the World.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by Euros Lyn,

performances by Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper, series 1, episode 2, BBC Studios,

2 Apr. 2005.

This episode is just the second of New Who, giving viewers another glimpse at this new embodiment of the Doctor. In this episode, the Doctor takes Rose to a spaceship circling the Earth in the future, waiting to watch it inevitably explode. Nonetheless, there is conflict onboard, as the evil Lady Cassandra begins murdering people with her hired help. The Doctor, at the end, confronts her and watches as she dies, doing nothing to stop it. The episode is referenced for that moment, because it shows just how dark the 9th Doctor is now. It shows how different he is from his past incarnations, how he has gone through things that have changed his outlook and

philosophy on life. The fact that the Doctor does not do anything to stop the death of Cassandra is very telling of his new nihilistic philosophy, thus making the episode important to mention in discussions of his beliefs and personality.

“The End of Time: Part 2.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by Euros

Lyn, performances by David Tennant, Bernard Cribbins, John Simm, and Timothy Dalton, 2009 Christmas special, BBC Studios, 2 Jan. 2010.

The second part of this story is David Tennant’s last episode. The Time Lords are trying to return using a connection through time, but the Doctor knows that he cannot let this happen because, towards the end of the Time War, the Time Lords began to represent more evil tendencies. The Doctor puts a stop to this but does it at the cost of his life. Before he dies, though, the Doctor says goodbye to every New Who companion that they have ever had, choosing love in the face of death. This is a choice that this version of themselves struggled with throughout his run as the character, but the fact that he was able to do it (even if it was at the end of his life) is very indicative of the theme of growth.

“The Girl Who Died.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat and Jamie Mathieson, directed by

Ed Bazalgette, performances by Peter Capaldi, Jenna Coleman, and Maisie Williams, series 9, episode 5, BBC Studios, 17 Oct. 2015.

This episode shows the Doctor realizing that they are who they are because they try to save people. That is really the only reason that I reference this episode: because it shows the character coming to an understanding about themselves that inspires their future growth. The

Doctor is inspired to declare that he saves people when a local girl in a Viking village dies as a result of the Doctor's plan to save the whole town. He is capable of saving her but knows that he is not supposed to because of "rules" (connection back to "The Fires of Pompeii"). This is what prompts him to realize that the Doctor saves people, and he goes back and saves the girl. In general, the episode is a good one to reference because it shows the 12th Doctor solving his identity crisis as he comes to an understanding about both himself and themselves.

"The Family of Blood." *Doctor Who*, written by Paul Cornell, directed by Charles Palmer, performances by David Tennant and Freema Agyeman, series 3, episode 9, BBC Studios, 2 Jun. 2007.

This is the second episode of the two-part story in which the Doctor becomes human all in an effort to avoid the Family of Blood. The episode is one of the first in which viewers are meant to question if what the Doctor did was right; this, in turn, proves that the Doctor does not have the ultimate authority to make these decisions between what is considered to be right and what is considered to be wrong. The episode characterizes the 10th Doctor brilliantly, showing his struggle to want to be human despite the fact that he cannot. It also illustrates the effect of the Doctor's actions; as pointed out by a character in the episode, if the Doctor had not chosen to hide in England in 1913, then nobody would have died there as a result. The true darkness and nihilism of the Doctor is scarily established as well, being present in the way in which he imprisons the Family of Blood. This is one of the most important episodes to talk about when discussing the Doctor's arc for these reasons.

"The Fires of Pompeii." *Doctor Who*, written by James Moran, directed by Colin Teague,

performances by David Tennant and Catherine Tate, series 4, episode 2, BBC Studios, 12 Apr. 2008.

This episode provides a brilliant instance of a companion grounding the Doctor to humanity. The episode finds the Doctor and Donna landing in Pompeii as they investigate strange happenings. Mount Vesuvius, as they know it does, ends up erupting and many people die as a result. The Doctor tries to leave all of them behind because the event is “fixed” and, according to his ambiguous rules, is not subject to change. The most important part of this episode, though, is when Donna pleads with him to go back and to save at least someone, which the Doctor ends up complying with. Donna is the Doctor’s anchor to humanity here, advocating for a humanist lens that he is not yet capable of seeing himself. The episode is therefore crucial in pointing out the relationship that the Doctor and their companions have, them acting as the humanist bridge that he so desperately needs.

“The God Complex.” *Doctor Who*, written by Toby Whithouse, directed by Nick Hurran, performances by Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, and Arthur Darvill, series 6, episode 11, BBC Studios, 17 Sept. 2011.

“The God Complex” is an oft forgotten episode of *Doctor Who*, despite the fact that it is an episode that goes out of its way to characterize the Doctor more than others. The episode finds the 11th Doctor, Amy Pond, and Rory Williams land in some kind of fake 80s-esque hotel, the rooms of which all hold a different “fear” of the people who are trapped there. The hotel has walls that seem to shift, and there is no visible way out. Meanwhile, a minotaur alien stalks the people that are trapped there, waiting until they “praise him” to kill them. The whole idea behind the episode is faith, and it is once the people in the hotel begin to fall back on their faith that the

minotaur moves to strike. Parallels are drawn between the Doctor and the ancient minotaur, and ideas about what the Doctor fears and has faith in are also questioned. It is his companions' faith in him (specifically Amy's) that is the true focus of this episode, highlighting the Doctor's relationship with those who travel with him and how that affects his personal views and philosophies. This is what makes this episode such a compelling source.

“The Name of the Doctor.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Saul

Metzstein, performances by Matt Smith, Jenna Coleman, and Alex Kingston, series 7, episode 13, BBC Studios, 18 May 2013.

This episode is the first a three-part exploration of the Doctor's character, including this episode, the 50th anniversary special, and Matt Smith's regeneration episode (the Christmas special). This episode proves to be one of the most important episodes to mention in talking about the character of the Doctor because it reveals the existence of the War Doctor, whom the Doctor holds an unbelievable amount of contempt for. He is, however, a version of the Doctor's self, representing things that the Doctor has done. The fact that they have buried this version of them so far within themselves proves the degree to which the Doctor has been unable to accept themselves, but also indicates that there is progress to be made. The episode leads nicely into the 50th anniversary special, where the Doctor learns to accept this version of their self.

“The Parting of the Ways.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies, directed by Joe Ahearne,

performances by Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper, series 1, episode 13, BBC Studios, 18 Jun. 2005.

This episode is crucial in discussions of how the Doctor has developed, specifically the 9th Doctor. It is well established at this point that the Doctor was the one who blew up Gallifrey and the Time Lords in order to stop the War. They did it simply by pushing a button. That situation is mirrored when the Doctor fashions a weapon to try to stop the Daleks on the spaceship in this continuation of the first series finale. As the Doctor stands there with a lever in front of him to blow up the entire station, he is faced with a choice that mirrors the one that they made during the Time War. However, this time the Doctor makes a different choice based off of the new experiences he has had with Rose, his human companion. The Doctor also sacrifices himself so that Rose can live. Thus, this episode shows just how much the 9th Doctor has developed, an important and crucial means of comparison for talking about the overall arc of the character.

“The Runaway Bride.” *Doctor Who*, written by Russel T. Davies, directed by Euros Lyn, performances by David Tennant and Catherine Tate, 2006 Christmas special, BBC Studios, 25 Dec. 2006.

As noted in my paper, there are *very* few instances in which the Doctor is alone in an episode, companionless. While this episode is technically not one of them, as he is joined by Donna Noble, she is not his regular companion. He is wholly unfamiliar with her (and her with him), and he still misses Rose. Thus, in a lot of ways, the Doctor is relatively on his own in this episode, acting without a true connection to humanity until Donna establishes herself as one for him. The episode finds the Doctor dealing with an alien invasion of spider-like aliens, who have already been messing with Donna’s life; this is how she meets the Doctor. He brings Donna along with her, her donned in her wedding dress as she was just about to get married (hence the

title), working together to try and stop the alien. Yet, at the end, the Doctor drowns the alien and her children in a burning building and just stands there and watches, showing his true capacity for darkness. Donna eventually has to talk him down and later emphasize his need for a companion. This episode functions to show viewers just how badly the Doctor needs a companion in order to function as the Doctor that he wants to be. This establishes it as a crucial mention in exploring the Doctor-companion dynamic.

“The Snowmen.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Saul Metzstein,

performances by Matt Smith and Jenna Coleman, 2012 Christmas special, BBC Studios,
25 Dec. 2012.

This episode follows the aftermath of the loss of Amy and Rory. The Doctor is a hermit, hiding among the clouds, away from all human behavior. Rather than reacting to his loss with anger and nihilistic determination, the Doctor is just sad. Nevertheless, he is sucked back into human affairs and inspired to try to save people again. The fact that the Doctor did not respond to his loss with darkness shows that they have indeed made progress in finding humanism, but the loss of Amy and Rory set them back dramatically. He now prefers isolation because he does not want to be in pain again. This, ironically, seems to be a very human instinct, establishing that the Doctor has a lot of growth but still a ways to go in finding their idea of humanism that they have been seeking for a very long time.

“The Time of the Doctor.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Jamie Payne,

performances by Matt Smith and Jenna Coleman, 2013 Christmas special, BBC Studios,
25 Dec. 2013.

This is Matt Smith's last episode as the 11th Doctor. Discovering that Gallifrey is trying to communicate through a crack in space and time on a planet called Trenzalore in a town called Christmas, the Doctor has to stay and guard the crack and town so that no one can destroy it. He does this for a very long time, eventually growing old and beginning to die of old age. The Time Lords, though, through the crack (which eventually closes) grant the Doctor more regenerations, as their 11th was their last one, and the Doctor eventually regenerates. I use this episode in the paper to reference the 11th Doctor's journey to self-acceptance (which is similar to the 9th Doctor's). With his regeneration speech, the Doctor shows that they are continuing to make progress in their efforts to find humanism as a philosophy.

"The Waters of Mars." *Doctor Who*, written by Russell T. Davies and Phil Ford, directed by Graeme Harper, performances by David Tennant and Lindsay Duncan, 2008-2010 specials, episode 3, BBC Studios, 15 Nov. 2009.

Airing as a part of a series of specials between 2008 and 2010, "The Waters of Mars" is a very important episode for the characterization of the Doctor because it shows him at one of his darkest moments. At this point in the 10th Doctor's life, he is without a companion, and so he goes on a trip to Mars where he finds a base full of astronauts. The Doctor knows that these people will end up dying when the base explodes, and yet he gets involved in events, eventually saving them despite him knowing that their deaths are fixed. The result is a darker Doctor, the "Time Lord Victorious" as he calls himself. This episode is essentially the prime example for what happens when the Doctor is by himself, lacking the humanity that he typically surrounds himself with. In this episode he goes too far and puts all of time at risk just to prove that he is in control. Because of the way that the episode showcases this, it is crucial to involve it in discussions of the Doctor's character.

“The Zygon Inversion.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat and Peter Harness, directed by

Daniel Nettheim, performances by Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, series 9, episode 8, BBC Studios, 7 Nov. 2015.

In this episode, the Doctor gives a speech that shows just how close to being humanistic they really are. Trying to talk an alien down from slaughtering all of humanity, the Doctor powerfully talks about the Time War, responsibility, and Clara, who inspired them to be better. The episode shows that the 12th Doctor, in comparison to previous New Who incarnations, is the closest they have ever been to finding humanism. The fact that he is able to give such a speech shows that he has been thinking and considering all of the things that he is talking about for a very long time. It is noteworthy that the stakes of the speech are to save everyone on the planet, and the Doctor delivers. The episode is important to talk about because of all of these things, representing another stepping stone on their path to humanism.

“Twice Upon a Time.” *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, directed by Rachel Talalay,

performances by Peter Capaldi, Pearl Mackie, Mark Gatiss, Matt Lucas, Jenna Coleman, and David Bradley, 2017 Christmas special, BBC Studios, 25 Dec. 2017.

This is Peter Capaldi’s last episode, and the one in which he regenerates. I use this episode primarily in the paper to reference Capaldi’s regeneration speech, which further displays the character’s humanistic growth. In this speech, the Doctor addresses their future self, telling them to be kind and represent love and compassion more than anything else. The fact that the Doctor is saying this while alone, talking to no one but themselves, shows just how truly and wholeheartedly he believes in the importance of these things now, indicating to viewers that they

now have a fully round understanding of humanism that identifies with them and their Time Lord beliefs. The Doctor of the future will be kind and humanistic; at least, that is what the 12th Doctor asks of them in his final moments. The episode is thus very important in further solidifying the humanistic arc.

Wicks, Kevin. "Who's Playing Who? It's 26-Year-Old Matt Smith!" *BBC America*, 3 Jan. 2009, www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2009/01/whos-playing-who-its-26-year-old-matt-smith.

This article came out when it was announced that Matt Smith would be playing the 11th incarnation of the Doctor. As a result of this, it has a tone rooted in the reaction and excitement of that time and reflects different expectations about the character. It also establishes how young Smith is, especially in relation to the other actors who have played the role. This is something I reference in writing to give a snapshot of the 11th Doctor's overall character and is therefore very important. Kevin Wicks, the author of this article, is apparently the founding editor of *Anglophenia*, and writes in a tone with such excitement that it is obvious that he is a super fan of the show.