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# Forward

*Andrew Žero | Phi Alpha Theta, Chi Mu Chapter Historian*

Welcome to the 2024-2025 edition of *The Chicago Style*!

This is Loyola University Chicago's very own peer-reviewed undergraduate history journal, produced by the Chi Mu chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society. It showcases the outstanding historical research done by our undergraduate historians!

This journal prides itself on being a platform for students to share their original historical research and share the weeks, months, or even years-long research they have done, while also being able to contribute to the field and have a publication under their belt.

In this issue, you will discover a wide range of topics and methods which show the depth and variety of undergraduate historical scholarship. From explorations of ancient civilizations to analyses of modern social movements, and from local histories to those spanning the entire world, each essay brings a one-of-a-kind lens through which to examine the past and its enduring relevance to the present.

We invite you to explore the pages of this journal for yourself and read the exciting research students are doing in various courses while pursuing a variety of other majors and minor programs here at Loyola. If you are a history student, a seasoned academic, or just love history, you will discover new views, engaging stories, and the importance of historical research.

With that, we first want to thank all the students who submitted their work for this edition. Your countless hours of dedication to these projects, the hours of research, drafting, writing, rewriting, and editing, are accomplishments in and of themselves – this journal would be nothing without you! Second, huge thanks go out to our student editorial board for their hard work. Thanks to them, this is the best edition it can be.

Now, with all that said and done... come one, come all, to *The Chicago Style*!

Sincerely,  
Andrew Žero | Chapter Historian  
Phi Alpha Theta, Chi Mu Chapter

## Letter from the Editor

*Michael Clausen | Phi Alpha Theta, Chi Mu Chapter President*

Thank you for reading *The Chicago Style*! This journal has been a labor of love for so many people, and I am so glad that the journal is back for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Now, more than ever before in American history, fact, truth, and the study of the world are all under attack. At no time in our country's past has the rigorous, critical study of history been more threatened or more important – for its preservation and for ours. To borrow a phrase from Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

We hope that this journal, in its own small way, will help shed the light of memory on the corners of our past that have been overlooked or forgotten – because history is too important to lose.

This publication could not have happened without the hard work of the amazing team on the Undergraduate History Board, the support of the History Department, and the dedication by Loyola's history students and professors to make the papers submitted for this year's edition the best they can be.

I'd also like to say thank you to the people who keep the History Department running, day-in and day-out – Dr. Bradford Hunt, Dr. Kelly O'Connor, Dr. Elizabeth Shermer, and David Hays. Our deep appreciation also goes out to Dr. Kim Searcy and Dr. Leslie Dossey for their work as faculty sponsors of the Chi Mu chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta National Honor Society over the past two years. We couldn't have done this without you all.

Sincerely,  
Michael Clausen | Chapter President  
Phi Alpha Theta, Chi Mu Chapter

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With special thanks to

Dr. Bradford Hunt, History Department Chair

Dr. Leslie Dossey, 2024-2025 Faculty Advisor

## **Section One: Icons, Ideologies, and Narratives of the Far-Right**

# Celebrities Get a Pass and Give a Pass: Charles Lindbergh and The Far-Right

*By Reid Sleeman*

The date was September 11th, 1941. Between eight and nine thousand people gathered in Des Moines, Iowa to attend a rally held by the America First Committee. Among the listed speakers is a genuine celebrity: Charles Augustus Lindbergh, famous for being the first man to successfully fly across the Atlantic Ocean alone. Years of political sparring with President Roosevelt brought him to this moment. As he began his speech, this rally was not much different from his previous appearances with the America First Committee, where he criticized the British cause in World War Two, the Roosevelt administration, and urged American nonintervention and re-armament. It was all going well, until he reached the part where he was to say what was really on his mind: “The three most important groups that have been pressing this country towards war are the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration.”<sup>1</sup>

Charles Lindbergh was a major part of the widely underreported and underestimated far-right movement in America during the 1930s and 1940s. Throughout his entire involvement in politics, the media was interested both in Lindbergh’s celebrity and his politics – and could not divorce the two. The media’s coverage of Lindbergh proves that the press was more interested in the style of the far-right than the actual ideological and political substance of the far-right. This manifested itself in a continuation of the fixation on the far-right as a subversive importation of European fascism. Even after dropping his mask and being openly antisemitic, Lindbergh’s celebrity and popularity continued to protect and obscure the far-right by soaking up criticism and personalizing the movement into a single celebrity who could be viewed separately from the movement.

The American far-right in the 1930s was widely misunderstood by its contemporary opponents. These various liberals and socialists were more focused on an importation of European fascism in specific rather than the character of a home-grown far-right movement.<sup>2</sup> The far-right was not ideologically united by any means, but distinguished itself from mainstream conservatism with its desire to transform basic values and its antisemitism.<sup>3</sup> The far-right was also being actively investigated and suppressed by the Roosevelt administration and its allies. Grassroots efforts from groups such as Friends of Democracy included media campaigns,

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<sup>1</sup>“F.D.R. Creating War Incidents, Lindbergh Says: Challenges Sincerity of Program," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 12, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/f-d-r-creating-war-incidents-lindbergh-says/docview/176678067/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 19-21.

<sup>3</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 16-17.

newsletters, and exposés of alleged fascist activity.<sup>4</sup> The administration itself pursued a program of surveillance which eventually resulted in indictments for sedition, some of which saw their defendants convicted. Even when indictments did not yield convictions, the process of trial and legal defense constrained far-right activists and consumed resources that could have been spent furthering their cause rather than defending their innocence.<sup>5</sup> Notably, while never indicted or formally investigated due to a lack of evidence, the America First Committee was investigated by the FBI at the behest of Roosevelt.<sup>6</sup>

From its start as a national organization on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1940, the America First Committee struggled to maintain an image of political moderation and had significant fraternization with far-righters. Although it later ejected them to maintain this image, the America First Committee included and welcomed many antisemites, such as Henry Ford, into their ranks.<sup>7</sup> Who they did not allow into the organization, however, was Gerald L. K. Smith, later dubbed the “dean of American antisemitism.”<sup>8</sup> It was precisely because of his extremism that the America First Committee found Smith undesirable. The America First Committee went so far as to warn several chapters against cooperation with Smith’s organization. But that did not stop him from rubbing shoulders with its members. Smith had contact with Gerald P. Nye, an advisor to the committee, sponsoring one of Nye’s speeches. These ideological affections were reciprocated by Nye, who returned the favor by contributing to Smith’s magazine, *Cross and the Flag*.<sup>9</sup>

Gerald P. Nye was not the only prominent member of the America First Committee to have contact with Gerald L. K. Smith. Lindbergh met with Gerald L. K. Smith, and donated money to his 1942 senate campaign.<sup>10</sup> The timing of this is important, because the isolationist cause was defunct by 1942. The America First Committee disbanded on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1941, four days after Pearl Harbor. Lindbergh had volunteered his services for the war effort the same month.<sup>11</sup> With isolationism dead and Lindbergh volunteering for the Army Air Corps, Lindbergh’s donation was an act of support for reasons other than isolationism. Lindbergh also was profoundly influenced by French scientist and eugenicist Alexis Carrel. According to historian Albert Fried, Lindbergh wrote in his 1977 *Autobiography of Values* that he was deeply touched by Carrel’s genius: “I felt I had reached the frontier where the mystical and the scientific meet, where I could see across the indistinct border separating life from death.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 189-190.

<sup>5</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 215.

<sup>6</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 186-187.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler—The Election Amid the Storm* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013), 65-66.

<sup>8</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 167.

<sup>9</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 158-9.

<sup>10</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 158.

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler*, 310-311.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Fried, *FDR and His Enemies* (1st ed.) (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 96-7.

While not an extremist activist or political theorist, although he did consort with far-right theorists and activists, Lindbergh was strongly far-right. Like other far-righters, Lindbergh was distinguishable from a conservative because of his antisemitism and his desire to change fundamental values. The latter is visible in a diary entry expressing his disappointment after a conversation with former president Herbert Hoover. In quoting this entry, historian Susan Dunn emphasizes his pro-German sympathies with italics: “‘I do not believe he recognized the decadence in England,’ the aviator wrote, ‘or the *virility* in Germany.’”<sup>13</sup> Lindbergh saw himself as someone accurately perceiving the fundamental moral issues in foreign policy, unlike conservatives such as Hoover who did not. In at least this aspect, Lindbergh saw himself as distinct from mainstream conservatism and superior to it. His pro-German sympathies, manifested most specifically in a longing for the alleged racial dynamism of the Nazi regime and its people, no doubt engendered within him a desire to change basic American values.<sup>14</sup>

As for the former of the far-right determinants, although it did not define his worldview nor was it scientific in a contemporary manner, Lindbergh’s antisemitism was determined. Shortly after his September 11<sup>th</sup> speech, he wrote in his diary that “almost any problem can be discussed today in America except the *Jewish problem*.”<sup>15</sup> In the Des Moines speech, his points line up solidly with the antisemitic rhetoric of other far-righters such as Father Charles Coughlin.<sup>16</sup> Between Lindbergh’s antisemitism and his longing for the strength he saw present in the Nazi regime, he was solidly within the far-right camp, despite his affiliation with the supposedly moderate America First Committee. Although he may have been far-right, it was not what Lindbergh was most prominently known for.

To the American Public, before he was an antisemite, or even a political figure, Lindbergh was a celebrity first and foremost – the “Lone Eagle.” Fried puts his fame well: “From the instant the *Spirit of St. Louis* landed at Paris’s Le Bouget airport on May 21, 1927, Lindbergh became the most famous man in the world.”<sup>17</sup> If Lindbergh’s fame is to be measured by crowd size, it is undeniably significant. Lindbergh drew throngs of over 100,000 at his transatlantic landing in France, half a million in Paris proper, and 250,000 when receiving the distinguished flying cross from President Coolidge.<sup>18</sup> Lindbergh’s fame was not merely a byproduct of his own actions and activities, it was something he courted and rejected to varying degrees as an active participant in the construction of his own image. Historian Stanley Shapiro writes that throughout his life Lindbergh “carried on a continuous negotiation with celebrity... Lindbergh kept himself in the public eye through a variety of voluntary acts: the global expeditions, his publications, the political embroilments.”<sup>19</sup> Lindbergh’s choice of highly

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<sup>13</sup> Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler*, 65-66.

<sup>14</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 54-56.

<sup>15</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 303.

<sup>16</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 204.

<sup>17</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 94.

<sup>18</sup> Stanley Shapiro, “The Celebrity of Charles Lindbergh,” (Clinton, Maryland: *Air Power History*, 2009), 26–27.

<sup>19</sup> Shapiro, “The Celebrity of Charles Lindbergh,” 31.

publicized acts gave him a degree of control over how he was perceived by the media, who he knew would be eagerly following his every step.

By 1940, Lindbergh had already had a great deal of experience with the press, given the extensive coverage of his son's kidnapping, but it drove him away from the media, rather than teach him its proper usage as a tool. Fried writes that "Lindbergh hated crowds, and, from every indication, hated the mass society that gave birth to them. Which is to say, he also hated the press, which acted as their midwife."<sup>20</sup> This fundamentally set Lindbergh apart from most far-right agitators who loved to bask in media attention. This goes to show that individual personality is highly relevant when it comes to celebrities because it shapes how they interact with their media environment. Lindbergh did not have a personality that was conducive to long-term political success, although it made him likeable in some respects. This shortcoming did not vex him terribly, however, as his political career lasted only about two and a half years, being cut short by America's entry into World War Two, and much shorter than many other far-right activists.

Lindbergh's first foray into politics was a dispute with FDR over federal air mail contracts in 1934. After several airlines had allegedly been fleecing the government, Roosevelt decided to cancel all air mail contracts and order the Army Air Corps to carry the mail instead. Lindbergh testified before the senate committee on post offices, strongly denouncing the sweeping action and lack of due process: "these contractors should have been given the right to trial before being convicted and a guilt implied and not proved."<sup>21</sup> Lindbergh's reputation was his shield in this endeavor, according to historian Albert Fried, as "few dared criticize the hero" by pointing out his financial stake at play in the issue.<sup>22</sup> His celebrity alone drew attention to the controversy. In the *New York Times* article about Lindbergh's testimony before the Senate committee on post offices, the author noted that "he seemed still to be one of the world's most fascinating figures," and included a description of his outfit down to the color of his socks.<sup>23</sup> The attention paid to Lindbergh's appearance, both before the committee as well as his fashion choices, were indicative that the media was not covering his testimony as a purely political function. Lindbergh was more than a politician, his very presence brought spectacle and wonder into the senate chamber, and reporters followed.

Lindbergh scored a political victory in this struggle and gave Roosevelt a black eye. In speaking out, Lindbergh claimed the Army Air Corps was woefully unqualified for the task of carrying air mail, and he was soon proven right by a succession of deadly crashes.<sup>24</sup> In this conflict Lindbergh was new to such matters, a political amateur, yet he inflicted a humiliating

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<sup>20</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 95.

<sup>21</sup>"Lindbergh Assails Air Mail Measure Before Senators," *New York Times*, March 17, 1934, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/lindbergh-assails-air-mail-measure-before/docview/101054200/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>22</sup> Fried, *FDR and his enemies*, 92.

<sup>23</sup> "Lindbergh Assails Air Mail," *New York Times*.

<sup>24</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 91-92.

defeat on a professional. According to historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who Fried cites, Lindbergh's triumph over Roosevelt "dented the myth of Roosevelt's invulnerability and strengthened the business community's dislike of what it considered personal and arbitrary action by the new deal."<sup>25</sup> The business community would later go on to provide most of the America First Committee's leadership and funding.<sup>26</sup> After the incessant publicity surrounding his son's kidnapping became too much to bear, Lindbergh retreated from public life and fled to Europe in 1936, sparing Roosevelt from any further clashes for the time being.

After returning from his European exile in 1939, Lindbergh appeared before politicians once more. He testified for enlarging the air force and was uniquely instrumental to the success of these critical efforts.<sup>27</sup> After the Second World War broke out in September of 1939, Roosevelt addressed the nation the day of, on September first. Lindbergh gave his own speech in response on the fifteenth.<sup>28</sup> Early in his crusade, Lindbergh found many defenders among the press. As early as September 17<sup>th</sup> of 1939, just two days after his speech, a club had been formed to promote him for president.<sup>29</sup> In June of 1940, a *Los Angeles Times* article titled "Listen to Lindbergh" urged readers to respect his expertise on all kinds of aviation, including military aviation, even if they disagreed with his uninformed foreign policy opinions: "When he talks aviation –and sticks to his subject – listen to him. In the cockpit of an airplane, he's our no. 1 man."<sup>30</sup> As a widely beloved national hero, the American public had an emotional attachment to Lindbergh that was hard to let go of. This shielded him from allegations of extremism throughout his political career and even after his antisemitic Des Moines speech.

Lindbergh's critics struggled to crack apart his image as a hero. A column in an African American paper from Kansas City, Kansas, attacked Lindbergh by asking readers to imagine his conduct as belonging to some insubordinate army officer, instead of the celebrity. The article ends on a note of disappointment rather than anger: "Lindbergh has done the army a great service by separating himself from it."<sup>31</sup> Lindbergh was still a widely respected figure in America, as is shown here and elsewhere, and criticism of Lindbergh repeatedly had to run this rhetorical gauntlet of both grief and respect for the hero.

Although not taken seriously until 1941, Lindbergh could have garnered significant support if he had decided to run for office, especially before September of 1941. In January of 1941, Gallup ran a public opinion poll on whether Americans think Britain should seek a

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<sup>25</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 192.

<sup>27</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 184.

<sup>28</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 185.

<sup>29</sup> "Lindbergh Assails Air Mail," *New York Times*.

<sup>30</sup> Bob White, "Listen To Lindbergh," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1940,

<https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/listen-lindbergh/docview/165167465/sc-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>31</sup> James A. Hamlett Jr., "Week-End C-H-A-T-S," *Plaindealer*, May 9, 1941,

<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/readex/doc?p=EANAAA&docref=image/v2%3A12ACD7C7734164EC%40EANAAA-12CCEB252C66F950%402430124-12CCEB2552B48B30-12CCEB2574AEC930>.

negotiated peace. 79% said that Britain should keep on fighting.<sup>32</sup> The coverage of this poll injects Lindbergh's name into it, strongly implying that most Americans do not share his views on foreign policy. Later in May, Gallup polled again, this time asking if Americans were familiar with his views, and if they were, what people thought of them. Six out of ten respondents were familiar, and of those familiar, 24% said yes when asked "do you agree or disagree with what Lindbergh says?" Another 13% were "undecided."<sup>33</sup> The difference between these two polls is important since Lindbergh's political fortunes generally declined as Hitler's conquests made his position increasingly unattractive. Therefore, it is notable that the poll directly about Lindbergh happens four months later, and he as a figure polls more favorably than his ideas. This is indicative of his immense popularity and esteem in the eyes of the general public. Dr. Gallup also writes at the end of the May poll that "virtually none of the voters interviewed questioned his sincerity or his right to speak."<sup>34</sup> Gallup's remark is indicative that political attacks on Lindbergh were restrained by respect for him as a public figure and national hero.

Although a public figure and national hero, the media did not consider Charles Lindbergh to be a serious and viable contender for public office until 1941. While none of these polls predict a victory for Lindbergh, the fact that he is polling in double digits is startling. If polling had been done in 1940 or late 1939, before the smear campaign against the America First Committee and Lindbergh had picked up steam, it is possible that Lindbergh would have done significantly better. Even if the media justifiably did not consider him a serious candidate as he had no love for politics or publicity, the club to draft him for president indicates that many isolationists initially saw him as an ideal candidate for their cause on the national stage. Furthermore, the ongoing suppression of the far-right means that this poll underestimates Lindbergh's support, since supporters would fear consequences for defending him. Lindbergh himself said that "men lost their jobs if they were frankly anti-war. Many others dared no longer speak."<sup>35</sup> The climate of fear surrounding the suppression of the far-right and wide use of anti-subversive rhetoric by both sides of the political spectrum no doubt gave Americans in 1941 pause before answering pollsters honestly.

Whether or not Lindbergh was taken seriously as a winnable candidate by the media at any given time, the America First Committee was taken seriously. Even as late as November, liberal groups were concerned enough about America First adherents to ask for delayed special

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<sup>32</sup> George Gallup, "Few Support Lindbergh View," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/few-support-lindbergh-view/docview/165120400/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>33</sup> George Gallup, "Public Disagrees with Lindbergh," *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/public-disagrees-with-lindbergh/docview/165234660/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>34</sup> Gallup, "Public Disagrees with Lindbergh."

<sup>35</sup> "F.D.R. Creating War Incidents," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

elections to prevent them from winning.<sup>36</sup> Although the America First Committee was by and large composed of Republicans, Lindbergh could have run without the support of the party. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1941, *The Los Angeles Times* published a poll from Dr. Gallup, which found that roughly one in six voters would vote for a “Keep-Out-of-War party.”<sup>37</sup> Now one in six is nowhere near an election-winning plurality in the United States, and a third party run is notoriously difficult, as Gallup concludes: “The American public continues to resist ‘third parties’ as a solution to political controversy.”<sup>38</sup> Although they would not have won, they had enough support and popularity to separate from the Republican party and attract a meaningful portion of the electorate in doing so. So long as the America First Committee did not break with the Republicans, they were a force to be reckoned with.

One of his most important speeches with the America First Committee, Lindbergh’s antisemitic speech at the America First Committee rally in Des Moines on September 11<sup>th</sup> was the moment where he went mask off. Needless to say, it was not well received, even within the America First Committee. By openly naming Jews as a conspiratorial group, Lindbergh was breaching the norms of civility at the time, and making the America First Committee look extremist, an appearance it had tried strenuously to avoid.<sup>39</sup> Two days later, a loud defender of Lindbergh’s cause, the *Chicago Tribune*, put out an article debunking Lindbergh’s points, titled “Lindbergh, Wilkie, and the Jews.” In the article, the Tribune emphasizes that while the only neighborhood that voted for war in their poll was predominantly Jewish, it “gave only the barest majority for war.”<sup>40</sup> This should be contrasted with Lindbergh’s claim in his speech that Jews were “agitating for war.”<sup>41</sup> The implication is that a group truly agitating for war would surely have voted for war by a significant margin and not a slight one. The fact that a strongly pro-Lindbergh paper changes its tune to directly contradict his talking points should indicate that even staunch supporters of the America First Committee felt the need to distance themselves from Lindbergh after the Des Moines speech.

Beyond being a backhanded critique of the speech, “Lindbergh, Wilkie, and the Jews” acknowledges that Lindbergh’s Des Moines speech severely damaged the moderate façade of the America First Committee. After a brief summary, the article opens with the declaration that “what follows is printed in the belief that it is better to handle the subject in public discussion than to leave it to the savagery of irresponsible private conversations. We doubt if many of our

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<sup>36</sup> “Delay in Filling Geyer Seat Urged: Victory for America First Adherent Feared,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/delay-filling-geyer-seat-urged/docview/165276477/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>37</sup> George Gallup, “Lindbergh ‘Peace Party’ Would Attract Only 16 Per Cent of Nations Voters,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/lindbergh-peace-party-would-attract-only-16-per/docview/165262707/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>38</sup> Gallup, “Lindbergh ‘Peace Party’ Would Attract Only 16 Per Cent.”

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, 1940: *FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler*, 66.

<sup>40</sup> “Lindbergh, Wilkie, and the Jews,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 13, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/lindbergh-willkie-jews/docview/176712011/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>41</sup> “F.D.R. Creating War Incidents,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

readers are unaware of the prevalence of those conversations in the last year.”<sup>42</sup> Expressing doubt that their readers are unaware of the covert antisemitism within the movement is an acknowledgement of their façade. Everyone knows what has been said privately and now after Lindbergh’s speech, they must denounce that covert antisemitism to save face. If the rest of the article is read considering this, it becomes apparent that this backlash is solely performative.

Outside the America First Committee’s supporters, the Des Moines speech drew widespread condemnation. The Republican District Attorney of New York and later Presidential candidate Thomas E. Dewey denounced Lindbergh, saying that he “injected religious and racial prejudice into a discussion of our foreign policy. That, I declare, is an inexcusable abuse of the right of the freedom of speech.”<sup>43</sup> In addition to exposing the America First Committee, Lindbergh’s speech had also alienated Republicans. Notably, Dewey did not mention the America First Committee or the isolationist movement. Dewey criticized Lindbergh and Lindbergh alone. From liberals, the response to the speech was harsher.

While slightly more perceptive of the America First Committee’s role in Lindbergh’s speech, newly galvanized interventionists and liberals also fixated on Lindbergh as an individual in their attacks on the speech. A *New York Times* article covering reactions to the Des Moines speech quoted the executive secretary of an interventionist group as saying that “Mr. Lindbergh’s prestige has descended even more quickly than Hitler’s dive-bombers” and “Americans know that Mr. Lindbergh lied when he said that the British and the Jews were foremost among the groups advocating war.”<sup>44</sup> No mention of the America First Committee was made. Interventionists attacked Lindbergh’s prestige and honesty rather than his organization. In this sense, when Lindbergh’s shield of celebrity failed him, he himself served as a human shield for the far-right and their fellow travelers, absorbing attacks that should have been directed at them.

When the press and other groups did focus on Lindbergh’s antisemitism, they missed the mark by fixating on connections to Nazism. The White House’s statement on the speech was short and sweet, emblematic of this pattern: “You have seen the outpourings of Berlin in the last few days. You saw Lindbergh’s statement last night. I think there is a striking similarity between the two.”<sup>45</sup> In the eyes of his contemporaries, Lindbergh’s status as a patriotic hero and a symbol of American aviation and power was simply incompatible with an inherently subversive and foreign far-right ideology. In the same *New York Times* article, a different interventionist organization called antisemitism a “cardinal principle of Nazi-Fascism.”<sup>46</sup> Liberals were fixated

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<sup>42</sup> “Lindbergh, Wilkie, and the Jews,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

<sup>43</sup> “Dewey Denounces Lindbergh’s Talk: Injection of Racial Issue Was ‘Inexcusable,’ He Says,” *New York Times*, September 15, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/dewey-denounces-lindberghs-talk/docview/106001638/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>44</sup> The United Press, “Assail Lindbergh For Iowa Speech: White House Aide Links It to Berlin as Groups Here Condemn Raising Racial Issue,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/assail-lindbergh-iowa-speech/docview/106002222/se-2?accountid=12163>.

<sup>45</sup> The United Press, “Assail Lindbergh for Iowa Speech.”

<sup>46</sup> The United Press, “Assail Lindbergh for Iowa Speech.”

on a subversive importation of Fascism or Nazism and sought to define Lindbergh and the far-right within that framework. All antisemitism and evidence of far-right leanings were rather evidence of Nazi subversion. They were not seen as evidence of a home-grown far-right movement, individualizing the problem and erasing the existence of the far-right.

Even when revealed as a far-righter, Lindbergh's fame and celebrity served to obscure the true nature and strength of the far-right in America. Style repeatedly triumphed over substance in the press. Dramatic and factually questionable exposés such as *Under Cover* became bestsellers,<sup>47</sup> while the 800,000 strong membership list of the America First Committee attracted little attention.<sup>48</sup> When Lindbergh testified before congress, the press also reported on his socks and his smile. When Lindbergh said Jews were conspiring to drag America into the war, there was no audience of far-righters eager to hear such a message, the press saw one man who bought into Nazi propaganda. This misattribution erases the existence of the far-right in favor of individualizing the problem and attributing it to an external source.

When Lindbergh stepped offstage at the September 11<sup>th</sup> America First Committee rally in Des Moines, he stepped down from the high-water mark of the 1930s and 1940s far right, never to return to such a level of power and prominence during that period. Although reviled afterwards, Lindbergh continued to campaign and draw large crowds all the way until Pearl Harbor.<sup>49</sup> Although forgotten by many and obscured by the reality-distorting effect of Lindbergh's cult of personality, the far-right is by no means a new player in the American political arena. In some respects, America was lucky that Charles Lindbergh was the celebrity voice of the far-right in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He never ran for office, hated politics and crowds, and drew wide condemnation for his Nazi sympathies and briefly overt antisemitism. Fortunately for America, by the time the first bomb had fallen on Pearl Harbor, Lindbergh was on the road to defeat, baited and outfoxed by the Roosevelt administration.

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<sup>47</sup> Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 189-193.

<sup>48</sup> Fried, *FDR and His Enemies*, 192.

<sup>49</sup> "America First To Campaign On Extensive Front: Lindbergh, Nye, Cudahy Will Lead Speakers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 4, 1941, <https://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/america-first-campaign-on-extensive-front/docview/176718467/se-2?accountid=12163>.

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# Spanish Romanticism to Christian Nationalism: The Glorification of Francisco Franco in the 21st Century

*By Charles Chengary*

Hannah Arendt's classic treatise on totalitarianism, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, offers both a historical and modern issue concerning radical political ideologies:

A conception of law which identifies what is right with the notion of what is good... becomes inestimable once the absolute and transcendent measurements of religion or law have lost their authority... Here, in the problems of factual reality, we are confronted with one of the oldest perplexities of political philosophy, which could remain undetected only so long as a stable Christian theology provided the framework for all political and philosophical problems, but which long ago caused Plato to say: "Not man, but a god, must be the measure of all things.

Totalitarianism must overshadow religion and fulfill the role of God.<sup>1</sup> In our modern and historical political climates there is no lack of ideologies which seek to both undo the religion of the past while making themselves an entirely new spectacle and instrument for political orchestration.

Roman Catholicism, as old as the tradition is, acts as the mouthpiece for both the marginalized and the oppressor. Roman Catholicism intertwined itself with national politics during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 where it played a crucial role in Spanish culture. Following the victory of the Nationalists under Francisco Franco, Spanish Catholicism became closely allied with the regime granting it a greater degree of political authority and cultural influence. After the death of Franco in 1975, Spain joined other European countries and became a secular democracy. The transition to democracy would appear to be the final note for Franco's Spain; however, the Francoist era did not only proliferate in the minds of right-wing Spaniards, but it exists in the minds of Americans. Catholics especially, who long for a political order with Catholicism at the center. Using history with the goal of presenting one era as a golden age presents a dangerous accreditation that abuses both politics, history, and religion.

I argue that American Catholics who are traditional socially and conservative politically use the Franco Era (1936-1975) as an example of history that manifests their particular worldview. I hope to show a change over time with how the original political and religious landscape of Francoist Spain changed into a romantic view that is compact and clear for modern political ideologies.

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 2nd enlarged ed. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958, 299.

Francoist Spain never ceases to be a fascination for both Spanish and international historians as to all the many facets in which Franco affected the lives of the Spanish. Historians have covered his intense union with the Catholic Church and how the boundary of Church and State was constantly thinned. With this research I hope to go beyond just Franco and the Church in his time. Our modern political landscape finds society struggling with the past like never before. Policy has as much work to do addressing the past as it does the future. Public monuments, national symbols, government bureaucracy, are all under scrutiny. American politics and culture have the unique ability to assimilate foreign cultures or histories into their own. America is always fascinated by European history that deserves either shame or awe. My argument is that as political polarization continues to push people to the fringes, Americans will find themselves more interested with foreign politics as models for the American government. Whether it is Soviet Russia, Scandinavian Democratic Socialism, or Swiss Exceptionalism, America points to Europe as the solution to the American problem. Such is the case with Spain, as more Americans seek to journey to a perfect time. I want to go beyond just Church and State, I want to show from this research the ever-global reservoir of ideologies that America taps into to shape itself.

### The Origins of Franco's Spain

Before investigating the Franco era itself, there is a need to first understand how Franco and the Spanish Nationalists responded to the Spanish political climate. Spanish socialism and anarchism emerged in the late 19th century in Spain as responses to advancements in industrialization.<sup>2</sup> These political movements countered the Catholic Church which for them inhibited the goal of political development and equality.<sup>3</sup> The reaction against the left wing and liberal ideologies was that of the Carlists who fought for a reactionary, clerical, and monarchical government throughout the various Carlist Wars.<sup>4</sup> The First Carlist War (1833-1840) sought to protect the perceived successor in contrast to the appointed, with the conservatives fighting for the latter and liberals for the former.<sup>5</sup> The Second Carlist War (1846-1849) was similar to the first with the same combatants a couple years later in the Basque region.<sup>6</sup> The Third Carlist war (1872-1876) further cemented the regional conflict within the Basque in the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> In each conflict the Carlists lost to the liberals which weakened the Carlist monarchical position, but the persistence did not wither from the conservative side as the Carlists strived to be one among

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Pierson, *The History of Spain*. 2nd ed. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798400665394>, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Pierson, *The History of Spain*, 128 .

<sup>4</sup> Pierson, *The History of Spain*, 129.

<sup>5</sup> Talitha Ilacqua, *Inventing the Modern Region: Basque Identity and the French Nation-State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.12801246>, 64.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley G. Payne, "Spanish Nationalism in the Twentieth Century." *The Review of Politics* 26, no. 3 (1964): 403–422. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1405234>, 410.

<sup>7</sup> Regina Mezei, "Carlism and the Spanish-American War: The Role of the Pretender Carlos VII." *Mediterranean Studies* 6 (1996): 113–128. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41166850>, 127.

many groups that emphasized religion and patriotism with the goal to be “Christian and national.”<sup>8</sup> The Carlists persisted on with the *requetes*, a paramilitary wing, along with the ideological allies of the Conservative Party (1903-1909),<sup>9</sup> the Falange Espanola,<sup>10</sup> the *Confederación española de derechas autónomas* (CEDA),<sup>11</sup> *Acción Popular*,<sup>12</sup> and *Renovación Espanola*.<sup>13</sup> What all these groups were seeking to protect was their view of Spanish traditionalism and Catholicism. Father Felix Sarda y Salvany presents in his work, *Liberalism is a Sin*, “the source of liberalism in the order of ideas; such, in consequence of our Protestant and infidel surroundings, is the intellectual atmosphere which we are perpetually breathing into our souls.”<sup>14</sup> Even further he writes, “In distinctly religious opposition to this mass of infidelity and to Protestantism, Catholics find themselves sharply and radically opposed. Heresy and infidelity are irreconcilable with Catholicity.”<sup>15</sup> With such a stark rejection of liberalism as a possible political structure, this shows the growing discontent and complete separation between the conservative and religious against the liberal and irreligious. This division of Spain has been captured as the idea of “Two Spains” with both sides of the spectrum having their origins in the early beginnings of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Sarda y Salvany’s disgust for liberalism is further shown by the Integrist Party in their declaration from 1910:

*Somos católicos, somos españoles, y no queremos ser ninguna otra cosa... ningún crimen sea más abominado ni tenga pena mayor que la herejía, la apostasía, los ataques á la religión, la rebeldía contra Dios y su Iglesia... queremos que el César se humille á Dios*

We are Catholics, we are Spaniards and we do not want to be any other thing... no crime is more abominable nor has greater penalty than heresy, apostasy, attacks on religion, rebellion against God and his Church, we want Caesar to be humble himself before God.<sup>17</sup>

It is this humbling of Caesar before God and this hatred of liberalism that will be the energizing force for Franco’s nationalists who further oppose the critical Republicans. With this context as to why the Spanish State became so united with the Catholic Church, we see that by the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, religion became synonymous with politics and the conservatives had been fighting for decades to make Spain in their image against a liberal backdrop. Lastly, Antonio Aparisi y Guijarro who founded the *Tradicionalistas*, a conservative

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<sup>8</sup> A. A. Parker, “Carlism in the Spanish Civil War.” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 26, no. 103 (1937): 383–398. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30097437>, 394.

<sup>9</sup> Payne, “Spanish Nationalism in the Twentieth Century,” 406.

<sup>10</sup> Payne, “Spanish Nationalism in the Twentieth Century,” 415.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Preston, “Alfonsist Monarchism and the Coming of the Spanish Civil War.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7 (1972): 114–189, 555.

<sup>12</sup> Preston, “Alfonsist Monarchism and the Coming of the Spanish Civil War.” 562.

<sup>13</sup> Preston, “Alfonsist Monarchism and the Coming of the Spanish Civil War.” 97.

<sup>14</sup> Félix Sardá y Salvany and C. B. Pallen, *Liberalism Is a Sin*. Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1993, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Sarda y Salvany and Pallen, *Liberalism is a Sin*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> W. J. Callahan, “Two Spains and Two Churches 1760–1835.” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 2, no. 2 (1976): 157–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41298665>, 157.

<sup>17</sup> “Síntesis del Programa del Partido Integrista.” *El Siglo Futuro*, January 3, 1910, 747th edition.

movement called for, “Catholic unity, a king who both rules and governs; a true Cortes in the Spanish tradition, decentralization, and a real life of the municipality and of the province; and above all the Catholic spirit, living in institutions, in the laws, in the customs.”<sup>18</sup> “*Dios, Patria y Rey*”<sup>19</sup>, became not only the motto and a summation for the *Tradicionalistas* but for the wider Nationalist faction, and a mission of a victorious Franco.

### The Catholic Spain of the Civil War

The Catholic Church throughout the Spanish Civil War was crippled throughout the Second Spanish Republic with 12 of the 28 national bishops being executed. It lost 20 percent of its clergy.<sup>20</sup> The bodies of women religious were exhumed and desecrated throughout the course of the war.<sup>21</sup> Stanley Payne in *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II* writes, “the violent revolution that they (the Nazis) indirectly helped to touch off in the Republican zone produced the most extensive and violent persecution of Catholicism in Western history, in some ways even more intense than that of the French Revolution.”<sup>22</sup> The persecuted Church would quickly turn to the Nationalists throughout the war and in 1937 the bishops wrote the *Collect Letter of the Spanish Bishops*, which justified the honorable methods of the national movement to halt the spread of communism throughout Spain.<sup>23</sup> In a private interview, Franco differentiated his regime from that of Hitler, “Nazism has a pagan program; we have another, a Catholic one. Spain must be Catholic according to her traditions and the teachings of the Church. Believe me, I say this with the deepest possible conviction.”<sup>24</sup> Franco even published Pope Pius’s 1937 encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (On Atheistic Communism) in the Nationalist presses.<sup>25</sup>

Before the Bishops’ letter the Bishop of Pamplona first characterized the Civil War as a religious crusade in support for the nationalists.<sup>26</sup> Franco and his Nationalists had therefore no difficulty in the continued vision of seeing the conflict as a modern-day *Reconquista* of Spain against the Republicans in order to take back a true Catholic and Castilian Spain. With the Nationalist victory on April 1, 1939, the etiological response to support the violence of the

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<sup>18</sup> John N. Schumacher, “Integrism: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Politico-Religious Thought,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 48, no. 3 (1962): 343–364, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25017087>, 344.

<sup>19</sup> Schumacher, “Integrism: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Politico,” 350.

<sup>20</sup> Eugenia Relaño Pastor, “Spanish Catholic Church in Franco Regime: A Marriage of Convenience,” *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 20, no. 2 (2007): 275–287, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43751790>, 278.

<sup>21</sup> “Mummies of Nuns, Barcelona,” Virtual Spanish Civil War, Accessed October 25, 2024, <https://www.vscw.ca/en/node/47>.

<sup>22</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vks5w>, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Santiago Martínez Sánchez, “The Spanish Bishops and Nazism during the Spanish Civil War,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (2013): 499–530, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23565369>, 513.

<sup>24</sup> Sánchez, “The Spanish Bishops and Nazism during the Spanish Civil War,” 515.

<sup>25</sup> Sánchez, “The Spanish Bishops and Nazism during the Spanish Civil War,” 507

<sup>26</sup> Nicola Rooney, “The Role of the Catholic Hierarchy in the Rise to Power of General Franco,” PDF, Queen’s University, Belfast, 2007, 4.

conflict was not a difficult narrative to continue.<sup>27</sup> On May 20, 1939, Franco attended Santa Barbara for a service that celebrated his victory.<sup>28</sup> The *Caudillo* presented his “sword of victory” to Cardinal Goma who was the primate of the Spanish Church.<sup>29</sup> This symbolic humility of Franco would begin his era of being a devout dictator, embodying the Catholic ideal in his rule.

### The Catholicity of “First Francoism” (1939-1959)

The era of “First Francoism,” typifies the ideal era in which the Spanish State stayed out of the Second World War, licked its wounds, and maintained internal measures of control.<sup>30</sup> It further necessitated the alliance between Franco and the Church. In 1945 Franco issued the *Fueros de los Espanoles*, which are the fundamental laws of the Spanish State.<sup>31</sup> In Article 6, Catholicism received an exclusive place, “No other outward ceremonies or demonstrations other than those of Catholic religion shall be permitted.”<sup>32</sup> In December 1948, Pope Pius XII, gave Franco and the Spanish State his blessing saying “May the God of mercy and of truth always protect the Spanish nation — a land fecund of saints — so that all dangers and thanks to the heroic zeal of its worthiest sons, it may always remain faithful to its noble Christian vocation.”<sup>33</sup> The most pivotal sign of favor that the Spanish State received was the 1953 Concordat between itself and the Holy See. The Concordat specified in Article 1, “The Apostolic Roman Catholic Church will continue to be the sole religion of the Spanish State and will enjoy the rights and prerogatives due to it under Divine and Canon Law.”<sup>34</sup> This quote shows the immense weight the Church maintained in Spain. Article 7 reinforced the Agreement of June 7th 1941 which had given Franco the power to select potential prelates for the Pope to choose from during a period of vacancy.<sup>35</sup> This degree of control by a government over the appointment of prelates is not only a sign of the interrelation between the Spanish and the Holy See, but a strong degree of caesaropapism where Madrid had a voice comparable to Rome. Ultimately, Rome benefited at the end of the Concordat being able to have a voice in the domestic affairs of Spain.<sup>36</sup> The document presents the truest form of a unification of Church and State that is desirable for those who are attracted to theocracy.

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<sup>27</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Rev. ed. New York: Modern Library, 2001, 886-890.

<sup>28</sup> Pastor, “Spanish Catholic Church in Franco Regime: A Marriage of Convenience,” 276.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Silvia Fischer, “Internationale Zeitschriftenschau,” *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 50, no. 3 (2015): 310–317, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24573254>, 311.

<sup>31</sup> Pastor, “Spanish Catholic Church in Franco Regime: A Marriage of Convenience,” 279.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Arnaldo Cortesi, “Pope Pius Blesses Franco and Spain,” *New York Times*, December 10, 1948, 98th edition, sec. 33, 196.

<sup>34</sup> “Franco’s Concordat (1953): Text: Concordat Watch – Spain,” Concordat Watch, Accessed October 25, 2024 [https://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org\\_id=845&kb\\_header\\_id=34561](https://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=845&kb_header_id=34561).

<sup>35</sup> “Franco’s Wartime Convention (1941),” Concordat Watch, Accessed October 25, 2024, [https://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org\\_id=845&kb\\_header\\_id=34551](https://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=845&kb_header_id=34551).

<sup>36</sup> Pastor, “Spanish Catholic Church in Franco Regime: A Marriage of Convenience,” 281.

The following year, as a reward for the strong alliance formed by the Concordat, Pius XII awarded Franco with the highest secular order of the Holy See, the Supreme Order of Christ.<sup>37</sup> In 1958, Franco enacted the Principles of National Movement where he declared:

The Spanish Nation considers it an honor to faithfully comply with the laws of God according to the doctrines of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the only true Church, the faith inseparable from our national conscience, which faith inspires our legislation.<sup>38</sup>

With such confidence, Franco's direct religious legislation continues the Integrist vision. Even in 1958, Saint Josemaria Escriva, who would found the Opus Dei movement, wrote to *Generalissimo* Franco, "I cannot help but rejoice ... that the Chief of State's authoritative voice should proclaim [Principles of National Movement quotation]. It is in fidelity ... that the best guarantee of success in acts of government...will always be found."<sup>39</sup> It is this vision of a modern state that receives its authority from an institutional Church and its approval from Popes and Saints that has attracted American Catholics of a traditional and conservative opinion.

## Second Francoism (1960-1975)

Second Francoism is a much more muted part in the reign of the *Caudillo* as Franco proceeded to age and wane in his authority, but the continual presence of the Church is not lacking. In Franco's operations, members of Opus Dei were operating in key positions.<sup>40</sup> Yet it would be those high-ranking members that assisted Spain toward liberalizing to keep Spain afloat. Lopez Rodo, the economic advisor sought, "a symbiosis between Catholic values, an authoritarian political system, and the American way of life."<sup>41</sup> The cabinets themselves saw a reshuffling of old guard members such as the Falangists, Carlists, and the ultra-Catholics.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most jarring aspects of this time period was the Second Vatican Council which enacted numerous progressive and modern reforms to liturgy and teaching. Spain's more traditional orientation isolated it amongst other Catholic countries in Europe.<sup>43</sup> This assisted in promoting groups of a more Catholic progressive identity to resist the Franco regime. One of these groups being the Brotherhoods of Catholic Action who protested on behalf of workers.<sup>44</sup> Despite the criticism from both laity and clergy, the Franco government was not shaken and still maintained the facade of being a society for National Catholicism.<sup>45</sup> For example, traditional

<sup>37</sup> "Franco's Concordat (1953)," Concordat Watch.

<sup>38</sup> Pastor, "Spanish Catholic Church in Franco Regime: A Marriage of Convenience," 282.

<sup>39</sup> Josemaría Escrivá, "Letter from Escrivá to Franco," Opus Dei Awareness Network, Accessed October 25, 2024, [https://odan.org/escriva\\_to\\_franco](https://odan.org/escriva_to_franco).

<sup>40</sup> Joan Martinez-Alier and Jordi Roca. "Spain after Franco: From Corporatist Ideology to Corporatist Reality." *International Journal of Political Economy* 17, no. 4 (1987): 56–87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40470464>, 58.

<sup>41</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, 506.

<sup>42</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 511.

<sup>43</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 560.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 564.

Catholicism found maintenance amongst the officers who identified strongly with the regime's.<sup>46</sup> However, as with any cult of personality, the success of Franco's regime was ultimately dependent on him.

If there was to be any continuation of the regime after his death, it would have had to be dependent on maintaining a culture that believed those maxims. However, with the great cultural revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, even Francoist Spain found itself losing grip on the culture as the same needs of the 1930s could not be replicated.<sup>47</sup> Even with Juan Carlos installed to be the successor after Franco in 1975, with a monarchy in place, Juan Carlos chose not to keep the vision going.<sup>48</sup> The last breath of the Spanish national Catholicism would follow Franco with him.<sup>49</sup> Despite the large legacy left behind, national Catholicism died in Spain, but as we will see, the tradition continues nevertheless.

### The Classic American Conservative and Franco

“You panderers of Communism... we will fight you in Franco's way... Christianity is the peaceful way until there is left no other way than self defense - the Franco way.”<sup>50</sup> This quote comes from the ‘Radio Priest,’ Fr. Charles Edward Coughlin on July 30, 1939. Coughlin was a famous conservative preacher and Franco apologist before the Second World War with an estimated audience of 30 million.<sup>51</sup> Coughlin, who was critical of the ‘godless communists’, is the first in the lineup of 20th century American conservatives and Catholics inspired by Franco's efforts. As we will see with many apologists, even during the Civil War, there is a skewed picture of what was occurring. American Francoists, mostly Catholics, used the impression not of a violent alliance, but of a paradise.<sup>52</sup> Even more so, as is prevalent in Franco apologetics, the conflict was construed as a metaphysical battle between communism and Christianity and not Republicans and Nationalists.<sup>53</sup> As was typical for opponents of communism during this time, Jews also became a target in the grand crusade of the Catholics. The hope for American Francoists was that Franco too would be able to resist the cabal of Jews that were the target of right wing violence through Europe and America.<sup>54</sup> American Francoists saved face by distancing the *Caudillo* from association with Mussolini and Hitler and denying Franco's fascistic tendencies.<sup>55</sup> Combining this distancing was the neutrality of Francoist Spain that

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<sup>46</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 570-571.

<sup>47</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 639.

<sup>48</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 506.

<sup>49</sup> Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975*, 620.

<sup>50</sup> A. J. Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 57, no. 2 (2022): 341–364, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094211063089>, 342.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” 31.

<sup>53</sup> Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” 353.

<sup>54</sup> Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” 357.

<sup>55</sup> Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” 358-360.

helped to distance Franco from the defeated Axis powers, allowing conservatives to continue to admire a country that they were not formally hostile towards in the postwar era.<sup>56</sup>

In the postwar era, the Cold War situated conservatives in a comfortable arena where America was focused more on communism than fascism, making praises of Franco more relevant and accepted. Figures such as William F. Buckley who founded the *National Review* and is the next torchbearer of American Francoists, said, “General Franco is an authentic hero.”<sup>57</sup> Philosopher Russell Kirk only needed to comment on the Spanish Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair in 1964, but used his platform to say that Spain was, “a triumph of traditionalism alive in the modern age.”<sup>58</sup> The now defunct magazine, *Triumph*’s founder L. Brent Bozell Jr., moved to Spain in 1965 to exist within National Catholicism.<sup>59</sup> These conservatives and others were fixated on the religion of Francoism particularly with Bozell saying that Spain was “an ideal integral Catholicism.”<sup>60</sup> Bozell further wanted to, “establish temporal conditions conducive to human virtue—that is, to build a Christian civilization,” indicating that Spain was the model for a revived Christian civilization.<sup>61</sup> Bozell would even go on to prophesy in part how modern conservatives react to liberalism, “[conservatives] swell the ranks of a proto-fascist reaction to the collapse of a secular liberalism.”<sup>62</sup> Bozell’s influence, inspired by Franco, has left its impact deep in American cultural politics, “the radical conservatives on today’s Supreme Court, wittingly or not, have channeled Bozell’s vision,” writes Jacob Heilbrunn for *Politico*.<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey Hart, one of the writers for *National Review*, even went so far as to take a historical revisionism to the bombing of Guernica calling it, “the Great Guernica Fraud,” claiming the attack never happened.<sup>64</sup> James Burnham, another commentator, lauded Franco, “Francisco Franco was our century’s most successful ruler,” at his death.<sup>65</sup> Reid Buckley, brother of William F. Buckley Jr. painted this picture, “a Spaniard out of the heroic annals of the nation, a giant. He will be truly mourned by Spain because with all his heart and might and soul, he loved his country, and in the vast context of Spanish history, did well by it.”<sup>66</sup>

Not only during this period was there an American appreciation but an international trend that found Franco ideal. Following the Second Vatican Council, a number of more conservative and traditional bishops and prelates found the results of the council displeasing. Namely the

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<sup>56</sup> Clements, “‘The Franco Way’: The American Right and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9,” 362.

<sup>57</sup> Joshua Tait, “Long before Hungary, the Right Was Fixated on Another Country,” *The Bulwark*, January 24, 2022, <https://www.thebulwark.com/p/long-before-hungary-the-right-was-fixated-on-another-country>.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Jacob Heilbrunn, “He was Dismissed as a Conservative Kook. Now the Supreme Court is Embracing His Blueprint,” *Politico Magazine*, Accessed October 29, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/07/07/leo-brent-bozell-abortion-game-00044246>.

<sup>60</sup> Tait, “Long Before Hungary.”

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Heilbrunn, “He was dismissed as a Conservative Kook.”

<sup>64</sup> José Pedro Zúquete and George Hawley, “Iberian Vistas: Franco, Salazar, and American Conservatives,” *Political Studies Review*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299241280469>, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Zúquete and Hawley, “Iberian Vistas: Franco, Salazar, and American Conservatives,” 6.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

French archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who would go on to found the FSSPX (Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Pii X). The Order of the Fraternity of St. Pius X, caters to those seeking a more traditional liturgical setting.<sup>67</sup> Not only would Lefebvre go on to establish this group, which would go on to be in open schism with the Vatican, but he also admired Franco.<sup>68</sup> This particular traditionalist appreciation for Franco is important because while Lefebvre was French himself, the FSSPX would spread internationally and would have churches in the United States. The American FSSPX possessed a large influence within Traditional Catholicism both politically and liturgically. As with Lefebvre himself, it's not at all hard to see that then and now the FSSPX are still apologetic of Franco and the traditional governance that was debuted in Spain. In one quote from an Anonymous author in an article for their publication *Angelus*:

General Francisco Franco, who was the chief military officer of Spain, understood the viciousness of the Republican leaders and mustered allies to combat for the Faith and the fatherland. In 1936, Franco and other generals rose up against the Republican government, a duly elected but Communist-centered coalition that quickly implemented an atheist agenda. It persecuted the Catholic Church, destroyed places of worship, martyred thousands of priests and religious, tore down Catholic schools, and otherwise attempted to remake Spain according to a Soviet model. The severity of this persecution cannot be underestimated.

As we will continue to see, Traditional Catholics laud Franco as a crusader against the 'vile' republicans.<sup>69</sup>

With all these classic conservatives, their vision of Franco as a victor against communism eventually faded away as Franco himself died and as the Cold War dissipated. Eventually, this generation of conservatives would transition out in the 80s and 90s. However, Franco appreciation still continued although in underground circles throughout this period to keeping the Francoist attraction alive to the present day.

## The Modern American Catholic Reception of Franco

While all of this background surrounding Franco and American conservatives may appear to be secondary to modern American politics and insight, it is far from the case. Florida State Representative Anthony Sabatini, on October 20, 2022 tweeted, "I answer only to God and to History," which is a direct quote from Franco.<sup>70</sup> Even in modern American politics we see that

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<sup>67</sup> News Services, "Rebel Catholic Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, 85, Dies," *Washington Post*, Accessed October 29, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1991/03/26/rebel-catholic-archbishop-marcel-lefebvre-85-dies/a4c709d4-e672-4cb5-aa83-3786e2f31842/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Anonymous, "Ismael de Tomelloso." *Angelus*, 2020, vol. XLIII, sec. 4, <https://sspax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/July%20August%202020%20Selections.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Graig Graziosi, "Florida Republican Defends Tweeting Quote from Spanish Dictator Francisco Franco," *The Independent*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/anthony-sabatini-francisco-franco-tweet-b2207292.html>.

Franco's appeal has not yet completely evaporated. It might not be surprising that some lower level politician has some unpopular political preferences, Sabatini represents an unrepentant side of right-wing American politics that seeks to answer their version of God and history.

Unsurprisingly, Franco did not dissipate from Spanish politics and is still celebrated by right wing Spaniards, yet America's more unconventional reception is from American Catholics, specifically Traditional Catholics, who go by the moniker of TradCaths. The fascination with Franco from Americans is not unique to Catholics. Josh Abbotoy, a Protestant, notoriously claimed and argued for the position that America needs a "Protestant Franco."<sup>71</sup> He cites fellow conservative Nathan Pinkoski concerning the attraction to the Spanish State, "the most unsettling relevance of the Spanish case is its demonstration that modern liberal democracies are not immune to revolution... Liberal democracies are not guaranteed happy endings."<sup>72</sup> Similar are the Christian Nationalists such as those at *American Reformer* who promote hagiographies of Franco.<sup>73</sup> But even more popular than any of these figures is Michael Knowles of the Daily Wire. Knowles is a Catholic and conservative podcaster, and the Daily Wire is a conservative media outlet. Knowles himself, as of October 26, 2024, has 2.1 million subscribers<sup>74</sup> on YouTube while his affiliated media company, Daily Wire has 3.3 million.<sup>75</sup>

Knowles fits the TradCath label perfectly having been a frequent guest on various TradCath social media platforms and is an advocate for Traditional liturgy and Catholic social norms. On July 19, 2023, responding to a comment affiliating current Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni to Mussolini, and the current Vox party of Spain to Franco, Knowles distances Franco from Mussolini with the following statement:

The difference here is Mussolini was a pretty bad guy. He's not – he wasn't the worst guy in the world. He wasn't Hitler, certainly. He wasn't Stalin, he wasn't Lenin. But he -- Mussolini was, let's say, at least a mixed bag leaning on the side of bad ... Franco was a conservative, Catholic, kind of guy who held things together and liberalized over time too, as the circumstances permitted it. (Media Matters for America Staff)

With this quote reaching such an audience, there are numerous concerns.<sup>76</sup> The indecisiveness with Mussolini in the first place and excluding him from Hitler and Stalin creates an odd tiering

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<sup>71</sup> David Austin Walsh, "Why Is the American Right So Thirsty for Generalissimo Franco?" *History News Network*, May 31, 2023, <https://hnn.us/article/why-is-the-american-right-so-thirsty-for-generalissimo>.

<sup>72</sup> Josh Abbotoy, "Is a Protestant Franco Inevitable?" *First Things*, Accessed September 23, 2024, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2023/10/is-a-protestant-franco-inevitable>.

<sup>73</sup> Kiera Butler, "To Understand JD Vance, You Need to Meet the 'TheoBros,'" *Mother Jones*, September 19, 2024, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/09/theobros-jd-vance-christian-nationalism/>.

<sup>74</sup> "Michael Knowles's YouTube Stats (Summary Profile)," *Social Blade*, Accessed October 26, 2024, <https://socialblade.com/youtube/channel/UCr4kgAUTFkGIw1WSodg43QA>.

<sup>75</sup> "DailyWire+'s Real-Time Subscriber Count," *Social Blade*, Accessed October 26, 2024, <https://socialblade.com/youtube/channel/UCaeO5vkdj5xOQH4UmlN6dw/realtime>.

<sup>76</sup> Media Matters Staff, "Daily Wire's Michael Knowles Praises Spanish Dictator Francisco Franco: 'Franco Was, Broadly Speaking, Pretty Good,'" *Media Matters for America*, July 19, 2023, <https://www.mediamatters.org/michael-knowles/daily-wires-michael-knowles-praises-spanish-dictator-franco-franco-was>.

of dictators that grossly misrepresents the way in which any dictator should be discussed. There is not a spectrum from dictators who get to be bad to varying degrees. Next, “circumstances,” for any political ideology, contain so much variation that anyone is able to excuse political answers due to “circumstances.” It is not a defined category by which historians or political scientists judge certain politicians or policies. “Circumstances” are just vague enough to approve whomever you choose. Further, while Knowles is correct that Franco was not a National Socialist or a member of the Nazi hierarchy, utilizing German soldiers and planes to win a civil war implies a strong acceptance of which allies you are willing to work with.

### Spread of Francoism in the Digital Age

Yet the American reception is a modern one where extremism is no longer expressed through standard print, but through social media. A TradCath online community exists where Christo-fascist and Christian nationalist ideas are spread within and shared out. This is where the Franco appreciation exists in an informal way.<sup>77</sup> Groups that coexist with both Christian Nationalists and Franco supporters are those in the Identitarian movement who have popularized their movement with music, “most of the tunes are distorted and overheated - accelerated to a fever pitch, injected with the militant ferocity of slamming hardstyle kicks.”<sup>78</sup> It is this style of online proliferation that brings the discourse of Franco out of the political commentators and into explore pages. On the page (@fernandogaebler), the individual posted an “edit” which is a short mashup of clips that present a simple narrative usually with music. The post from February 14, 2013 is combined with the song *Franco* by PseudoSchizo which combines the strong rhythm of the song with the powerful imagery in the video to create a compelling vision of Franco’s Spain.<sup>79</sup> Another similar edit from the YouTube Channel (@Marcelo Goldschmidt), uses similar clips of Franco with the song *Gangsta’s Paradise* by Coolio and L.V. to create a similar effect.<sup>80</sup>

While these might be only two simple examples for Franco, I argue strongly that without any official propaganda wing, that the Christian Nationalists of tomorrow are already being influenced by edits whether they concern Franco, Traditional Catholicism, fundamentalism, political radicalism, or conspiracy theories. There exists an understanding within Catholic circles that for Francoist Catholics, there is not necessarily any grand reason as to why they find Franco an attractive figure, but rather they are attracted to the idea of him. While some might know of an

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<sup>77</sup> Tess Owen, “Christian Fascist Propaganda Is All over TikTok,” *VICE*, July 27, 2024.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/tik-tok-chrsitian-nationalism/>.

<sup>78</sup> Kieran Press-Reynolds, “Save Europe: the alt-right movement spreading hate with dance music,” *Dazed*, June 18, 2028, <https://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/62885/1/save-europe-tiktok-alt-right-music-movement-spreading-racist-hate>.

<sup>79</sup> Fernando Gaebler, (@fernandogaebler), TikTok video, February 14, 2023, <https://www.tiktok.com/@fernandogaebler/video/7200167815351930118?q=francisco%20franco%20edits&t=1729915045459>.

<sup>80</sup> Marcelo Goldschmidt, “Viva Francisco Franco (Gangsta Paradise),” YouTube video, May 16, 2021, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=KMWZatHhAeU>.

obscure individual who supports Franco, it is clear that they do not need to be aware of all the history that surrounds him. Rather, all they need to be aware of is their own personal struggle within the Church or in a pluralistic world, and be aware of how Franco was different, to hook them on to believing that there is a need for a Franco figure in the United States or even in the Church.

### J.D. Vance and Francoism

With all of this understanding, the modern relevance is best portrayed with the current Republican Vice President, J.D. Vance who endorsed the book, *Unhumans: The History of Communist Revolutions (and How to Crush Them)* by Jack Posobiec and co-author Joshua Lisee.<sup>81</sup> The text states, “the eventual [sic] victorious Franco — the self-proclaimed *caudillo*, or leader, of postwar new Spain — didn’t actually do a lot of fascism or dictating.”<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the text states the legitimization of the Spanish Civil War, “a righteous, justified war for the sake of the cross — that is for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ.”<sup>83</sup> Posobiec, the main author, raises a lot of flags as he has 2.7 million followers on X, has endorsed the Pizzagate conspiracy, and views the Civil Rights Movement as a destroyer of civilization.<sup>84</sup> Posobiec has a past of collaborating with neo-Nazis and in an interview with Charlie Kirk of Turning Point USA praises both Joseph McCarthy and Franco, “who have fought Marxists ... over the years and actually done something about it,” with that “it” resulting in the deaths of 160,000 to 200,000 people in the White Terror of the Nationalists.<sup>85</sup> Posobiec, a Catholic along with Vance, had also spoken at the 2024 Conservative Political Action Conference.<sup>86</sup> With all of this implication with Vance and TradCaths, there is an accusation against the Republicans that they are fascist or long for dictatorship. By endorsing this book, Vance with his faith and politics clearly puts himself on one side of the culture wars that leaves American politics up to violent and hateful rhetoric.

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<sup>81</sup> Noah Lanard, “JD Vance Decrying Political Violence Might Be Persuasive If Not for This,” *Mother Jones*, September 17, 2024, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/09/jd-vance-just-decried-political-violence-but-he-endorsed-a-book-celebrating-it/>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Alexandra Berzon, “The R.N.C. Asked a Conspiracy Theorist to Train Poll Watchers. Here’s What He Told Them,” *New York Times*, September 26, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/26/us/politics/republican-national-committee-2024-posobiec.html>.

<sup>85</sup> John Knefel, “Project 2025 Partner Makes a List of ‘Anti-American Bad Actors,’ Echoing MAGA Media’s Celebration of Joe McCarthy,” *Media Matters for America*, Accessed October 29, 2024, <https://www.mediamatters.org/project-2025/project-2025-partner-makes-list-anti-american-bad-actors-echoing-maga-medias>.

<sup>86</sup> Tyler Arnold, “Faith Inspires Many at CPAC, Including Numerous Catholic Speakers,” *Catholic News Agency*, October 29, 2024, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256911/faith-inspires-many-at-cpac-including-numerous-catholic-speakers>.

## **The Implications of Modern Appeals to Francoism**

High profile and influential names in the digital age are the ones who either endorse or associate themselves with Franco. There is a clear correspondence that by having even familiarity or flirtations with this extremism, there is more forgiveness or defense of historical atrocities and present violence. All people need is a push to find themselves far from dialogue and close to finding violence to be the answer. For many while dictatorships in Europe such as Germany and Italy might be seen as failures, Franco in Spain, Salazar in Portugal, or Pinochet in Chile appear to be successful and somewhat more neutral as the United States was never engaged in direct conflict against those regimes. Therefore, there is a furthering of approval, even if unintended of the actions, policies, and results of those regimes when politicians or commentators give the basics of a time and place where your political opponents were either hushed, exiled, or dead.

Not only is it that radical politics is found to be attractive, but bigotry against women or minorities is also by extension permissible when certain examples are glorified. In the examples given, conservative women are not the ones who are vocal about supporting Franco. Surely there are some, but they are not the vocal ones who encourage or by proxy promote the regime. With the acceptance of radicalism in politics, it creates dangerous and repressive settings for women and minorities who are viewed in a hostile way or even in a more damaging way, they are simply ignored for the greater goal of political authority or singularity.

With the examples given from before Franco in the 19th century to today, the Catholic faith and Church has undoubtedly played a role in the creation, maintenance, and proliferation of the Franco regime even if it has not been directly endorsed in modern pontificates. There is a strong base of traditional Catholics who not only want beautiful liturgies or traditional gender roles but have given up on democracy and see religion and autocracy as a match made in heaven. The desire throughout American conservative culture and particularly Catholic conservatives, to bring about the unity of church and state will continue to flourish as long as simple histories are given of not only the Franco regime, but other regimes and events in Church history such as the Inquisition and Crusades which are also being justified. While religion can certainly act as a public good, the manner in which it associates itself with the public is a difficult balancing act. If conservative Catholics are to in any way pursue their goals, having Franco as a roadmap presents a number of issues for political opponents, and even other non-Catholic conservatives as even the base can become alienated. The modern rejection of pluralism as an effort through religion and politics, especially with Francoism in mind only allows for the fatal repetition of history.

## **Conclusion**

From the way in which Franco's idea became popular with a base of Spanish conservatives who felt sorely defeated, to his cozying up with prelates and the Holy Father, to how easy it is for modern content creators to spawn a new wave of digital propaganda, there is a threat that still is present in all of them. From the Carlists to the Christian nationalist memes,

there exists a strong desire from conservatives to make the world understandable and an entity that can be controlled. If one has a strong religious view that appears mocked today, all it takes is a couple minutes for someone to find a video that packages history into a neat format that makes one feel empowered for just a moment. It does not require a bachelor's degree in history to make someone feel empowered by simple phrases and an all-encompassing ideology like Catholicism or Fascism. In bringing back Arendt, man cannot be the measure of all things, but there is a pleasure when he feels like the god he serves, when he feels like he is in control of history and destiny. Perhaps it is "*Viva Christo Rey*" or "*Sieg Heil*" or "*Deus Vult*," but what I hope to show is how history is being made into a one-minute video that can change a person's entire worldview, and the entire world.

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# “My Head is Bloody, but Unbowed”: The Violent Evolution of White Power Martyrdom Within Internet Echo Chambers From 1995 to 2012.

By Madalyn Schroeder

On the morning of April 19th, 1995, Timothy McVeigh got into a yellow rental truck and started the two-hour drive to Oklahoma City. He carried a black Model 21 semi-automatic .45-caliber Glock pistol loaded with a Black Talon bullet, also known as a cop-killer.<sup>1</sup> He chose his outfit carefully: a white t-shirt with a drawing of Abraham Lincoln on the front accompanied by the phrase *Sic semper tyrannis*—“Thus always to tyrants”—which John Wilkes Booth shouted after assassinating Lincoln in 1865.<sup>2</sup> By invoking Booth’s words, McVeigh paid homage to the memory of a martyr long admired by the white supremacist community. The back of his shirt featured a bloodstained oak and his favorite quote from Thomas Jefferson: “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”<sup>3</sup> This t-shirt, an alternative to army fatigues, had become McVeigh’s standard uniform in his war against the federal government.

In the passenger seat sat a white envelope containing dozens of articles, pamphlets, and letters that outlined McVeigh’s political philosophy. Chief among these documents was an excerpt from William Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries*. McVeigh highlighted a quote in which Earl Turner, whose fictional war against the government includes the bombing of intelligence headquarters, writes “The real value of our attacks today lies in the psychological impact, not in the immediate casualties...[Politicians] learned this afternoon that not one of them is beyond our reach.”<sup>4</sup> If officers captured or killed McVeigh in Oklahoma City, this line and the envelope’s curated contents would become the bomber’s manifesto.

In the back of McVeigh’s Ryder truck lay seven thousand pounds of explosives composed of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and diesel racing fuel.<sup>5</sup> It took two days for McVeigh to create the device that would decimate the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City, killing 168 civilians and wounding 800 others. McVeigh later justified his actions, saying, “I didn’t define the rules of engagement in this conflict. The rules, if not written down, are determined by the aggressor... You put back in [the government’s] faces exactly what

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<sup>1</sup> Lou Michel and Dan Herback, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & the Tragedy at Oklahoma City* (New York: Avon Books, 2002), 268.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 271.

<sup>5</sup> Documents relating to the Oklahoma City bomb investigation, FBI File: *OKBOMB*, Accessed October 10, 2024. <https://vault.fbi.gov/OKBOMB/OKBOMB%20Part%2001%20of%2001/view>.

they're giving out.”<sup>6</sup> McVeigh, a veteran of the Gulf War, witnessed the suffering that the American military was capable of bestowing upon innocent civilians and hoped that bombing the Murrah Building would incite a revolution against “the ultimate bully”: the federal government.<sup>7</sup>

For members of the white power movement, Timothy McVeigh represented a new era. Unlike many of his predecessors, McVeigh did not outwardly express racist or anti-Semitic beliefs, participate in far-right organizations like the National Alliance (NA), or subscribe to Odinism, a Nordic religion popular among neo-Nazis during the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the far-right's anti-federal message, expressed through propaganda like *The Turner Diaries*, resonated with McVeigh, whose military experience left him feeling aimless and resentful.<sup>9</sup>

Seduced by the combative aspects of the far-right, McVeigh saw himself as the modern incarnation of revolutionaries like Thomas Jefferson and John Wilkes Booth. Although scholars debate the origin of McVeigh's extremist beliefs, most agree that his reading and subsequent obsession with *The Turner Diaries* solidified his commitment to achieving his goals through martyrdom. McVeigh's consumption of far-right media not only altered his self-image but also reduced complex individuals like John Wilkes Booth to aspirational symbols of radical violence.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, far-right propaganda spread through regional networks, gun shows, and mailing lists. These methods targeted audiences already predisposed to extremist ideology. In 1983, the mass distribution of in-home computers significantly accelerated the speed at which extremists spread information. This new technology also expanded the movement's audience size, making it possible for supremacists to reach potential recruits on an international scale.

Many scholars of right-wing extremism (RWE) have focused on this time period, agreeing that the modern white power movement is notably more unified and aggressive than previous waves. Kathleen Belew's book *Bring the War Home* captures the rise and unification of the white power movement from 1975 to 1995. Belew focuses on paramilitary sects and their leaders, emphasizing a web of connections that resulted in a united white nationalist front. She argues that Vietnam War veterans felt betrayed, neglected, and ostracized by the government.<sup>10</sup> This widespread dissatisfaction united neo-Nazis, Klansmen, and anti-communists, forging an all-encompassing white power movement. Belew suggests that the vagueness of movement's

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<sup>6</sup> Michel and Herback, *American Terrorist*, 267.

<sup>7</sup> Robin Aitken, “Inside McVeigh's mind,” BBC News, BBC, June 11th, 2001, Accessed October 9, 2024, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1382540.stm>.

<sup>8</sup> The Southern Poverty Law Center, “New Brand of Racist Odinist Religion on the March,” *The Intelligence Report*, March 15, 1998, Accessed November 3, 2024, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/1998/new-brand-racist-odinist-religion-march>.

<sup>9</sup> Michel and Herback, *American Terrorist*, 110.

<sup>10</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the war home: the white power movement and paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 5.

ideology played a key role in this amalgamation, asserting that the shared enemies, rather than shared beliefs, unified the factions.

*Taking America Back* by David Austin Walsh expands on Belew's work, examining the presence of extremism in American conservatism from 1930 to 2023. Walsh discredits the popular notion that the radical components of American conservatism are a recent development. He contends that the alliance between the far right and the Republican Party represents a long-standing relationship, with the formation of the "New Republican Party" marking the culmination of many years of partnership. *Taking America Back* examines the gradual yet impactful influence of extremism on mainstream politics, highlighting a shift in the rhetoric Americans deem acceptable from politicians.<sup>11</sup>

Taking a narrower perspective, Pete Simi and Robert Futrell's book *American Swastika* analyzes the ways Aryan groups use free spaces to create comradeship, spread rhetoric, and ingrain themselves in popular culture. *American Swastika* specifically examines how white power ideology manifests in music, cyberspaces, and education. To gather information, the authors conducted extensive interviews with members of the movement. These first-hand accounts provide essential insight into the mindset fostered by white supremacy.<sup>12</sup>

In the counterterrorism field, many researchers analyze the language used by white supremacist groups. In his 2020 study, "Testament to Murder: The Violent Far-Right's Increasing Use of Terrorist Manifestos," scholar Jacob Ware draws a connection between the publication of manifestos and increasingly violent far-right attacks. He lists a series of influential RWE manifestos, linking each to a notable instance of violence and demonstrating the correlation between dangerous words and malicious crimes.<sup>13</sup> Ware's findings indicate that the consumption of hateful and often falsified rhetoric harms society. Other studies, such as Viveca Greene's 2019 work "'Deplorable' Satire: Alt-Right Memes, White Genocide Tweets, and Redpilling Normies," examine social media's role in normalizing far-right extremism. Analyzing white power's internet presence, Greene uncovers how constant media consumption on the internet desensitizes people to disturbing content, transforming once-taboo suggestions of graphic violence into easily dismissible jokes.<sup>14</sup>

Although all of these works have deeply influenced the study of far-right extremism, scholars have made little effort to trace the presence and evolution of martyrdom within the movement between 1995 and 2012. This work contributes to the field by offering an ideological analysis of this period through the lens of the internet, evaluating its role in shaping narratives of

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<sup>11</sup> David Austin Walsh, *Taking America Back: The Conservative Movement and the Far Right* (Yale University Press, 2024).

<sup>12</sup> Pete Simi and Robert Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Jacob Ware, "Testament to Murder: The Violent Far-Right's Increasing Use of Terrorist Manifestos" International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23577>.

<sup>14</sup> Viveca S. Greene, "'Deplorable' Satire: Alt-Right Memes, White Genocide Tweets, and Redpilling Normies," *Studies in American Humor* 5, no. 1 (2019): 31–69. <https://doi.org/10.5325/studamerhumor.5.1.0031>.

martyrdom. By analyzing references in the white power movement's music and websites, it emphasizes how the internet's ability to rapidly spread information has created a community characterized by hero-worship and copycat violence.

This paper will initially provide a brief background on the white power movement before 1995, touching on several important figures and events later ingrained in the movement's mythology. After outlining the state of RWE before 1995, this paper moves chronologically, detailing various instances of violence committed by white supremacists and how the community commemorated, propagandized, and celebrated these actions. This section begins with the movement's reaction, or lack thereof, to Timothy McVeigh's bombing, trial, and 2001 execution. The movement's initial decision to distance itself from McVeigh's crimes reflected an unwillingness to align with radical violence. However, between 2005 and 2010, this stance began to shift. Blog posts on neo-Nazi websites such as Stormfront.org and lyrics from skinhead bands like Prussian Blue illustrate a growing acceptance of violent actions. By 2011, the movement's commemoration of martyrs and hate crimes, spread mainly via the internet, led to an outpouring of copycat crime. Beginning with Anders Behring Breivik's 2011 attack in Norway, this concluding section examines the interconnected nature of four domestic terror attacks that occurred between 2011 and 2022.

### **1975-1990: Background**

White supremacist and Neo-Nazi organizations saw a resurgence in popularity after the Vietnam War. The politicians' lies about the conflict reshaped many veterans' perceptions of the government, making them feel as though it trivialized their sacrifice. Veterans felt restless, betrayed, and adrift, and the camaraderie offered by extremist groups resonated with them. Many service members who joined organizations like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), the National Alliance, or the Aryan Nations found leadership roles in paramilitary offshoots. Among these new recruits were three individuals whose legacies the white power movement would later memorialize: William Pierce, Robert Mathews, and Randy Weaver.

Born September 11th, 1933, William Pierce became the movement's most popular ideologue. Although Pierce attended a military academy, an injury prevented him from enlisting upon graduation.<sup>15</sup> Instead, Pierce dedicated his time to politics, floating between several far-right organizations before forming his own neo-Nazi group, the National Alliance, in 1974. Pierce used the NA's publishing company, National Vanguard Books, to publish white nationalist propaganda, including his novel, *The Turner Diaries*.

*The Turner Diaries* is a dystopian novel that favorably depicts a successful white power coup. Written as a collection of diary entries, it tells the story of Earl Turner, a dedicated

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<sup>15</sup> Robert S. Griffin, *The fame of a dead man's deeds: An up-close portrait of white nationalist William Pierce* (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books Library, 2001), 34.

follower and eventual martyr of the movement. Turner and his comrades, collectively known as “The Order,” create a white ethnostate by carrying out bombings, robberies, mass lynchings, and public executions.<sup>16</sup> Although *The Turner Diaries* notably lacks concrete ideology—allowing readers to insert whatever hateful beliefs they subscribe to—it serves as a practical guide for individuals intending to carry out terrorist attacks.<sup>17</sup> Since its publication, the novel has caused the deaths of at least 200 individuals, all killed by extremists inspired by its message.<sup>18</sup> The novel serves as a call to action, outlining the required steps—including martyrdom—to overthrow an aggressive non-white government.

Initially published in serial form in the NA magazine *Attack!*, *The Turner Diaries* circulated within the militant white power community without drawing much civilian attention.<sup>19</sup> In the following years, supporters of the National Alliance and similar groups could only buy *The Turner Diaries* via mail order. However, when the movement began to utilize the internet in 1983, Pierce uploaded the novel digitally for larger consumption. By 1999, the Alliance had sold an estimated 500,000 physical copies while reaching an undoubtedly broader audience online.<sup>20</sup>

Following the publication of *The Turner Diaries*, William Pierce expanded his media empire. In 1999, he bought Resistance Records, a Skinhead music label known for promoting revisionist conspiracy theories. By the time of its acquisition, Resistance Records was the world’s largest distributor of skinhead music.<sup>21</sup> William Pierce’s multimedia marketing strategies enabled the white power movement to reach younger generations, redefining its recruitment techniques in the digital age.

William Pierce died in 2002 of natural causes. Upon his death, internal leadership disputes caused the National Alliance to dissolve.<sup>22</sup> Pierce’s cult of personality, often likened to Adolf Hitler’s, responded to their leader’s death by memorializing him through songs, writings, and actions.<sup>23</sup> Though Pierce did not sacrifice his life for the cause like *The Turner Diaries*’ protagonist, the movement remembers and celebrates him for his ideological contributions. As this paper will explore, Pierce and *The Turner Diaries* frequently appear in white power mythology, often lauded for presenting a radical and violent plan to achieve a white-only world.

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<sup>16</sup> Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, “Inside The Turner Diaries: Neo-Nazi Scripture.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, no. 4 (1997): 717–18, .

<sup>17</sup> J.M. Berger, “The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism’s Deadly Bible,” *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) Evolutions in Counter-Terrorism*, no. 1 (November 2020 [2016]): 19-54, <https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/2023-01/Special-Edition-1-3.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Sutherland, “Gospels of hate that slip through the net,” *The Guardian*, April 3, 2000, Accessed November 23, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/apr/03/race.mcveigh>.

<sup>21</sup> *The New Lexicon of Hate: The Changing Tactics, Language and Symbols of America’s Extremists* (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2009), 3, .

<sup>22</sup> Barry J. Balleck, *Modern American Extremism and Domestic Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Extremists and Extremist Groups* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018): 285, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX7484900135/GVRL?u=loyolau&sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=7681edea>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

Pierce's ideas resonated with many white nationalists in the 1970s and 80s, but perhaps no one was more influenced than Robert 'Bob' Mathews. Although Bob Mathews participated in several survivalist and fundamentalist groups in the 70s, he is best known for founding and leading The Order, a white supremacist militia active from 1983 until Mathews' death in 1984. Inspired by the operation of the same name in *The Turner Diaries*, The Order committed bank robberies, counterfeiting operations, and various hate crimes across the country.

The organization's year-long rampage culminated in the assassination of outspoken Jewish radio host Alan Berg in June 1984. Two members of the group, David Lane and Bruce Pierce, were convicted and sentenced for the crime, while Mathews, suspected of being an accomplice in the murder and wanted on federal racketeering charges, fled to a remote home in Washington.<sup>24</sup> While on the run, Mathews penned a menacing letter declaring that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would soon "know what it is like to become the hunted."<sup>25</sup> On December 7th, government agents surrounded Mathews' safehold, initiating negotiations until Mathews abruptly cut communication and began firing.<sup>26</sup> On December 8th, agents resorted to throwing flares into the building, igniting a stockpile of various weapons and ammunition. As flames engulfed the house, Mathews refused to surrender, fighting until the blaze incinerated him.<sup>27</sup> Since his death, Mathews' final stand persists in white power mythology, symbolizing, as expert Kathleen Belew notes, the ideal "warrior culture and paramilitary masculinity."<sup>28</sup>

Although Mathews became one of the first to achieve martyrdom in the modern era of white supremacy, he was not the last. Another figure whose actions would galvanize the movement was Randy Weaver, a former Green Beret who served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1970.<sup>29</sup> Although Weaver never fought in Vietnam, a fact that frustrated him relentlessly, he utilized his survivalist training in the white separatist movement.<sup>30</sup> The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) defines *white separatism* as "a form of white supremacy that emphasizes the idea that white people should exist separately from all inferior, non-white races, whether by establishing an all-white community somewhere or removing non-whites from their midst."<sup>31</sup> Weaver adhered to the earlier version of this ideology, relocating his family to the separatist stronghold of Boundary County, Idaho, in 1983.

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<sup>24</sup> Balleck, *Modern American Extremism*, 207.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Mathews, "TO THE EDITOR," 1984, Accessed November 24, 2024, [https://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/wolzek/1984\\_BobMathewsLastLetter.html](https://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/wolzek/1984_BobMathewsLastLetter.html).

<sup>26</sup> Balleck, *Modern American Extremism*, 211.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 210.

<sup>28</sup> Belew, *Bring the war home*, 128.

<sup>29</sup> Jason Wilson and Rachel Carroll Rivas, "Randy Weaver, Influential Figure for White Supremacist, Militia Movements, Has Died," The Southern Poverty Law Center, May 13, 2022, Accessed November 21, 2024, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/05/13/randy-weaver-influential-figure-white-supremacist-militia-movements-has-died>.

<sup>30</sup> Belew, *Bring the war home*, 196.

<sup>31</sup> Anti-Defamation League, "White Separatism," Accessed November 18, 2024, <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/white-separatism>.

In Idaho, Randy Weaver joined the Aryan Nations, a neo-Nazi group whose racist and anti-Semitic views aligned with his fundamentalist beliefs.<sup>32</sup> As a member, Weaver regularly attended the group's annual World Congress, where he networked with like-minded individuals to discuss the white power movement and ways to advance its cause.<sup>33</sup> During this period, Weaver and his wife Vicki became reclusive and paranoid, convinced that the Apocalypse would come at the hands of the federal government.<sup>34</sup> Driven by these fears, they moved to a remote cabin on the outskirts of Boundary County, near a cliff face known as Ruby Ridge.

In 1989, Weaver's increasingly erratic behavior and rhetoric attracted FBI attention, leading undercover agents to approach him at the World Congress. Weaver sold the agents illegal sawed-off shotguns, prompting the FBI to issue a warrant for his arrest. Weaver refused to cooperate, and the legal situation greatly deteriorated over the next several years. By the time six U.S. marshals arrived at Weaver's Ruby Ridge residence in mid-August of 1992, Weaver and his family had barricaded themselves inside, heavily armed.<sup>35</sup> During the ensuing eleven-day stand-off, marshals shot and killed Vicki Weaver and Samuel 'Sammy' Weaver, the couple's 14-year-old son. After these tragic losses, Randy surrendered to hostage negotiators on August 31.<sup>36</sup> For white nationalists, the stand-off at Ruby Ridge symbolized increasing federal aggression. In the years that followed, the names Vicki, Sammy, and Randy Weaver became rallying cries for resistance against government overreach and abuse of power.

### 1990-1995: Celebration of Legacies

William Pierce, Bob Mathews, and Randy Weaver's legacies play important roles in the white power movement. Their leadership, heroism, and resilience inspired many admirers to honor them in music, symbols, and, more recently, online forums.

In the 1980s, punk culture spread from England to the U.S., providing a new generation of teens with a defining sound. Because rebellion against authority is a defining characteristic of punk music, far-right organizations eagerly embraced the genre, recognizing a new way to spread their rhetoric to an impressionable demographic.<sup>37</sup> The fusion of extremist ideology and punk music amplified the American neo-Nazi skinhead movement, a racist offshoot of the British skinhead subculture. Rejecting the formal structure of traditional white power organizations, American skinhead groups operated like street gangs, with members wearing

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<sup>32</sup> Belew, *Bring the war home*, 196.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson and Rivas, "Randy Weaver..." para. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Belew, *Bring the war home*, 197.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 199.

<sup>37</sup> David Pearson, *Rebel Music in the Triumphant Empire: Punk Rock in the 1990s United States* (Oxford Academic, 17 Dec. 2020), 1, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197534885.003.0001>.

bomber jackets and steel-toed boots and proudly displaying their tattoos and shaved heads.<sup>38</sup> Racist skinhead music, described by the ADL as “hatecore punk,” repackaged supremacist ideologies into a leather-clad, anti-authority aesthetic that appealed to isolated and angry teenagers.<sup>39</sup>

In the early 1990s, skinhead bands included white power rhetoric in their lyrics, emphasizing core principles like martyrdom. In their 1990 song “Solitary Warrior,” punk group Bound for Glory references a man “locked in his cell,” alluding to David Lane, a member of The Order imprisoned in 1984 for racketeering, conspiracy, and the violation of Alan Berg’s civil rights.<sup>40</sup> White supremacists view Lane, serving a life sentence, as a martyr and hero of the movement. Lane wrote the Fourteen Words, which author Sara Kamali calls the “collective mission statement” for white nationalists.<sup>41</sup> The statement—“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children”—asserts white superiority and remains a popular rallying cry within the movement referenced in songs, online discussions, and manifestos.<sup>42</sup>

After paying tribute to Lane, “Solitary Warrior” continues: “He fought for his country, he fought for his land / He never gave up when the battle was at hand.”<sup>43</sup> This portrayal of a relentless soldier fighting for his race evokes the image of Bob Mathews. References to Mathews are commonplace in the skinhead music scene, which commemorates his actions more than those of other figures. Each year, on the anniversary of his death, Hammerskin Nation—one of the most prominent American skinhead groups—celebrates “Martyrs Day,” an event blending elements of a music festival and a political convention.<sup>44</sup>

The skinhead movement reached the height of its popularity in the mid-1990s, breeding an underground political culture that preached aggressive action and used stories of martyrs to suggest that the federal government was oppressing its people. This style of music and messaging predominated the cultural environment in which Timothy McVeigh bombed the Murrah Building in downtown Oklahoma City.

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<sup>38</sup> Daniel Byman, *Spreading Hate: The Global Rise of White Supremacist Terrorism* (Oxford Academic, 17 Feb. 2022), 60, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197537619.003.0004>.

<sup>39</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “The Sounds of Hate: The White Power Music Scene in the United States in 2012,” 2012, Accessed November 26, 2024, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Sounds-of-Hate-White-Power-Music-Scene-2012.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> Bound for Glory, “Solitary Warrior,” track 11 on *Warriors Glory*, Rock-O-Rama Records, 1990, <https://www.metalkingdom.net/lyrics-song/bound-for-glory-solitary-warrior-162163>.

<sup>41</sup> Sara Kamali, “The Fourteen Words: The Racist Beliefs of White Nationalists,” In *Homegrown Hate: Why White Nationalists and Militant Islamists Are Waging War against the United States*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2021), 41, .

<sup>42</sup> Bridge Initiative Team, “Factsheet: Fourteen Words,” The Bridge Initiative, Georgetown University, July 2nd, 2019, Accessed October 21, 2024, <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-fourteen-words/>.

<sup>43</sup> Bound for Glory, “Solitary Warrior,” 1990.

<sup>44</sup> Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika*, 18.

### 1995-2001: Traditional Martyrdom

After leaving the army in 1991, Timothy McVeigh drifted across America, making a measly living as a security guard and selling white power merchandise at gun shows and right-wing conventions.<sup>45</sup> Although McVeigh's specific music taste is unknown, he likely encountered skinhead music at these events. In 1992, the stand-off at Ruby Ridge and the murders of Sammy and Vicki Weaver greatly exacerbated his distrust of federal authority. McVeigh, a steadfast supporter of the 2nd Amendment, saw Ruby Ridge as a sign that the government intentionally targeted civilians' inalienable rights.<sup>46</sup> In a letter written to a friend two months before the Oklahoma City bombing, McVeigh's hatred and paranoia is evident. He angrily references Ruby Ridge, describing FBI agent Lou Horiuchi as "the sniper who blew Vicki Weaver's head off," and concludes the letter ominously, stating, "my whole mindset has shifted, from intellectual to...animal."<sup>47</sup>

The stand-off at Ruby Ridge, coupled with the 1993 siege of a Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, convinced McVeigh that "a sharp, forceful blow...might bring the government to its senses."<sup>48</sup> Although he knew his actions would kill many innocent Americans, he wholeheartedly believed that "someday...historians would call him a martyr, maybe even a hero."<sup>49</sup> McVeigh's conviction that the white power movement would embrace him as a champion motivated him to act per the movement's primary goal of inciting a war against the federal government.

Unfortunately for McVeigh, in the days and weeks following the Oklahoma City bombing and his arrest, movement leaders actively distanced themselves from the explosion. Chief among these individuals was William Pierce, whose leadership in the NA branded him as the face of modern white supremacy. In a 1996 interview with the *Oklahoman*, Pierce denies any connection to the bombing and downplays *The Turner Diaries'* influence on McVeigh, stating, "I am a peaceful man. All I can do is get people to think."<sup>50</sup> By distancing himself and his novel from the violence he obviously encouraged, Pierce's words represent not only a denial but a forceful condemnation. This reprimand is surprising given Pierce's 1984 eulogy for Bob Mathews, who drew similar inspiration from *The Turner Diaries*. In his speech, Pierce applauds Mathews for "taking [the movement] from name calling to blood-letting," indicating his approval of The Order's violent crusade.<sup>51</sup> In the decade between Mathews' death and

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<sup>45</sup> Michel and Herbeck, *American Terrorist*, 162.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 157.

<sup>47</sup> Timothy McVeigh, "Letter to Gwenda Strider," February 10, 1995, <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/1997/05/09/text-of-mcveigh-letter/62315084007/>.

<sup>48</sup> Michel and Herbeck, *American Terrorist*, 198.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 198.

<sup>50</sup> "Mild Mannered Ex-Professor Spreading Racist Message," *The Oklahoman*, July 7, 1996, Accessed November 13, 2024, <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/1996/07/07/mild-mannered-ex-professor-spreading-racist-message/62350276007/>.

<sup>51</sup> William Pierce, "ROBERT J. MATHEWS..." *National Alliance Bulletin*, December 1984, Accessed November 29, 2024, [https://miro.medium.com/v2/resize:fit:832/format:webp/1\\*37xWYtFhj-zLOe2a8PItaQ.jpeg](https://miro.medium.com/v2/resize:fit:832/format:webp/1*37xWYtFhj-zLOe2a8PItaQ.jpeg).

McVeigh's attack, Pierce continued to spew provocative rhetoric while emphasizing the need for militancy. However, by distancing the movement from McVeigh in 1996, he defined the boundaries of acceptable violence, drawing a distinct line between a "hero"—like Mathews, who killed one person, and a "monster"—like McVeigh, who killed 168.

After 1995, skinhead music reflected Pierce's condemnation, with many bands choosing to omit references to the bombing and continuing to write about traditional martyrs like Mathews and Weaver. Blue Eyed Devils' 1999 song "Retribution" encapsulates the movement's unchanged definition of martyrdom: "Looked death in the face and never turned to run. / Seen the bravest fall to my enemies' guns. / Rage of revenge burns deep in my heart."<sup>52</sup> Although these lyrics do not name specific martyrs, they allude to the stand-off at Ruby Ridge in the line, "the bravest fall to my enemies' guns."<sup>53</sup> Notably, this song and the rest of the tracks on the Devils' album *Retribution* do not mention the OKC bombing or McVeigh's looming 2001 execution date. When a band referenced or omitted an event or individual in their music, they signaled to fans what the movement deemed acceptable. By maintaining the separation established by Pierce, skinhead musicians reinforced a tightly controlled cultural system, diligently moderating the information included in propaganda.

### 2001-2007: The Period of "Inactivity"

While white power organizations wielded direct influence over skinhead groups through record label ownership, they lacked the same control over the internet. Although the movement used the web as an informational resource as early as 1983, radicalization continued primarily through real-life interactions. In their 2017 study on RWE, social scientists Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij determined that the internet radicalized only three percent of lone wolf attackers before 9/11, while membership in white power organizations accounted for twenty-six percent.<sup>54</sup> However, advancements in technology and the growth of social media at the turn of the century impacted this trend. Post-9/11, the internet radicalized twenty-six percent of lone wolf attackers, while television and radio influenced nine percent, a notable increase from the previous zero.<sup>55</sup>

While many white power websites emerged in the late 90s, Stormfront.org remains the most popular and influential. Described by expert Heidi Berich as the "murder capital of the Internet," Stormfront is a neo-Nazi, white nationalist forum founded by Klan leader Don Black

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<sup>52</sup> Blue Eyed Devils, "Retribution," track 1 on *Retribution*, Resistance Records, 1999, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.streetdirectory.com/lyricadvisor/song/wffuf/retribution/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1733095486967836&usg=AOvVaw1u94-As8HvCazZpwylZUCT>.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Mark S. Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 2017), 59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hamm18174.8>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 63.

in 1995.<sup>56</sup> According to Black, the site aims “to provide information not available in the controlled news media and to build a community of White activists working for the survival of our people.”<sup>57</sup> To achieve this mission, Stormfront allows users to create “threads,” posts intended to generate discussions on a variety of topics including, dating advice, favorite movies, conspiracy theories, current events, and, most importantly, shared frustrations. By providing a thread for every aspect of socialization, Stormfront’s formatting creates an echo chamber that meets all the user’s needs, eliminating the requirement for other websites, mainstream news outlets, or even in-person communication.

Following Timothy McVeigh’s execution in June 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and William Pierce’s death in 2002, the white power movement disappeared from public view, seemingly disbanding amidst both internal and external turmoil. However, despite the dissolution of several official white power organizations, membership on Stormfront and other extremist hate sites increased, indicating a shift from in-person assembly to online communities.<sup>58</sup> On the now defunct neo-Nazi site Panzerfaust, two 2004 posts from users TruckingSkinhead and HateMachine capture the typical sentiments expressed on forums during this time, demonstrating the continued prevalence of white power rhetoric:

when i was in 1st grade i was dragged into the boys room by 4 [n—] was beat to a pulp then pissed on by all 4 of them....I learned to stand up for myself and realize now I have good reason [to hate]. TruckingSkinhead.

I personally just have always seen around me how we are much different than non-Whites and liked that I was white. But, what made me a “pure racist” so to say is when I attended middle school which was 90% [n—]. HateMachine.<sup>59</sup>

Posts like these aim to evoke sympathy, encourage other angry individuals to share their own stories, and ultimately create a brotherhood built on victimization.

Although several works like *American Swastika* quote since-deleted neo-Nazi forum posts, none of these references directly address the concept of martyrdom. These omissions, Stormfront’s confusing and inconsistent archival system, and the removal of websites like Panzerfaust make it difficult to accurately gauge the online perception of martyrdom before 2007. Fortunately, skinhead music, still culturally relevant in the early 2000s, provides a glimpse into the movement’s evolving mindset. Like many skinhead songs, Prussian Blue’s 2004 ode “Sacrifice” celebrates white power heroes, including Bob Mathews, who “set an example with courage so bold,” and William Pierce, who “helped so many of us open our eyes / and see the

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<sup>56</sup> Heidi Beirich, “White Homicide Worldwide,” *Intelligence Report*, The Southern Poverty Law Center, April, 2014, Accessed December 2, 2024, [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6\\_legacy\\_files/downloads/publication/white-homicide-worldwide.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/white-homicide-worldwide.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Don Black (“DonBlack”), “Guidelines for Posting,” on Stormfront.org, October 26, 2001, Accessed December 2, 2024, <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t4359/>.

<sup>58</sup> Simi and Futrell, *American Swastika*, 87.

<sup>59</sup> Posts on panzerfaust.com, quoted in *American Swastika*, 95.

future for what it could be.”<sup>60</sup> However, in a notable break from tradition, “Sacrifice” also honors Nazi leader Rudolf Hess who “wouldn’t give up and he wouldn’t cease / to give his loyalty to our cause.”<sup>61</sup> As Hitler’s Deputy Führer, Hess played an important role in organizing and implementing the initial expulsion of Jewish individuals from Germany. By mentioning Hess, Prussian Blue demonstrates a newfound comfortability with mass murder, reflecting a growing acceptance of extreme violence within white power culture. This ideological shift coincided with the popularization of hate sites, indicating a connection between the internet and the movement’s new rhetoric.

## 2007-2012: A New Standard

In 2007, after years of underground online activity, the white power movement experienced a public resurgence as a response to America’s involvement in the Middle East, the approaching presidential election, and financial hardship. In the face of uncertainty, Americans turned to social media networks to express their frustrations, doubts, and anger. While some extremists found support on YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), Stormfront remained the primary space where hateful individuals sought affirmation and reassurance.

With its archives beginning in 2007, Stormfront’s forums provide insight into the minds of white nationalists during this turbulent time. In a post titled “Heroes,” user “Truck\_Roy,” whose real name is Freeland Dunscombe, dedicates the quote, “what one man can do, another can do,” to Klan leader David Duke, Don Black, and the mysterious “Erick KW.”<sup>62</sup> Although unclear, this name may refer to Erich Priebke, a Nazi SS officer who orchestrated the Ardeatine massacre, where his men executed 335 Italian civilians.<sup>63</sup> Due to his position in the Nazi regime, several extremist groups admire Priebke.<sup>64</sup> If this post indeed references him, it highlights white power’s continued embrace of violence and exaltation of brutality.

Regardless of “Erick”’s true identity, Dunscombe views him, Duke, and Black as heroes. He writes poetically about these men, building a good versus evil narrative that eliminates nuances. By invoking the quote, “what one man can do, another can do,” he implies that Priebke,

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<sup>60</sup> Prussian Blue, “Sacrifice,” track 5 on *Fragment of the Future*, Resistance Records, 2004, <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/8536946/Prussian+Blue>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ryan Lenz, “People of Stormfront: Meet Freeland Roy Dunscombe, Don Black’s Radio Sidekick,” The Southern Poverty Law Center, April 8, 2015, Accessed December 4, 2024, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/04/08/people-stormfront-meet-freeland-roy-dunscombe-don-black%E2%80%99s-radio-sidekick>.

<sup>63</sup> Alison Smale, “Erich Priebke, Nazi Who Carried Out Massacre of 335 Italians, Dies at 100,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2013, Accessed December 3, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/12/world/europe/erich-priebke-nazi-who-carried-out-italian-massacre-dies-at-100.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Duke, and Black are figures to emulate. His adoring prose further illustrates his admiration for those who follow in the footsteps of his heroes:

All my life I beleived [*sic*] in Heroes. Modern society seeks every dark corner of a persons [*sic*] life in pursuit of bringing Hero to his knees. My, how the weak hate the strong! When they see the Hero, they see their own failings where he triumphed.<sup>65</sup>

Dunscombe's consistent capitalization of "hero" appears intentional, suggesting a reverent, almost spiritual devotion to these infamous men. This vague yet unwavering praise contrasts with the skinhead lyrics of the 1990s, which focused more on detailing the specific actions of each martyr rather than pledging a broad, undying allegiance.

Since its creation on October 10, 2007, nearly two thousand users have viewed the "Heroes" thread.<sup>66</sup> This view count suggests that the post, while semi-popular, is largely conventional and non-controversial, indicating that many members share Dunscombe's sentiments about martyrdom. For example, an impassioned user expresses similar views in a thread regarding the importance of physical activism: "It is forthright heroism that made our Race great, not anonymous whispering from the shadows. As the saying goes, 'No guts, no glory!'"<sup>67</sup> Like Dunscombe, this Stormfronter advocates for heroism and, by criticizing individuals "whispering from the shadows," contends that immediate real-world action is necessary to save the white race from extinction. According to this mindset, individuals achieve martyrdom not through victimhood but through aggression. This digital age of white power defines heroes by their drive, agency, and capacity for destruction. Through this measurement, white nationalists can easily normalize and memorialize extreme acts of violence.

Witnessing the celebration of mass murderers on Stormfront and similar forums not only causes desensitization but also results in the belief that violence leads to glory—a concept sometimes referred to in RWE circles as "Valhalla," after the paradisiacal Norse afterlife. This conviction that the movement will reward sadism encourages future violence, ranging from more minor instances like microaggressions to larger, more radical actions such as assassinations, bombings, and mass shootings. By escalating the level of brutality, perpetrators seek to outdo previous attacks, both as a tribute to earlier figures and to gain recognition, status, or validation within the movement.

Before their attacks, several perpetrators of large-scale violence posted on Stormfront or similar sites, sharing hateful tirades, threats of vengeance, and rambling manifestos. Often, fellow users reacted positively to these rants, providing encouragement and camaraderie. In

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<sup>65</sup> Freeland Dunscombe ("Truck\_Roy"), "Heroes," posted on Stormfront.org, October 10, 2007, Accessed December 3, 2024, <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/blogs/u115496-e234/>.

<sup>66</sup> According to Stormfront's website, approximately 1,722 users had viewed this post as of December 2024. However, the accuracy of this figure is debatable due to the site's frequent erasures of information and the static nature of the view count, which did not change despite multiple visits by the author.

<sup>67</sup> James Harting, "On the Dangers of a Virtual Movement," posted on Stormfront.org, September 26, 2012, Accessed December 3, 2024.

2008, a user named “year2183” joined Stormfront and became an active contributor on the site. In one of his earlier posts, he writes, “Feminism, corrupt treacherous politicians, a corrupt treacherous media, pro-immigration Jewry and a corrupt academia is the hole in the ‘dike,’ while Muslims are the water flooding in.”<sup>68</sup> In response, Freeland Dunscombe, author of the aforementioned “Heroes” thread, commented, “glad to have you here.”<sup>69</sup> Over the next three years, “year2183” built close relationships with site leaders like Dunscombe, Billy Joe Roper, and Timothy Gallaher Murdock.<sup>70</sup>

On July 22nd, 2011, “year2183”—whose real name is Anders Behring Breivik, a Norwegian white nationalist—emailed a 1,518-page manifesto to his Stormfront allies. Titled *A European Declaration of Independence–2083*, the document is an anti-immigration and Islamophobic diatribe filled with references to the Crusades, revisionist history, and familiar white power rhetoric. Breivik concludes the work memorably, writing:

The old saying: “if you want something done, then do it yourself” is as relevant now as it was then. More than one “chef” does not mean that you will do tasks twice as fast. In many cases; you could do it all yourself, it will just take a little more time. AND, without taking unacceptable risks. The conclusion is undeniable. I believe this will be my last entry. It is now Fri July 22nd, 12.51. Sincere regards, Andrew Berwick [*sic*], Justiciar Knight Commander.<sup>71</sup>

This passage’s intense language, especially regarding the concept of self-reliance, exemplifies a new style of white power martyrdom created by the internet. Breivik clearly believes he must awaken the white race through a bloody revolution, viewing this mission as a path to achieving fame and immortality. He shows this conviction by using medieval secret society titles, demanding immediate action, and obsessing over memorialization. Posts like Dunscombe’s “Heroes” undoubtedly influenced Breivik’s perspective and contributed to his decision to perpetrate the deadliest white power attack since the Oklahoma City bombing.

Hours after sending his manifesto to friends, Breivik detonated a truck bomb in front of a government building in downtown Oslo. The fertilizer bomb, reminiscent of McVeigh’s and the weapon used in *The Turner Diaries*, killed eight people and injured ten others.<sup>72</sup> These casualties failed to satisfy Breivik’s bloodlust, and two hours later, he arrived at a summer camp for the Norwegian labor party’s youth organization on Utøya Island.<sup>73</sup> For the next hour and thirteen minutes, Breivik stalked the island with a semi-automatic rifle, killing sixty-nine people, most of

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<sup>68</sup> Anders Breivik (“year2183”) 2008 post on Stormfront.org, quoted in Beirich, “White Homicide Worldwide,” 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Anders Behring Breivik, *A European Declaration of Independence*, July 22, 2011, Accessed December 4th, 2024, <https://www.rai.it/dl/docs/13115255886322083-A-European-Declaration-of-Independence.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup> Graham Macklin and Tore Bjørgo, “Breivik’s Long Shadow? The Impact of the July 22, 2011 Attacks on the Modus Operandi of Extreme-Right Lone Actor Terrorists,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15, no. 3 (2021): 2, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27030880>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

them under eighteen-years-old.<sup>74</sup> A court found Breivik guilty of mass murder, causing a fatal explosion, and terrorism in August 2012 and sentenced him to a minimum of twenty-one years in prison.<sup>75</sup> A Stormfront thread announcing the sentence included a photo of Breivik raising his right fist in an imitation of a Nazi salute. Users responded to the now-deleted post with comments praising Breivik as a “hero” and a “P.O.W.,” demonstrating affection and admiration for the terrorist.<sup>76</sup> The white power movement’s positive online reaction to Breivik differs from its response to McVeigh in 1995, illustrating a drastic and dangerous change in its ideology.

The positive reception of the July 22nd attacks on web forums motivated other users to commit deadly attacks inspired by Breivik. This pattern of replication is known as copycat crime which, according to criminologist Ray Surette, “implies that the root of a crime can be found in exposure to a live model or media content concerning a prior crime.”<sup>77</sup> The celebration of Breivik’s actions within white nationalist media generated an unprecedented number of copycat killers who viewed the Oslo attack as a blueprint for future violence. These perpetrators both envied and admired Breivik, aiming to reinforce his ideas and gain fame by surpassing his body count. The circulation of *The European Declaration of Independence* played a significant role in amplifying this phenomenon and, as counterterrorism expert J.M Berger notes, “became the baton in a relay race of extremists, passed from one terrorist murderer to the next through online communities.”<sup>78</sup>

## 2012-2022: The Disciples

In early June 2015, twenty-one-year-old Dylann Roof uploaded his manifesto online, echoing Anders Breivik’s utilization of the internet. In the untitled work, Roof directs the majority of his ire toward Black Americans by using derogatory terms and relying on racist stereotypes to support his argument. He expresses a familiar and dangerous sentiment: the belief that heroism, specifically his heroism, will save the white race. “We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet,” Roof writes, “Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.”<sup>79</sup>

Days later, on June 17th, Roof attended a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a Black congregation in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. As attendees

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Beirich, “White Homicide Worldwide,” 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ray Surette, “Copycat Crime,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology*, 26 Sep. 2017, Accessed December 4th, 2024, <https://oxfordre.com/criminology/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264079-e-33>.

<sup>78</sup> J.M. Berger, “The Strategy of Violent White Supremacy is Evolving,” *The Atlantic*, August 7, 2019, Accessed October 10th, 2024, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/08/the-new-strategy-of-violent-white-supremacy/595648/>.

<sup>79</sup> Dylann Roof, *Untitled* (original publication date unknown), discovered by law enforcement on June 20, 2015, Accessed December 4, 2024, <https://media.thestate.com/static/roofmanifesto.pdf>.

bowed their heads for a concluding prayer, Roof pulled out a pistol and began shooting, killing nine congregants. Law enforcement discovered Roof’s manifesto on his website, *lastrhodesian.com*, on June 20th. Mainstream media outlets quickly amplified its existence, inadvertently broadcasting it to obscure and hateful corners of the internet. Similarly to Breivik, Roof’s manifesto became an inspiration for several white power devotees radicalized online, including Australian white nationalist Brenton Tarrant.

In 2019, Tarrant attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing fifty-one people. Like Roof, Tarrant actively engaged with extremist websites including 8chan, a discussion forum frequented by far-right zealots. Following Breivik’s tradition, Tarrant uploaded a manifesto online before the attack. In the document, he thanks “Knight Justiciar Breivik” for his bravery and inspiration.<sup>80</sup> By using Breivik’s self-assigned honorific, Tarrant betrays an intimate familiarity with the Norwegian’s lengthy manifesto. This extensive knowledge exposes Tarrant’s deep involvement in the white power movement, especially given the deliberate removal of Breivik’s work from mainstream media. In addition to posting a manifesto, Tarrant live-streamed the massacre on Facebook, building upon and escalating the cruelty of prior attacks. His decision to broadcast his attacks operated as a sadistic call to arms, inspiring others to replicate his destruction.<sup>81</sup>

In 2022, eighteen-year-old Payton Gendron live-streamed himself murdering ten Black Americans in Buffalo, New York. Gendron, a disciple of all three aforementioned terrorists, posted a manifesto online. The work is formatted as a Q&A, replicating the structure initially used by Tarrant. In response to the question, “What do you want?” Gendron quotes the Fourteen Words, David Lane’s iconic slogan, demonstrating respect for earlier martyrs.<sup>82</sup> When asked, “Is there a particular person that radicalized you the most?” he writes:

Yes, and his name is Brenton Harrison Tarrant. Brenton’s livestream started everything you see here...without his livestream I would likely have no idea about the real problems the West is facing.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to Tarrant, Gendron also credits Breivik and Roof, applauding their “stand against ethnic and cultural genocide.”<sup>84</sup> Finally, in response to the question, “If convicted, do you expect to stay in prison?” he answers:

Yes, I do wish to see how the world plays out after all. If I become old in the same prison, I would only assume that we have passed the point of no return and will die out,

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<sup>80</sup> Ware, “Testament to Murder...,” 5.

<sup>81</sup> Eitan Azani, Liram Koblenz-Stenzler, Lorena Atiyas-Lvovsky, Dan Ganor, Arie Ben-Am, and Delilah Meshulam. “Evolution in the Modus Operandi of Far-Right Activists.” *The Far Right — Ideology, Modus Operandi and Development Trends*. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), 2020, 59.

<sup>82</sup> Payton Gendron, *What you need to know*, May 12, 2022, Accessed December 4, 2024, <https://www.hoplophobia.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PG-Manifesto.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

and that I have failed. If we do rise up against the replacers, I expect that I will be let out and honored amongst my people.<sup>85</sup>

Gendron's manifesto represents the culmination of a decade-long ideological evolution, exemplifying the consequences of replacing traditional martyrs with homicidal avengers.

All four of these terrorists, connected by shared ideology and motives, reflect a new age of white supremacy. Simultaneously united and isolated by the internet, digital supremacists find purpose and inspiration in the idea of immortality, which they believe can only be achieved through violence. On forums like Stormfront, Panzerfaust, and 8chan, users pen rants infused with an ever-present sense of urgency. These anonymous keyboard warriors demand action, lamenting the bygone days of the Klan, the National Alliance, and The Order. "Someone must step up," they insist, for the movement thrives on narratives of heroic sacrifice. However, in the last twenty years, the internet's normalization and encouragement of violence corrupted the traditional notion of heroism. Dying for the cause, like Robert Mathews, no longer suffices. Now, the movement demands individuals be willing to shed blood, measuring their value based on body count rather than ideological contributions. While Payton Gendron is the most recent embodiment of this change, he will not be the last. The internet is an uncontrollable force, and advancements only escalate its capability for desensitization, radicalization, and destruction. As long as the internet exists, individuals like Breivik, Roof, Tarrant, and Gendron will continue to commit extreme acts in the name of racial preservation. The modern white power movement's capacity for violence is limitless, and over the next decade, the frequency of attacks will intensify as internet echo chambers continue to isolate dangerous communities from the rest of the world.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

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## **Section Two: Commodities, Cooking, and Cultural Change**

# Anglo-Indians in the Early to Mid-20th Century: How Did Cookbooks Establish a Social Group?

*By Grace Polak*

Distinct pockets of food and people made their roots in India following the colonization by the British in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The constant migration to and from India by British soldiers, scholars, writers and more also created a diverse exchange of taste for new and familiar foods. The effort to document and commemorate a taste of India for Brits led to some cookbooks which can give a glimpse into culinary life in colonial India. By analyzing historical cookbooks and social histories of the Anglo-Indian community, generational attitudes about Indian food “versus” British food are created, perpetuating a cycle of cultural superiority among the population. Historically, cookbooks were written by upper-class British “exiles” for their white servants on how to run a successful household in India utilizing Indian servitude, ingredients, and cooking methods. The language and interpretation of food in these cookbooks during the height of the British Raj then shaped how Anglo-Indians viewed the cultures they were coming from around India’s Partition, which led to animosity and appreciation towards aspects of both cultures.

## History of British in India

The British began establishing trading routes and encountered locals in 1608. A trend seen across the East India Company was employing as few natives as possible or granting them low level jobs only with little room for equality. The British originally used India as a means for gaining access to resources for their domestic economy, but mid nineteenth century morality and race theory caused company employees, as well as Christian missionaries to see their mission in India as one of bringing an uncivilized race to modernity, while also using them for labor and resources. As more European soldiers, businessmen, and religious scholars made their homes in India, a complicated and vast social community and “government” emerged, which following the 1857 Mutiny became the official governing voice in India, and the British Raj was born.

The 1857 Mutiny is an important event to look at to understand relationships between Indian nationalists, British loyalists, and Anglo-Indian subjects. Anglo-Indians before this event were seen as unimportant to the British, yet the rebellion, which needed as much manpower as possible to suppress, prompted the acceptance of the minority. This event established a long running bond between the British and Anglo-Indians, with the latter group trying their best to seem as appealing as possible to gain better rights, education, and employment opportunities. Lastly, as a response to the rebellion, the British sent an increased number of officers, and now

their families, to establish communities and strongholds of Britishness to maintain their dominance over the subcontinent. This is how dozens of cookbooks concerning the home of a Brit in India as well as adapting ingredients and recipes in a new climate came to exist and influence the next generations of British and Anglo-Indian readers and civilians.

### Who are the Cookbooks for?

While looking at older cookbooks from the nineteenth century including some mentioning of India, specific language indicates the audience for these books. All the cookbooks consulted are written by white British “exiles” who are writing to satisfy their longing for the lifestyle in India from Britain.<sup>1</sup> Even though the tone of these books suggests an appreciation for Indian life, using the term exile in this context shows a separation between the metropole and colony, that being away from Britain for any reason is some sort of punishment. Spelling of recipes and ingredients is also a factor in deciphering the language used within these books. Within the cookbook *Anglo-Indian Cookery at Home*, words not from English are spelled by how the author hears them being pronounced. Words like coconut are replaced by “cocoanut” and a specific Indian food called vadas are spelled as “vuddays.”<sup>2</sup> The frequent misspellings of words cross over many sources, showing the widespread practice of appropriating words from Hindi or another regional language into a jumbled form of English. In the *Indian Cookery Book* from its earliest print in 1880 so egregiously misspells foods like pilau as “pooloo” or “pellow,” which is so far from a phonetic spelling that it can only be from lack of care and feelings of superiority, as these recipes would have to have been written or taken from Indian chefs and servants speaking to the author.<sup>3</sup>

Another feature that helps discern the audience for these cookbooks are the mentioning of aids, servants, cooks, and household people. One book refers to the reader as “‘Old Indians’ in England” which references people who lived in India at some point and wish to recreate familiar tastes.<sup>4</sup> In this context we can see how some British held a sort of pride towards their stay in India, enough to willingly call themselves a title other than white or British. The time spent in the colony was also happy, so much so that books reminiscing on their time, memories, and tastes became a popular topic for food writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Cookbooks could also be written for men and ladies on how to run their households with Indian servants efficiently. The cookbook entitled *Culinary Jottings for Madras* has an entire section dedicated to management of the cooks and kitchen areas in India, with a special note from the

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<sup>1</sup> Henrietta A. Hervery, *Anglo-Indian Cookery at Home: A Short Treatise for Returned Exiles*, (London, Horace Cox, 1895).

<sup>2</sup> Hervery. *Anglo-Indian Cookery at Home*, 19, 24.

<sup>3</sup> A Thirty-Five Year’s Resident *The Indian Cookery Book: A Practical Handbook to the Kitchen in India*, (Thacker, Spink, and Co., 1880), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Hervery. *Anglo-Indian Cookery at Home*, iii.

author that “unless amicable relations exist between the cook and his mistress or master, the work will never be carried out satisfactorily”.<sup>5</sup>

A last detail in these cookbooks is the name association with the separate groups involved in cooking and consuming food. The *Indian Cookery Book* refers to the cooks and servants who are undoubtedly Indian as “natives” only, showing a racial superiority from the author that again reflects the popular moral stances taken against nonwhite colonial subjects to preserve the British Raj’s power.<sup>6</sup> Analogies are common among these books, using pseudonyms and examples of types of servants to make management seem more relatable. The author of *Culinary Jottings* had a cook named Ramasámy, and in point explains situations in the kitchen from which the reader’s own Ramasámy can learn to improve their servitude skills. The wording of these scenarios is very demeaning toward the Indian cook, with wording reminiscent of guides on how to take care of pets, but the section dedicated towards management is like the cookbook’s own recipe catalog, only on how to treat a human being of a different race.

Seeing how 19<sup>th</sup> century books describe Indian people and food, it can be clear to see that British nationals interested in the exotic nature of India were the target audience. These books helped preserve British life and tradition in places they came to occupy unjustly. Since later cookbooks even mention these editions, the influence is clear that later generations got a lot of social direction inspiration from media that included cookbooks. This type of media is important for highlighting the social climate in colonial India and in England, and we can better see how the descendants of both British and Indian populations were at odds with each other socially despite finding ways to integrate the cultures into a new contact group, with food being a focal point.

### **Who is the Anglo-Indian?**

The term Anglo-Indian originally was to refer simply to British people living in India. The term Eurasian was also a common interchangeable word, and the idea of interracial unions was only brought about to replace the role of British women for companionship by East India Company employees. As suggested by Grimshaw’s 1959 article on integration of marginal communities, the reproduction between the races was purely out of convenience and rarely out of affection.<sup>7</sup> Indian women were commonly used as simple comfort beings with the British, with the produced children often ignored or neglected. Many Anglo-Indians have ancestry from a wide range of metropole countries that spent time in India, including Portugal, France, and of course Britain. Much like the British, the Hindu sects of society also frowned upon the children of these relations, as in the caste system, mixed blood people were to be shunned from another

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<sup>5</sup> Wyvern, *Culinary Jottings for Madras*, (1878), 8.

<sup>6</sup> A Thirty-Five Year’s Resident, *The Indian Cookery Book*.

<sup>7</sup> Allen D. Grimshaw “The Anglo-Indian Community: The Integration of a Marginal Group,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Feb. 1959, Vol. 18, No. 2, 227-240, Michigan: Association for Asian Studies, 1959, 2.

form of community around them.<sup>8</sup> This caused yet more reason for the Anglo-Indian community to become hostile towards both groups in some respects. While trying to create their own space and place to thrive, the issues of not fully aligning with the British or Indians became a key factor in their development before and after Partition.

Anglo-Indians thus faced issues fitting into and adapting both British and Indian cultural markers, including the food they consumed and saw in daily life. Because they were shunned completely by the Indian community and only partially by the British, Anglo-Indians became obsessed with and focused on assimilating as close as possible to Western life. They adopted English as the native language, became Christian, and even dressed in Western clothes for most of daily life. Noel Gist recognized this connection, as the eating of curries was common, but the table etiquette of the West was favored and deemed any other form as “repugnant.”<sup>9</sup> This internal struggle of having to use Indian resources for sustainability while feeling superior to the native population because of European ancestry has long been a prominent preconceived notion and in some cases a racist belief held by Anglo-Indians to feel established away from Indians. Anglo-Indians and their internalized racism can explain their cultural desires to appear more European and yet also draws questions about how it was practiced and then interpreted by the communities around them.

The economic status of Anglo-Indians also impacted their responses to culture and therefore food and created the foundations for these more Western attitudes towards life in India. Most Anglo-Indian men and women at first were forced into lives of poverty, as they were barred from forms of civil service within the East India Company, and from Indian posts and jobs because of the caste system. Even though they were barred from positions to grow their social status, the fact they spoke English gave them an advantage against their fully Indian counterparts. Post Partition, many Anglo-Indians including Collette Kohlhoff became stenographers and secretaries for large international companies with offices in India. The Anglo-Indians were a big part of establishing railroads and the British telegraph system throughout India, furthering their seeds of loyalty in the eyes of the Company, which also continued after partition, as many men in Collette’s family worked on the railroads and in the telegraph companies.<sup>10</sup>

Following the mutiny in 1857, the British began to tighten their grip on Indian society, turning back to the Anglo-Indians as an asset to bolster their ranks and loyalties amongst the local populations.<sup>11</sup> These difficulties for the Anglo-Indian as a British subject caused further dedication to the crown. The adoption of British tradition and attitudes became even more normal heading closer to Partition, as many Anglo-Indians never even learned an Indian dialect

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<sup>8</sup> Grimshaw, “The Anglo-Indian Community,” 3.

<sup>9</sup> Noel P. Gist, “Cultural versus Social Marginality: The Anglo-Indian Case,” *Phylon* (1960-), 4th Qtr., 1967, Vol. 28, No. 4, 361-375, Georgia: Clark Atlanta University, 1967, 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Grimshaw, “The Anglo-Indian Community,” 5.

<sup>11</sup> Grimshaw, “The Anglo-Indian Community,” 5.

despite living in India their whole lives. It is not surprising that cookbooks and other forms of British media about the minute details that make up the British home became notable features of the Anglo-Indian home, and for a group socially barred from most aspects of British community building in India, something like food at home could help them keep their connection even if small.

Many families incorporated Indian food into their diet not only for culture, but for convenience as well. In an interview conducted on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, with an Anglo-Indian woman named Collette Kohlhoff (Robson), it became clear that growing up Anglo-Indian was a lot more nuanced than the research conducted around that time like Grimshaw and Gist. Meals at home for the typical Anglo-Indian family were usually Indian in nature; featuring curries, frys (a very thick, almost liquid-less stew that used Indian spices) and relying heavily on starches and rice for their cheapness and filling-ness. The interviewee agreed with the statement that Anglo-Indian food was simply Indian food cooked in a western way, referencing styles of slow cooking, and baking as well as the eating-time norms that contradicted at home and at school. She agreed that Anglo-Indian food only differed from British food by using local spices and ingredients. Although wanting to remove oneself from their Indian heritage in favor of adopting more British cultural markers is a common tactic for the Anglo-Indian, food was still a connector that showed some level of Indian acceptance. The home was a critical area for Anglo-Indian culture to be sustained, but schools also became an important part of food memories and influence.

Growing up following the Partition in 1950s-1970s, many Anglo-Indian children went to boarding schools that focused on western education models. One of the oldest British schools in India is in Chennai (then Madras) and is the alma mater for the entire Robson family as well as the Kohlhoffs. Despite being a school that championed instilling Western values into its students, the institution provided meals that reflected a mixed taste. Breakfasts consisted of porridge, a common food found in all households of the time regardless of race, but special note was made that tea and coffee were given to the children during this time. This then coincided with the daily ritual for all students to partake in teatime, a tradition for British that Anglo-Indians sought to emulate to appear less Indian.

Lunches and dinners involved vegetable as well as meat curries but included western utensils. It is interesting to mention again the eating-time norms Collette discussed, as the times dedicated to eating meat were different, lunch being the norm at home while meat with dinner was the practice at the school. It is interesting that the British school altered the student's eating habits in some small ways and left enough of an impact on these children that they would remember that difference over 50 years later. Seeing this real-world scenario of Gist's article gives another air of credibility to the discourse on Anglo-Indian habits of the time and paints an experience of growing up surrounded by differing food types that somehow combine to create a new type of eating experience.

## Hybrid Cuisine

The discussion on Anglo-Indians and their diets details not only their unique and adopted foods, but also hybrid cuisines. As mentioned earlier, Anglo-Indian food tradition can be best described as a British way of cooking Indian food. Many Indian foods like curry dishes become simplified and with fewer “exotic” ingredients. On the other hand, British foods can be adapted and changed to incorporate new ingredients not previously seen before. One popular dish among Collette’s family is a food called a puff. It is a British meat pastry dish that was adapted by Anglo-Indians and others living around the British to include Indian spices and create a handheld fry packaged in bread. The idea of puff pastry is not originally from India, it is a western food brought over. This food adoption has made the ingredient popular amongst all Indians, not just Anglo-Indians, an example of hybrid creation in the past and present. Despite this positive example of hybrid food, seeing cultural food abroad can be a dissimilar experience, creating questions about what actual Indian food is.

Indian food, in contrast, for the British has consistently been modified to appear more enticing and appealing. The British are even credited with creating one of the most popular dishes for Indian restaurants in the West: butter chicken. This dish is symbolic in the present more of British identity in Indian culture, rather than an accurate representation of what India’s food culture has to offer. Yet its signature ingredient, cream, is not a traditional part of Indian cooking. It is again an ingredient used to make Indian food more palatable and enjoyable for the European tastebuds. A cookbook that Collette used later in her life to replicate the recipes of her childhood is an interesting resource to see a more contemporary connection of how Indian food was prepared and enjoyed by Anglo-Indians up until its globalized popularity.

Attia Hosain’s cookbook titled *Cooking the Indian Way*, originally published in 1962, delves into the cooking processes and ways adapting Indian food can be done. Hosain’s introduction identifies that even outside of Anglo-Indian houses, by 1962 many Indian families were incorporating some Western dishes into their meals, and by that point Western and British cooking vessels, methods, and utensils were common in many households. Recipes like “Casserole Meat and Rice” showcase this new type of cooking for the culture, with usage of Indian spices like turmeric, garam masala and saffron while utilizing the western style casserole dish and oven for cooking.<sup>12</sup> Unlike previous cookbooks that had racist and ignorant undertones to their comments in between recipes, this cookbook has a refreshing outlook on how Indian cooking has evolved and implemented traditional and contemporary styles. Anglo-Indians consumed both the insight from these books and their recipes to incorporate Indian heritage diets into their palettes, which is the kind of atmosphere post-Partition Anglo-Indians came of age in. Seeing the evolution of cookbooks for Indian food over almost 100 years allows a glimpse at both the social relations of the British and Indians, and the emerging identity of Anglo-Indians and their food culture that was influenced by the discourse of their parent groups.

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<sup>12</sup> Attia Hosain. *Cooking the Indian Way*, (London, Spring Books, 1962), 85.

## Conclusion

The modern term for Anglo-Indians is broader and has now become synonymous with all mixed-race Indians, not just the specific minority community in India that descended from British colonialism. This makes it more challenging to analyze the social impact and story of the original Anglo-Indian group, but comparisons and observations between the two groups can also tell us a lot about globalization and what their presence means in society now. Some Anglo-Indians from Collette's generation developed trauma and identity issues from not being seen as fully one ethnicity by either the British or Indians. Despite growing up in a time where mixing cultures and food was becoming normalized, many leave India in favor of western or European-dominated countries where they can fully embrace western life. The childhood given to them, complete with tea times and western attitudes prepared them for this, as if the Anglo-Indian were always going to leave India in search of the western world. In Collette's story, it took taking a trip back to India almost 40 years after leaving to rekindle her interest in Indian food and finding comfort in the curries, fries, and other dishes her mother used to make. This allowed the younger generation of her family, mostly me, to experience what it meant to be Anglo-Indian, the way the older generation had forgotten to acknowledge: with food. Asking questions and learning about food through the eyes of Collette allowed a small child to connect with a culture forgotten, one that had a diverse and colorful menu connected to a rich history highlighting the effect of cultural mingling.

Indian food has taken on a broader meaning and diversity throughout the world in the age of globalization. As more people are exposed to the food of unfamiliar cultures, its significance and interest has spread as well. In India, the food eaten in the west is just that: food. There is not usually a special marker or determining name that labels it as a special dish. Many people of many diverse backgrounds can be introduced to Indian food; it is not just a family secret kept locked in the doors of homes of immigrants. Thriving communities in big cities all over the world are built around restaurants that welcome not only their own to give them a taste of home, but also curious and interested visitors who can spread awareness about cuisine.

The identity of Indians in new countries and immigrant communities has also changed how Indian food is seen, eaten, and created. Older iterations of Indian food in western countries had before been simplified, condensed, and gentrified much like what the original British in India had done to the food. With the ever-growing number of immigrants in countries though, the percentage of unique and traditional style food is on the rise. Historically, it can be noticed that also specific geographic regions in India had more immigrant movement than others, but again, with the growth of globalization and world movement in general, the opportunity for regional cuisine to be represented in a new country accurately is increased significantly. For the Anglo-Indian, a taste of home can have many implications abroad. Going to Indian restaurants is more of an event, and eating Indian food at home, much like in the childhood of Collette, is more of the norm. It is interesting how despite the globalization, modernization, and acceptance of the Anglo-Indian, this very acceptance has freed many Anglo-Indians from the long-held view to run

away from Indian culture and food, and instead embrace it to hold onto childhood and their unique cultural identity that is now a respected part of the hundreds and thousands of global identities and food cultures.

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# Chocolate and Coffee as Socially Symbolic Goods in Early Modern England

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*By Molly Foran*

The late 17th and early 18th centuries in England were marked with unprecedented social divisions born out of an increasingly fraught religious and political environment. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century created mistrust and suspicion among neighbors, amplified by sensational events such as the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and Titus Oates' Popish Plot conspiracy of 1678. Political tensions naturally coincided with this increasingly divided religious environment.<sup>1</sup> The world's first political parties originated in mid 17th-century England, factions centered around differing ideas of sovereign power and the role of parliament in a monarchical state.<sup>2</sup> Much early political ideology was based on the exclusion or lack thereof of heir presumptive James, Duke of York, from royal succession because of his Catholic faith. This period of rapid social change and division was augmented by an increasingly free press, in which daily papers would often affiliate with either the Whig or Tory party. England's status as an imperial power also fueled a century of rapid modernization within the kingdom, and the nation was a huge importer of new goods in this period, especially of coffee, chocolate, and tea.

Within a few decades of introduction to English society, coffee and chocolate became symbolic forces of an increasingly modernizing and divided English upper society through the assigning of certain distinct virtues to each good and the institutions that they represented. The polarization of chocolate and coffee was based upon existing medical and regional qualities which were synthesized with England's social and political tensions to typify and enact opposing social identities. Because chocolate and coffee's introduction into England was deeply entwined with ongoing discourse, the social integration of each commodity reflected broader social modernization and changes, while also illustrating the desire for British social groups to distinguish themselves from one another by assigning moral qualities to commodities that were intrinsically amoral.

The first advertisement for chocolate in England was published in a June 1657 publication of the *Publick Advertiser*, in which it was announced that there was an "Excellent *West India* drink" to be sold at a Frenchman's house.<sup>3</sup> The explicit advertising of chocolate as a

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Bucholz and Key Newton, *Early Modern England 1485-1714: A Narrative History*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), 305.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 289.

<sup>3</sup> Kate Loveman, "The Introduction of Chocolate into England: Retailers, Researchers, and Consumers, 1640-1730," *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 1 (2013), 30.

West Indian drink shows that it was initially marketed as exotic and foreign. Exoticism lent itself to luxury and courtly associations, and the dual properties of being both medicinal and luxurious made chocolate a desirable commodity for consumption among the British urban population. Chocolate was also more complicated than either coffee or tea in its preparation. It was served as a drink, often made with milk, water, and eggs. In the 1657 *Publick Advertiser* advertisement, patrons were told they may either purchase their chocolate premade or “unmade.”<sup>4</sup> The preparation of chocolate required a level of skill and aptitude, which partly contributed to chocolate not becoming as popular a commodity as coffee or tea. Within a decade of the *Publick Advertisers'* first notice, there were dozens of sellers throughout London and chocolate had become more integrated into English society.

An early English-language source on chocolate's various qualities was printed in 1662 by Henry Stubbe titled *The Indian nectar, or, A discourse concerning chocolata[...]*. Stubbe presented chocolate as a drink with medical properties, including but not limited to; stomach health, better breath, provoking the menstrual cycle, comfort to the womb, loosening phlegm, and a brightening of the spirits.<sup>5</sup> In “A curious treatise of the nature and quality of chocolate” by Antonio Colmenero, translated from Spanish by Don Diego de Vades-forte in 1640, Colmenero described chocolate as a particularly courtly drink with differing qualities depending on additives such as nuts and peppers. Chocolate was also presented as having dual qualities of heat and coldness, as well as the ability to calm the stomach while also upsetting it.<sup>6</sup> In a later edition of Colmenero's treatise titled “*Chocolate: or, An Indian Drinke,*” translated by James Wadsworth in 1652, Vadesforte said that chocolate was “thirsted after by people of all degrees (especially the Female sex) either for pleasure therein naturally residing, to cure, and divert diseases [...]”<sup>7</sup> Chocolate had strong associations with fertility and menstruation in early advertisements and treatises such as these.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 27–46.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Stubbe, *The Indian nectar, or, A discourse concerning chocolata [...]*, (London, 1662), 54.

<sup>6</sup> Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, *A curious treatise of the nature and quality of chocolate [...]* (London, 1640) trans. Don Diego de Vades-forte.

<sup>7</sup>Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, Diego de Vades-forte, “To the Gentry of the English Nation,” *Chocolate: or, An Indian Drinke*, (2007), trans. James Wadsworth.



Figure 1. Chocolate India, “Opusculum De qualitate & natura chocolatae.” (Nuremberg, 1644).

The front matter of Colmenero’s treatise (Figure 1) depicts the West Indies giving the gift of chocolate to Europe. The Indies are represented as a female maiden-like figure, whereas Europe is the male god Poseidon. There is also clear imagery of European dominance, both in Poseidon’s domineering height and his wealth of riches. The New World’s personification as a woman was not a new phenomenon, for as long as Europe had known of the Americas, the region was depicted as a woman. In particular, the West Indies’ fertile soil and lush landscape made it ripe for sexual allegory. In a 1655 survey of the New World, *America, or, An exact description of the West-Indies*, the author, and unnamed gentleman, said that fruits were improved when grown in the West Indies in taste, size, and beauty because of the soil’s “richness and lustiness.”<sup>8</sup> The fertility of the New World proved a clear correlate to female fertility and reproduction, and the female Indies gifting chocolate to the dominant male Europe in the front matter of Colmenero’s treatise signifies that the association of femininity with the New World itself carried over into the foods that originated in the region. Chocolate was described as having distinct qualities linked with menstruation and fertility. In *The vertues of chocolate East-India drink*, published in 1660, it was said that causing conception is one of the medicinal virtues of chocolate and that women who have been unable to conceive should no longer worry because “tis a Help Immediate, If such but Lick of Chocolate.”<sup>9</sup> Chocolate’s explicit connection to

<sup>8</sup> N.N. Gent, “America, or, An exact description of the West-Indies”, (London, R.H. for Edw. Dod, 1657), 103.

<sup>9</sup> “The vertues of chocolate East-India drink”, (Oxford, Henry Hall, 1660), 1.

fertility can be attributed to its origin in the West Indies - the fertility and femininity that had been prescribed to the region carried over into the prescribed qualities of chocolate itself.

The origins of chocolate's explicit sexualization by Europeans, particularly in such a gendered way, are difficult to trace. Word of chocolate's aphrodisiac powers traveled with the Spanish as they brought chocolate to Europe. The Aztecs made a drink with chocolate called *xocolatl*, which Spanish writer Hernández reported to be an aphrodisiac.<sup>10</sup> According to Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés, Aztec emperor Montezuma was a huge consumer of chocolate, a habit that was said to have aided in his romantic endeavors. Conquistador Diaz Del Castillo wrote that Montezuma had many women as mistresses and it was rumored that Montezuma drank 50 cups of chocolate a day to sustain such trysts. Word of the sexual power associated with chocolate traveled across the Atlantic with Spanish importation, and thus became important in shaping the English medicinal understanding of chocolate. With the successive introduction of the chocolate house, the associations with fertility and femininity that chocolate was imbued with would develop into an association with sexual promiscuity, female seduction, and prostitution.

Similarly to chocolate, coffee was presented as being medicinal in quality in 17th-century England, though with differing benefits. In an advertisement from 1652, *The Vertue of the COFFEE Drink*, it was explained that coffee is cold, dry, non-inflammatory, helps digestion, protects against headache, gout, and scurvy, and makes the skin clear and white.<sup>11</sup> Coffee was notably coded as Turkish in this advertisement, where it was said that coffee grows "only in the deserts of Arabia" and that Turks drink it at all times of the day.<sup>12</sup> In a 1662 advertisement, coffee was referred to as the "Turkey berry."<sup>13</sup> Coffee and chocolate were advertised as being from distinctly different parts of the world - chocolate from the newer, more exotic West Indies, and coffee from the closer, more familiar East Indies. In the same 1662 advertisement, coffee was said to be able to stop women's menstruation altogether - it was an "excellent Remedy against the stoppage of Womens Courses."<sup>14</sup> The dryness of the climate from which coffee emerged was the opposite of the lush, fertile climate in which cocoa was grown, and coffee's climatic association with infertility was so strong that it became anti-sexual. An English translation by Edward Pockocke of an Arabic medical text determined that coffee "asswageth lust," while in the satirical *Women's Petition against Coffee* from 1674, "women" complain that coffee has made their husbands so sterile that they "run the hazard of being Cuckol'd by Dildo's."<sup>15</sup> Though coffee and chocolate were introduced into London at roughly the same time,

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<sup>10</sup> Jan G. R. Elferink, "Aphrodisiac Use in Pre-Columbian Aztec and Inca Cultures." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9, no. 1/2 (2000), 25–36.

<sup>11</sup> "The Vertue of the COFFEE Drink," (London, Pasqua Rosée, 1652).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> John Timbs, "Turks Head Coffee House in Change Alley," *Club Life of London, Volume II (of 2)* (London, Richard Bentley, 1866), *The Kingdom's Intelligencer* (1662).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Brian Cowan, "Coffee and Early Modern Drug Culture," In *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (Yale University Press, 2005), 41; "Women's Petition Against Coffee" (London, 1674).

they were markedly different in the connotations they carried, connotations based upon explicitly conflicting medical properties and different regions of origin.

The first coffeehouse in England opened in 1650 at Oxford, though the coffeehouse itself was not a novel idea to the British, as coffeehouses had a long tradition in the Arab world.<sup>16</sup> Coffee and chocolate houses began as places for scholars to gather and try exotic commodities that were difficult to secure for private consumption. By the 1690s, coffeehouses and chocolate houses were frequented by the London elite.<sup>17</sup> Both the coffeehouse and chocolate house quickly gained reputations, though similarly to the different qualities ascribed to the commodities themselves, what each institution was known for varied greatly. In 1673 it was written in *The Character of A Coffee-House, with the Symptomes of a Town-Wit*, “The Room stinks of *Tobacco* worse than Hell of *Brimstone*, and is as full of *smoak* as their Heads that frequent it, whose humours are as various as those of *Bedlam*, and their discourse ost-times as *Heathenish*.”<sup>18</sup>

Coffeehouses were viewed to be the breeding ground for free thought and heathenish discourse, due in large part to the proliferation of daily papers at these establishments. Newspapers were in increasing demand and printed more regularly because of a lapse in the Licensing Act in the late 17th century, and were oftentimes highly satirical or critical of authority.<sup>19</sup> The coffeehouse became a place for the academic and high-minded legions of the London elite to discuss current events, local and global politics, and debate contentious issues, and the coffeehouse was deemed so politically dangerous that several attempts were made to lessen its growing influence in the political world. In 1675, King Charles II issued *The Proclamation for the Suppression of the Coffee-House*, which stated in part, “that in such Houses, and by occasion of the meetings of such persons therein, divers False, Malitious and Scandalous Reports are devised and spread abroad, to the Defamation of His Majesties Government, and to the Disturbance of the Peace and Quiet of the Realm[.]”<sup>20</sup> Such political discourse was a relatively new symptom of modernization in England, and the coffeehouse was emblematic of a changing environment in which political thought and debate was becoming more acceptable in the public sphere.

The political connotations of the chocolate house were just as salient as the coffee house. There were three main chocolate houses in London in the late 17th century; Ozinda’s, White’s, and the Cocoa-Tree.<sup>21</sup> Whereas coffee houses were the sophisticated institution of growing political thought, chocolate houses had much stronger associations with gambling and general ill-mannered behavior of all kinds. Chocolate was imbued with a sexuality that was especially

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<sup>16</sup> Brian Cowan, “Coffee and Early Modern Drug Culture,” 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 1.

<sup>18</sup> “The Character of a coffee-house with the symptomes of a town-wit” (London, Jonathan Edwin, 1673), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Brian Cowan, “Coffee and Early Modern Drug Culture.” 147.

<sup>20</sup> King Charles II, “By the King. A proclamation for the suppression of coffee-houses,” (London, 1675).

<sup>21</sup> Brian Cowan, “Coffee and Early Modern Drug Culture,” 170.

correlated with women. In 1693, Robert Gould wrote the poem “The corruption of the times by money a satyr”, which says in part:

That the great Lady's *soaking* in her *Bed*?  
 [...]
 Dish after Dish, for *Chocolate* she calls;  
 [...]
 No other *Nectar* they allow *Divine*.  
*Vain Sex!* at once both *Foolish* and *Unjust*,  
 To think they need *Provocatives* to *Lust*<sup>22</sup>

Here, women’s lustful nature was directly linked to chocolate. Gould also described women as “foolish” and “unjust,” for their need for chocolate. Chocolate was an aphrodisiac, and the strong sexual meanings that had been sown into the good carried over into the place where the good was served - the chocolate house.

This extension of sexual imagery from the commodity to the institution became a defining factor in the public image of the chocolate house as compared to the coffee house. In the comedy *Greenwich-Park* written by William Mountfort and printed in 1691, differing associations of chocolate and coffee houses were laid out as such:

*Will's* Coffee-House is the Office of Intelligence;  
 And for the Masks who hunt the smaller Fry,  
 Their Chocolet-House will their wants supply

Later in the same play, a character says “[come] pick up Whores at the Chocolate-House,” and another, “That's the Constant Cant of the Chitts at the Chocolet-House, where, as they receive favours from nothing but Chamber-maids and Trulls.”<sup>23</sup> The chocolate house was a hotbed for prostitution and sexual deviancy in popular culture. In Roger North’s *Examen*, he stated that the chocolate house was a place where “gaming is added to all the rest, and the summons of Whores seldom fails; as if the Devil had erected a new University.”<sup>24</sup> Here, chocolate houses were blatantly connected to sexual promiscuity and prostitution. Chocolate had sexual connotations as a commodity before it was connected with any one institution, but it is evident that these connotations carried over into the institution of the chocolate house. Chocolate was now connected to a physical institution and the sexual quality that was ascribed to the good before it had even reached England’s shores melded with the chocolate house itself. Coffee houses were masculine, politically dangerous, and led to cuckolded wives, whereas chocolate houses were hedonistic, riotous, and hotbeds for sexual promiscuity.

The chocolate house and the coffeehouse developed starkly different political associations. Though political parties were still in their infancy, the Whigs frequented the coffeehouses whereas the Tories frequented the chocolate houses. In John Macky’s *Journey*

<sup>22</sup> Robert Gould, “The corruption of the times by money a satyr,” (1709).

<sup>23</sup> William Mountfort, “Greenwich-park a comedy acted at the Theatre-Royal,” (1691).

<sup>24</sup> Roger North, “Examen,” (1740), 141.

*Through England*, published in 1722, he wrote “I must not forget to tell you that the parties have their different places, where, however, a stranger is always well received; but a Whig will no more go to the Cooatree than a Tory will be seen at the Coffee House, St. James’.”<sup>25</sup> How exactly this political division between the chocolate and the coffeehouse came to be is not clear, but the political ideologies of each group had unmistakable similarities with the qualities ascribed to both chocolate and coffee. The Whig party was more dissident and populist, in favor of the exclusion of Charles II’s Catholic brother James from the protestant succession, while the Tories believed more deeply in the divine right of the English monarchy and were against the idea of James’ exclusion from the English succession.<sup>26</sup> As such, the Tories became more strongly associated with Catholicism and especially Jacobitism, which supported the reinstatement of the House of Stuart.<sup>27</sup>

Following events like the Gunpowder Plot and the Popish Plot, Catholics were increasingly viewed as the foreign, “popish” enemy, anti-Catholic hysteria spread through England in the 17th century. Francis Barlow wrote from the perspective of a fearful Englishmen in the satirical *A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish Plot* in 1682:

How the *Jesuit*, *Devil*, and *POPE* did agree,  
Our *STATE* to destroy, and *Religion* so old.  
To *murder* our *KING*,  
A most Horrible Thing!<sup>28</sup>

The Tory's simultaneous association with Catholicism and chocolate reflects a correlation in the perceived virtues of both religion and exotic commodities. Chocolate was overtly sexual, feminine, and foreign, and Catholicism was foreign, sinful, and associated with women - like Henrietta Maria, the Roman Catholic wife of executed King Charles I. The fear that Catholic women may influence the court of Charles II through seductive prowess proves an obvious parallel to the alluring, sexual, and feminine powers that chocolate was believed to hold. These qualities were unique to chocolate and unique to the Tory party. On the other hand, coffee was ascribed as a more innocent, non-sexual, and familiar commodity. These values clearly correlate with the Whigs, who were loyal to the king and the royal succession, and who were aligned with the Anglican Church. Though perhaps not explicitly, connections between the ascribed values of both chocolate and coffee and the different factions of the upper classes appear to have led to the separation between the institutions of chocolate and coffeehouses based upon the ongoing social stratifications. England was embroiled in rapid religious and political change amid crises of succession and monarchical sovereignty. The proliferation of printed news was how coffee and chocolate houses were able to become centers for political thought, as well as hubs for vices - for coffee heathenistic sedition, and in the case of chocolate, general moral debauchery.

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<sup>25</sup> John Macky, “A journey through England.”, (1722-1723), 133.

<sup>26</sup> John Cannon; Robert Crowcroft, *A Dictionary of British History*, “Whigs,” (Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, “Jacobite Risings.”

<sup>28</sup> “A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish-Plot.” (London, Matthew Turner, 1682).

The London elite used chocolate and coffee to reinforce their differing political and moral standings. The time at which these commodities were introduced was one of unprecedented popular friction on various fronts, when people were turning to social categorizations to define themselves - Whig or Tory, Protestant or Catholic, Jacobite or Loyalist, intelligent or uninformed, chocolate or coffee. Chocolate and coffee entered the English market with pre-existing nuances and ascribed qualities; what was unique in England was the assigning of moral qualities to the institutions of coffee and chocolate houses, moral qualities which grew out of pre-existing medical and social beliefs. In 18th-century England, these moral qualities were fleshed out and explicitly placed in opposition to one another as a means to typify the differences between certain social groups. Some other commodities were polarized for a similar effect – printed newspapers would cater to one political party or the other, and specific women's makeup styles did the same. People had a desire to distinguish themselves from the other, and turned to commodities to do so.

What was unique about coffee and chocolate was how existing meanings that had been imbued with an imperial context - for chocolate sexuality, exoticism, and fertility, for coffee infertility and familiarity - were manipulated into aligning with ongoing societal divisions. Coffee and chocolate not only typified differences, but exemplified them. The larger religious, political, and economic context of the 17th century, when chocolate and coffee were first introduced on a large scale, was opportune for this kind of stratification, and the distinct qualities understood to belong to coffee and chocolate made them ideal in the construction and performance of opposing cultural identities. Chocolate and coffee were also singular for their status as edible commodities that were politicized in such a way, other imperial goods like sugar and tea were not politicized, sexualized, or moralized. It was because of the complexities of each product, but mostly because of chocolate and coffee's felicitous pre-configured connotations - which were remarkably similar to the social qualities that had been ascribed to various groups - that chocolate and coffee were uniquely suited to emblemize broader societal themes. In this context, chocolate and coffee were able to typify and exemplify these differences distinctively - their nature as imperial, edible commodities served to bolster their association with the upper class and courtly activity, while their more dissident overtones allowed for a unique representational quality of the political, religious, and sexual atmosphere of the era.

The utilization of foods in 17th and 18th century England to represent moral and personal ideals demonstrates the ability of food to be multi-dimensional in its qualities and to enhance historical understandings of social formation. Chocolate and coffee were desired for their exoticism and their taste, but they became quasi-mythical, symbolic goods. Going to the chocolate house did not just mean one was going to enjoy a cup of chocolate, it carried with it meanings that had been ascribed to it through a complicated process of imperialism and globalization, modernization, and public discourse. Coffee and chocolate fortified and amplified certain aspects of one's identity in a way that other symbolic goods did not. While the use of foods as identifiers in England has been acknowledged in the historiography, it remains largely

understudied. The complexity of the various elements that converged to create the stratification of chocolate and coffee is vast. Gender, sexuality, imperialism, religion, politics, sovereignty, masculinity, trends, and modernization were just a few of the converging factors that created the conditions for this representational quality of coffee and chocolate. In the broader historical context, further study on the division between the two commodities would serve to enhance the understanding of how social divisions and identities were enacted in England in the 17th- and 18th-centuries. There is much work to be done on exactly how these divisions formed - as I have hypothesized, it was based upon existing understandings of both coffee and chocolate that were molded to fit into social categorizations, which served to bolster the formation of differing political, religious, and social identities.

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# The Erasure of Reverse Acculturation in Pre-Modern Latin America Through the Paper Trail of Cochineal, Cacao, and Copal

*By Ava Reichert*

When one steps inside a shopping mall, chances are the red-colored products are made with a dye known as carmine, or a colorant prepared from cochineal extract. The cochineal insect grows on the fruit of the nopal and prickly-pear cacti in Latin America and is used to create a pigment from the crushed bodies of the female. When perusing the merchandise sold by popular makeup brands such as YSL, Maybelline, Burt's Bees, L'Oreal and Chanel, carminic acid often tints products ranging from blushes to lipsticks, incentivizing buyers with a commitment to natural and cruelty-free cosmetic lines.<sup>1</sup> With respect to the food industry, hot chocolate is known as one of the most cherished and festive drinks during the holiday season. Whether an individual is buying a box of Swiss Miss hot chocolate packets, or paying a visit to a coffeehouse, the cacao bean, native to tropical regions in central and southern Latin America, serves as a key ingredient used to create one of the most famous and widely consumed flavors in United States and global culture.

In analyzing the trends of U.S. consumerism, it is important to understand the copal resin and its function within Aztec society, or Nahua culture. The Nahua were the Middle American native population of now central Mexico, of which the Aztecs were, arguably, the most well-known subgroup. The Nahua regarded copal as a vital element of their religious culture and used the resin as a form of incense. That said, today's expenditures on products made with copal are significantly lower than those spent on commodities utilizing cochineal dye and chocolate. Upon discovering the lucrative implications of New World resources, specifically the region of present-day Mexico City, the Spanish successfully severed cochineal and cacao from Aztec culture to sell them to Europeans. Cochineal became a "safe" resource to usurp as a commercial merchandise, since its dye harbored limited spiritual, sacred and medicinal significance to the Aztecs. Rebranding cacao as a marketable drink was a relatively simple feat, likening chocolate to one's everyday cup of coffee and erasing the ritual implications of the resource. Copal was a different story. The Aztecs harvested copal from trees in the form of resin and repurposed the commodity as an incense used within spiritual ceremonies. Copal was integral to any sacred space in pre-modern native society (the early fifteenth century through the eighteenth century),

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<sup>1</sup> Danielle Ramos-Sullivan, "What Is Carmine In Makeup, And Why Can't You Use It If You're Vegan?," *The List*, April 1, 2023, <https://www.thelist.com/1242299/what-is-carmine-makeup-cant-use-vegan/>.

and, as such, became intertwined with what the Spaniards deemed “satanic.” Revitalizing the resin as palpable to Eurocentric consumers, long-term, became impossible.

The argument within the following text transcends a mere conversation surrounding commodities with Latin American origins. What is important to recognize is that history is everywhere – it can be seen, touched, felt, and smelled. Cochineal, cacao, and copal represent microcosms for reverse acculturation, or the ways with which native culture influenced, informed, and altered the trajectory of European history and how it developed through time. Indigenous peoples, like the Nahua, already functioned as a society within the New World. Upon the Spaniards reaching central Latin America, its native inhabitants modified the way with which European society progressed. The Spaniards side-stepped cultural appreciation and opted for an agenda of appropriation – advertising Aztec discoveries as innovations of their own doing. Including Aztec voices in present historical discourse reveals, by contrast, the true origins of cochineal, cacao, and copal as being intimately and initially immersed within pre-colonial Latin America. In illuminating the pre-Columbian history of these commodities, this text seeks to extend rightful accreditation to the true trailblazers of inventions that have blossomed from Latin America: the Aztecs.

Literature written by Louise M. Burkhart, such as *The Slippery Earth*, sparked interest in decolonizing Latin American indigeneity for the first time in 1989. Rather than accepting the typical narrative of Spanish colonists happening upon the New World and civilizing the existing natives, Burkhart forced historians to recognize the innovation and sophistication of Nahua peoples. Historians, anthropologists, and theologians followed in her footsteps by studying elements of Aztec consumerism, medicine, science, and theology. Rather than investigating the paper trail of these commodities or examining the part they played within the Columbian Exchange, scholars have primarily elected to examine Aztec resources as they existed on Latin American and Spanish soil.

Dr. Daniella Bleichmar’s *Visual Voyages: Images of Latin American Nature from Columbus to Darwin* stands as a prime example of literature investigating the exchange of knowledge surrounding Nahua commodities. One chapter focuses on cochineal, with Bleichmar’s exploration depicting a stark dichotomy between Spanish naturalists (pre-modern scientists) and Nahua society. In her writing, Bleichmar illuminates how the Spaniards negated a native individual’s capacity to offer knowledge on the scientific end of cochineal production. Instead, colonists viewed the Aztecs as domestic contributors and a source of manual labor.<sup>2</sup>

Conversely, scholarship by historians like Dr. Elizabeth Moran merely views goods, such as cacao, within the context of Aztec spirituality. Offering examples and expositions of what the

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<sup>2</sup> Daniella Bleichmar, *Visual Voyages: Images of Latin American Nature from Columbus to Darwin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 67.

cacao bean stood for within Nahua religion and each social class, Moran makes clear that the resource harbored sacred meaning, likening cacao to blood and the heart.<sup>3</sup>

That said, publications such as Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian's *The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas*, do argue how the Old World and present global economy was impacted by Latin American colonialism. Exploring facets of this system of trade, like the spread of cash crops from the New to Old World, Nunn and Qian consider how native peoples posed to alter the orientation of a European economic history by way of agriculture.<sup>4</sup>

Rather than purely exploring how cochineal, cacao and copal functioned within Aztec and Spanish societies, the following text investigates the paper trail tracing these goods from their origins, in pre-modern Latin America, to the nations that appropriated these findings by way of colonial expansion. Moreover, in a way that the secondary sources of the present do not, this work contrasts the commercialization of the three commodities in considering how their respective spiritual connotations may or may not have precluded them from assimilating within a Eurocentric body of consumers. Finally, identifying the sectors of capitalism today where one can find evidence of cochineal, cacao and copal is paramount. In highlighting the prevalence of Indigenous history among the average U.S. citizen's everyday life, one must note the presence of these commodities within the cosmetic, retail and food industries of the present.

## Cochineal

The *Florentine Codex* and the *Codex Mendoza* offer a wealth of information on how Aztec individuals made use of the cochineal insect and dye. In examining the history of these texts, the *Florentine Codex* is a three-volume work that delineates Nahua culture and history. Spearheaded by the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún in collaboration with four Nahua scribes, the *Florentine Codex* was written between the years of 1540-1575 at the College of Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco. Most Folios within the codex provide the reader with columns discussing information in both Spanish and Nahuatl. The indigenous co-authors Antonio Valeriano, Martin Jacobita, Pedro San Buenaventura, and Alonso Vegarano converted the language of Nahuatl, previously written using pictorial, hieroglyphic symbols, into a phonetic, alphabetized lexicon sounded out by the friars studying the text.<sup>5</sup>

In a similar fashion, the *Codex Mendoza* was written by unknown Nahua authors at the orders of Don Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy to Mexico and the individual whom the

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Moran, *Sacred Consumption: Food and Ritual in Aztec Art and Culture/Elizabeth Morán* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 46.

<sup>4</sup> Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (2010): 164, Accessed November 11, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.24.2.163>.

<sup>5</sup> Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry, "NLUS Lecture Notes," Newberry Institute, February 6, 2024, Loyola University Chicago and the Newberry Library Undergraduate Seminar, PowerPoint.

codex is named after. Written around 20 years after Spanish contact with the Aztec empire, Mendoza dedicated the codex to the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V. With a synonymous goal of outlining a history of the pre-conquest Aztec society, the codex employed traditional indigenous hieroglyphs, with the addition of Spanish commentary elaborating on the substance and perceived importance of each topic discussed by the Nahua scribes.<sup>6</sup> The *Visual Lexicon of Aztec Hieroglyphs* of today offers an additional analysis by scholar Stephanie Wood in an effort to honor the voices and true intentions of the indigenous authors as recorded in the *Codex Mendoza*.

In the *Florentine Codex*, the Nahua scribes discussed the cycle through which the cochineal insect matured, and the process the Aztecs adhered to in harvesting the dye coloring various garments and fabrics. Furthermore, the text observes cochineal as a merchandise traded at the local markets. In Book 11 (*Forest, Garden, and Orchard*), Folio 216v, the translation of the Nahua text by scholars J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble reveals how Nahuas documented the cochineal's metamorphosis. According to the Aztecs, cochineal begins the first stages of its lifespan as a worm. When the insect becomes swollen due to the pressure of its expansion, it blankets itself with a web. Breeding and growing on the fruit of the nopal and prickly pear cacti, the Nahua state that the cochineal insect then died and fell off the plant, later swept up with a broom by their native caretakers. The term *tlapalli*, or “dry color” refers to, upon collection, the color derived from cochineal shells.<sup>7</sup> After its refinement, the *Florentine Codex* highlights how the pigment of the dye resembles that of a chili chroma utilized as a textile colorant, or to create paints.<sup>8</sup>

While the extract could be used to create dyes and paints, the Nahua traded cochineal, in and of itself, in exchange for items of high value. In trading cochineal, the insect was exchanged for luxuries like amber, often engineered to make lip plugs and labrets (a form of body piercing), long quetzal feathers, and the blue cotinga and honeycreeper birds – all goods reserved for lords and the nobility within Nahua society.<sup>9</sup> The codex notes the great danger in traveling to markets where Aztecs would sell products like cochineal. If the Aztecs were recognized, they were killed by other Indigenous peoples from towns along the way. The Nahua viewed cochineal as being both precious and fundamental to their everyday lives, evidenced by the risks and riches reaped from their expeditions on the insect's behalf. Financing those of a high socioeconomic status and the consequential deaths of countless natives are just two examples of how the Aztecs revered the cochineal insect as a foundational element of a pre-modern Latin American economy.

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<sup>6</sup> “Codex Mendoza (1542),” *The Public Domain Review*, May 14, 2012, Codex Mendoza (1542) — The Public Domain Review, <https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/codex-mendoza-1542/>.

<sup>7</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, 1961, *The Florentine Codex: Book 11: Forest, Garden, and Orchard*, Folio 216v. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

<sup>8</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Book 11*, Folio 216v.

<sup>9</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, 1961, *The Florentine Codex: Book 9: The Merchants*, Folio 19r. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Moreover, within the *Codex Mendoza*, the Nahua scribes emphasize how the cochineal insect operated as a form of coinage within the Aztec financial state. The cochineal iconography in Folio 43r of the *Codex Mendoza* depicts an image of 18 cochineal shells within what appears to be a burlap sack. The Aztecs did not have a standard or uniform currency but were still expected to pay taxes to their center of commerce and now present-day Mexico City: Tenochtitlan.<sup>10</sup> The lucrative implications of cochineal become indisputable when one examines the opulence of the items that the insect was traded for. Nonetheless, the insect shell, alone, represented an inherent monetary value – a form of income used to fulfill the dues a Nahua individual owed to uphold the integrity and functionality of the native economy.

On the Spanish side of cochineal production, scholar Daniela Bleichmar's *Visual Voyages* notes that conquistador Hernán Cortés sent samples of cochineal from Latin America to the Spanish government as early as the year 1518, the same year that he began his exploration of present-day central and southern Mexico. The Spaniards had quickly discovered that the dye created from cochineal extract gave way to a far more vibrant and lasting hue than other known colorants from this era, such as kermes. As a result, cochineal began to circulate and, ultimately, dominate within the global system of trade, reaching regions such as North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East, the Philippines, Asia and, of course, Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, in *Colonial Cataclysms*, Bradley Skopyk highlights how cochineal became so popular within the international economy, that its consumption flourished second only to the silver industry. In fact, the cochineal industry became so successful across the globe that the indigenous Cabildo, or the colonial Spanish government council, lamented peasants tabling their duties to produce maize. By investing most of their efforts into cochineal plantations, neglecting the granaries ensured famine became an impending threat, demonstrating how peasants would sooner starve than surrender the profit gained from cochineal cultivation.<sup>12</sup> The Nahua people remained integral to the cochineal industry until the late 18th century, since they possessed the knowledge for how to best care for and harvest dye from the insect. Nonetheless, the manuscript *La Memoria sobre la naturaleza, cultivo, y beneficio de la grana* (A Report on the Nature, Cultivation, and Industry of Cochineal) of 1777, by the *criollo* José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez, blatantly suggested the Nahua suffered from an incapacity to participate in naturalism, and as these disciplines intersected with cochineal production. Detailing stages of the taxonomic investigation into the cochineal insect, Alzate's manuscript furnishes ten annotated drawings of observations describing both the nopal cactus and the insect in question. Alzate argues that the Nahua could extend their competence from a domestic standpoint, acknowledging the value in their understanding of how to tend to the cochineal insect and the cactus upon which they made a

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<sup>10</sup> James Cooper Clark and Antonio de Mendoza, *Codex Mendoza, the Mexican Manuscript Known as the Collection of Mendoza and Preserved in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford/Edited and Translated by James Cooper Clark, (London: Waterlow & Sons, Limited), 1938, Mdz43r – *nocheztli*.

<sup>11</sup> Bleichmar, *Visual Voyages*, 67.

<sup>12</sup> Bradley Skopyk, *Colonial Cataclysms: Climate, Landscape, and Memory in Mexico's Little Ice Age* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020), 83.

habitat. That said, Alzate believed that scientific literacy should have been left in his hands, completely overlooking the plethora of Nahuatl entries documenting the lifespan and metamorphic development of the cochineal insect from the *Florentine Codex*.<sup>13</sup> In doing so, naturalists like Alzate negated the role Nahuas played in informing a Spanish understanding of cochineal production. Likewise, Alzate set the stage for the total erasure of the Aztecs from cochineal's history, and the resulting industry that stemmed from its cultivation.

Upon an examination of the subject matter and handwriting of a doctrine known as *Pintura del beneficio dela grana cochinilla en Mexico* (The Benefits of Cochineal), the text is thought to be a sister document to Alzate's *La Memoria*. Further depicting the use of Nahuatl as a free source of labor, across the 12 illustrations that comprise the manuscript, nearly half portrayed images of indigenous individuals caring for the cochineal plantations on behalf of the Spaniards.<sup>14</sup> In keeping with the subordination cast onto Aztec individuals, *Pintura del beneficio dela grana cochinilla en Mexico* reduced the Nahuatl to peons. The Spanish monopoly on cochineal products did not preclude nations of greater Europe from advertising this insect's commercial potential. Scottish academic, translator and cartographer, John Ogilby, authored a 1671 text entitled *America*, which exemplified how New World discoveries, like the cochineal dye, had made their way to late 17th century England. In *America*, Ogilby details a narrative discussing the Spanish discovery of cochineal upon reaching Oaxaca of now Southern Mexico, describing the finding as a fruitful commodity.<sup>15</sup> Given the frequency with which he references known Spanish conquistadors, such as Hernán Cortés, a strong argument can be made that Ogilby's writings on the cochineal insect were inspired by a literature authored by Peter Martyr, entitled *Decades of the Newe World or West India*. Martyr published the *Decades* in 1577, reproducing a compilation of narratives by famous explorers like Cortés, just as *America* would go on to do a century later. Ogilby's text began with a citation page, listing the names of authors, including Martyr, who had informed his rendition of New World testimonies. This connection between the Martyr and Ogilby works reveals the textual journey, across primary documents, of the cochineal insect from Latin America to greater Europe.<sup>16</sup> *America* is a prime example of how

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<sup>13</sup> Alzate y Ramírez, José de Antonio, Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa, and Charles III. "Memoria sobre la naturaleza, cultivo, y beneficio de la grana ...," 1777.

<sup>14</sup> Lucien de Rosny, and Charles Chadenat, "Pintura del beneficio dela grana cochinilla en Mexico [ca. 1775].," 1775.

<sup>15</sup> John Ogilby and Arnoldus Montanus, *America: Being the Latest, and Most Accurate Description of the New World : Containing the Original of the Inhabitants, and the Remarkable Voyages Thither : The Conquest of the Vast Empires of Mexico and Peru, and Other Large Provinces and Territories, with the Several European Plantations in Those Parts : Also Their Cities, Fortresses, Towns, Temples, Mountains, and Rivers : Their Habits, Customs, Manners, and Religions : Their Plants, Beasts, Birds, and Serpents : With an Appendix Containing, besides Several Other Considerable Additions, a Brief Survey of What Hath Been Discover'd of the Unknown Southland and the Arctick Region / Collected from Most Authentick Authors, Augmented with Later Observations, and Adorn'd with Maps and Sculptures by John Ogilby Esq. His Majesty's Cosmographer, Geographick Printer, and Master of the Revels in the Kingdom of Ireland*, (London: Printed by the author, and are to had at his House in White Fryers, 1671).

<sup>16</sup> Ogilby, *America*.

the Spanish role within cochineal production catalyzed its ultimate visibility within the Columbian Exchange.

That said, leaning on literature, such as Richard Eden's *The First Three English Books on America*, allows readers to decipher a compilation of Spanish retellings of their pilgrimages to Latin America, including a palatable English reiteration of Martyr's the *Decades*. Historians speculate Eden published his work between 1511 and 1555.<sup>17</sup> With Eden's translation, one can read discussion of a plant called "tuna," the Spanish term for the fruit that grows from the nopal cactus. Mentions of the term "tuna" are located within the section "Of newe Spayne cauled Noua Hispanica, or Mexico" – a segment that dealt with transcribing Martyr's writings.<sup>18</sup> The entry further delineated how native individuals would dye cotton red among other hues. Martyr's writings were a secondary account of Latin American findings and even the most acclaimed of 17th century European naturalists were unable to deduce whether cochineal was an insect or plant. Given that the *Decades* was written almost 100 years before the Ogilby text, it is possible that Martyr did not yet know of the term "cochineal."<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the parallels between the Ogilby and Martyr works suggest Ogilby may have taken inspiration from Martyr. This interaction between doctrines corroborates the idea that cochineal was in such high demand, that authors across greater Europe were taking pen to paper to spur conversation surrounding commodities that could bolster a European nation's respective standing within the international system of trade.

Aztec society primarily viewed cochineal as an economic stimulant by way of its use as a dye and medium of currency. By commercializing cochineal into a global commodity, the Spaniards recognized this same commercial potential. According to Bleichmar, cochineal was not "ingested or connected to Amerindian medical or religious beliefs," making the insect an "uncontroversial" asset to transform into a transcontinental product. Cochineal did not possess a connection to Aztec spirituality, an element of their culture that the Spaniards labeled as "malignant." Since there were no affiliations with the Aztec religion to expunge, The Spaniards could easily separate cochineal from native heritage. In doing so, the Spanish were able to bury the reverse acculturation that had transpired. Native peoples taught the colonists how the insect was used to dye fabrics and create paint, how cochineal could function within an economy and the process by which the Nahuatl would harvest the insect. In negating this transfer of knowledge from historical doctrine, the Spaniards effectively erased the true origins of the carminic acid that colors the clothing we wear, the cosmetics we apply and the food that we consume in the present.

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Eden, Edward Arber, Sebastian Cabot, Pietro Martire d' Anghiera, and Sebastian Münster, *The First Three English Books on America, (?1511)-1555 A.D.: Being Chiefly Translations, Compilations, &c. by Richard Eden from the Writings, Maps, & c. of Pietro Martire ... Sebastian Münster ... Sebastian Cabot ... : With Extracts, &c. from the Works of Other Spanish, Italian, and German Writers of the Time / Edited by Edward Arber*, (Birmingham: [s.n.], 1885).

<sup>18</sup> Eden, *The First Three Books on America*, 228.

<sup>19</sup> Bleichmar, *Visual Voyages*, 69.

European interest in cacao further intensified the Spanish affinity for profit by way of appropriating Aztec commodities.

### The Cacao Bean

While the Aztecs solely regarded the cochineal insect as an economic entity, the cacao bean can be observed as a multifaceted resource within native culture. Cacao is documented as having satisfied economic, medical, and sacred needs within pre-modern Latin America, making chocolate a particularly invaluable indigenous discovery. The cacao bean certainly harbored both economic and medicinal significance within Aztec daily life. That said, a close examination of both the *Florentine Codex* and the *Codex Mendoza* illuminates how the Nahua largely viewed cacao as a sacred element of their culture.

In conveying cacao's emblematic importance, historian Elizabeth Moran's *Sacred Consumption* emphasizes how in Book 6 of the *Florentine Codex (Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy)*, the Nahua recorded the phrase "the heart and blood are to be feared." The Aztecs often attributed this saying to the cacao bean, underscoring how precious the resource was. Sahagún's scribes made explicitly clear the deep connections between cacao, blood, and life, speaking to the innate intersection between the Aztec mentality surrounding religion and ritual, and chocolate.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Moran also sheds light on the image of a monkey sitting on a cacao tree. Moran argues the Aztecs illustrated spider monkeys on top of and stealing cacao shells to indicate chocolate's spiritual relevance within native communities. The visual implies monkeys prized cacao because of how precious the good was, since cacao vessels, the heart and blood all contained "valuable liquid" in the eyes of the Nahua.<sup>21</sup>

That said, the Aztecs also viewed cacao's economic potential as significant in the function of their society. Entries like Folio 10v of the *Codex Mendoza* show the commercial value of cacao. At first glance, the glyph from this section of the codex appears to represent a ritual bag with a cross on its front that suggests no relation to the cacao bean. Historian Stephanie Wood argues, however, that the cross on the front of this bag represents the number 8,000. Sources like the *Florentine Codex* or Chimpalpahin's annals, Wood further asserts, explain how this bag carried cacao beans that numbered close to 8,000. Understanding the link between 8,000 and cacao reveals how the bean, at times, functioned as a form of capital in that the number constituted the idea of currency.<sup>22</sup> In detailing how cacao could operate within an economy, the Aztecs unknowingly informed the Spanish in how to use the commodity for this purpose themselves. This instance of reverse acculturation can be credited, in part, for cacao's commercial prowess within capitalism today.

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<sup>20</sup> Moran, *Sacred Consumption*, 46.

<sup>21</sup> Moran, *Sacred Consumption*, 93.

<sup>22</sup> James Cooper Clark and Antonio de Mendoza, *Codex Mendoza*, Mdz10v – *xiquipilco*.

Further outlining cacao's versatility, Aztec medicine reveals how native peoples used cacao as an ingredient of prescribed treatments. As illustrated in Book 11, Folio 123v of the *Florentine Codex*, chocolate drinks incorporated ingredients of Aztec medicine used to treat fevers.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Book 11, Folio 115v discusses the resin, *ulli*, harvested from the *olcuahuitl* tree. The Nahua used this resin to treat ailments of the eye, pustules and, when drunk with cacao, the resin cured various stomach and intestinal illnesses, restored the health of internal organs and remedied the symptoms of infections.<sup>24</sup> Though Aztec literature primarily endorsed cacao as a means of washing down medicine, the aforementioned excerpts depict the ways chocolate nursed an abundance of infirmities while also, like in the case of the *ulli* resin, altering the properties of a medicine to target an acute area of the body, such as the stomach. While cacao proved profitable in its use as a currency within the Nahua economy, it being used to ameliorate the symptoms of illnesses as commonplace as a fever or stomach virus only furthers how critical chocolate was to the functionality of Indigenous communities within Latin America.

The medicinal properties of cacao, originally documented by the Aztecs, catalyzed how the Europeans severed associations between chocolate and indigenous Latin America. The text *A curious treatise of the nature and quality of chocolate* of 1640 tackles the topic of cacao through a Europeanized, medical lens. In its opening pages, this literature references accolades from two royal doctors of the Spanish kingdom. Their professional opinions affirmed the text's necessity, asserting the doctrine would inform and educate European citizens who were optimistic about the potential role chocolate could play in the medical field within Old World Spain. In the beginning of the text, Doctor Melchor de Lara illuminates how Aztecs mixed chocolate with a variety of ingredients to create a holistic medicine, with these ingredients serving "to temper the coldness of cacao." Melchor de Lara employed the terms "hot" and "cold," commonplace in describing treatments in European medicine, to usher cacao's assimilation within the budding pharmaceutical industry.<sup>25</sup> It goes without saying to note that chocolate did not go on to become a staple within the medical field. This hijacking of the Nahua's economic and medical uses for cacao, nevertheless, distanced the resource from its spiritual connections to native culture, rebranding chocolate as a Eurocentric merchandise. In observing how the Nahua used cacao within the realm of medicine, the Spaniards drew inspiration from the Aztecs in leaning on chocolate's medical properties to spark its partition from native associations. In doing so, the Spaniards wrote about cacao in a way that neglected its indigenous ties, advertising chocolate as a uniquely European merchandise.

*The American Physitian*, published by Englishman William Hughes in 1692, also expanded the reach of cacao by introducing its value to greater Europe. Across the literature, Hughes notes a "famed" chocolate drink in "great request" and "well known to most parts of

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<sup>23</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*: Book 11, Folio 123v.

<sup>24</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*: Book 11, Folio 115v.

<sup>25</sup> Antonio Colmenero de Ledesma, and James Wadsworth, *A Curious Treatise of the Nature and Quality of Chocolate, VVritten in Spanish by Antonio Colmenero, Doctor in Physicke and Chirurgery, And Put into English by Don Diego de Vades-Fort, Imprinted at London: By I. Okes, dwelling in Little St. Bartholomewes, 1640.*, 12.

Christendome,” composed from kernels of the cacao bean.<sup>26</sup> When one examines the progression necessary to convert cacao from a uniquely native resource to a global commodity, Hughes highlights the steps taken to achieve this commercialization – steps in direct contradiction to indigenous people’s original uses and preparations of the good. Hughes indicates that native individuals seldom made use of compounds to enhance or alter the taste of the cacao – their priority being promoting health rather than engineering a flavor with a pleasant taste. Nonetheless, the Spanish tended towards using the cacao bean to make lumps, balls and cakes that incorporated ingredients such as chile (red pepper), achiote (sweet pepper), *orejuelas*, *banilas*, *pocolt* or *paniso*, *atolle* (maize-flower) and sugar that transformed cacao into a product that satisfied the palettes of its consumers.<sup>27</sup>

After analyzing for his readers how the Spanish colonists, and thus the English, were able to culturally appropriate the cacao bean, Hughes perfectly summarizes the consequence of this reverse acculturation. Hughes makes clear that all demographics consumed chocolate – not only those of a high socioeconomic or social status within England and greater Europe. In fact, Hughes notes that in addition to both the nobility *and* common people having enjoyed chocolate in various forms, people of all sexes and age demographics also drank and ate chocolate across Europe. He even promoted this mentality as fact amongst native peoples as well, directly challenging the way indigenous codices discussed the cacao bean, which made clear that Aztec society only granted lords and nobles access to chocolate.<sup>28</sup>

In understanding chocolate’s function within Nahua culture, it is essential to explore the bean’s reputation, which Europeans learned from and observed in repurposing the resource to accommodate their economic agenda. In doing so, the Europeans were able to manipulate chocolate into an integral element of the burgeoning Columbian Exchange. In considering chocolate’s socioeconomic importance within Nahua tradition, as mentioned, Aztec society exclusively reserved cacao drinks for their lords and nobility. In Book 8 (*Kings and Lords*), Folio 25r of the *Florentine Codex*, the Nahua translation describes the Aztec lords drinking a variety of cacao strains after finishing their dinner.<sup>29</sup> The nobility drank chocolate from richly designed, painted gourd vessels, signifying cacao being uniquely accessible to those of great importance within the socioeconomic strata of indigenous society.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Book 4 (*The Soothsayers*), Folio 65v of the codex illustrates a feast amongst a congregation of high-ranking native peoples, where after they finished their dinner, a servant, responsible for serving chocolate specifically, came and placed drinks made from the cacao bean in front of the guests. After arranging the attendees in order by social status, the servant distributed the chocolate drinks.<sup>31</sup> In

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<sup>26</sup> Hughes, *The American Physitian*.

<sup>27</sup> Hughes, *The American Physitian*, 119-120, 122.

<sup>28</sup> Hughes, *The American Physitian*, 148.

<sup>29</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, 1961, *The Florentine Codex: Book 8: Kings and Lords*, Folio 25r. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press).

<sup>30</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Book 8*, Folio 25r.

<sup>31</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, 1961, *The Florentine Codex: Book 4: The Soothsayers*, Folio 65v/66r. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press).

understanding cacao's hegemonic connotations within Aztec society, Europeans ensured the drink was accessible to all peoples, irrespective of their social hierarchy. In circulating chocolate across all demographics, colonists eliminated a primary cornerstone of what made cacao unique to native culture.

The cacao bean's notable financial and medical merit within Nahua communities cannot be disputed. However, the magnitude of cacao's revered status reigned superior in significance to its economic and curative qualities. That said, Cacao blossomed into a commercialized good despite its social and sacred implications. European primary documents underscore how colonial empires expropriated cacao. In doing so, the Spaniards revolutionized chocolate into a staple within the transatlantic institution of trade by way of medicine and commercial delicacies. Colonial Spanish doctrines remembered chocolate as a predominantly economic and even medical asset within Aztec society. When European writers did make note of native associations with the cacao bean, it was done so in a way that undermined the true cultural and sacred importance of the product. By generalizing the resource to a white audience, Europeans made it possible to view chocolate as separate from its symbolic undertones. The misinformation spread and negating of a Latin American connection to the cacao bean perfectly reveals the masking of reverse acculturation at the hands of European bias. Copal incense, in stark contrast, almost exclusively found itself at the nexus of deity worship and religious demonstrations within native communities.

## Copal

Unlike the cochineal insect and cacao bean, the conversation regarding copal in the *Florentine Codex* exclusively focused on ritual purposes. The codex predominantly addresses copal and its uses within Book 2 (*Feasts*). A prime example of how the resin was referenced can be found within Folio 120v, with the Nahua illustrating their religious leaders raising the copal incense in the "four directions." The four directions were surmised to symbolize the four corners of the world, and after commemorating them, the Aztecs censured the temple's statue. At the commencement of any spiritual or religious gathering, those leading the meeting traditionally began by throwing copal in the fire, an act meant to show reverence for their deities and to ask them for guidance or help.<sup>32</sup>

Despite a multitude of entries covering copal's religious significance, not a single entry within the *Florentine Codex* or the *Codex Mendoza* discusses copal in terms of medical use. In contrast to how the *Florentine Codex* documented copal, other authors, including Nicolás Bautista Monardes, describe the Spanish using the resin as a tool for combatting a multitude of ailments. Monardes was a Spanish physician and botanist who wrote about medicine in the New

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<sup>32</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, 1961, *The Florentine Codex: Book 2: The Ceremonies*, Folio 120v. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press).

World in 1580 in his work *Joyfull Newes*. Monardes' retells anecdotes passed on to him from conquistadors who had voyaged to the New World. John Frampton translated Monardes' work into English in 1570. In doing so, he believed this would allow the people of England to use the medical findings made in New Spain to cure illnesses and diseases that the English had yet to solidify a treatment for.<sup>33</sup> In *Joyfull Newes*, Monardes claims that colonists brought back two types of resins to Seville, one being copal. In his discussion of copal, Monardes notes how Nahuas drew from the resin's scent in crafting perfumes doused during sacrifices and in temples, and even greeted the colonists upon reaching the New World by wafting the copal smoke under their noses. He also recognizes how the Spaniards used the copal resin in Spain as a fragrance meant to cure diseases and pains that resulted from "coldness of the head."<sup>34</sup> Monardes' discussion of healing and copal begs the question: Why did the *Florentine Codex* and the *Codex Mendoza* neglect to mention these medical purposes for copal?

In his 1990 study *Aztec Medicine, Health and Nutrition*, the anthropologist Bernard Ortiz de Montellano explores the thought process behind Sahagún and his indigenous co-authors when writing about Nahuatl medical practices and remedies. Montellano acknowledges how sections of the *Florentine Codex* dealing with medicine evidence a level of censorship the remainder of the literature lacks resulting from multiple cycles of revisions and alterations. Montellano references historian Lopez Austin, who unveils that even the Aztec writers and informants of the *Florentine Codex* abridged their contributions on medical practices and plants. They knew what the Spanish friars rejected, medicines intertwined with indigenous spiritual beliefs, and, thus, withheld information accordingly.<sup>35</sup> In his final draft of the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún included appendices renouncing Aztec gods as heretical and idolatrous, and further eradicated information surrounding indigenous spirituality, particularly in the realm of medicine.<sup>36</sup>

Of course, Sahagún, like many Spaniards and Nahuas alike, believed in the power and authenticity inherent in magic, and could not eliminate the supernatural principles of native culture and medicine entirely. That said, in considering Montellano's hypothesis, it can be argued that the attitude with which copal was discussed in the *Florentine Codex* solely associated the incense with ritual and spirituality. Since the Spaniards saw medical practices as illegitimate when deeply intersecting with Aztec supernaturalism, copal never garnered notoriety within the realm of Western medicine. Denouncing copal as a mechanism of Aztec religion, the Spaniards

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<sup>33</sup> Nicolás Bautista Monardes, "Ioyfull newes out of the newfound world wherein are declared the rare and singular vertues of diuers and sundrie herbs, trees, oyles, plants, [and] stones, with their applications, aswell to the vse of phisicke, as chirurgery: which being wel applied, bring such present remedy for all diseases, as may seeme altogether incredible: notwithstanding by practize found out, to be true. Also the portrature of the sayde herbes, very aptly described: Englished by Iohn Frampton merchant. Newly corrected as by conference with the olde copies may appeare. Wherevnto are added three other bookes treating of the Bezaar stone, the herbe escuerçonera, the properties of yron and steele, in medicine and the benefite of snowe [Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven en medicina.]" 1580, 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Monardes, *Joyfull Newes*.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition*, 19.

weaponized the incense, using it as ammunition to argue that the Nahua needed education in Eurocentric and Christian lifestyles. Using findings like copal to further the Spaniard's imperial agenda, this argument underscoring Aztec ignorance effectively warranted the Spanish Crown's investment in New World exploration. By the same token, these claims prevented readers from viewing the Aztecs as a people with the capacity to impart valuable information that could positively develop the way with which the European scientific and medical fields investigated treating illness.

Another indigenous codex however, dared to inform the Spanish monarchy of the intersections between Aztec spirituality and medicine. Charles U. Clark discovered the Aztec Herbal entitled *Codex de la Cruz Badiano* at the Vatican Library in the fall of 1931, a doctrine known today as America's earliest medical text, written in 1552. Two native authors by the names of Martinus de la Cruz and Juannes Badianus wrote the *Badianus Manuscript*. Martin de la Cruz was an Indigenous physician who composed the work in the phonetic language of the Aztecs. Juanes Badianus translated de la Cruz's writing into Latin. Written at the College of Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, the same institution where natives completed the *Florentine Codex* and the *Codex Mendoza*, the text also contains the earliest known botanical illustrations in American History.<sup>37</sup>

After Professor Clark discovered the *Badianus*, scholar Emily Walcott Emmart of Johns Hopkins University constructed the first modern and English translation of the botanical. In her foreword, Emmart makes several arguments about the credibility of the original writings. She asserts that the *Badianus* is the "only medical text known to be the work of Aztec Indians," and that the text contains information on "herbal medicines and treatments," which "are purely those of Mexico without the contamination of European medical practices such as are found in later Mayan medical texts."<sup>38</sup> Though Emmart is not wrong about the lack of friar or colonial oversight, Martinus de la Cruz, despite being native, had been converted to Christianity by the Spanish friar system. In Emmart's own words analyzing the dedication excerpt of the original *Badianus Manuscript*, she highlights, "From the rest of the dedication we learn that the work was written by a native Indian at the request of Don Francisco de Mendoza and was intended as a gift to 'His Holy Caesarian Catholic Royal Majesty' Charles V."<sup>39</sup> The words "Holy" and the "Caesarian Catholic Royal Majesty," capture de la Cruz's newfound Christian faith and allegiance to the Spanish Crown -- factors that may have biased his writing of the botanical.

Though not contrary to Emmart's opinions on the *Badianus*, Montellano refutes her argument for the codex's reliability as a medical source. In his own discussion of the *Badianus*, Montellano reveals the College of Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco was in jeopardy, as it had earned a

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<sup>37</sup> Martín de la Cruz, Juan Badiano, Emily W. Emmart Trueblood, and Emily W. Emmart Trueblood, *The Badianus Manuscript, Codex Barberini, Latin 241, Vatican Library; an Aztec Herbal of 1552./Introduction, Translation and Annotations by Emily Walcott Emmart*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940).

<sup>38</sup> Cruz, *The Badianus Manuscript*, xiii.

<sup>39</sup> Cruz, *The Badianus Manuscript*.

negative reputation amongst Spaniards who felt that the Aztecs were “inferior and should not be educated.” The institution had lost a royal financial sponsor in Charles V, passing the torch to sixteen-year-old Prince Phillip II, who would reign over Spain and neglect to renew the financial allowance granted to the university. As a diplomatic strategy, Francisco de Mendoza, Don Antonio de Mendoza’s son, dedicated the *Badianus* to Charles V as a measure meant to “recommend the college to the king,” in hopes the herbal would promote “the view that Indians were ‘human,’ capable of being educated, and possessors of a worthwhile culture.” In hopes the College of Santa Cruz, Tlatelolco might demonstrate the native potential for civilization, viceroys like Francisco de Mendoza believed the codex would exemplify this argument and compel Charles V to continue investing in the university. The *Badianus* was meant illustrate how the institution served to sophisticate the Nahuatl.<sup>40</sup>

Nonetheless, Montellano further argues that de la Cruz described many aspects of medicine and magic within the *Badianus* that met the expectations of European intellectual criteria. Juanes translated the *Badianus* into Latin, tainting the text with European linguistics. De la Cruz also referenced a famous European scientist named Pliny, and appraised several European medical remedies, such as bezoars (an antidote for poison), gemstones and coprotherapy. Thus, de la Cruz advertised an Aztec understanding and appreciation for European naturalism.<sup>41</sup> Montellano calls upon the text’s modern readers to carefully discern between its elements suggesting European influence over the supernatural and medical material, in contrast to native medical and ritual discoveries that had escaped Eurocentric bias. Montellano cites scholar Del Pollo, who asserted the view that Sahagún intentionally omitted de la Cruz from the list of native informants who contributed to the codex. This argument further supports the notion that Sahagún experienced a certain level of fear in appealing to the Spanish monarchy, while simultaneously noting the pertinence of religion and spirituality in Aztec herbal practices.<sup>42</sup>

The excerpts from the *Badianus* dealing with the function of copal within native society approach the incense not just from a spiritual angle, but a medical one as well. In describing the use of copal through a medicinal lens, de la Cruz outlined a recipe to create a “traveler’s safeguard” when he stated, “The dried flowers *mecaxochitl*, *tlixochitl*, *hueynacatzli*, the bark of the trees *copalxocotl* and *atoyaxocotl*,” among other ingredients were combined to form a powder then poured into a receptacle, worn by natives in the form of a necklace.<sup>43</sup> Spanish conquistadors Bernal Diaz and Hernán Cortés wrote about the native custom of receiving the Spaniards with smoking incense. Monardes’ *Joyful Newes* corroborates this observation. Though the Spanish perceived being greeted with smoking censers as the Nahuatl welcoming and commemorating their arrival, this practice also protected the Aztecs against any diseases or infections brought by the foreigners, unbeknownst to the Spaniards and hence the name

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<sup>40</sup> Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition*, 20-21.

<sup>42</sup> Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition*, 22.

<sup>43</sup> Cruz, *The Badianus Manuscript*, 314.

“traveler’s safeguard.”<sup>44</sup> Aside from defending native peoples against any illnesses the Spanish may have brought from overseas, the Aztecs also used copal incense to treat epilepsy (*Badianus*, pl. 94), those struck by lightning (pl. 92), and to exterminate unsavory scents (pl. 55).<sup>45</sup>

The *Badianus* and Emmart’s appendices on the medical uses of copal make clear that the Aztecs were, in fact, known to disclose information on both the intersection of medicine and magic, and how copal transcended its ritual purposes. De la Cruz likely saw the European belief in and affinity for magic and medicine, as evidenced by the notoriety of famous naturalists such as Pliny the Elder, who wrote his work *Natural History* in 77 CE. With this in mind, de la Cruz viewed the *Badianus* as an opportunity to eradicate the stigma surrounding Aztec religion and medicine with his botanical work of the mid-sixteenth century. Instead of allowing the prejudiced views of native spirituality and its overlap with medicine to persist, de la Cruz employed copal as an example of how elements of indigenous ritual could be implemented to trailblaze investigation into treatment for previously incurable illnesses. Perhaps de la Cruz was attempting to find common ground with the Spanish Crown through his literature. Taking de la Cruz’s motivations into consideration, one can plausibly conjecture that, instead of running away from any mention of magic and its connection to medicine, like Sahagún, he saw the project as a chance to flip the script. Though scholars like Emmart and Montellano take different stances on the integrity of the text and the degree to which European influence tainted the *Badianus*, the perspective that the codex appealed to the humanity and intellectual capacity of the Aztecs is a point which they can both agree upon.

Despite de la Cruz’s best efforts, copal never gained the desired traction in the medical realm or global trade system that he had envisioned. While copal and cochineal were able to garner the reputation of being significant commodities within pre-modern European consumerism, copal, arguably, only became relevant to the international economy by way of serving as an ingredient of varnish today. Copal never overcame its associations with what the Spanish believed was the wicked Aztec religion. A prime example of this is the way with which Spanish conquistador Ruiz de Alarcon wrote about indigenous spirituality and medicine in his *Treatise*, scorning Aztec medicine on the grounds that their medicinal practices harbored direct ties to the devil and witchcraft. The cures Alarcon describes primarily involve hallucinogens or symbolic resources such as water and copal incense, and leaves his readers with the thesis that Nahua medicine predominantly maintained magical properties, rather than basing itself in tangible naturalism and science.<sup>46</sup> Unlike the cochineal insect and cacao bean, copal was too engendered within the sphere of Aztec spirituality for Spaniards to see the resource as an element of any other discipline. While cochineal and cacao were used as a form of currency, a merchandise bought and sold and an integral aspect of global trade, copal remained trapped at

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<sup>44</sup> Cruz, *The Badianus Manuscript*, 314.

<sup>45</sup> Cruz, *The Badianus Manuscript*, 49-52.

<sup>46</sup> Ortiz de Montellano, *Aztec Medicine, Health, and Nutrition*, 24.

the center of Spanish argument against dangerous instruments that furthered the Nahua's demonic agenda.

## **Conclusion**

Reverse acculturation is one of the most prevalent yet under studied variables to shape global history as it stands today. When students across the nation walk into their history classes, they are met with the message that colonists traveled the Atlantic to, ultimately, discover a treasure trove of resources and cultures they could civilize by way of the blueprint for Christianity and Eurocentrism. Nonetheless, the ways with which native individuals made collectives of European peoples more sophisticated, and human go unnoticed in history today. It takes a thorough investigation into the muffled voices of the Indigenous Latin American people to unearth where the aspects of our everyday lives originate. But that should not be the case.

An acknowledgment of the true origins of discoveries and resources like the cochineal insect, the cacao bean and the copal resin should be given in any classroom, museum, or textbook. It is with this sentiment in mind that I argue for the accreditation that the Aztecs are long overdue for their role in developing science, medicine, and consumerism today. Likewise, I advocate for an attitude of egalitarianism surrounding all religions and cultures, specifically those of the Nahua, because the close-mindedness with which their spirituality was met has effectively created a barrier limiting a deserved recognition for resources as valuable as copal. History can be found in the food that we eat, the air that we breathe and the views that we take in each day, yet it is all too challenging and inaccessible for the average American to appreciate this idea. History far transcends the narrative as written by pre-modern Europe, and it is time that places of learning incorporate a consideration of reverse acculturation into the fabrics of their respective curricula.

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## **Section Three: Conflict and Political Turmoil in the Twentieth Century**

# Nixon in Moscow: An Analysis of Newspapers

*By Simon Charkewycz*

In May of 1972, American President Richard Nixon went to Moscow on a mission to ease tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union and reach an agreement on nuclear arms reduction. Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was a generous host and an agreement was soon reached that satisfied both countries. While in Moscow, both superpowers negotiated the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty or SALT which limited the number of anti-ballistic missiles each country had. During the summit, the key issues that Nixon wanted resolved, such as the Vietnam War and the Middle East were talked about, but no solution was reached. Both sides joked with each other, thus “humanizing” their counter parts easier. This paper will analyze Moscow via American newspapers written before, during, and after the summit. These newspapers give important insight into the context of the geopolitical landscape at the time. The analysis of the newspapers will be via the themes of optimism, pessimism, and realism.

The newspaper articles coming from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune* have pessimistic, optimistic, and objective appraisals for the summit. A pre-summit article written by James Reston for the *New York Times* offers a realistic view of ambitions of the Nixon Administration and gives a serious analysis of how realistic those ambitions were. Frank Star’s article written for the *Chicago Tribune* during the summit about Nixon’s landing, meeting with Brezhnev, and welcome dinner in the Kremlin offers a very optimistic analysis of the summit. He mentions that the Soviets were gracious hosts with seeming optimism and that Nixon came to them in good faith. Another article that expresses optimism, is Jack Anderson’s article written for the *Washington Post*, offering a glimpse into why Nixon trusted Brezhnev and insight into their private meeting. Jack Anderson’s other article is about Brezhnev’s intentions during the summit and why he needs the summit to succeed for his own political sake. While the article is not optimistic in the traditional senses, it reassures readers that Brezhnev is coming to the negotiating table in good faith. The articles that are post-summit analysis are more pessimistic, highlighting congressional opponents, the lack of agreements and roadmaps on key issues such as the Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that the Soviets had walked back on their word before.

Since at least 1970, the Nixon Administration sought a summit with the Soviet Union to ease Cold War tensions and score Nixon domestic political points for the 1972 Election. The book *Nixon and Kissinger*, written by historian Robert Dallek, provides excellent background and discussion of the summit. In the spring of 1971 Moscow had signaled a willingness to begin talks about an eventual treaty on nuclear arms reduction as well as a possible summit. Around the same time, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger held meetings with the Soviet

Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin to iron out the particulars of a statement and a possible summit meeting. On May 20, 1971, both Washington and Moscow released similar statements regarding a treaty on antiballistic missile systems (ABMs).<sup>1</sup>

Another important motivation for the Nixon Administration was for the Soviet Union to convince its allies to seek peaceful solutions with the United States and her allies. Nixon thought the Soviets could pressure their allies, namely the North Vietnamese and the Arab states into negotiating. Thus, during the summit the Nixon Administration asked the Kremlin to pressure North Vietnam into approaching possible peace deals. Henry Kissinger and the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko discussed both of these points in a September 30 meeting. During the meeting, Gromyko said he did not believe that Moscow could influence Hanoi into a settlement but that the Soviets were willing to withdraw arms shipments to the Arab states as well as withdraw forces from the region.<sup>2</sup>

The article, “The Nixon Agenda” by James Reston discusses Nixon’s motives for going to Moscow and focuses on the efforts relating to the Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The article is realistic and mentions that the Soviets have good reason to support the Arabs, but mentions that a settlement on Vietnam is possible. Reston mentions the many meetings held between Henry Kissinger and Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin that discussed the various issues of Vietnam while the American offensive on the North Vietnamese capital Hanoi and the port city of Haiphong was occurring. Kissinger directly asked the Ambassador if the Soviets could pressure Hanoi to take the ongoing Paris peace talks more seriously. Reston also notes the Nixon Administration's efforts of applying pressure on Hanoi via its other key ally, China, who Nixon also sought better relations with. Reston relays a secret visit Kissinger made to Moscow in late April and early May of 1972 to discuss Vietnam and possibly have a high level North Vietnamese delegation come to the Soviet capital to meet with him. The article points out that a settlement in the Middle East was far less likely. At the time, Moscow was gaining influence in the region by deploying its navy more aggressively in the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. This could have threatened Arabian oil going to the West and Japan if a war erupted between the great powers. The author believes that common ground could be established to prevent both Israel and the Arab states from acquiring nuclear weapons, as neither power wanted a Middle Eastern conflict between them. Reston’s reporting is objective in what the Nixon administration desired from the summit. Realistic expectations, especially in regards to the Middle East were important because Americans needed to know what the Soviets would conceivably concede and what Nixon's reach was.<sup>3</sup>

The articles “Nixon, Brezhnev Confer 105 Minutes in Kremlin” by Frank Star, and “Nixon: Brezhnev can be Trusted” by Jack Anderson both provided optimistic appraisals for the summit, highlighting the levels of trust on both sides. These articles also provide insights into the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*. New York, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 286-288.

<sup>2</sup> Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 302, 326.

<sup>3</sup> James Reston, “The Nixon Agenda,” *New York Times*, May 21, 1972.

personal relationship between Nixon and Brezhnev, and the optimism expressed by both in the summit's first day. The final article that has an optimistic undertone is another of Jack Anderson's articles, "Nixon: Brezhnev can be Trusted," which covers Brezhnev's reasons for needing the summit to succeed.

Frank Star's article provides an analysis of Nixon's arrival in the Soviet Capital. Air Force One arrived at Moscow's VIP airport and was greeted by Nikolai Podgorny, the Soviet head of state. Nixon inspected the honor guard and listened to the playing of both countries' national anthems. After this brief reception, the American president was driven to the Kremlin, the seat of the Soviet government and symbol of Soviet power. Two hours after his arrival, Nixon was invited by Brezhnev to a private meeting. Star mentions that the President and General Secretary discussed international events and that the meeting was "business-like and frank" according to Ronald Ziegler, the White House press secretary. Henry Kissinger was very nervous that Nixon was meeting alone with Brezhnev and according to a Soviet observer said, "there's no telling what he's saying in there." According to the Soviet transcript, the meeting consisted of Nixon and Brezhnev complementing each other for both their, and their countries sake.

Star's article focuses on the reception in St. George's Hall in the Grand Kremlin Palace. The toasts from both Nixon and Podgorny were optimistic in their tone and expressed hope. Podgorny said, "We stand for a radical turn towards the relaxation of the existing tensions in all continents of the world, for freeing the peoples from the heavy arms burden, for a peaceful political settlement of problems thru negotiations." Nixon replied that "the only way to enter Moscow is to enter in peace (a reference to the failed military campaigns by Napoleon in 1812 and Hitler in 1941)... the foundation of healthy competition must be a willingness to cooperate and reciprocate on matters of overriding importance ... let our two powers always be used to keep the peace, never to break it."<sup>4</sup> Star's reporting is very objective and does not offer his opinion, thereby allowing the reader to come to their own conclusions about the summit. Star is writing about the optimism coming from both sides and indicates that both sincerely wanted to resolve the problems facing the world's two most powerful states. After all, Moscow rolled out the red carpet, and Washington flattered their gracious hosts. While the article covers a ceremonial event, it strongly conveys the tone of good faith and gives the impression that both sides were looking for genuine solutions to problems rather than merely "talking the talk."<sup>5</sup>

The article by Jack Anderson, "Nixon: Brezhnev can be Trusted" provides insight into the personal relationship between Nixon and Brezhnev. Nixon felt that he had a genuine relationship with Brezhnev and as a demonstration of trust, did not bring a State Department interpreter to the first meeting. During the meeting, the two leaders joked about the size of the new Soviet SS-9 nuclear missile. Nixon said that the missile could be substituted for submarines

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<sup>4</sup> Frank Star, "Nixon Brezhnev Confer 105 Minutes in Kremlin," *Chicago Tribune*, May 23, 1972.

<sup>5</sup> Star, Frank, "Nixon Brezhnev Confer 105 Minutes in Kremlin," *Chicago Tribune*.

because the SS-9 resembles a Soviet submarine in both size and shape. Brezhnev sounded surprised that Nixon knew anything about the SS-9. Nixon replied back that both sides should be honest about their respective capabilities, as both had very good intelligence on the other. To soften the blow, he suggested that the Soviets should put the SS-9 on the submarines, Brezhnev replied back that it would sink the submarines, Nixon said that was the point. Anderson's article provides excellent insight into an often overlooked aspect of foreign policy, the personal relationship between leaders.<sup>6</sup> The article gives American readers a glimpse into the work of diplomacy and that the awkward Nixon and the leader of America's arch-rival had a sense of humor and could joke with each other.

In the article "I Trust you Because you are my Friend," scholar Donald J. Raleigh writes about the Nixon-Brezhnev relationship from Brezhnev's point of view. The article covers the entire relationship from the beginning of their correspondence to Nixon's downfall in August of 1974. During the first private meeting between Nixon and Brezhnev, Brezhnev mentioned the relationship between Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin during World War II as inspiration for the new relationship. Nixon agreed to form a close relationship with Brezhnev akin to the Roosevelt-Stalin partnership. Nixon also agreed to Brezhnev's idea for a pan-European conference after Brezhnev invoked the pains of World War II and the destruction it brought to his country.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the summit, Nixon and Kissinger met with Brezhnev one more time in private. The night prior, Nixon addressed the Soviet people from the Kremlin and in the ending of his speech he discussed the diary of a girl, Tanya, who lost her whole family in the Siege of Leningrad, and spoke that it was the duty of both nations to prevent more stories like Tanyas.<sup>8</sup> Nixon's words had moved Brezhnev to tears.<sup>9</sup>

Jack Anderson's "Brezhnev Needs Summit Success" offers a unique glimpse into the world behind the Kremlin's red walls and the high stakes game of Soviet politics. Anderson writes that Brezhnev needed a successful summit to score points over the more hawkish members of the nomenklatura – the Communist Party elite. Anderson writes that there was fierce opposition to inviting Nixon within the Kremlin, as the opposition forces feared angering Hanoi. The hawks in the Kremlin believed that Hanoi was gaining the upper hand with the help of newly delivered Soviet weapons. The Soviet marshals wanted to exploit Hanoi's displeasure with Beijing inviting Nixon, and to draw Hanoi closer to Moscow. Brezhnev had to exert all of his power to override the marshals, so he needed the gamble to pay off. Anderson provides valuable insight to the inner workings of the Kremlin and shows that the positions of Soviet leaders are not as secure as some in the West might have thought. Although Anderson is being

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<sup>6</sup> Jack Anderson "Nixon: Brezhnev can be Trusted," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Donald J. Raleigh, "'I Speak Frankly Because You Are My Friend': Leonid Ilich Brezhnev's Personal Relationship with Richard M. Nixon," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 45, no. 2 (April 1, 2018): 151–82. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18763324-20171286>, 159.

<sup>8</sup> Nixon Presidential Library, "President Nixon Addresses the Soviet People Live From the Kremlin," YouTube, Uploaded January 16, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oantwy7crzk>.

<sup>9</sup> Raleigh, "I speak Frankly," 169.

optimistic, as his article suggests that the Soviet side needed the summit to be a success and that Brezhnev was gambling more than Nixon was. Anderson's article is important as it offers Americans a glimpse into the politics of America's rival superpower, and that Brezhnev needed the summit to succeed even more than Nixon did. The article highlights the high stakes game of geopolitics and how it is often very intertwined with a leader's perception of their own power and image. The article can serve as a reassurance to readers who were skeptical of Soviet intentions.<sup>10</sup> While not optimistic in the traditional sense, it does provide Americans with a sense of security that Moscow has very real reasons for wanting the summit to succeed even if it is just to serve the personal political ambitions of Brezhnev.

The week-long visit to Moscow was made up of many meetings both successful and even heated, with both sides expressing respect for the other, but in one instance scolding and questioning the other side's intentions. One of the most interesting meetings was between Nixon and Brezhnev, going off of what was said above, the meeting was very friendly and both leaders thanked each other, talked about meetings from the 1950s, and the difficulties of long distance flying. Brezhnev denounced the Chinese as "opponents acting under the guise and pretext." The Soviet leader also mentioned Vietnam as the reason why the Kremlin could not meet with the White House. Brezhnev hoped Nixon took this admission as a sign that Moscow was more than willing to embrace detente. He also mentioned the Soviet-American alliance during World War II as a hallmark of cooperation. Nixon mentioned that the basic principles Kissinger worked on with the Soviets earlier in the month would be kept secret and that the White House would say that they were agreed to during the summit. The meeting between the two leaders ended with an acknowledgment of ending hostilities around the world with peace being a mutual goal.<sup>11</sup>

The next day, May 23, launched the conference in earnest with three meetings. The first meeting, with eleven participants from each side, set the stage with SALT being the number one issue and the Soviets bringing up trade. The two other meetings that day involved just Nixon, Kissinger, and Brezhnev. The talks would get tense over submarine-launched ballistic missiles, with Brezhnev saying that the US had the advantage, with Nixon countering that the Soviets had a counterbalance in terms of the size of the weapons. Nixon then urged that both sides offer concessions, and by the meeting's end, Brezhnev felt confident that an agreement had been reached. Both Nixon and Kissinger felt the same way, as to them, this was the crowning achievement of the summit.<sup>12</sup>

The meeting on May 24, largely revolved around trade and European affairs. Nixon said that in order for trade relations to improve, the issue of Soviet debts from World War II would need to be settled. The President also said that issues regarding NATO troop levels in Europe must be made in consultation with allies, not just the US. Alexi Kosygin posed a question: could the two countries become allies if both did not have allies? Nixon responded that it "will take

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<sup>10</sup> Jack Anderson, "Brezhnev Needs Summit Success," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1972.

<sup>11</sup> Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 392.

<sup>12</sup> Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 393-394.

time.” The meeting ended with light words about a possible joint manned mission to Mars, with both sides joking that the foreign ministers should go.

That night's meeting at Brezhnev's dacha outside of Moscow was less friendly. Upon arrival, Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny scolded the Americans on the Vietnam War. Nixon warned against allowing Vietnam to get in the way of real progress on other issues and defended the Paris peace talks, stressing that the United States was approaching the talks in good faith. The Soviets refused to give ground on the issue. They argued that America's conduct was shameful and that Vietnam in no way threatened the United States. The Soviets charged that the war significantly discredited the United States and that Hanoi was ready to allow foreign troops to fight on its side. Nixon brushed off this threat. Nixon's counter offensive to this tirade was good but not particularly strong, as he did not want to risk the summit over Vietnam. One Soviet official told his American counterpart that the criticism of Vietnam was merely for show, so that Moscow could be seen standing up for an ally. However the Americans believed that this was genuine anger and displeasure over American actions.<sup>13</sup>

Over the next few days the leaders would continue to meet although little was agreed upon on economics and the Middle East. On May 25, Nixon and Kosygin met discussing economics and the next day Nixon and Brezhnev discussed the Middle East. By this time, the main point of the summit, the SALT treaty, was already settled. SALT was signed on May 26. That night Nixon and Brezhnev had dinner and agreed to have Brezhnev come to Washington in 1973. They also agreed that both could not decipher the Chinese mind, and that China's massive population made it a very large player. On May 29, both leaders had a final dinner and then on the 30 the American delegation headed to Tehran.<sup>14</sup>

The last two articles by William White, for the *Chicago Tribune* and Robert Sempal for the New York Times give a post summit analysis and what could happen next in US-Soviet relations. Both articles offer a pessimist assessment of the summit. White mentions the Soviets going back on their word numerous times and that the summit means nothing if the Soviets don't uphold their end of the deal. White writes that a strong president needs to be in the White House to hold the Soviets accountable. Sempal's article notes that little progress was made on Vietnam and the Middle East. In terms of the SALT treaty, he notes the role Congress plays in the signing of treaties. Although he expects SALT to get through Congress, he writes that there are detractors who feel the treaty coincides too much and that it gave the Soviets the advantage.

William White's article "There are Perils in Moscow Pacts" gives a critical analysis of the summit. White contends that "about 80 per cent of its contents may be safely said to offer genuine hope for the eventual liquidation of the cold war... 20 per cent... spells latent danger." White writes that the agreements made in Moscow could only be upheld if the man in the White House held firm and did not buckle. The author believes that Nixon was able to achieve what he

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<sup>13</sup> Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 394-397.

<sup>14</sup> Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, 397-398.

achieved by being firm, especially when he did not end the blockade of North Vietnam, thus proving that he was not a paper tiger. White writes that had Nixon abandoned South Vietnam, the Soviets could have walked over him and gotten more concessions from the Americans. White goes on to write that both the Soviets and the Americans were “tough-minded and unemotional men”<sup>15</sup>, and that both had respect for the other. Perhaps the most impactful point from the article is that the pact had no meaning if the Soviets didn't stay true to their words. The Soviets had a reputation for going back on their word and taking advantage of US trust; White stresses that the White House must hold Moscow accountable, and only then can the pact have any meaning. White's critical analysis and cautious optimism regarding the talks gives readers a realistic assessment of the talks. White reminding readers that the Soviets were not always trustworthy is important as it reminded Americans that Nixon and all future presidents needed to hold the Soviets accountable for anything to matter.<sup>16</sup>

Robert B Sempal's article, “For Nixon, There are Still Big Tasks Ahead,” provides a good overview of the topics discussed and what lies ahead in terms of Congress and domestic opposition. Upon arriving back in the United States, Nixon gave a rare speech to a joint session of Congress on the progress made in Moscow. His speech beamed with optimism and emphasized the importance of both his mission to Moscow and his mission to Beijing earlier in the year. Nixon was more than just recapping the visit but was making the case to Congress to approve the agreements made in Moscow. In Moscow, the countries agreed to limit the number of anti-ballistic missiles deployed to just two sites, rendering both countries more vulnerable to nuclear attack. Another key agreement was the five-year ban on new offensive missile launchers. The ban on defensive missiles only required a 2/3 majority in the Senate to be approved and Nixon for the offensive ban wanted a joint resolution that required a simple majority in both houses of Congress. Both items were expected to pass Congress, and once they did Nixon had expected to start talks with Soviets on a second SALT treaty.

During the summit, the Soviets expressed a desire to expand trade between the two countries, with Nixon agreeing to the establishment of a joint trade commission. Problems from the American side included long standing unpaid Soviet debts from World War II lend-lease, and that the United States Maritime Union wanted at least 50% of the trade to be done via American ships, whose rates were more expensive. Although both Nixon and Brezhnev spent hours discussing Vietnam, not much was agreed to accept that peace must be achieved. In terms of European security both sides agreed “in principle” that talks between NATO and the Warsaw Pact should happen, and that those talks would start in the fall of 1973. Perhaps the most important point brought up in the article is the Congressional opposition, Democratic lawmakers such as Lloyd Benston and Henry Jackson believed that the treaty gave the Soviets an advantage over the United States in terms of number of nuclear weapons.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> William White, “There are Perils in Moscow Pact,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 4, 1972.

<sup>16</sup> White, “There are Perils in Moscow Pact,” *Chicago Tribune*.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Sempal, “For Nixon There are Still big Tasks Ahead,” *New York Times*, June 4, 1972.

Sempal does not call the summit a triumph as not everything that Nixon wanted was achieved and the SALT treaty was only successful if both countries agreed to the provisions. Despite Sempal's assessment, the Soviet's farewell to Nixon was grand and joyful, perhaps an indication that they were prepared to honor what was agreed to. By mentioning Congress, Sempal is reminding Americans of the all-important role Congress has in foreign policy, the power to approve of treaties. Showing that although the White House negotiates, the Hill needs to approve. Sempal's article is also good because it gives the bones of what was agreed to in Moscow and informs Americans of the substance of the talks and their implications on global security.

The 1972 Moscow Summit was the first time an American president visited Moscow, and the effects are felt today. Another key aspect of the summit was the media coverage of the event. The press covered both the ceremonial and the official events, as well as the substance of the talks. The news media's coverage was realistic, optimistic, and pessimistic. The realistic sentiments came from before the summit, optimism came during the summit, and pessimism in the post summit analysis. The summit was the culmination of years of work on part of the Nixon Administration to begin in a new era of US-Soviet relations. The historic meeting officially started the era of detente, and the cooling of relations between the two global hegemon. Both sides showed a willingness to concede points and recognized the other side's point of view. In 2024, even after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the summit still holds relevance to the US-Russia relationship. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the relationship between Washington and Moscow has soured to one of the worst point since the end of the Cold War. Both sides can look to the Moscow Summit for inspiration on how to warm the relationship and ease tension between the world's foremost nuclear powers. Russia can concede on annexing Ukrainian territory and the US can concede on giving Ukraine NATO membership. While the United States and Russia mend and fix their relationship, the media should cover all the aspects of the relationship and not just the "clickbait" moments so that Americans and Russians can be well informed.

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# The Failed Unification of Hungary and Czechoslovakia: The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam as a Catalyst for Political Transition

*By Jameson Walker*

## Abstract

In 1977, in an effort to encourage economic development, introduce hydroelectricity, prevent flooding, and improve navigation on the Danube River, the Hungarian People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic signed the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros treaty, agreeing to create multiple dams along the river. The project was envisioned as a "single and indivisible operational system of works" with both nations collaborating on a transnational project for mutual gain.<sup>1</sup> However, the implementation of this project has been far from unifying. Over the course of the project, multiple lawsuits have been made to the International Court of Justice, ongoing debates continue decades after their initial filing, and overall, an ever-growing divide between these nations has been created. This paper will discuss the original objectives of the dam and the political climate which led to the treaty's signing. Then, it will consider the main factors which contributed to the dam's failure and eventual lawsuits: environmental concerns and advocacy groups, changing and failing economies, and the symbolic value of the dam which polarized the two states. Finally, it will explore the link between these factors surrounding the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam and their contribution to political transformations and upheaval in each state. In Hungary, environmental concerns surrounding the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam symbolized and contributed to wider conversations surrounding the nation's perceived oppression by the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia, the Gabčíkovo portion of the dam became symbolic of Czechoslovakian economic modernization and eventually contributed to the formation of an independent Slovakia.

## The Treaty's Inception

The original intention of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam, similar to many historical projects regarding the Danube, was to encourage and simplify the navigation of the Danube River internationally, primarily for trade and economic purposes. Dams played a significant political role throughout the 1900's, as they became a symbolic indicator of man's ability to

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Deets, "Solving the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Conflict," Wilson Center, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/171-solving-the-gabcikovo-nagymaros-dam-conflict>, 171.

control nature, prevent typical river flooding, and increased and eased river navigability.<sup>2</sup> Between 1973 and 1974, however, an oil crisis which shocked many East Central European nations' energy supplies caused Hungary to shift the treaty's objectives primarily toward energy production, with navigability and flood control as secondary objectives.<sup>3</sup>

The dam's primary energy and industrial aims received heavy backing from the Soviet Union, which hoped to decrease East Central Europe's reliance on foreign energy sources for its growing industries by expanding domestic energy projects, in this case, hydroelectricity.<sup>4</sup> The political climate in Hungary and Czechoslovakia at the time also contributed to the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros treaty's inception. Both nations were politically entrenched between polarized conservatives and reformers for much of the post-WW2 period, with the conservatives winning out toward the early 1970's.<sup>5</sup> The conservatives of the time were fonder of heavy industry and dominated the Communist Party and the party's bureaucracy. As a result, these political actors supported the large water management endeavors which would benefit heavy industry, trade, and increase overall energy output.<sup>6</sup> The conservative majority in both Hungary and Czechoslovakia remained quite submissive to Soviet influence, which led the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project to be heavily influenced by Soviet aims of the time, rather than solely based around the mutual interests of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Due to this political climate, at its inception, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project's design reflected "the industrial gigantism of the Stalinist era".<sup>7</sup> It was also inspired by the 1956 resolution of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) which discussed large-scale projects on the Danube from the Black Sea all the way to Bratislava.<sup>8</sup> These plans included the construction of dams for energy production, economic development, and navigation. Even before the COMECON resolution, however, nearly a century of proposals surrounding the reengineering of the Danube River between Bratislava and Budapest had been under discussion, pointing to the enduring relevance of the Danube River and the consistent lead up to the eventual Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros agreement.<sup>9</sup>

Navigability of the river to Bratislava was also geopolitically significant, given its potential to function as a mass transportation center for goods in the most important international

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities in a Two-Level Game: Understanding the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Conflict," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (2009), 5(1), [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2008.00082, 37-56](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2008.00082.37-56).

<sup>3</sup> Gábor Baranyai and Gábor Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock: A Systemic Analysis of Why the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Dispute is Still Unresolved," *Water Policy* (2015), 18(1), <https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2015.040>, 39-49.

<sup>4</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Aaron Schwabach, "Diverting the Danube: The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dispute and International Freshwater Law," *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, 1996, [https://lawrepository.ualr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1276&context=faculty\\_scholarship](https://lawrepository.ualr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1276&context=faculty_scholarship), 290.

<sup>8</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>9</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

waterway of Europe under Soviet control.<sup>10</sup> The Danube River is also the second longest river in the European continent, and connects ten countries, which was appealing to the Soviet Union's aims of spreading and maintaining its own naval and trade power. The Danube River's navigability would also allow Soviet ships direct access to Austria's border which was incredibly geopolitically significant for the expansion of communism and the Soviet sphere of influence to the West.<sup>11</sup> Soviet ideological motivation also played a role in the dam's proposal, as it was purported and believed by communists that one role of humanity was to correct the flaws of nature. At the time of original negotiations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia around 1950, it was practically considered a fact that a river such as the Danube which spanned so much land mass would require multiple dams to ensure its functionality, especially in regard to trade and flood prevention.<sup>12</sup> The Danube is naturally shallow, which largely inhibited the Soviet Union's aims to use the river as a means of transport for goods throughout East Central Europe, so building the dams would strengthen its production chain and capabilities. Communist USSR leadership believed at the time that without multiple dams to support the Danube, sediments would accumulate in the water, leading to the disruption of trade activities and potentially even damaging embankments, leading to bridges collapsing.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, while the treaty aimed to decrease flooding, provide energy, stabilize trade, and improve navigation, it was also meant to “strengthen the fraternal relations of the two states and significantly contribute to the bringing about of the socialist integration of the states.”<sup>14</sup> It is clear that this treaty was not only meant to provide industrial value, but that its inception sprouted from deeply rooted symbolic value as well. From the view of the Soviets, this dam project was a representation of the power of the socialist brotherhood. The success of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam would signify the economic stability fostered through inter-state collaboration under the leadership of the Soviet Union. With heavy economic, industrial, and political intentions set and negotiations underway, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros treaty was signed in 1977.

## Environmental Impacts

From the start, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam was rooted in the ambitious political, economic, and ideological aspirations of the Soviet Union and ignored the needs and wants of Hungarians and Czechoslovakians. The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project suffered from setbacks and delays almost immediately upon implementation and construction. These setbacks were due most significantly to the environment, bolstered by economic unrest and the symbolism

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<sup>10</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, “Anatomy of a Deadlock,” 39-49.

<sup>11</sup> Fred Pearce, “The Dam that Broke the Berlin Wall,” *New Scientist* (2009) 203(2716), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0262-4079\(09\)61852-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0262-4079(09)61852-2), 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> Gyorgy Moldova, “A Tale of Two Dams,” *UNESCO Courier* (2001), 54(10), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000123753>, 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Sharon Fisher, “The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Controversy Continues,” *RFE/RL Research Report* (1993), 2(37), 7-12.

attributed to the dam in each state. I will explore how the environmental, symbolic, and economic facets of the dam make way for social upheaval and play a role in the political transition of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and eventually Slovakia.

A powerful deterrent to the success of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam project was the environmental concerns which were not readily apparent at the treaty's inception. When examining the Danube, environmental protections are incredibly important. The Danube River is the second longest river on the European continent and is the second largest supplier of freshwater to the European continent. Given the Danube's unique connection to the Black Sea, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project would later be found to have severely damaged not only the ecology and environmental function of the Danube, but also left long-term effects on the Black Sea as a whole.<sup>15</sup> According to an environmental impact study completed in the mid-1980's by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the project would have a direct and negative environmental impact on over half a million people.<sup>16</sup> The study also found that given the fragile nature of the river's ecosystem, any dam construction would put at risk the freshwater supplies of more than three million people in Hungary alone.<sup>17</sup> The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project also led to increased floods, causing the worst floods in 150 years which damaged property and endangered people and wildlife. These floods also increased the amount of agricultural pollutants such as fertilizers present in the already polluted Danube waters, which, especially in Czechoslovakia, had nitrate concentrations so high it was advised that pregnant mothers and children not consume the water at all.<sup>18</sup> Overall, the Danube is a valuable ecological wetland, which provides a vital freshwater source for millions of Europeans and supplies undeniably significant biodiversity to its surrounding states.

From the outset, the 1977 agreement appears to make an effort to protect the natural environment of the Danube River, as a clause within the treaty called for the construction and functionality of the dam to be conscious of the "requirements of nature conservation."<sup>19</sup> However, this clause is incredibly vague and fails to outline specific environmental protections or necessities unique to the Danube or freshwater ecosystems as a whole. Instead, the agreement makes a minute, easy to ignore gesture toward the supposed need for environmental conservation, leaving up to interpretation the role this conservation will entail and the specific requirements for protecting the natural environment of the Danube. In fact, this statement is the only mention of the environment in the entire agreement. The vagueness of the statement likely

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<sup>15</sup> Christoph Humborg, Venugopalan Ittekkot, Adriana Cociasu, & Bodo v. Bodungen. "Effect of Danube River Dam on Black Sea Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Structure," *Nature* (1997), 386(6623), <https://doi.org/10.1038/386385a0>, 385-388.

<sup>16</sup> V. Balaban. "Danube Dam Plans Stir Unprecedented Protest." (*Alternatives: Perspectives on Society & Environment*, 1988) 15(4), 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

contributed to the lack of environmental consciousness present in the project itself and the eventual environmental destruction the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam would cause.

When examining the original design of the dam system, it is clear that the environment was largely unconsidered. In fact, no environmental impact studies were undertaken for nearly a decade after original negotiations began.<sup>20</sup> According to the original design, two separate dams were proposed: one upstream at Gabčíkovo in Czechoslovak territory and one downstream at Nagymaros in Hungarian territory.<sup>21</sup> This design was intended to reach the highest level of power output possible, with the dam at Gabčíkovo releasing water two times a day at peak times of power demand for both nations.<sup>22</sup> This design thought little of the environmental consequences of the dam, only the industrial energy power to be gained, with the aim to achieve the highest possible energy output without entirely destroying the river itself.<sup>23</sup>

As construction on the dam project finally began in the early 1980's, more information about the environmental effects of the dam became clear to the public. In 1981, Janos Vargha, a Hungarian biologist, began to research the environmental, ecological, and biological effects of the dam after being assigned to write an article for a small science magazine called *Buvar* related to the feasibility of creating a park in an area along the river's bend in Budapest.<sup>24</sup> When Vargha began to investigate the area, he discovered the plans for the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dams, which, up until this point, had not been discussed with the public. Once he learned about the dam, he looked into the environmental and biological effects of the construction of such a dam along the Danube River, finding that the dam would lead to an increased concentration of water pollution in the area and dry out and destroy the river's valuable wetlands, dismantling the intricate ecosystem of the river, and destroying its underground water reserves.<sup>25</sup>

Confronted by the severity of these issues, Vargha attempted to publish an article in *Buvar* surrounding the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam; however, he was confronted by the conflicting views and power of the Hungarian communist bureaucracy when his article was blocked by the editorial board of the magazine due to disagreement by a single member of the board, a director of Water Management for the Hungarian government.<sup>26</sup> The censorship of the article alerted Vargha to the purposeful block on the dissemination of information and therefore revealed the true depth of the issue. Eventually, after multiple attempts, Vargha was able to publish a few articles about the environmentally detrimental effects of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam, accumulating a small group of Hungarians who were informed and concerned about the issue.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Balaban, "Danube Dam Plans Stir Unprecedented Protest," 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Pearce, "The Dam that Broke the Berlin Wall," 46-47.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

By 1984, this group would become The Danube Circle, an illegal environmental advocacy organization. Unlike Vargha and a few others, the group was not made up of scientists, rather, it was primarily composed of writers, artists, and everyday citizens who appreciated the beauty of the river and the social and recreational capital it provided to the region.<sup>28</sup> The Danube Circle was not entirely of epistemic concern, rather, it reflected the stifled voices of the Hungarian people, who had no say on the construction of the dam, which, regardless of ecological changes, would permanently disrupt the river's scenery and the natural environment of the people living near the dam. According to Vargha, "We decided it wasn't enough to talk and write, so we set up an organization: the Danube Circle. We announced that we didn't accept censorship. We would act as if we were living in a democracy."<sup>29</sup> In order to discreetly amplify the voice of public dissent for the project, the Danube Circle focused its efforts on the dissemination of information surrounding the harmful effects of the dam. In this way, the people could fight back against the censorship imposed upon them by the Hungarian government and Soviet influence, regardless of legality.

The primary objective of the Danube Circle was the collection of signatures for a letter of petition against the dam's construction. The letter outlined the damage the dam would have on the ecology of the river, the impact it would have on freshwater supplies and pollution, and also the economic irrationality of the project.<sup>30</sup> In a major feat, from 1981 to 1984, more than 10,000 signatures had been collected.<sup>31</sup> The Danube Circle also collaborated with Western environmental groups which had more autonomy and freedoms, allowing the Western media to disseminate information about the dam's effects in their own states.<sup>32</sup> These Western connections were most significant in Austria, a state which had financial stake in the project, as it provided millions of dollars in loans to Hungary during a period of economic instability to finance the dam's construction.<sup>33</sup> Because of the terms of the loan agreements, Austria also had the potential to benefit from the energy production and utilize some of the hydroelectricity from the Nagymaros portion.<sup>34</sup> Through the influence of the Danube Circle, articles were published in *Die Presse*, an Austrian newspaper, which sparked public denunciation of the hydroelectric project in Austria as well.<sup>35</sup> While the Danube Circle's efforts were not recognized by the Hungarian state, they were largely recognized and honored by the wider European audience, especially in Western Europe. In 1985, the Danube Circle won the Right Livelihood Peace Award from Right Livelihood and was granted nearly \$100,000 to continue their advocacy

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<sup>28</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37–56.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Pearce, "The Dam that Broke the Berlin Wall," 46-47.

<sup>33</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Balaban, "Danube Dam Plans Stir Unprecedented Protest," 8–9.

efforts.<sup>36</sup> This award was a symbolic recognition of the importance of the Danube Circle's efforts and the vitality of environmental advocacy efforts in Hungary and East Central Europe.<sup>37</sup>

In many ways, opposition to the dam within environmental advocacy groups went beyond the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project, at least symbolically. The Danube Circle largely attempted to ground its critiques solely in regard to the environment rather than the communist superstructure in fear of retaliation from the state, however, Vargha still believed in the symbolic effect the Danube Circle would have on the fall of communism in Hungary, stating: "The Communist system was collapsing. But I think it happened maybe five years sooner because of our efforts. The dam had become a symbol of the subjugation of people as well as of water. And as the Danube ran free, so did the people. We opened the floodgates."<sup>38</sup>

The presence of the Danube Circle inspired other more militant environmental organizations to surface.<sup>39</sup> The Blues are a prime example of this, as they were an organization which focused on environmental advocacy but targeted their critiques directly at the state as the sole creator of these environmental issues.<sup>40</sup> In a samizdat, or secret underground publication, made by the Blues in 1986, an anonymous leader states: "Our aims in fact extend beyond environmental protection, for we want to stimulate independent thinking in all aspects of life and to encourage greater autonomy."<sup>41</sup> The Blues' call for "independent thinking" and "greater autonomy" creates a direct contrast to the Soviet imposition of assimilation; therefore, connecting environmental concerns to socio-political ones. The dam began to hold significant symbolic value in Hungary, as "the project was more and more perceived as the ultimate symbol of the arrogance, incompetence, and mismanagement of the country by the ruling communist regime."<sup>42</sup> The efforts of Hungary's environmental organizations, both those more and less directly critical of the communist state, solidified the symbolic connection between the Danube's need for environmental liberation and the people's need for economic and social liberation. It also functionally aligned Hungary more with Western Europe rather than the Soviet Union in the East due to its growing values surrounding environmental justice and individual freedom. This symbolic value created the seeds for the eventual disillusionment of communism with "the environment serving as a powerful vehicle in the quest for overall democratic transition."<sup>43</sup>

Unlike Hungary, in Czechoslovakia, the environmental consequences of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam were largely unknown or ignored. The Czechoslovak public predominantly looked fondly upon the dam, believing that it was relatively more environmentally friendly due

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<sup>36</sup> Balaban, "Danube Dam Plans Stir Unprecedented Protest," 8–9.

<sup>37</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>38</sup> Pearce, "The Dam that Broke the Berlin Wall," 46-47.

<sup>39</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Jansuz Bugajski, *East European Fault Lines: Dissent, Opposition, And Social Activism*, (Westview Press, 1989).

<sup>42</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>43</sup> Viktoria Szirmai, "The Structural Mechanisms of the Organisation of Ecological – Social Movements in Hungary," *Environment and Democratic Transition, Policy and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993, 146–157.

to its production of hydroelectricity.<sup>44</sup> At the end of World War II, Czechoslovakia was largely agrarian, but as the Soviet Union seized control of Czechoslovakia, the communists began large industrial expansion. By the 1970's, Czechoslovakia was a hub for chemical plants, arms factories, and metal works, which made up a majority of Czechoslovakia's economy.<sup>45</sup> This increased reliance on heavy industry meant a growing need for cheap energy, but Czechoslovakia had almost no cost-efficient domestic energy sources. Because of this economic vulnerability, the Soviet Union heavily pushed for the expansion of hydroelectricity and other domestic energy sources in Czechoslovakia, rather than relying on foreign energy supply.

Before the creation of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam, the main source of energy in Czechoslovakia was coal, leading to increasingly polluted air.<sup>46</sup> This pollution and coal usage also led to increased support for the dam in Czechoslovakia, as the dam's hydroelectricity was seen as fundamentally environmentally preferable to the expansion of coal power plants.<sup>47</sup> However, over time and as the environmental consequences of the dam became clearer within neighboring Hungary and throughout the West, in the late 1980's, alongside the Velvet Revolution, Czechoslovaks began to realize many of the environmental issues with the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project. While this new understanding spurred public concern, by 1989, much of the damage had already been done. In fact, the environmental condition of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam was seen by both governments as nearly impossible to restore.<sup>48</sup>

Vaclav Havel, who became President of Czechoslovakia in 1989 was previously a leading member of Charter 77, a prominent human rights organization which was the most active anti-Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros actor in the state.<sup>49</sup> As a part of the Charter 77 organization, he was anti-dam, even stating that the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam was a "totalitarian, gigomaniac monument which is against nature."<sup>50</sup> However, despite Havel's fervent opposition, by the time he reached office, a majority of the dam had already been completed, leading even him to concede that recreating and reestablishing the wetlands which had been disrupted by the dam and buried by cement for nearly a decade would be an almost impossible feat. Given that a majority of the environmental damage had already been completed, and return to an ecological equilibrium was unlikely, Havel decided to push forward with the completion of the dam, believing that it would be the most environmentally sustainable position moving forward.<sup>51</sup> This sentiment was common, with even the Slovak Green Party agreeing with the continuation of the Gabčíkovo project.<sup>52</sup> Czechoslovakia, though primarily Slovakia, was eager to propose technical alterations to the original plan which would better protect the environment, yet still allow for the

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<sup>44</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>45</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>46</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Deets, "Solving the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Conflict," 37

<sup>52</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

dam's completion. Throughout Gabčíkovo's construction, almost 20% of construction costs went toward environmental harm mitigation.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Hungary refused to move forward with construction, causing Slovakia to proceed with Variant C, an independent Slovakian effort to complete the dam system in Slovakian territory. This action further divided the two nations entrenched in conflict and exacerbated already existing environmental concerns by leading to an increase in detrimental floods, the worst seen along the Danube in over a century.<sup>54</sup>

### The Dam's Political and Economic Implications

The political unrest surrounding the dam's symbolic nature and environmental degradation are exacerbated by the economics of the project itself. In Hungary, the original plan for funding the project was through foreign loans which would spark industry in the state and eventually be able to be refunded. However, by the mid 1980's, the Hungarian economy was in a state of near total collapse due to reliance on these foreign loans.<sup>55</sup> Economic studies conducted in 1989 found that the project, even if it were fully completed, would never make up for the costs which went into construction.<sup>56</sup> Because Hungary was entrenched in the international treaty yet struggling with a deteriorating economy, it once again turned outside the Warsaw Pact for support, asking for Austrian financing.<sup>57</sup> Austria agreed to provide a 600-million-dollar loan in return for approximately two-thirds of the Hungarian portion of energy production for the first 20 years after construction and for 70% of the construction contracts.<sup>58</sup> With Austria's terms, the agreement became even less aligned with the Hungarian state's individual interests, given that much of the project's initial perceived benefits were not reflected domestically. Hungary's agreement to these terms added to the symbolic shift of the dam's value, becoming an agreement forced upon them, which damaged their environment, damaged their economy, and which they benefited little from.

While it would've been economically harmful for the Hungarians to continue with the project, it would've been detrimental for the Czechoslovaks to cease operations. In the late 1980's, the Nagymaros dam in Hungary was still in the initial stages of construction due to the country's economic struggles. However, the same cannot be said of the Czechoslovak portion, as the dam in Gabčíkovo was about 90% complete by the mid-1980's due to the widespread view of the dam as a positive investment toward the economic stability of Czechoslovakia both by the people and the state.<sup>59</sup> This is likely because of the nature of the Gabčíkovo project as a "modernization symbol," which is defined by Steinburg as large-scale projects with excessive

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<sup>53</sup> K. Okolicsanyi. "Slovak-Hungarian Tension: Bratislava Diverts the Danube," (RFE/RL, 1992) 1(49), 51.

<sup>54</sup> Debora MacKenzie "Divisions Deepen Over Danube Diversion." *New Scientist* (1992), 136(1850), <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg13618501-400-divisions-deepen-over-danube-diversion/>, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>58</sup> Fisher, "The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Controversy Continues," 7-12.

<sup>59</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

costs, a long development period, and challenging construction which contribute to public perception of a state's modernization and economic development.<sup>60</sup> Once these projects are proposed, they become symbolic of economic stability and security and become tied to feelings of national pride, power, and self-determination for the people and the state. According to the World Dam Commission, within the mid to late 1900s, dams held this political significance and were "synonymous with development and economic progress. Viewed as symbols of modernization and humanity's ability to harness nature, dam construction accelerated dramatically."<sup>61</sup>

Around the time of the Velvet Revolution, public awareness, and concern about the negative environmental effects of the dam began and deconstructing the dam was known to be economically unfeasible. At the time, estimates for dismantling the dam and restoring a baseline natural environment were placed between 1.5 and 6 billion US Dollars.<sup>62</sup> The government argued that even pausing or stopping the work would be more environmentally damaging than completing the project.<sup>63</sup> As a result, the Czechoslovak position became fixed on completing the dam and focusing on mitigating further environmental harm. This position created a great divide between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as Czechoslovakia was only interested in conversations surrounding harm mitigation while completing the dam, whereas Hungary refused to contribute to resuming work on the dam, insisting that the Czechoslovaks abandon their work on the project.<sup>64</sup>

### **Division and Political Transition**

The dam not only created a further divide between Hungary and Czechoslovakia but also contributed to the political transition of Czechoslovakia to Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In the early 1990's, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam was one among many topics of negotiation as Slovakia and the Czech Republic considered peaceful separation. With the dam already representative of modernization, independence, and economic stability, it was incredibly appealing to the Slovak population to continue operation of the dam in their territory independently, viewing it as a facet of their economic identity. Chief among Slovak supporters of the independent Slovakian continuation of the Gabčíkovo dam was Slovak Prime Minister Melair, who feared that the Czechoslovak federal government would submit to Hungary and cancel the dam's continual construction and use.<sup>65</sup> Melair also believed that the dams were vital

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<sup>60</sup> Gerald A. Steinberg, "Large-Scale National Projects as Political Symbols: The Case of Israel," *Comparative Politics* 19, no. 3, 1987, 331-46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/421883>, 331-346.

<sup>61</sup> American University International Law Review. "The Report of the World Commission on Dams-Executive Summary." (*American University International Law Review*, 2001) 16(6) 1435-1452.

<sup>62</sup> Fisher, "The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Controversy Continues," 7-12.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Deets, "Constituting Interests and Identities," 37-56.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

to the economic success of Slovakia and Slovakian industry.<sup>66</sup> These beliefs contributed to the growing divide between Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and in 1991, Slovakia began their own independent construction project known as Variant C. Variant C was completed with the hope that eventually Hungary would continue their construction at Nagymaros; however, it was primarily independent, and was highly symbolic of Slovakian economic and political independence.<sup>67</sup> The dam was supported in Slovakia, especially as the transition to an independent state led to job losses and economic decline, causing public fear surrounding the state's ability to develop economically independently.<sup>68</sup>

The Gabčíkovo dam and Variant C became symbolic of Slovakian independence and played a role in the political transition of Czechoslovakia into Slovakia and the Czech Republic by becoming synonymous with a new-found Slovakian state identity. Overall, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam treaty's inception was characterized by Soviet aims, with little consideration for the individual economic and socio-political intentions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The treaty hoped to establish domestic energy supplies which could contribute to a wider expansion of heavy industry without reliance on foreign sources and held geopolitical significance in regard to trade pathways and reliable Soviet access to the second largest freshwater source in Europe. The dam had initial political support in both nations; however, less than a decade after the treaty's signing, a great divide between Hungary and Czechoslovakia began due to debates surrounding the dam's environmental sustainability. Environmental movements in Hungary fervently believed that the dam was detrimental to the Danube's ecosystem, demanding the cessation of Czechoslovakian construction; however, in Czechoslovakia, the hydroelectric aims of the dam provided a more environmentally sustainable energy source than their coal alternatives, causing epistemic conflict between the two nations. Increasing economic loss surrounding the project in Hungary led to more urgency surrounding the project's prohibition whereas the opposite was true in Czechoslovakia, with the dam acting as a significant economic asset for the nation.

This conflict coalesced with the rising polar symbolism of the dam in each nation. In Hungary, environmental and economic effects symbolically contributed to a wider anti-communist narrative, with the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam becoming synonymous with the Soviet's oppressive and economically stifling control of the state. In Czechoslovakia and later Slovakia, the dam became symbolic of the economic prosperity and social independence of Czechoslovakia, acting as an indicator of modernization and autonomy. These beliefs became entrenched within wider negotiations surrounding the separation of Czechoslovakia and Czechia, contributing to eventual Slovakian independence. Throughout the late 20th century, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam conflict has survived the fall of the Berlin wall, the end of communism in both states and eventual democratic and capitalist transition, the separation of

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and each state's induction into the European Union.<sup>69</sup> Throughout this period, the dam's relevance and symbolic nature held true, almost entirely unscathed, thoroughly contributing to the wider social and political transition of Hungary and Czechoslovakia throughout the late twentieth century.

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<sup>69</sup> Baranyai and Bartus, "Anatomy of a Deadlock," 39-49.

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# Subterranean Warfare: Tunnels, Soldiers, and Methods

*By Alex Kopetz*

In May of 1967, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Task Force 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division engaged in combat in the Duc Pho area of Vietnam. In the coastal plain, the division defeated a battalion of Viet Cong troops, and consequently, the Viet Cong decided to focus their efforts on an “antisweep” operation.<sup>1</sup> These operations usually consisted of Vietnamese soldiers sniping at U.S. soldiers from distances and then retreating, never engaging in open ground warfare. American efforts to split into smaller groups and pursue the soldiers were often in vain, and units were having no success in tracking down the guerillas. The big break came on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967, when “A” company captured a Vietnamese soldier.<sup>2</sup> He led them to a pile of leaves and pointed down towards them, and upon further investigation, the marines could see a tunnel trapdoor. In an area 250 by 250 meters, “A” company killed eight soldiers, captured one, and came across five weapons—the success of the tunnel clearing led to the observation and study of the tunnels. From there, strategies, methods, and warning signs were passed to areas all over Vietnam to help the Americans route and find Vietnamese tunnels and soldiers.

In the early years of this guerilla war style of fighting, the U.S. researchers studied the tunnels so that men in the field knew how to spot and uncover Viet Cong hiding spots. In their research, they found there to be three common types of tunnels: the “under bamboo hole,” the “beach hole,” and the “water entrance.”<sup>3</sup> The first type, “under bamboo hole,” was the hardest to spot as the entrances were well-camouflaged trapdoors covered with broken twigs, rocks, bamboo, and leaves. They got their name as the bamboo around the entrance was usually cut with a straight blade, leaving marks in the bamboo stalks around the hole and excess pieces on the ground. If not looking closely, a GI could easily step on or around these trapdoors without ever knowing it was there. The best way to find a tunnel of this type was by looking for breathing tubes.<sup>4</sup> These consisted of pieces of bamboo straw, each about three to four inches in diameter and camouflaged to look like cut pieces of bamboo or shortened stalks. The next type of hole was the “beach hole.” As denoted by the name, this tunnel was built under a layer of sand by the Viet Cong troops. The entrance to these tunnels was made with hard timbers rather than cut bamboo for reinforcement, as bamboo would be too weak to hold up the immense

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<sup>1</sup> “Hole Huntin’: Techniques to Detect, Neutralize and Destroy Enemy Tunnels, Vietnam, MACJ3-053,” 20 December 1968, Box 01, Folder 02, Sandra Marie Wittman Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Accessed 11 Apr 2024, <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=16920102001>, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 3.

amount of sand. This tunnel system could only be found in the air holes and ventilation shafts.<sup>5</sup> These, unlike the bamboo holes, did not need the bamboo to be hidden; they could utilize the huts and lean-tos on the beach to their full advantage. The Viet Cong went as far as to disguise their breathing holes as support beams in the huts along the beach. What made these tunnels so efficient was that they were not susceptible to bombing by the U.S. forces. With the loose layer of sand on top and the hard sandstone layer underneath, the top layer would simply scatter and reduce the force of the blast by the bombs, allowing the Vietnamese soldiers in the tunnels to be safe from aerial bombardments.<sup>6</sup> However, bombing could damage their breathing tubes and lead to a lack of oxygen in the tunnels, but this was usually repaired rapidly by the enemy soldiers. The final type of Vietnamese tunnel was the “water entrance” tunnel. These were much smaller and escaping Viet Cong soldiers typically used them as places of refuge.<sup>7</sup> Although smaller, these were equally as hard to detect as the other two types. The entrances to these tunnels would usually be near the bank of a small stream or river. The Vietnamese would slip into these entrances without a trace because of the camouflage of the reeds and mud along the bank. Some entrances were completely submerged underwater, with the entrance at an upward slope, preventing the water from entering the main tunnel network.<sup>8</sup> This was only the case if the growth on the side of the river was not tall or thick enough to hide a terranean tunnel entrance.

However, for tunnels to be studied, they needed to be found. Once there were tunnels found in the area, the GIs on the ground would receive word and the search would begin. The process involved an entire company patrolling a one-thousand-meter square area with no time constraint. The company was broken into two teams: search and security team. The search team was responsible for looking for tracks and signs that there were Vietnamese soldiers in the area. Signs they would look for were mostly clues such as worn bamboo (used for handholds), small worn footpaths, partially harvested bamboo clumps, and slight depressions in the earth.<sup>9</sup> Often, a lone Vietnamese person, warm food, or a smoking campfire would all be signs of a Viet Cong tunnel system nearby.<sup>10</sup> This tunnel system would usually be the only place of habitation for these people as small towns or villages may not be present for miles around the perimeter of the search. In deeper areas of the jungle, these signs would be a dead giveaway. Members of the search team were usually the company’s curious soldiers. They were urged by their commanding officers to follow their natural intuition and explore places off the trail. While the search team was looking for Viet Cong tunnels, the security team set up and guarded a perimeter of the search area until the Marines of the search team found the tunnel entrance. Once found, the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ben G. Crosby Collection (1936), “Finding Aid,” Ben G. Crosby Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Accessed 15 Apr 2024, <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=1936000000>.

security team would shrink the perimeter to better guard the members of the search team investigating the potential tunnel site. While the teams would occasionally rotate, most stuck to their assigned team. Morale dwindled among the searchers when long periods without finding a tunnel occurred, but when they were found, morale skyrocketed.<sup>11</sup>

In April of 1967, the army approved the use of scanners to find tunnels in certain areas. The sensors were designed to pick up on anomalies in the physicality of the environment. Any pings on the sensors would trigger a search of that area as the ping usually meant there was tunneling digging through the soil, which tripped the sensors as there was less soil mass.<sup>12</sup> The physical features of the Viet Cong tunnels kept evolving as the war went on, but much of the above-ground landscape changed. Beginning in 1961, C-12 pilots began to deforest large areas of Vietnamese jungle around suspected Communist hideouts.<sup>13</sup> The method of deforestation was a concentrated mixture of liquid herbicide in an area 100ft wide and 14 miles long sprayed from the wings of these planes. The main goal of these missions was to allow less jungle coverage for the enemy to move through, but secondarily, to allow the scanner technology to scan the jungle subterranean landscape better.<sup>14</sup> With the foliage cleared, the success of scanning attempts skyrocketed.

As the Marines got smarter, so did the Viet Cong. Viet Cong tunnels possessed a series of walls and turns to protect against U.S. attempts to dislodge them from the tunnel. Usually, the tunnels would have shrub escape exits located throughout many parts of the system. False termite mounds also led to hidden escapes or entrances, although the marines quickly discovered these.<sup>15</sup> The initial technique for clearing the Viet Cong from the tunnels was known as “Hole Reduction.”<sup>16</sup> The technique consisted of doing one of each of the following steps. First, the GIs would fire one to two M16 magazines into the wooden trapdoor, discouraging the Viet Cong from coming out of the hole holding hand grenades or explosives. Then, the Americans shouted in both Vietnamese and English to come out of the tunnel. If nobody emerged, the GIs would place explosives at the mouth of the tunnel and blow up it with the “Charlie” inside. As the tunnels evolved, walls near the entrance were added for additional blast protection, so grenades were nowhere near as effective. This new design led the U.S. to use tear gas and flamethrowers to root out stragglers within the tunnels.<sup>17</sup> However, resilient enemies still would resist these

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<sup>11</sup> “Staff Film Report 66-25A” Edited by Department of Defense, *Internet Archive*, 1 Jan. 1966, <https://archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.26977>.

<sup>12</sup> Ben G. Crosby Collection, Finding Aid.

<sup>13</sup> “Viet Defoliation Goes On Despite Criticism, 2520105027,” 4 January 1970, Box 01, Folder 05, Paul Cecil Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Accessed 16 Apr 2024. <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=2520105027>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> “Hole Huntin” Sandra Marie Wittman Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive.

<sup>17</sup> “Staff Film Report 66-25A,” Department of Defense.

attempts. So, to find the enemies in the tunnels, the soldiers created training to teach volunteer GIs about the methods of tunnel warfare.<sup>18</sup> They became known as Tunnel Rats.

The first initial entry into enemy tunnels occurred in 1966 when volunteer men went into shallow tunnels to clear them.<sup>19</sup> These men were ill-equipped and had little experience of underground structures. Even though the selection process became more streamlined, and the techniques of the Rats better as the war went on, from the years 1965-1972 the Tunnel Rats had a 33% mortality rate.<sup>20</sup> This was an unusually high rate, even for the Vietnam War, as the jobs required of them were high stakes every time. Physical requirements were in place for volunteers to volunteer to be Tunnel Rats as the Vietnamese people were much smaller than the average American. Therefore, only prospects with an average height of five foot five inches and a wiry build were selected.<sup>21</sup> Along with physical attributes, Tunnel Rats had to be mentally and physically strong. They had to be able to crawl for sometimes hours in confined, cramped, and dark spaces and avoid suffering from claustrophobia. Tunnel Rats needed lightning-quick reflexes and decision-making as turns could lead to enemy soldiers or animals such as scorpions or snakes. Food and other pleasurable activities such as drinking, smoking, eating candy, and chewing gum were universally avoided by Tunnel Rats as the smell of any of these on one's breath or body could mean death.<sup>22</sup>

The element of surprise was a strong factor in the Tunnel Rat's success, especially early in the war. From July 10th to August 10<sup>th</sup> of 1968, a recorded 386 enemy combatants were KIA, 77 became POW, and 158 weapons were seized.<sup>23</sup> Of these statistics, only 12 U.S. soldiers were lost in the tunnel hunting campaign during the time frame. After some time, U.S. front runners within the Tunnel Rat members began to innovate ways to streamline killing and combat within the tunnels, which decreased the amount of equipment brought into the tunnels. The Rats carried a pistol, flashlight, communications wire, compass, standard-issue bayonet, and sometimes a gas mask.<sup>24</sup> Because of the tunnels' size, the soldiers had to leave their flak jackets, vests, helmets, and water canteens. All these things added weight and size to the soldier as well as slowing their reaction time. The gas mask was different. When a soldier went down into the tunnel, they had to weigh the pros and cons of bringing their gas mask. Some advantages of the gas mask were that it muffled breathing sounds to the environment outside and prevented soldiers from being killed with the released gas. The cons of the gas mask were that it could not be worn all the time and could not be put on fast enough in an enclosed space in an emergency. It also significantly

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<sup>18</sup> "Hole Huntin'" Sandra Marie Wittman Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Jim Maret, "My Life as a Tunnel Rat," *New York Times*, 10 Feb. 2018, *NYTimes.com*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/09/opinion/vietnam-war-tunnel-rat.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Curran, "Tunnel Rats of the Vietnam War," *National Museum of the United States Army*, Accessed 16 Apr. 2024, <https://www.thenmusa.org/articles/tunnel-rats-of-the-vietnam-war/>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Hole Huntin'" Sandra Marie Wittman Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive.

<sup>24</sup> Curran, "Tunnel Rats of the Vietnam War."

impaired the Tunnel Rat's vision.<sup>25</sup> Yet, even with these options, most Rats opted to leave their masks with their guard on the surface.

As the war dragged on, the methods of tunnel clearing became much more efficient. Some tunnel rats switched to shotguns and, when out of shells, strictly used their knives. Others learned to shoot three bullets from their gun before reloading, as the Viet Cong learned to count the gunshots and would charge if the Rat was out of bullets. They also switched to red-lensed flashlights so their night vision would not be ruined whenever they had to make abrupt switches in light levels.<sup>26</sup> These methods became crucial to the abundant success the Tunnel Rats experienced, and because of that, they gained respect among members of the U.S. forces.

Tunnel Rats never worked alone, although, during the whole war, there were only 700 Tunnel Rats; they worked tirelessly with their teams to clear enemy tunnels.<sup>27</sup> In larger systems, sometimes two Tunnel Rats would go into the passageways, one in front and one behind. The Rat behind was responsible for using the communication wire and relaying information to the surface while the lead Rat cleared the way of enemies, traps, and animals.<sup>28</sup> Each tunnel varied in size and depth. When the Tunnel Rats entered the maze of passageways, they sometimes could not map the entirety of the system in a few hours. While clearing and mapping the tunnels, they would often come across enemy soldiers and officers. In these cases, hand-to-hand combat was the primary source of violence as the close quarters prevented either soldier from drawing weapons of any kind.

Throughout the Vietnam War, American GIs and the Tunnel Rats found and killed over 12,000 enemy soldiers, as reported by one Vietnamese Officer after the war.<sup>29</sup> Of the things the American GIs captured, most were food, weapons, intelligence, maps, and battle plans. This intel would ultimately lead the U.S. to many more hideouts in the area and surrounding regions. The tunnels and intelligence found led the U.S. to many major victories during the war, some of the most notable being the Tet Offensive and the U.S. counteroffensive.<sup>30</sup> These victories played a large part in the Vietnam War and turned the U.S. on a path where victory was obtainable. The study of the tunnels, men that fought in them, and the methods that were discovered played a significant part in the success of the U.S. and ARVN forces.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Hole Huntin'" Sandra Marie Wittman Collection, Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Gerner, "Life of a Tunnel Rat: Fighting Fear in 'Nam," *Chicago Tribune*, June 28, 1985, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1985-06-28-8502110841-story.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Curran, "Tunnel Rats of the Vietnam War," 1.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

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## **Section Four: Faith, Fealty, and Violence**

# Beyond the Mouth of the Victor: A Nuanced Review of Colonial Religious Conversion in the Spanish Yucatan

*By Tylor Serpico*

## Introduction

In the year 1562, Mayan populations of the Yucatan Peninsula found themselves a mere 60 years removed from their first encounters with ships filled with pale, <sup>1</sup> In this time, they had seen the presence of these foreigners steadily increase in the region, learning of their military proficiency as they came to depose the rulers of their own communities and those who surrounded them. With this change in leadership also came the introduction of a new religious framework carried through the envoy of Franciscan Catholic missionaries. In this year though, the means through which the Maya were coerced to abandon their polytheist and animist beliefs in favor of this new ideology came to drastically intensify with the construction of the Inquisition of Mani by then Friar Diego de Landa.

Under this ad hoc institution came the widespread jailing and torture of local populations as they were accused of idolatry and diabolism for nothing more than simply practicing their longstanding ancestral beliefs. With these trials came widespread instances of torture through exceptionally cruel methods, the deaths of an unknown hundreds of Mayan men, women, and children, and the destruction of invaluable sources of sacred scripture and precontact history.<sup>2</sup> One can imagine the sentiments of fear and confusion felt among these populations as they were punished for adherence to a worldview that had pervasively shaped their lives and being for centuries prior to the arrival of these new conquerors.

Historical moments such as this display how the navigation of ideological difference between communities of varied cultures is a foundational yet complex component of human interaction, and in turn the larger historical record that works to describe it. Tales of initial convergences between distinct populations often include differences in more commonly variable ways such as forms of governance and social organization. That said, in some cases, this extends to larger ideas more central to individual being, such as conceptualizations of the world and one's ascribed place or role within it. With this tendency for variance between cultures, the conceptual examination of these moments allows us, as observers of the past, to propose questions that generate the potential for a more developed understanding of the human experience and modes of interaction. These pursuits include exploring how the construction of a

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Sharer and Loa P. Traxler, *The Ancient Maya*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Illustrated, (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 758.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Restall, Amara Solari, John F. Chuckyiak, and Tracy Arden, "Introduction: The Landa Conundrum," in *The Friar and the Maya: Diego de Landa and the Account of the Things of Yucatan* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2023), 3-4.

sense of drastic distinction in ideology and culture between populations can come to be in the first place, and the practical effects these stances have on cross-cultural relations both throughout history and into the modern day. When moving to examine specific historical moments where contact of this sort occurs, these questions further deepen to include how individuals participating in these exchanges conceptualize, respond to, and interact with populations who because of their varied beliefs, they chose to characterize as distinct from their own.

The consideration of these ideas becomes of necessity in the generation of accurate and informed histories of periods of cultural domination and imposition, in particular as it exposes the potent effects culturally informed biases hold on social, political, and economic relations. These often carry with them influence upon the construction of systems of power - and often oppression or suppression - put in place to distinguish groups labeled as varied from one another upon their attempted coexistence. On the macro level, this opens the door to the application of potential theoretical constructions that allow the posing of explanations as to why certain trends are seen across these exchanges historically. This most characteristically includes the placing of cultures as hierarchically less developed, civilized, or right in relation to one's own, and in turn a desire for their erasure or reformation in pursuit of homogenization toward a purported ideal. Overall, the acknowledgement and review of these factors becomes of key importance in our scholarly examinations of the past as the generation of historical narratives, and our perspectives of those populations included within them are by no means a passive or objective endeavor. When considering this reality in relation to instances of cultural contact where clear dynamics of power are at play, such as those between the colonizer and the colonized, the generation of historical record is often headed by those in assumed positions of authority and control. Because of this, one must be careful to conduct scholarly review of the past in a way that is free of traces of this historically pervasive partisanship, a factor often only perpetuated by our own socializations and misinformed common conceptions in the modern day as well.

A historical theatre that demonstrates the value of a more calculated review of the injection of socialized biases into systems that govern instances of cross-cultural contact is the "re-linking" of the Eastern and Western hemispheres in the late 15th century. Columbus' discovery of the "New World" reignited an exchange of individuals and ideology that is thought to have ended roughly thirteen thousand years earlier with the submergence of the Bearing Sea Land Bridge. In the interim, these areas, and the massive populations which inhabited them, saw thousands of years of independent development in complete isolation from one another. This resulted in a convergence of societies with wholly different spiritual frameworks from one another, as Catholic Spaniards spread to conquer vast portions of Latin American territories historically occupied by polytheistic and animist societies. For this examination, I will specifically direct my focus toward colonial interactions between Spanish conquistadors and clergy and the predominantly Mayan populations of the Yucatan Peninsula of what is now Southern Mexico, a period of interaction and cohabitation that ranges from their first contact in 1502 to the region's independence from Spain in 1821. This example proves especially valuable,

as it shows not only the processes by which cross-cultural biases are formed, but their larger implications as these modes of distinction were utilized to justify the cultural reformation of native populations. With the accounts of these Spanish colonizers largely informing our understandings of Indigenous societies in the modern day, we are also provided a window through which to interrogate how our views of past populations are molded by the biases of those whose opinions form their foundation.

By developing a greater understanding of the true nature of the cultural blending that occurred during this historic interaction, a more accurate view can be had of this multifaceted ideological exchange, and the actions and interpretations of populations on either side of it. This will be done by first exploring the formation of Spanish conceptions of native populations through primary source accounts of ecclesiastical officials and missionaries who acted as the driving force of the religious conversion and larger sociocultural transformation of the Maya. Examination of these records provides insight into why Spanish settler colonialists' geographic and ideological distance from these Indigenous groups led to the formation of generally misguided notions of their being, rooted in a lack of cultural relativism. In seeking to offer a balanced account of both sides of this interaction, I will also explore a series of contemporary religious texts produced by Mayan populations. These sources work to detail the results of their attempted forced conversion as they were made to interpret and implement Christian doctrine into their existing worldview. By paying mind to these often-neglected sources, an increased recognition can be had of the continued existence and resilience of these Indigenous communities through framing a more accurate history of their development rooted in fact rather than Eurocentric biases alone.

With this, we come to recognize the extent to which Spanish views of Indigenous populations of Latin America still hold influence into the modern day. These are seen in the persistence of ideas built on a notion of their savagery and need for wholesale cultural erasure toward the moral goal of reformation in the form of the Spanish ideal. As was stated in the memoir of Bernal Diaz de Castillo, a member of Hernan Cortes' expedition to conquer the Mexica Empire, Spaniards framed their occupation of these peoples as a larger mission to "serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness" showing their belief that this conquest was to the ultimate benefit of indigenous populations.<sup>3</sup> With a more focused view of this exchange, an accurate accounting can be had of the extent to which socialized biases shaped the actions and interpretations of populations on both sides. By contrasting this reality to more general histories of this period, wholly abandoned or erased.

There exists a longstanding and robust discourse of scholarly review that seeks to analyze interactions between Iberian colonial authorities and their indigenous Latin American subjects. Within this larger area of study, a series of more recent landmark sources have placed their focus

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<sup>3</sup> Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz Del Castillo*, Vol 2. Translated by John Ingram Lockhart (Project Gutenberg, 2010).

particularly on attempted religious and ideological conversion, the barriers which arise in this process, and its eventual results. In exploring the complexity of this exchange, those which most closely relate to my own examination often do this by drawing upon the role that barriers of language and cultural distance played in this process. A source of note for the range of cultural encounters it covers, both over time and across multiple Latin American regions and populations, is *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*. Dr. David Tavárez, a linguistic anthropologist specializing in Latin American history edited this collected volume of essays published in 2017. By placing its focus on the ultimate results of these ideological exchanges, the work poses a more detailed examination of trends which exist across them such as frequent mistranslation and the construction of a false sense of relation between ideas of distinct origin on both sides. In doing this, Tavarez and his co-authors show that in many cases, religions of Indigenous origin would ultimately persist despite their persecution and attempted eradication by their colonial occupiers.<sup>4</sup> As a result, this work makes clear the complexity of ideological exchange in instances of forced cross-cultural conversion. Tavarez and his contributors demonstrate that this topic cannot be easily summarized by viewing accounts based on Spanish sources alone and proposing specific theoretical reasons as to why exchanges tended to occur in this way.

Other authors have conducted more narrow examinations of this sort by placing their focus on the change over time that occurred among a single Indigenous population of this period. Famous among them is the 2010 work *Converting the Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, by professor of anthropology Dr. William F. Hanks. In this work, Hanks explores the means through which processes of religious, cultural, and spatial conversion of the Mayan landscape were conducted and their results. In doing so, Hanks works to construct a historical narrative that makes reference to key figures in this process while focusing on difficulties seen in attempts to accurately convey the intended meaning of religious ideology across barriers of language.<sup>5</sup> My own study will seek to further expand upon this existing literature by synthesizing the results detailed in the religious texts of both the Spanish and the Maya in a succinct way. I will specifically do this to highlight the nature of their often-neglected complexity, and to apply existing theoretical frameworks on the structure of worldview to explain why this exchange played out as it did. With this in mind, I hope to progress the wider applicability that review of this sort has historically beyond this individual exchange. This will be done by paying mind to progressing the notion that the continued influence of indigenous ideas and ideology among their practitioners is a line of evidence that combats a sense of their complete erasure upon their conquest. By realizing the persistence of Mayan communities and their cultural influences into the modern day, I seek to the means through which these past exchanges are historically categorized and viewed in our scholarship.

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<sup>4</sup> David Tavárez, ed. *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, Illustrated, *The Anthropology of Christianity*, 6 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

## Setting the Scene Prior to Contact

In seeking to dissect the nature of this exchange, important consideration must be made to review the circumstances that placed these populations in their respective positions prior to their contact. With regard for this context, a clearer view can be had of how factors such as demographics, relative power, and cultural values shaped the specific motivations that each side carried into this interaction. A major aim of the Spanish was to progress a reformation of religious and social structure of native populations across Latin America. These desires were, in many ways, informed by hundreds of years of political and economic engagements that had already occurred within the Iberian Peninsula and the greater Mediterranean region. In January of 1492, only seven months before Columbus' first voyage sponsored by the Spanish crown, the over 700-year struggle between Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula and their Muslim adversaries concluded. This campaign known as the "*Reconquista*" brought with it a larger state-sponsored intolerance for non-Christian populations of Muslims and Jews when then King Ferdinand II ordered their expulsion in 1502.<sup>6</sup>

General attitudes of ethnoreligious intolerance extended beyond the space of local cohabitation alone, and in the process of Spanish conquest of the Yucatan are Papal Edicts relating to Catholic relations with Jews and Muslims from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were sweeping orders declared by the Pope himself, meant to guide the actions of all practitioners of the Catholic faith. Having a close relationship to the Vatican as a Christian monarchy, these edicts held strong influence over the actions of the Spanish crown toward religiously diverse populations they encountered upon their expansion.

A striking example of this is the Papal Bull *Dum Diversas*, authored by Pope Nicholas V in 1452. This edict was issued to inform Portuguese relations with North African populations adjacent to their expanding colonial holdings in the region. This decree authorized the subjugation, conquest, and enslavement of those populations, State.<sup>7</sup> Policies like *Dum Diversas* underscore the extent to which ethnoreligious variation came to be viewed as a characteristically distinguishing factor between populations in the Iberian worldview, and its implications. These orders enabled the projection of perceived similarity to the idealized and centralized authority and culture of contemporary Catholic European monarchies. This sense of bias toward the hierarchal value placed on Christian states was further cemented by the implications of their own relative success – raising questions as to why, , or been enabled to carry out colonial expansion in the first place. Outside of the bounds of the Spanish kingdom itself, this sense of normalized religious intolerance was further reinforced by a culture of crusading in the name of the

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<sup>6</sup> Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 10th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2018), 23-25, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Francis G. Davenport, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies*, (Washington D.C: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917), 12.

expansion of Christendom. Urged by Papal authorities, powers across the whole of western Europe began to mount and fund armed expeditions to reclaim land of religious significance in the Eastern Mediterranean beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century with the First crusade. These factors together worked to guide the attitudes and perceived responsibilities of Spanish colonizers in interactions with the animist and polytheistic Indigenous populations of Latin America. Not only was religious variation viewed as intolerable, but Spanish authorities felt they were morally obligated to play a role in the reformation and correction of these spiritually deviant populations for their own benefit.

In setting this scene, attention must also be paid to exploring the state of pre-contact Mayan populations of the Yucatan. Though it falls outside the scope of this paper to provide a complete review of precontact Mayan populations that is warranted in seeking to understand their complex religious and social structure, when reviewing their interactions with Spanish colonizers, it is a disservice to not pay some mind to their relative demographic collapse prior to this interaction. Mayan civilization saw a period of relative decline with the end of what has been labeled as the “late-classic” period from 600-800 CE that carried through to when they were first encountered by Spanish explorers in 1502. Though these chronologic labels carry a sense of inherent bias in their ascribing of relative value, it is true that over this time Mayan populations in lowland areas were thought to have decreased by up to 80% in size prior to the arrival of the Spanish. The reasons for this are explored in the seminal article “On the Maya Collapse,”<sup>8</sup>

These Mayan-specific factors were further exacerbated by the influence of biological variables, including the deadly and sweeping effects of newly introduced European diseases to Indigenous populations. Historian Shawn Miller offers statistical insight into the scale of this, stating that “in the century after 1492, some 50 million Indians had vanished, more than 90% of America’s once vigorous populations,” he in large part relates to the effects of disease.<sup>9</sup> The Maya were not immune to this, seeing further reductions in population from foreign diseases even prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the Yucatan Peninsula. Taking note of these factors helps to contextualize the nature of conquest and reformation that would follow, with these populations being unable to offer a robust resistance to the rapidly surging spread of Spanish expansionism in the region.

### **Theoretical Explanations for and Long-Term Impacts of *Reducción***

The historically informed motivation of the Spanish to classify and then assign a sense of right or wrongness to those populations or cultures who varied from their own was carried into their conquest of Indigenous populations across Latin America, including those of the Yucatan

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<sup>8</sup> Robert S. Stanley, Thomas W. Killion, and Mark T. Lycett, “On the Maya Collapse.” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 42, no. 2 (1986), 123–159.

<sup>9</sup> Shawn William Miller, *An Environmental History of Latin America, New Approaches to the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50.

Peninsula. This often resulted in the construction of a sense of distance between these groups and their conquerors, something based on a willingness to place them into a binary of being either acceptable or in need of reformation to align with the Spanish ideal. Because of this perceived sense of drastic variation in their modes of spirituality, the religions and cultures of Indigenous societies tended to fall into the latter category exclusively. Mayan populations found themselves subject to similar assessment upon their contact with the Spanish, with a systematic characterization and associated analysis of value being applied to both their individual action and larger worldviews by members of the Spanish clergy. The judgments that ultimately resulted would go on to play an important role in the Spaniards' interpretation of the meaning of these new ideologies in regard to their own, and their navigation of the ways in which they would choose to relate to them moving forward.

The results of these examinations, and the notably impactful sense of bias clearly present within them, are conveyed in primary source materials, especially in the recordings of Spanish monastic authorities. Rather than being viewed objectively for what they were wholly different from their own, for example, are one of many works coming from figures of religious authority that sought to record the supposed idolatry that remained among Indigenous populations even after initial attempts toward their conversion were underway. In 1629 he summarized the general attitudes held by the Spaniards toward native religions when he wrote, "It is established and rooted among these miserable people that the words of their invocations, incantations, curses, and protestations - and all other words that the Devil taught their ancestors have an infallible affect according to their meaning," later adding that because of this "all the set invocations and incantations carry at least an implicit pact with the Devil."<sup>10</sup>

The drawing of such false equivalencies to characterize their meaning, something that will be explored in greater detail later in this essay, played a particularly important role in the larger process of devaluing the cultural and religious histories of Mayan society in the eyes of their Spanish occupiers. These attitudes would go on to inform and justify the conceptualization and implementation of a system of attempted holistic reformation of Indigenous populations known as *reducción*. Under the guise of this framework, both the monastic and secular arms of the Spanish colonial mission sought not only to reform Indigenous society, religion, and culture to better align with the Spanish ideal – but to reshape or eliminate existing traces of its pre-contact existence as a whole.

Before further exploring the multifaceted features of this system or its immediate and more long-term historical effects, it is first important to understand why such biased conceptualizations of Indigenous populations and their religious practices became the norm in the first place. With this, we can also trace the practical effects of these trends as ideas of distinction and the related sense of relative superiority they cultivated served as justification for

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<sup>10</sup> Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, *Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions That Today Live among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629*, Edited by Ross Hassig, Translated by James Richard Andrews (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 73.

Spanish efforts to culturally reform native populations on the grounds of it being their moral duty. To do this, I will offer an overview of structuralist theories on the generation and distinguishing of meaning as it relates to both personal identity and one's larger worldview. Beyond the self and one's own culture, these ideas hold the potential to shed light on important considerations regarding the conceptualization, categorization, and attempted blending of foreign ideology or cultures between groups of distinct origin.

Structuralism as a theory utilized in the field of cultural anthropology was largely pioneered by ethnologist and anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss in the 1940s. These theories posit that across all existent human cultures, there are rules that structurally govern the characterization of meaning assigned to all things. These processes are informed by an ability to place ideas, individuals, or social systems into what he labeled "systems of binary oppositions." These arbitrarily formed and culturally variable conceptual categories group not only on what falls within them in regard to a perceived sense of relation, but also what is viewed as opposed to them based on a perceived sense of distance.<sup>11</sup> A simple thought experiment that helps to illustrate this idea that the assignment of meaning is based on a sense of relation is the fact that it is nearly impossible to define something, or understand its context without relating it to, or distancing it from something else for which a definition or general attitude is already had. These constructed categories are carried into the process of one's socialization within a given culture as they come to conceptualize the world through their own culturally informed lens, and their interpretation of the lenses held by others. This extends to affect important notions of the self, including an individual's place or purpose within their larger society or environment, and in deciding how the worldview of others is related to or distant from their own.

The application of structuralist thought is particularly apparent in the examination of practical systems that serve functional purposes. This includes language as a means of communication, and religion to conceptualize one's place within the physical and spiritual world, which in turn, works to ground their ideas of what constitutes morally acceptable action. These ideas of relation and distinction also then become the basis from which individuals engage and interact with cultures or groups they view as being distinct from their own. With this, the ability to interpret and generate meaning inherently relies on being able to assess and place ideas newly presented to them into their preexisting systems of categorization. In many cases, this leads to a biased misinterpretation of their significance. This is because assessments of foreign ideas are rooted in the personal biases of the observer rather than being understood on their own terms.

Regarding language, this idea is further expanded upon in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, where vocabulary and the nuances of grammatical structure are framed as an applied summation of these systems of categorization, making language<sup>12</sup> In this way, language is seen to play a role of particular importance in communicating religious ideas, as they are often something

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<sup>11</sup> Rachel Briggs and Janelle Meyer, "Structuralism." The University of Alabama Department of Anthropology, n.d.

<sup>12</sup> Ana Deumert, "Language, Culture, and Society," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics*, edited by Keith Allan, First, 655–74, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 663–665.

which is not directly interacted with in a physical way as practitioners seek to engage with and share their beliefs. Because of this, it is necessary religious ideas be conveyed and understood through some form of abstraction via written or verbal communication that employs the use of language. Keeping their already inherently complex nature in mind, this leads to increased difficulty in conveying these ideas in a way that retains the whole of their initial meaning and implication between groups whose language and systems of conception are drastically varied from one another. This also warrants additional consideration in the processes of translation on either side of this exchange, as their “foundational socializations” are central in their own ability to both convey and interpret meaning.<sup>13</sup> Knowing this, it becomes clear that those who carried out translations between the Spanish and the Maya were not only bounded by their own socializations and worldview, but also their own personal associations and conceptualizations of ideas within them as well.

At large, these factors work in conjunction to progress that individuals of different languages and socializations experience and interpret the world in distinctly different ways dependent on their worldview. This notion connects to the larger idea of the ontological turn within the humanities, which posits that these differences of socialization, and in turn categorization, in the generation of meaning are so pervasive that distinct cultures not only have different understandings of the same world – but ultimately inhabit conceptually different worlds altogether. Knowing the implications of these theories, it is not hard to understand their connection to instances of contact and cultural assessment carried out by the Spanish toward their Mayan counterparts and vice versa. This is not to mention the additional difficulties that arose in attempts at wholesale cultural reformation that would follow, as the Maya were pressured to incorporate new forms of being into their lives and daily action. Not only did the Spanish seek to relay their own religious ideas to Mayan populations across a cultural divide, but also through a language barrier. This additional factor required the translation of terms in a way that wholly conveyed their intended meaning, requiring their removal from associations to preexisting Mayan ideology and worldview held by their audience.

With this theoretical framework in mind, let us now attempt to succinctly unpack the path taken by the Spaniards as they assessed Mayan populations upon their initial contact, and the effects these views had on the subsequent action taken in their occupation of the region. The motivations of the Spanish in this conquest went beyond the general sense of bias stemming from national pride that tends to be present in all societies, a sort of manufactured right to expand rooted in favorable views of the self. Their position and attitudes were further boosted by their involvement in previous wars of religious reconquest, which firmly positioned them to view themselves as being just and moral actors on a mission of expansion and Christianization supported by the Catholic papacy and the larger will of God. Upon their initial contact with Indigenous populations on the Mexican mainland, including the Maya, the Spanish are then

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<sup>13</sup> Kirsten Malmkjær, “Translation: The Intertranslatability of Languages; Translation and Language Teaching,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 691- 693, 699.

forced to dissect and interpret the structure, meaning, and significance of Indigenous religion and social order. As they do this, their assessments and conclusions are rooted in their own socially and culturally informed systems of categorization including language and religion that play a fundamental role in shaping their systems of generating meaning. With Maya societies being viewed as wholly distinct from their own because of their technological, ideological, and spiritual distance from Catholic Iberia, they are thus assigned as being the opposite of the way in which the Spanish view themselves, and thus a group which is holistically inferior and pervasively tainted by sin and satanic influence.

The validity of approaching this historical moment with a structuralist framework in mind is displayed when exploring the trend of Spanish monastic officials falsely equating the meaning of Mayan ritual practices to those of their own religion. This was most commonly done by manufacturing a sense of relation between native ceremonies and icons of worship to Catholic sacraments and symbols. One such account that is especially notable comes from Friar Diego de Landa in his widely studied work *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* from about 1566. Landa, a Franciscan priest, plays both an important role in the recording of pre-contact Mayan history and Spanish attempts toward their religious transformation. Labelled as a sort of early ethnographer for his studies ritual practices, Landa's accounts work to inform our knowledge of the Mayan culture as a whole. This role is largely overshadowed by his general infamy gained from leading an inquisition against supposed heretical behavior, resulting in the

Though he was a controversial figure in his time, for his perceived successes Landa would eventually be appointed to Bishop and acting head of the Archdiocese of the Yucatan by King Philip the II of Spain in 1571. Despite his clear willingness to characterize Mayan behavior as misguided and in need of reform, he also wrote with a sort of approving interest of Mayan birthing rituals and associated rites of passage.<sup>14</sup> This association of Mayan and Catholic ritual is then further reinforced by Landa's description of other aspects of these ceremonies. These include the role of the leader of these rituals, who he equates to a priest, the use of liquid for anointment,

Another Franciscan clergyman, Francisco Hernandez, extends this trend of general mischaracterization of Mayan practices beyond the space of ritual alone. While in service as a missionary to rural Mayan populations of Cozumel, he recorded a surprising number of perceived similarities between the Mayan religions he encountered and his own Catholic faith in his work "Of the Religious Beliefs of the Indians of the Yucatan in 1545," In this report, he conveys information about local ritual learned from the chiefs or "caçiques" of the Maya he encountered, mentioning their apparent praising of a God who endowed a virgin mother with his son, who would go on to die for the sins of the many eventually rise again from the dead. In addition it compelled him to write, "it would seem that this part of the land had been (long ago)

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<sup>14</sup> Diego de Landa, *Yucatán Before and After the Conquest: Relación de Las Cosas de Yucatán*, Translated by William Gates (New York: Dover Publications, 2012), 71-75.

informed about our Holy Faith, for in no other part of the Indies have we ever found such news...it is quite certain that the country and kingdom of Yucatan give us more special and singular cases to ponder over.”<sup>15</sup> Despite what these accounts may convey, short of divine intervention, these populations could not have had any encounter or employ religious practices which were meant to embody or emulate Christian beliefs prior to the arrival of the Europeans. This inability to approach the Mayan religion separated from their own beliefs would play a key role in resulting Spanish of Mayan society’s inferior or misguided nature relative to their own,

A first-hand view into the nuances of the resulting processes of *reducción* are also on display in the writings of Landa, where he outlines some, but not all, of its key components and desired outcomes. The first and most central of these was the spatial and cultural reformation of the Mayan landscape through the physical destruction and replacement of its idols and monuments with those of their Spanish occupiers. A window is provided into this practice when Landa recounts the actions taken by conquistador Hernan Cortes upon his arrival to the Yucatan Island of Cozumel in 1519. He wrote, “he set a banner of white and blue in honor of Our Lady, whose image, together with the cross, he always placed wherever he destroyed idols.”<sup>16</sup> Processes of this nature were employed as common practice moving forward, with spatial transformation in some cases being taken literally as Mayan temples were physically deconstructed, with the remaining stones used to erect Catholic churches in their footprint. With this process of replacement and reformation underway, the Spanish then sought to root out remaining traces of cultural and religious histories that existed prior to their arrival.

Moving beyond the space of reinstruction alone, the depth at which these ethnocentric judgements of Indigenous cultures permeated into Spanish action is shown in their attempted erasure of sources of Mayan history. It was not enough to attempt to correct the action of these populations to bring them closer to the Spanish ideal, and all traces of their precontact existence should be removed because of their supposed fallacious nature. In his work *Relación de Las Cosas de Yucatán*, Landa describes the discovery of sacred indigenous texts that detailed Mayan systems of time keeping and ritual obligation. Through his interpretation of the works, he comes to understand their importance to the recording of Mayan myth and historical records. Of their nature, he writes “we found a great number of books in these letters, and since they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain.”<sup>17</sup>

With the means to physically connect to their culture and religion not only replaced, but erased, Landa then describes how monastic authorities carried this sentiment to the human level as well. This was done through the multigenerational replacement of Mayan customs with

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<sup>15</sup> Francisco Hernandez, “Of the Religious Beliefs of the Indians of Yucatan in 1545,” in *Reports on the Maya Indians of Yucatan*, edited by Marshall H. Saville, (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1921), 210-215.

<sup>16</sup> Landa, *Yucatán Before and After the Conquest*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Landa, *Yucatán Before and After the Conquest*, 127.

Spanish Catholic instruction aimed at the children of leading figures in Mayan communities. He explains how these children were commonly removed from their homes by force for education in catechism, often grooming them to be agents in weeding out and reporting supposed idolatry from within their own families and larger communities.<sup>18</sup> This comprehensive desire to conceptualize and employ such calculated efforts to reform the Mayan sociocultural landscape represents the immediate impacts that biases in interpreting worldview can have on the ground level. Without removing themselves from the bounds of their own values and socializations when assessing these Mayan cultures, the Spanish used a misplaced sense of cultural superiority to enact change that carried often grave and irreversible consequences.

This instance of cultural contact and forced ideological transformation has also produced effects that extend beyond the time of their occurrence. With the Spanish placed in a position of authority as the acting metropole, imbalances of power and biased notions of Mayan societies are also carried into the construction of general historical narratives and common misconceptions that describe these populations. At present, the common consciousness of the Western world on Mayan history and culture is rife with Eurocentric judgments that can be traced back to their biased assessment by the Spanish. These often paint a view of the Maya as a savage people governed by a religion rooted in animalistic bloodlust, and with an overt focus on aspects of their culture that have since been exoticized, including their ritual calendar and the practice of human sacrifice. Such developments have shifted attention away from aspects of Mayan culture, and Latin American Indigenous populations that more accurately speak to their development and complexity. These include but are not limited to: technologically advanced infrastructure, the ability to construct cities and empires that surpassed their contemporary European powers in both size and population, and their formation of theocracies ultimately not dissimilar from their Catholic.<sup>19</sup> Given the nature of the forms of cultural reformation and erasure carried out by the Spanish, our most accessible accounts of these populations are isolated to the mouth of the victor alone, which as an extension progresses their relative inferiority and seeds notions of their complete erasure. As such a biased view of these cultures has, in many ways become the norm, it becomes crucial to examine what remains of the historical record with a critical lens that seeks to highlight the moral implications of the act of *reducción* and give voice to those marginalized groups it targeted by reviewing materials of which they are the source. Akin to Dr. Gordon Wright's idea of conducting historical study as a "moral science," a certain responsibility falls upon us as scholars in the present to seek to transcend these manufactured biases by progressing an account of the past imbued with analysis of the morality of actions carried out by past populations, alone.<sup>20</sup> With this, a more accurate view can be had into the Mayan experience, their resiliency, and ultimate persistence of their culture into the modern day.

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<sup>18</sup> Landa, *Yucatán Before and After the Conquest*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, *An Environmental History of Latin America*, 10, 21, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Gordon Wright, "History as a Moral Science," *The American Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (February 1976): 1–11.

### **(Mis)interpreting the Sacred: Realized Outcomes of Imposing Spiritual Beliefs Across Barriers of Language and Worldview**

When shifting to review sources of Maya origin, the preservation of their religion and worldview despite its persecution and general neglect in modern histories is seen. I hypothesize this is at least partially because of conclusions drawn from framing the outcomes of this interaction through the lens of structuralism. With this framework in mind, it must be realized that like the Spanish, whose own biases permeated into their view of Mayan religion and culture, that ritual and doctrine they forced upon Mayan populations would similarly be absorbed, applied, and understood through the lens of their existing worldview and culture. Because of this, a sweeping sense of ideological transformation that saw the abandonment of traditional Maya cosmology was not the ultimate result of these exchanges. Rather than its wholesale replacement by Spanish teachings and influences, as colonial authorities may have hoped, what occurred is better described as a creolizing of religions and worldviews. This is because Mayan populations interpreted and applied these new ideas in the only way they knew how, by interpreting them in relation to their own preexisting beliefs and conceptions of reality.

I offer the label of a creolized religion from this process to the formation of a creole language in the field of linguistics. A creole is a form of stable hybridized language that develops from the exposure of speakers of different languages to the vocabulary and grammatical structures of one another. The result is the simplifying and mixing of their native languages into an entirely new form of communication labeled as a pidgin. This new form of communication then continues to expand and elaborate into its own fully-fledged language, which eventually becomes the native tongue of a new generation of speakers with time.<sup>21</sup> In a similar way, when the two distinct ideologies of Spanish Catholicism and Mayan animism forcefully encountered one another, Mayans sought ways to incorporate Catholic tradition and practice into their existing forms of worship. With this, they adhered to the larger general framing of their Indigenous religions while injecting myth, doctrine, and rituals drawn from Spanish Catholicism into their existing religion. This process, over time, developed to create what Louise M. Burkhart refers to as “distinctly nativized Christianities,” which eventually became the accepted religions of new generations of increasingly blended native populations with time.<sup>22</sup> In scholarship examining the persistence of these religions, they are often referred to as Mayan or Latin American Christianity as a means to take note of this regional or cultural influence that only grew as the efforts of Catholic missionaries faltered over time. Examples of this blending of ideology that altered and reshaped Mayan religion and culture through the infusing of Christian doctrine are on display in the books of the *Chilam Balam*. These are a series of religious texts that contain both historical accounts and prophecy from Mayan priests known as *chilam*, who specialized in calendrical and astrological timekeeping systems. They were written based upon

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<sup>21</sup> Jeff Siegel, “Pidgins and Creoles,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, 2nd ed., 382–297, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Louise M. Burkhart, “Introduction.” in *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*. 5.

the teachings of a specific *chilam* also Chilam Balam, is said to have occupied the city of Chumayel.<sup>23</sup>

These texts were produced in alphabetic Mayan script from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries for use by Indigenous communities, of which nine are known to remain in existence. Outside of this, little is generally known about their origin in terms of the specific date of their initial creation or their original authors, with these details often being deferred to when a compiled accounting of them was discovered, where this occurred, and by whom this process was carried out. This general air of secrecy was due to their aforementioned book burnings carried out by Deigo de Landa in 1562, a precedent of repression and destruction of native texts was set that makes these some of the few examples of primary source knowledge remaining with information of religious significance derived from Mayan and mestizo authors of the time. Outside of offering information about precontact Maya ritual and tradition, these texts also show the pervasive injection of catholic influences into religious practices during the initial generations after Spanish arrival.

The *Chilam Balam De Nah*, for example, presents the viewer with an interesting mixture of cosmologies by displaying a blended Mayan-Catholic ritual calendar.<sup>24</sup> This includes monthly charts that present days listed on the Julian calendrical system and highlights their dedication to the veneration of certain Catholic saints. On this same page, another column next to this shows these days alignment with Mayan day names based on their ritual cosmology. Later in the text, the source also outlines European astrological signs, and their overlap with Mayan seasonal ritual obligations. With this, they denote when planting and harvesting is to be made to ensure agricultural success in the form of purging or bloodletting. The inclusion of a mixing of ideologies in this form speaks to the practical nature in which these beliefs became mutually valued in the eyes of the Maya. This illustrates the degree to which these previously distinct ideological systems were carried out in conjunction with one another rather than being thought of as mutually exclusive.

This is expanded upon further in one of the most potent pieces of evidence detailing the full creolization of this new blended religion in the *Chilam Balam De Chumayel*. In this text, compiled by a mestizo named Don Juan Jose Hoil in 1782, the author offers a creation myth that implants the birth of the Christian “God the Father” as one of many Gods within the larger Mayan polytheist mythos.<sup>25</sup> The source also includes reflections of Mayan religious leaders on the state of religious blending seen among their practitioners. Rather than advocating for a pure precontact form of Mayan religion, the author routinely levels criticisms towards those among them who reject the place of Christian principles and icons within this new hybridized

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<sup>23</sup> Sam Krieg and Betsy Haggerty Gram, “Ancient and Living Maya in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Archaeological Discovery, Literary Voice, and Political Struggle,” (University of North Carolina Libraries).

<sup>24</sup> “Chilam Balam de Nah,” 1857. Special Collections - Edward E. Ayer Collection. Newberry Library.

<sup>25</sup> Don Juan Josef Hoil, *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, Translated by Ralph L. Roys, New, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933), 17-21, 49-58.

worldview. This extent of this is shown in his labeling of these ‘purists’ as being steeped in “the old ways of sin” and in turn acting as cause of suffering for others.<sup>26</sup> This acceptance of elements of Catholic doctrine into Mayan religion, and the authors own notable labelling of this new form of worship as distinctly removed from those of the precontact faith work to illustrate the tendency for ideological transition and evolution. From this, we can see the role that this distinctly blended religion, far removed from the complete erasure of original pre-contact doctrine, came to have in the Mayan space.

A more nuanced review of Mayan sources, such as these, shows that ideological transformation of these groups by the Spanish is not an exchange than can be easily summarized as complete cultural disappearance. Though it is hard to downplay the important elements of pre-Columbian Mayan history that were lost in the processes of *reducción*, or the larger impacts this system has had on the image of the Mayan people in the modern day, we must note the means through which these cultures persisted nonetheless. These modern impacts notably include the creation of distance between those of indigenous ancestry who advocate for a willingness to accept some level of blending with Spanish Catholic influence, and those who prefer to wholly reject or distance themselves from it. Such distinctions can create pressure for individuals to distance themselves from their ancestral beliefs on either side of this debate, as they work to unpack the origins of their religious practices and the implications of their current cultural engagements. The loss of culturally significant artifacts in the form of sacred texts, idols, and other religious iconography seen in this exchange also hold damaging long term effects as well. Outside of reducing our ability as outside observers researching these populations, this deficit more importantly limits the ability of descendants of Mayan populations affected by the processes of *reducción* to access their own precontact histories in their unaltered form, with blending that stemmed from failed attempts at cultural homogenization now themselves being referenced to as characteristically Mayan. For these reasons, this historical moment acts as an incredibly valuable window into the lasting pitfalls that arise when ethnocentric thought and varied degrees of cultural intolerance are carried into determining action.

## Conclusion

By conducting a narrower review of Spanish action and the experiences and adaptations of the Maya over time, we begin to better understand the outcomes that emerge when an ideology of cultural supremacy so often imbued into colonial interactions take hold. We are presented with the potency of an imposing power’s ability to manufacture distinction and employ notions of superiority based on the context of one’s own socializations. From this, we can directly draw connections to how these frameworks work to guide Spanish action and deny the ability for a realization of the ultimately negative consequences of *reducción*. On the other side of the exchange, we see how those Mayan populations of the periphery engaged in both passive

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

and active resistance to these advances, and the theoretical and conceptual hurdles which stood in the way of their complete homogenization. Beyond this, and removed from the perspective of either individual side, we can see the effects these historical systems have in solidifying imbalances of power in relation to our notions of these populations. These systems enable a trend of biases in the modern perceptions of those formerly subject populations that positions them as inferior in a light similar to those first promoted by their oppressors. By seeking to malign Indigenous populations in this way, these homogenizing institutions have had a noticeable impact on the amount and kinds of sources available in the archives from which we draw our ability to research and comprehend these populations and their histories in the modern day.

However, recognition of the lessons that emerge when reviewing an example like this in isolation should not be thought of as existing purely in a vacuum. Rather, the considerations gained by exploring the nuances of these sorts of ideological exchanges should be carried into the formation of a historical lens applied when seeking to better understand the nature of all interactions that display forms of cultural imposition. Though examples of this sort are particularly common and historically accessible from the early modern era of globalized colonialism onward, they are largely characteristic of most forms of cross-cultural interaction throughout human history. This makes their analysis relevant to building a complete view of the past, and in seeking to understand how these instances relate to our own systems of classification into the modern day. It proposes questions about how things such as our heuristic devices and general view of worldviews which vary from our own are informed by a legacy created from the biases of those involved in these historic interactions.

For example, consider the association of value conveyed in our labeling of certain eras of a population or civilization's development as classic as opposed to on the decline. Surely the sorts of landmarks from which we base judgements of the success of past populations over time relate to an ideal informed by our own value judgements and conceptions of what marks a civilization on the rise. Such distinctions have also informed the general scope of religion and worldview common among those nations and regions viewed as the most developed globally. Historically animist and polytheist religions, such as those of the Maya, are often associated with non-modern states and "under-developed" civilizations, and because of this have seen a general decline. It is important to take time to highlight historical examples like these, as they allow space for a more critical review of ourselves as modern populations, and of our global history. Conducting a review of this sort, framed in a recognition of the biases that stem from variances in socialization, allows for the construction of more true and nuanced histories as a whole.

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## Beyond the Carthaginian Child Sacrifice: History, Analysis, and Interpretation

By Patrick McGreevy

Since the age of antiquity, the Carthaginians have been accused of practicing the “unholy” act of sacrificing children to their gods as a form of votive offering. Until the Twentieth Century scholars of the ancient world were forced to rely on accounts, almost all written by non-Phoenicians, for information on Carthage and her practices. In 1919, however, archeologists investigating the Punic colony of Motya in Sicily made a discovery that would radically alter the state of Carthaginian historiography. On the northern coast of the island archeologists unearthed a large collection of infant remains, which had been grouped with the carcasses of various animals. This discovery, according to the first publication made in English on the site, “seem to have been, not an ordinary cemetery for the burial of human beings ... which, if an opinion may be hazarded, had been victims of sacrificial offerings to the pagan deities.”<sup>1</sup> Two years later another such child cemetery was discovered within Carthage itself, by French colonial officials investigating a smuggler.<sup>2</sup> These sites of infant burial grounds, equivalents of which have been found in other Phoenician and Carthaginian colonies, are dubbed “Tophets,” named after a valley in the Bible in which men, are said to have, sacrificed their children to their gods.<sup>3</sup>

Few scholarly English language works outright deny the existence of Carthaginian or Phoenician human sacrifice in its entirety. Some suggest that many of the bones discovered at the “Tophet” sites were, in fact, postnatal natural deaths. One of the foremost of these scholars is the osteologist J.H. Schwartz who argues that “the youth of Tophet humans being consistent with a society that does not recognize individuals as ‘persons’ until a certain age” and that “the ‘reports’ of Diodorus et al. of Carthaginian infant sacrifice were at best exaggerations and at worst anti-Carthage propaganda.”<sup>4</sup> This view is highly disputed by articles such as “Aging cremated infants: the problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage” which is highly critical of Schwartz’s work. Interestingly much of the contemporary dispute has played out within the lines of the academic journal *Antiquity*. Nonetheless the scholarly consensus still aligns with the view stated by Richard Miles in his monograph on Carthage that “the conclusion to be drawn is that

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph I. Whitaker, *Motya: A Phoenician Colony in Sicily* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1921), 257.

<sup>2</sup> Shelby Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in Their Mediterranean Context*, JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series, no. 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Smith, et al, "Aging Cremated Infants: The Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage," *Antiquity* 85 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00068368>, 859. For the Biblical narrative see Jeremiah 7:31-32.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey H. Schwartz, et al "Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited," *Antiquity* 86, no. 333 (2012), 739.

during periods of great crisis the Carthaginians and other western Phoenicians did sacrifice their own children.”<sup>5</sup>



Figure 1. A Votive Punic Stele, circa 4th century B.C, which shows, what appears to be, a Priest holding an infant. This image has been interpreted as a depiction of Punic ritual child sacrifice.

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 72.

Ancient sources are rife with accounts and references to the Carthaginian practice of ritual human sacrifice, particularly that of their own children. However, it has been noted by authors such as Shelby Brown in her monograph *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice* that our written information consists almost entirely of works by enemies or the Carthaginians.<sup>6</sup> When relying upon these sources it would appear that the ignoble act of human sacrifice was not uncommon among the Carthaginians and their forebearers the Phoenicians. Particularly the Carthaginians appear to have not merely sacrificed slaves or prisoners of war, but rather their own infant children. Regarding one Carthaginian colony, the ancient chronicler Plutarch wrote that “with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds ; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan ; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless.”<sup>7</sup> Another account by a historian named Diodorus of Sicily, full of lurid detail, describes how in desperation after military setbacks “they [Carthaginians] selected two hundred of the noblest children and sacrificed them publicly; and others who were under suspicion sacrificed themselves voluntarily, in number not less than three hundred. There was in their city a bronze image of Cronus, extending its hands, palms up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire.”<sup>8</sup>

We lack any attestations directly from the Carthaginians or Phoenicians regarding their alleged human sacrifices. The closest we have to their writings are the funerary steles which are located near the Tophets, one of which reads, rather explicitly “It was to the Lady Tanit Face of Baal and to Baal Hammon that Bomilcar son Hanno, grandson of Milkiathon, vowed this son of his own flesh. Bless him you!”<sup>9</sup> Another, semi-Punic, source is that of the Christian writer Tertullian, who wrote lived in the late 2nd and early 3rd century. Tertullian was a native of Roman Africa who wrote “In Africa infants used to be sacrificed to Saturn and quite openly” and continued, ominously, that “and to this day that holy crime persists in secret.”<sup>10</sup> Some of the ancient allegations are lurid and defamatory, however many are nonjudgemental or merely observational. Therefore, based on the archeological and literary evidence it is safe to conclude that the practice of child sacrifice occurred in Ancient Carthage and the ancient sources cannot be dismissed as merely tendentious polemics.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Moralia Plutarch, Volume II, De Superstitione, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928), 45.

<sup>8</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Book 20.14.5–6, Loeb Classical Library, trans. C. H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

<sup>9</sup> Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed*, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, trans. T. R. Glover, in *Tertullian: Apology, De Spectaculis*, Loeb Classical Library 250 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 47.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice*, 33-34.

Previous historiography on Carthage was tainted by a vein of Orientalism, on the part of the Western scholars who often adopted the biased views of their ancient sources. These scholars readily adopted the ancient view of Punic decadence and savagery, as it coincided with their own prejudices of a backwards and barbarous civilization.<sup>12</sup> With more modern tools of analysis, at our disposal, we can now contextualize the actions of the Carthaginians more properly.

The most salient contemporary dispute regarding ritual infanticide in ancient Carthage is the demography of the Tophet cemeteries and whether they suggest the practice of human sacrifice was widespread in Carthage or a rarity. Ancient sources may present the Carthaginian practice as common. But while early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars suggested that all infant remains found in the Tophets were victims of human sacrifice, the demography of the infant corpses found there does not necessarily bear that out.

In a landmark 2010 study, rather provocatively titled “Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants” a team of scholars fielded by J. H. Schwartz, whose members included physical anthropologists and classicists, argued that the corpses of sacrificed children comprised only a small minority of the bodies discovered in the Carthaginian Tophet. A significant number of the Tophet corpses were described as fetal, the results of miscarriage or stillbirths, indicating that they could not have been victims of ritual sacrifice.<sup>13</sup> This study appeared to confirm the view, previously postulated by Brown in her monograph on Punic ritual sacrifice, that the Tophets may not be entirely or even predominately populated by sacrificed infants.<sup>14</sup>

This article prompted a 2011 rejoinder, the aforementioned, “Aging Cremated Infants” article which was published in *Antiquity* and coauthored by Patricia Smith. This study argued that Schwartz and his team’s 2010 article failed to take into account the effects of cremation on the bones and teeth of infant bodies when estimating their age.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the study argued, the age profile of the infants was not consistent with contemporary literature on postnatal mortality rates, nor did it mirror the age distribution for infants in Ancient Greek or Roman cemeteries. Lastly the burial method of the Tophet infants differed from those of adults or older children found in regular Phoenician cemeteries.<sup>16</sup>

This article prompted a response from Schwartz’s team and in turn several more tit-for-tat academic retorts. For the sake of simplicity, the two sides will be, henceforth, designated by their most commonly referenced authors: Schwartz and Smith. In a 2012 response Schwartz combated many of Smith’s claims. In regard to the Tophet containing only infants and animal

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<sup>12</sup> Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed*, 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> J. H. Schwartz et al., "Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants," *PLoS ONE* 5, no. 2 (2010), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice*, 72-75 and 174-175.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, et al, "Aging Cremated Infants: The Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage," *Antiquity* 85 (2011), 862.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 869-871.

remains Schwartz suggests that Carthaginian did not view these infants as human until a certain age.<sup>17</sup> Schwartz's article also disputed Smith's reassessment of the age of the Tophet sample, arguing that his team's methodology was correct.<sup>18</sup> The article criticizes Smith's inclusion, in their article, of a Tophet stele which depicts a man, interpreted by Smith as a Carthaginian priest, carrying an infant. Schwartz argues that rather than depicting a ritual sacrifice of an infant, it is likely that "this small individual was already dead and is being carried to a place of cremation." Finally, the article rejects Smith's usage of various ancient sources, ending the article by stating that he and his co-authors "suggest that the reports of Diodorus and others need to be taken with more than a grain of salt."<sup>19</sup>

This dispute may appear, in its most literal form, academic. The authors are arguing over a rather precise interpretation of Carthaginian infant burial sites, and how widespread Punic ritual infant sacrifice was. While the existence of human sacrifice is anathema to our modern values it was not, as demonstrated by Brown, unique or even uncommon within the Mediterranean world.<sup>20</sup> Where Carthaginian civilization's ritual human sacrifice differed from its contemporaries was in that it was the children of the Punic populace who were being sacrificed. Brown writes that "no other ancient people ... regularly chose their own children as sacrificial victims."<sup>21</sup>

Often referenced or suggested, usually as a matter of rhetoric, by proponents of the existence of widespread human sacrifice in Carthaginian society are scholars who make an argument against any form of human sacrifice perpetrated in the Tophet. However, these putative denialists appear to be more polemical than factual. For example, in 2017 Schwartz's team accused Smith's 2011 article of labeling them as deniers of human sacrifice in Carthage.<sup>22</sup> However, the wording in Smith's article is in fact more ambiguous and does not explicitly make such a claim. If such denialists do exist, then this author has been unable to discover them in any scholarly article in the English language.

The dispute over the nature of the Tophet's victims will likely continue. Both Smith and Schwartz rely on the same basic archeological evidence and draw different conclusions based on textual and posthumous analysis. Personally, this author suspects that the articles by the Smith team are closer to the truth. The universal verdict of ancient authors from Greeks to Romans to

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<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey H. Schwartz, et al "Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited," *Antiquity* 86, no. 333 (2012), 739.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 742.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 744.

<sup>20</sup> For examples of Human Sacrifices in other ancient contexts see Shelby Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in Their Mediterranean Context*, JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series, no. 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), chap. 6, 147–170.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 175.

<sup>22</sup> For the accusation see J. H. Schwartz, et al, "Two Tales of One City: Data, Inference, and Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice," *Antiquity* 91, no. 356 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2016.270>, 446; For the supposed labeling of denialism by Smith's team see Smith, et al, "Aging Cremated Infants: The Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage," *Antiquity* 85 (2011), 860-861.

the Hebrew Bible is that Phoenicians and their descendants practiced ritual infanticide.<sup>23</sup> It seems logical to conclude that ritual human sacrifice took place in the Tophet, given that the bodies of the Tophet infants are also located next to animal carcasses, which essentially all scholars believe to have been ritual sacrifices.<sup>24</sup>

Human sacrifice, in some form and with some frequency, was undoubtedly practiced in Carthage. This heinous practice drew the condemnation of their ancient contemporaries and now the fascination of modern historians. The debates described in this essay will likely continue and new revelations or archeological discoveries may shed more light on how the Carthaginians practiced ritual human sacrifice and how widespread this ghastly tradition was.

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<sup>23</sup>Paolo Xella, Josephine Quinn, Valentina Melchiorri, and Peter van Dommelen. "Phoenician Bones of Contention." *Antiquity* 87 (December 2013), 1203.

<sup>24</sup> Paolo Xella, Josephine Quinn, Valentina Melchiorri, and Peter van Dommelen, "Cemetery or Sacrifice? Infant Burials at the Carthage Tophet: Phoenician Bones of Contention," *Antiquity* 87, no. 338 (2013), 1197.

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# A Faustian Bargain: The Scalp Bounties in 1840s

## Mexico

*By Patrick McGreevy*

The practice of scalping, the removal of the back of the human head with the hair attached, has origins going back millennia. The ignoble and atavistic practice of scalping has been recorded independently in a variety of cultures, from the earliest attestations by Herodotus<sup>1</sup> regarding the Scythians to archeological discoveries from the Shang dynasty in China.<sup>2</sup> Typically, the act is performed to collect trophies of slain foes or to humiliate one's enemies through posthumous mutilation. However, despite the recurrence of scalping throughout human history it has rarely been so ubiquitous as in Amerindian societies and rarely so pernicious or deadly as when practiced in the 1840s in the Mexican-American borderlands. It was here that Mexican state governments placed a bounty on the scalps of Indian warriors. Prices varied by time, state and by specific bounty, however the genocidal intent was always evident. For example, in 1837 the Mexican state of Chihuahua issued a bounty "that offered one hundred pesos for the scalp of a warrior, fifty for that of a squaw, and twenty-five for that of a child."<sup>3</sup>

The catalyst for the Mexican scalp bounties were the increased frequency and intensity of Indian war parties launching attacks against the northern Mexican frontier. They stole cattle, kidnapped women and children and slaughtered the men. The effect which Indian raids, and in particular those of the Apache and Comanche, had upon the region of Northern Mexico cannot be understated. One Anglo-American observer, Josiah Gregg, stated that "The depredations of the Apaches have been of such long duration, that, beyond the immediate purlieu of the towns, the whole country from New Mexico to the borders of Durango is almost entirely depopulated."<sup>4</sup> The most acute and intense phase of violence began with the end of the complex network of treaties which the Mexicans had held with the Indians following Mexican independence. The collapse of the treaty system and the lack of any coherent national government meant that Comanches, Apaches and other Plains Indian tribes were able to renew their raids on Northern Mexico with increased vigor.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 235–36.

<sup>2</sup> Xingcan Chen, "Ancient Scalping Custom in China and Related Issues," *Chinese Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2001), 11–14.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph A. Smith, "Apache 'Ranching' Below the Gila, 1841–1845." *Arizoniana*, vol. 3, no. 4, Winter 1962, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies: Or, The Journal of a Santa Fe Trader, During Eight Expeditions Across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico*, 4th ed., J.W. Moore, 1850, 293.

<sup>5</sup> William S. Kiser, "The Business of Killing Indians: Contract Warfare and Genocide in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 110, no. 2 (September 2023), 19.

Mexican responses were disordered and ineffective. Greggs wrote that “Occasionally a detachment of troops is sent in pursuit of the marauders, but for no other purpose, it would seem, than to illustrate the imbecility of the former, as they are always sure to make a precipitate retreat, generally without even obtaining a glimpse of the enemy.”<sup>6</sup> The governmental system of Mexico worked against itself, as the federal government left its autonomous state to their own devices when it came to combatting the Indians.<sup>7</sup> Local Apache Tribes often made treaties with Mexican State governments, particularly Sonora and Chihuahua, which amounted to little more than propitiatory promises of tribute under the guise of peace. These treaties were often violated months after they were signed, but served to further subvert Mexican counterattacks, as historian Ralph A. Smith noted that “When a Mexican department made one of these local treaties with Indians, it forbade troops of another department to penetrate its territory in pursuit of them.”<sup>8</sup>

It was, therefore, not entirely hyperbolic when it was reported that “They [*The Comanches*] declare that they only spare the whole nation [of Mexicans] from destruction because they answer to supply them with horses.”<sup>9</sup> The Apaches, likewise, are said to have begun referring to the various Mexican settlements they raided as their “ranches.” Substantial evidence suggests that Apache raiders would oftentimes take care not to exterminate Mexican settlements entirely, in order to maintain a constant supply of cattle, booty and slaves.<sup>10</sup>

It was from this harsh political situation from which “the vile industry of selling scalps” arose. The implementation of the scalp bounty system was not immediate nor ubiquitous across the Northern Mexican states. The process was gradual, the Mexican state of Chihuahua first implemented a bounty on the scalps of “Barbarous Indians” in 1837 and then ended it in 1841<sup>11</sup> before renewing it in 1846. After the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo almost every state in Northern Mexico implemented a scalp bounty.<sup>12</sup>

A bounty system predicated on the delivery of body parts or other mementos is not unique in human history but rarely has a system of organized murder been so explicit as to reward its participants for the number of human scalps they supply. In Amerindian history there are few moments of violence so explicitly genocidal in nature as the scalp bounty system. For example, the fact that prices were listed for the scalps of women and children indicates, according to historian William S. Kiser, that “identification of noncombatants as legitimate

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<sup>6</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 293.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, "Apache 'Ranching' Below the Gila, 1841–1845," 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Texas in 1837: An Anonymous, Contemporary Narrative*, Quoted in Hämäläinen, “The Comanche Empire,” 219–220.

<sup>10</sup> See Smith, Ralph A. "Apache Plunder Trails Southward," also Worcester, Donald E. “The Apaches,” pgs. 25–49.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph A. Smith, "The Scalp Hunt in Chihuahua—1849," *New Mexico Historical Review* 40, no. 2 (1965), 116–140.

<sup>12</sup> Ralph A. Smith, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands 1835–1850," *Arizona and the West* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1964), Published by *Journal of the Southwest*, 16–17.

targets for scalping revolved around the racism that was at the base of the state's codification of extra-lethal violence in northern Mexico."<sup>13</sup>

Some scalpers were local Mexicans who "for many years...had not been reluctant to scalp Indians" and who could now, due to the scalp bounties, "collect more pesos, worth the same amount in American dollars, for a single trophy than he could earn by hard labor in a year."<sup>14</sup> The vile industry also attracted a significant number of Anglo-Americans including the most prominent such as Michael H. Cheville, James Kirker, and John Joel Glanton. The American scalp hunters were predominately soldiers of fortune, ex-Texas Rangers and ex-Forty-Niners.<sup>15</sup> The Panic of 1837 incentivized many Americans to seek their fortune in Mexico where a peso was equivalent to one American Silver dollar and, in the state of Chihuahua, the scalp of an Apache warrior warranted 100 pesos.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, these Anglos lacked ties to the cultural communities in Mexico and were therefore more ready and able to exploit the situation to their needs.

Some scalp hunting expeditions proved successful and appeared to halt the frequency of Indian raids, as well as decimating some Apache tribes.<sup>17</sup> One scalp hunter named James Johnson surprised and killed several hundred Apache with concealed cannons.<sup>18</sup> James Kirker who, because of his closeness to the Apache tribe had been dubbed by some American observers as the "Chief of the Apache nation" betrayed his erstwhile tribe and took 182 scalps, including that of his guide, who had been slain.<sup>19</sup>

The scalp hunters themselves were extremely heterogeneous. One scalp hunter, Samuel E. Chamberlain, wrote in his memoir that within his gang, that of John Joel Glanton, there were "Sonorans, Cherokee and Delaware Indians, French Canadians, Texans, Irishmen, a Negro and a full blooded Comanche in this band of Scalp Hunters, with a miscellaneous collection of weapons, and equipment and a diversity of costume seldom seen in a regular organized body of volunteers for Indian warfare."<sup>20</sup> Other non-Anglos also took part including vengeful Mexican civilians as well as other Indian Tribes. A southeastern group of Seminoles under Chief Coacoochee as well as the Afro-Seminole John Horse began engaging in the lucrative market.<sup>21</sup> The longstanding racial prejudice against Plains Indians was now able to grant economic profit if one was willing to take the initiative. Where previously Indians had been lynched and scalped as

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<sup>13</sup> Kiser, "The Business of Killing Indians," 26.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, "The Scalp Hunt in Chihuahua," 125.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands," 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Donald E. Worcester, *The Apaches: Eagles of the Southwest*, Originally published 1979, Paperback ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Ralph A. Smith, *Borderlander: The Life of James Kirker, 1793-1852*, Originally published 1999, Paperback ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2022), 68-70.

<sup>19</sup> Smith, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands," 15.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel E. Chamberlain, *My Confession: Recollections of a Rogue*, Introduction by Roger Butterfield, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 268.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands," 19.

acts of racial hatred or retributive vengeance, there was a newly added economic incentive. Kiser writes that “Personal economic gain and the enforcement of state Indian policy were mutually reinforcing, and transgressive acts of racialized violence became the common denominator linking private and public interests.”<sup>22</sup>

Hostile relations within Plains Indian societies were also exploited. The Comanche Indians were occasionally persuaded to hunt for the scalps of their ancestral enemies the Apaches and receive the bounty reward. Comanches were able to, generally, avoid the Scalp hunters because of the expanse of Comancheria and their heightened mobility and nomadic lifestyle.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the worst effects of the Scalp bounties were felt by the Apaches.

Despite the losses that some Apache tribes faced at the wrath of the scalp hunters, their frequent raids into Northern Mexico continued unabated and with a new intensity, as they were now seeking vengeance against the Scalp Hunters. In May of 1846, for example, Apache retaliated for the attacks of James Kirker by killing twenty-four Chihuahuans.<sup>24</sup> Ralph A. Smith notes that “When one compares the number of scalps and captives presented for bounties with the number of [Mexican] citizens killed or carried into captivity, it appears that the program did little more than enable the Mexicans, even with alien help, to break even.”<sup>25</sup>

Most of the scalp hunters quickly garnered notorious reputations, particularly the Anglo-Americans. Moreover, the scalp hunters are also known to have engaged in “fraud.” In the North of Mexico much of the population has mestizo ancestry, and there were also large numbers of peaceful pastoral Indians who did not participate in raids against the Mexican population. These groups made easier prey than Comanche or Apache warbands and were therefore ambushed and scalped. The Anglo-American scalpers in particular felt little compunction about scalping dark haired Mestizos, Spaniards or pastoral Indians.<sup>26</sup> Ralph A. Smith wrote that “at no time in American history did people show more interest in each other's hair.”<sup>27</sup>

One American, George Wilkins Kendall, who heard of Kirker from Mexicans wrote "it being soon suspected that he [Kirker] was in the practice of bringing in counterfeit scalps- or in other words that he did not scruple to kill any of the lower order of Mexicans he might meet with, where there was slight chance of being discovered, and pass off their top-knots for those of true Apaches.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Scalp Hunters often targeted the very population, whom they had been hired to defend.

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<sup>22</sup> Kiser, “The Business of Killing Indians,” 20.

<sup>23</sup> Hämäläinen, “The Comanche Empire,” 228.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Borderlander*, 156.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, “The Scalp Hunt in Chihuahua,” 136.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, “The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands,” 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> George Wilkins Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition: Comprising a Description of a Tour through Texas, and across the Great Southwestern Prairies, the Comanche and Caygüa Hunting-Grounds, with an Account of the Sufferings from Want of Food, Losses from Hostile Indians, and Finale Capture of the Texans, and Their March, as Prisoners, to the City of Mexico*, Volume 2. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1847), 57.

The level of this “fraud” is impossible to detect due to the secrecy in which “illicit” scalping took place. However, one passage from Donald. E. Worcester’s monograph on the Apaches is telling: “Kirker claimed that he and his men had killed 487 Apaches, but it might have been more accurate to say that they collected bounties for that many scalps.”<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the interests of the Mexican state governments of Chihuahua and Sonora were not in fact directly aligned with those of the Scalp Hunters. The economic situation in the borderlands created a type of situation known in economics as a perverse incentive, wherein the scalp hunters benefited from increased Indian raids as it further necessitated the existence of scalp bounties on Indian warriors. Therefore, they sought to create conditions for increased Indian raids on the Mexican frontier which enabled them both more negotiating power and also more opportunities to take scalps.<sup>30</sup>

Scalp hunters are also known to have disguised themselves as Indians while conducting raids. This served a double purpose, as they collected Mestizo scalps which they could later turn in for payment, and it increased the immediate need for their services. Samuel Chamberlain records one such episode thusly “we passed a few miserable herdsmen's huts, the inhabitants fleeing in affright, taking us for Apaches. To impress this belief more forcibly on their minds, we gave them a specimen of savage war whoops” Chamberlain’s group also scalped and murdered a “poor vaquero” in order to further deceive the Mexican population.<sup>31</sup> A truce between the Mexican governments and the Indian tribes, therefore, would have been disastrous for most of the scalp hunters.

Many of the Scalp Hunters would ultimately have bounties placed on their own heads by the Mexican governments, after the revelation emerged that many of their “fraudulent scalps” had been taken from Mexican citizens. Kirker, for example had a 10,000-peso bounty placed on his head and was forced to flee Mexico for California while Glanton faced a similar bounty and fled from Chihuahua to Arizona where he was murdered by Yuma Indians in a form of “poetic retribution.”<sup>32</sup> Most other foreign scalp-hunters searched for better fortunes in the California gold mines or other less dangerous sources of income. In the face of these miserable episodes dealing with Anglo-American scalp hunters, thereafter the Mexican scalp trade was left in the hands of Mexican citizens. But the trade itself would continue, in lesser forms, for decades, with the last recorded payment occurring in 1886, and scalp bounties remained in place until the end of the Apache raids in 1891.<sup>33</sup>

Was the scalp bounty, in any way, successful in deterring Indian raids on Mexican settlements? Certainly, scalp hunters, both foreign and domestic, were able to exterminate large

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<sup>29</sup> Worcester, *The Apaches*, 47.

<sup>30</sup> See Smith, “The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands,” Also Kiser, William S. “The Business of Killing Indians,” 38-39.

<sup>31</sup> Chamberlain, *My Confession*, 273.

<sup>32</sup> Kiser, “The Business of Killing Indians,” 32; Worcester, *The Apaches*, 47.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Borderlander*, 225-234.

number of Apaches in their genocidal campaign. According to one estimate one eighth of the Southern Apache population was killed.<sup>34</sup> However, this was not enough to deter Apache or Comanche raids, and it in fact increased their intensity and ferocity. Ralph A. Smith wrote that “In the long history of Apache and Comanche depredations, the 1840s probably saw some of the worst destruction of life and property.”<sup>35</sup> Donald. E. Worcester notes that “By the end of 1849, [four years after the most recent scalp bounty] Chihuahua City, the ‘scalp capital of America’ had paid out substantial sums for Apache hair, but Apaches still killed people on the outskirts of the city.”<sup>36</sup>

A new cycle of tribal retribution had broken out between the Mexicans and the Plains Indians to the north. Thousands of Mexican civilians were murdered, sometimes by the same Scalp Hunters hired to protect them, and a fresh enmity was born that would only be vanquished by the end of the traditional Plains Indians lifestyle of equestrianism and raiding. The hatred born out of this intense conflict would become deep and entrenched, further exacerbating tensions between already embittered peoples. The Apache Chief Geronimo later stated that “if I were young, and followed the warpath, it would lead into Old Mexico.”<sup>37</sup> Tens of thousands of Indians and Mexicans would die before the generational conflict was finally put to an end.<sup>38</sup>

The conflict was explicitly genocidal in nature, one of the most barefaced and sordid, such, example in all of Amerindian history. But neither can it be said that the Mexican government acted unprovoked or without good reason. It is, perhaps, unhelpful to cast our modern eyes down in contempt at the desperate actions of the local Mexican state governments. Neither can we, however, absolve them in good conscience. Moreover, the actions of most of the Scalp Hunters displayed pure ruthless commercialism as well as racial prejudice and bloodlust. The Scalp bounties will therefore likely remain an obscure but distasteful historical phenomenon in North American history.

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<sup>34</sup> Kiser, “The Business of Killing Indians,” 37.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, “The Scalp Hunt in Chihuahua,” 117.

<sup>36</sup> Worcester, *The Apaches*,” 46.

<sup>37</sup> Kiser, “The Business of Killing Indians,” 38.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 37-39.

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## **Section Five: Shifting Societies and Social Boundaries**

## A Tale of Two Mutinies: The Fames Revenge and the Fall of Atlantic Piracy's Golden Age

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Close to one o'clock in the morning on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1726, as the merchant ship *Elizabeth* sailed from Jamaica to Guinea, William Fly and his compatriots crept abovedeck and murdered Captain William Green and his first mate, throwing them overboard before renaming the ship the *Fames Revenge*, thus beginning a new career as “gentlemen of fortune.”<sup>1</sup> When Fly, along with Samuel Cole and Henry Greenwill were executed in July of that year, they were asked to repent their crimes in the face of the hangman's rope. While minister Cotton Mather, who was present at the hanging, reported that Cole and Greenwill showed great “Signs of Repentance” and “desired the Spectators to take Warning by them” and stay away from a life of piracy, Fly gave the minister no such satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> “When he was called upon, to Speak what he should judge proper to be spoken on that sad occasion, at least for the Warning of Survivors, he only said, That *he would advise the Masters of Vessels to carry it well to their Men, lest they should be put upon doing as he had done.*”<sup>3</sup>

The crew of the *Elizabeth* was “put upon” mutiny in the face of inhumane treatment and sought, after becoming pirates, to create a freer and more just way of living. Fly, however, fared no better in his captainship than his predecessor. Scarcely two months after he and his crew became pirates, a second mutiny ousted him from his position and landed him on Boston's gallows. The *Fames Revenge's* first mutiny was a common story during the Golden Age: a rebellion against an abusive captain which became a radical new lifestyle. The fact that there was a second mutiny, however, presents a challenge to this narrative of Golden Age piracy. The story of the *Fames Revenge* illustrates how change in imperial policy caused the downfall of buccaneer culture and subsequently the Golden Age of piracy itself.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tryals of sixteen persons for piracy, &c. Four of which were found guilty, and the rest acquitted. At a special Court of Admiralty for the Tryal of Pirates, held at Boston within the province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, on Monday the fourth day of July, anno dom. 1726. Pursuant to His Majesty's commission, founded on an act of Parliament, made in the eleventh and twelfth years of the reign of King William the Third, intituled, An act for the more effectual suppression of piracy. And made perpetual by an act of the sixth of King George.* (Boston: Printed for and sold by Joseph Edwards, at the corner shop on the north-side of the town-house, 1726) Readex Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 2819, 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> Cotton Mather, *The vial poured out upon the sea : a remarkable relation of certain pirates brought unto a tragical and untimely end : some conferences with them, after their condemnation : their behaviour at their execution : and a sermon preached on that occasion.* (Boston : Printed by T. Fleet, for N. Belknap, and sold at his shop near Scarlet's wharf, 1726) Library of Congress, 48.

<sup>3</sup> Mather, *The Vial*, 48.

Modern history on Atlantic pirates emphasizes their roles as both predator and prey in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial ecosystems. This essay, through its focus on the *Fames Revenge* will explore how the Golden Age ended through a breakdown in culture resulting from the war on piracy waged by colonial governments. Historians such as Marcus Rediker and Robert C. Ritchie revitalized the study of Atlantic piracy, while those such as Carla Gardina Pestana and Virginia W. Lunsford have focused on the relevance of Atlantic piracy to global history.<sup>4</sup> In addition, scholars have increasingly included voices in their narratives that were traditionally excluded from pirate discourse, such as women, indigenous people, and the extension of maritime culture created on the shore.<sup>5</sup> Beyond piracy, authors such as Robert W. Harms have explored contemporary maritime history through an account of one ship.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, this essay will explore the unique story of a single ship, *The Fames Revenge*, to illustrate the end of an important era in global history.

### The First Mutiny

In the tradition of the many mutineers-turned-pirates before him, Fly justified his actions in the face of the abuse he had suffered while a merchant seaman. In the days before the execution, “great pains were taken, by [Mather and other ministers] to dispose them for a Return to God.”<sup>7</sup> Over the course of his meetings with Fly, Mather attempted to convince him to repent his sins and forgive the wrongs done him by the captain. At this, Mather failed. Instead, Fly maintained that, “I cannot Forgive that Man. GOD Almighty Revenge me on him!... I won’t dy with a Lye in my mouth.”<sup>8</sup> Not only could Fly not bring himself to do as Mather advised and forgive Green, but he would not admit that he had committed a crime at all in killing his captain. In fact, in Mather’s transcription of their interview, Fly vehemently condemns Green and his mate: “I shan’t own myself Guilty of any Murder, -- Our Captain and his Mate used us Barbarously. We poor Men can’t have Justice done us. There is nothing said to our Commanders,

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<sup>4</sup> Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Carla Gardina Pestana, “Why Atlantic Piracy?” in *The Golden Age of Piracy: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Popularity of Pirates*, ed. David Head (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2018); Virginia W. Lunsford, “A Model of Piracy: The Buccaneers of the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean,” in *The Golden Age of Piracy: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Popularity of Pirates*, ed. David Head (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Rediker, “Liberty Beneath the Jolly Roger: The Lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, Pirates,” in *Iron Men and Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Linda Norling (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Arne Bialuschewski, “Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in Captivity in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century,” *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (2017): 41-63 <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-3688359>; Dianne Dugaw, “Female Soldiers Bold: Transvestite Heroines and the Markers of Gender and Class,” in *Iron Men and Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Linda Norling (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Robert W. Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*. (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Mather, *The Vial*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Mather, *The Vial*, 16.

let them never so much abuse us, and use us like Dogs.”<sup>9</sup> What specific instances of mistreatment pushed Fly and the other mutineers over the edge, we cannot know, but accounts of brutal mistreatment like Fly’s are extremely common.

The lot of a sailor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a difficult and deadly one. One contemporary author wrote that “no man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in jail with the chance of being drowned... A man in jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company.”<sup>10</sup> Food on merchant ships was “often as rotten as it was meager,” discipline was severe, and sailors faced “disease, disabling accidents, shipwreck and premature death.”<sup>11</sup> Conditions were so severe that in 1731, almost one in four sailors died on French slaving voyages. In fact, death rates for sailors working on slave ships equaled or exceeded those of the enslaved prisoners.<sup>12</sup> Payment for their services was meager even without the rampant fraud that often decreased it further.<sup>13</sup> One author demanded how the families of sailors could be “maintain’d, when they are kept on board, 3, 4, or 5 years without their pay” and payment was legally denied to indentured servants, who were treated even more brutally.<sup>14</sup> Alendandre Exquemelin, author of the bestselling history and memoir of his time as a pirate, *The Bucaniers of America*, reports that famed captain Henry Morgan was an indentured servant before he became a pirate legend, and that he himself experienced “all the hard usages imaginable” in the same position.<sup>15</sup> Once free, many formerly indentured people were, as Exquemelin described himself, “naked, and destitute, of all human necessaries, nor knowing how to get my living,” perfect candidates for piracy.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, much like the inmates to which Johnson compared sailors, many serving in the Royal Navy had no choice about the matter. The “ungrateful Methods of Press-gangs,” or the practice of kidnapping men off the street to serve in the navy, was a well-known danger.<sup>17</sup> An

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<sup>9</sup> Mather, *The Vial*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Harms, *The Diligent*, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 43.

<sup>14</sup> *Piracy destroy'd: Or, A short discourse shewing The Rise, Growth and Causes of Piracy of late; with a sure Method how to put a speedy stop to that growing Evil. Humbly offered to the Consideration of the present Parliament. In a Letter from an Officer of an East-India Ship Lately arriv'd in the River, to the Deputy Governour of the East-India-Company, London.* (London: Printed and sold by John Nutt near Stationers-Hall, 1701) British Library, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Alexandre Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America, or, A true account of the most remarkable assaults committed of late years upon the coasts of the West-Indies by the bucaniers of Jamaica and Tortuga, both English and French wherein are contained more especially the unparallel'd exploits of Sir Henry Morgan, our English Jamaican hero who sack'd Puerto Velo, burnt Panama, &c. / written originally in Dutch by John Esquemeling ... ; and thence translated into Spanish by Alonso de Bonne-Maison ... ; now faithfully rendred into English.* first English edition. (London: Printed for William Crooke, 1684), The Huntington Library Records, 61, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Barnaby Slush, *The navy Royal: or a sea-cook turn'd projector. Containing a few thoughts, about manning our ships of war with the best of sailors, without violences, and in the most pleasing manner: According to the Fourth Article of a late Proposal, Publish'd by our Worthy Chaplain of Her Majesty's Ship the Lyme..* (London: printed for B. Bragge, at the Raven in Pater-Noster-Row, 1709.) British Library, 1.

anonymous Royal Navy officer published a pamphlet called *Piracy Destroy'd* in 1701, condemning piracy, but including in its suggestions for eradicating it the reasons many pirates gave for turning to the brotherhood. The first of the offences that he lists is men “being pres’d, and haled from their Families like Dogs.”<sup>18</sup> Once on board, because of the precautions taken to prevent the pressed sailors from running away, “they complained much of the severe confinement they endur’d many Months after they were pres’d, tho’ both necessary business, and their health required their being on shore.”<sup>19</sup> On navy ships, the discipline and pay were often even worse than on merchant vessels.<sup>20</sup> As well as denouncing the pay fraud that ran rampant, one former Navy sea-cook wrote that because “the luck to fall in with Generous Commanders... is not the Lot of many... they are used very Scurvily... That Inviolable Obedience they owe to Martial Discipline at Sea; binds up their Hands oft times from giving their Captains sensible Proofs they are Gentlement: and not Born, nor sent there to be Slaves nor Footmen.”<sup>21</sup> The *Fames Revenge* was a merchant ship, but her men could have had experience on navy vessels as well, and similar hardships and abuses could be found on the vast majority of ships crossing the Atlantic.

The reaction of pirate culture to widespread maltreatment at sea is reflected in their behavior toward the captains and crews of captured ships. Merchant captain William Snelgrave described buccaneer society in his account of his extraordinary experience being captured by pirates. He wrote that one pirate “took me by the hand and told me, ‘My Life was safe provided none of my People complained against me.’”<sup>22</sup> Later, he wrote, the pirate captain declared that “if you tell the Truth, and your Men make no Complaints against you, you shall be kindly used; and this shall be the best Voyage you ever made in your Life, as you shall find by what shall be given you.”<sup>23</sup> Snelgrave’s men did not make a complaint against him, but Snelgrave certainly did not consider that voyage his best. The crews of Captains Davis and Cocklyn unanimously voted that Snelgrave should be given a vessel along with a good portion of the pirates’ stolen goods from other ships. They even offered to accompany him down the coast of Africa, refilling his ship with enslaved people taken from other vessels they would capture. While there was some consternation when Snelgrave refused this offer—he did not feel he could maintain his reputation among other merchants after accepting the rewards of piracy—Davis declared that “I am for allowing every body to go to the Devil in their own way,” and provided Snelgrave a ship and the remains of his original cargo.<sup>24</sup> Snelgrave’s narrative is so interesting because it recounts

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<sup>18</sup> *Piracy Destroy'd*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Piracy Destroy'd*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Rediker, *Villans*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Slush, *Navy Royal*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> William Snelgrave, *A new account of some parts of Guinea, and the slave-trade : containing I. The history of the late conquest of the kingdom of Whidaw by the king of Dahomè ... II. The manner how the negroes become slaves ... III. A relation of the author's being taken by pirates, and the many dangers he underwent.* (London: Printed for James, John, and Paul Knapton, 1734) Huntington Library, 208.

<sup>23</sup> Snelgrave, *A New Account*, 212.

<sup>24</sup> Snelgrave, *A New Account*, 242.

the process of justice that pirates carried out on behalf of sailors who typically had no path of recourse against the captains who abused them. The extraordinary generosity displayed by Davis's and Cocklyn's crews toward a rare instance of an honorable captain demonstrates the genuine appreciation that pirates had toward those merchant captains who were more humane in their treatment of their sailors.

By contrast, Snelgrave's fellow slave trader, Captain Skinner, was captured by Edward England's crew and met a fate very similar to that of the *Elizabeth*'s Captain Green. He had not engendered among his crew the unusual loyalty that Snelgrave had. In fact, as he was ordered aboard the pirate ship, "the Person that he first cast his Eye upon, proved to be his former Boatswain," who was thrilled to have come across his old captain.<sup>25</sup> "Is it you?" he asked Skinner sarcastically, "The only Man I wish'd to see; I am deeply in your Debt, and now I shall pay you all in your own coin."<sup>26</sup> The feeling was not mutual. Skinner "trembled in every joint" before the boatswain and his comrades "pelted him with empty Glass Bottles, which broke upon his body... whipped him about the Deck, till they were weary, then told him, because he was a good Master to his Men, he should have an easy Death, and so shot him thro' the Head."<sup>27</sup> Skinner's boatswain's sarcastic cruelty may seem vindictive, but such feelings were far from uncommon among merchant seamen and navy sailors in his time. The crew of the *Fames Revenge* did not have to wait for a chance meeting to take their revenge—instead, they mutinied and took control over the ship as well as their own lives and labor. Impressed sailors in the navy, enslaved people, indentured servants, and oppressed merchant seamen made up the "alienated, indigent, and dispossessed... flotsam and jetsam of the harsh colonial systems of France, England, and the Netherlands" who "went on the account," or joined a pirate crew.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that someone on the *Fames Revenge* in its previous life as the *Elizabeth*, like Snelgrave's first mate, "hoped we should meet with Pirates," before the mutineers took matters into their own hands.<sup>29</sup>

As pirates, the crew of the *Fames Revenge* sought to free themselves from the abuse they had faced as merchant seamen or navy sailors and to create a more just way of living for themselves. The "government" of the pirate ship exhibits the ways in which they resolved their grievances from their previous employments in the merchant marine or navy as part of their mission to "do justice to sailors."<sup>30</sup> One of the prime issues addressed by the pirates in the making of their "world turned upside down" was the abuse of authority many had suffered under

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<sup>25</sup> Charles Johnson, *A general history of the robberies and murders of the most notorious pyrates, and also their policies, discipline and government, from their first rise and settlement in the island of Providence, in 1717, to the present Year 1724*. (London: Printed for Ch. Rivington at the Dille and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, J. Lacy at the Shop near the Temple-Gate, and J. Stone next the Crown Coffee-House the back of Greys-Inn, 1724) British Library, 134-5.

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, *A General History*, 135.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, *A General History*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Lunsford, "Model of Piracy," 126.

<sup>29</sup> Snelgrave, *A New Account*, 221.

<sup>30</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 89.

cruel captains—the pirates of the *Fames Revenge* mutinied for that very reason.<sup>31</sup> Instead, while they chose a captain, he was elected and given complete authority only “in fighting, chasing, or being chased” and “in all other Matters whatsoever...governed by a Majority.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, “their radical and homegrown form of direct democracy” was the central organizing principle of Atlantic Piracy.<sup>33</sup> All questions were decided by a vote, including who would be officers, where they would sail, who they would attack, and where to get provisions.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the buccaneers became “a potent force of highly organized, keenly motivated, passionately committed, cohesive, and flexible warriors who were extremely successful in their military exploits.”<sup>35</sup>

The position on the pirate ship which most exemplified these principles was that of the quartermaster. Snelgrave wrote that the quartermaster “has the general Inspection of all Affairs, and often controls the Captain’s Orders” and was responsible for arguably the most important job on the ship: the distribution of food and spoils.<sup>36</sup> All pirates were said to “make a solemn Oath to each other, not to abscond, or conceal the least thing they find amongst the prey” as part of their “Articles” with the consequence of expulsion from the group.<sup>37</sup> The spoils were divided based on their position on the ship, with the highest shares going to the captain and quartermaster. Even so, payment was divided far more equally on pirate ships than on merchant ships. For example, Captain Bartholomew Roberts earned double the share of the common sailor on his ship, while on a contemporary merchant ship, the captain earned ten times more than his lowest-paid sailors.<sup>38</sup> On the pirate ship, “none are exempt from the general Toil and Danger; so if the Chief have a Supream Share beyond his Comrades, ‘tis because he’s always the Leading Man in e’ry daring Enterprize; and yet as Bold as he is in all other Attempts, he dares not offer to infringe the common Laws of Equity.”<sup>39</sup> While the captain might get a larger share of the spoils, he was not fed “any greater proportion of flesh... then unto the meanest Mariner,” and decisions were still made democratically.<sup>40</sup> Aside from their position on the ship, injuries sustained in battle accounted a pirate a higher payment. Alexandre Exquemelin describes “for the loss of a right Arm, six hundred pieces of eight, or six slaves,” “For an eye, one hundred pieces of eight, or one slave,” and so on.<sup>41</sup>

As much as Atlantic piracy’s primary goal was the creation of a more just life for sailors, it was also founded on plunder, and including plunder of the most valuable “commodity” traded

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<sup>31</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 65.

<sup>33</sup> Lunsford, “Model of Piracy,” 138.

<sup>34</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Lunsford, “Model of Piracy,” 138.

<sup>36</sup> Snelgrave, *A New Account*, 200.

<sup>37</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 88.

<sup>38</sup> Harms, *The Diligent*, 117.

<sup>39</sup> Slush, *Navy Royal*, vii.

<sup>40</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 86.

<sup>41</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 87.

in the Americas. Slavery and piracy were both central to seventeenth century colonial economies and the relationship between them lasted beyond the period in which non-Iberian governments relied upon piracy to acquire free labor. As mentioned above, a pirate injured in action could receive a slave as compensation in lieu of money and pirates certainly, and in some cases, especially traded in slaves as part of their naval predations.<sup>42</sup> While many pirates considered slave ships the best to capture because of their size, sturdiness, and armaments, the environment of the pirate ship was substantially different than that of the merchant slave ship. Those differences could substantially affect the experience of the enslaved people on board.<sup>43</sup> Racist remarks and references to the slave trade are rampant in Exquemelin's account, but he also mentions that some members of the pirate brotherhood were black.<sup>44</sup> Pirates were well known to be open to releasing or recruiting enslaved people from the slave ships they captured. Robert W. Harms writes in his account of a slave ship that "the slaves on board might have been better off had the pirates succeeded [in capturing the ship] because pirates often set slaves free or invited them to join their crew."<sup>45</sup> In fact, black or mixed-race sailors were present on almost every pirate ship "and only rarely did the many merchants and captains who commented on their presence call them slaves."<sup>46</sup> Some were free and joined the brotherhood in much the same fashion as their white counterparts, but some had escaped enslavement. Marcus Rediker discusses the attraction to piracy of enslaved people and to formerly enslaved volunteers of pirates: "[Pirates] were more concerned with who would make a committee pirate, and of course escaped slaves fitted the bill."<sup>47</sup> While there is no evidence of formerly enslaved pirates on the *Fames Revenge*, we have so little evidence about the backgrounds of its sailors that the possibility should not be ruled out. It is also possible that the *Elizabeth* transported enslaved people. There is no mention of them in the trial record or Mather's account, but the fact that no enslaved people were on board during the mutiny and its aftermath does not mean that they were never there. In her first life as the *Elizabeth*, the *Fames Revenge* was a site of oppression and exploitation—for the sailors working on her and for the enslaved people she potentially transported.

In contrast to the harsh conditions under which they had previously worked and lived, pirates sought to create a culture of care amongst themselves. Barnaby Slush, a former cook in the Royal Navy, wrote in his memoir that pirates were "Hostes Humani generis [enemies of all mankind], as great Robbers as they are to all besides, are precisely Just among themselves; without which, they could no more Subsist, than a Structure without a Foundation."<sup>48</sup> In fact, to Slush, the money earned from their crimes was most certainly less important to them than the culture they created: "It's not Money, so much as fair Usage, that has the strongest Influence

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<sup>42</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 87.

<sup>43</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 138-9.

<sup>44</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 71, 92.

<sup>45</sup> Harms, *The Diligent*, 326.

<sup>46</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 54.

<sup>47</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 55.

<sup>48</sup> Slush, *Navy Royal*, vii.

over them.”<sup>49</sup> Among the pirates, there was a culture of mutual care. According to Exquemelin, “If any wanteth what another hath, with great liberality they give it to one another.”<sup>50</sup> Even the fearsome Blackbeard staged his most dramatic operation, the blockade of Charleston Harbor that brought trade to a halt, to acquire medicine to treat the sick onboard.<sup>51</sup> Aside from the “welfare system” created by guaranteed food, drink, and health care as well as payouts from injuries, disabilities did not result in discrimination or bar one from becoming a captain—Captain John Fenn was one-armed while Captain John Taylor was “lame of his Hands.”<sup>52</sup> Marcus Rediker argues that “the core values of the broader culture of the common sailor were institutionalized aboard the pirate ship” as they “seized the means of maritime production and declared it to be the common property of those who did its work.”<sup>53</sup> It was the culture they created in response to the abuse they suffered that allowed for the “vibrant group solidarity” that Virginia W. Lunsford lists as one of the essential pillars that made Atlantic piracy possible and existed, at least for a time, on the *Fames Revenge*.<sup>54</sup>

## The Second Mutiny

On June 23, the *Fames Revenge* had experienced almost a month of successful piracy. Several ships had been taken and, after a last stop at Martha’s Vineyard, Fly and his crew planned to finally make their way to Guinea, as the *Elizabeth* had planned to do before its first mutiny. As before, though, they would not reach that destination. William Atkinson, who had been a passenger on one of the ships taken by the *Fames Revenge*, staged a mutiny not unlike Fly himself had accomplished scarcely a month before. At Atkinson’s direction, a pilot who had worked on one of the captured ships deliberately missed the port at which he was supposed to land to allow time for the mutiny. Next, Atkinson, along with Benbrook and Walker, the captain and first mate of other captured ships, attacked and subdued Fly and several other of the pirates, before bringing them back to stand trial in Boston.<sup>55</sup> But why was there a mutiny aboard a pirate ship if pirate culture was a democracy and captains were elected?

From our vantage point on the *Fames Revenge*, near the demise of the Golden Age, we can see both the conditions that encouraged the rise of piracy and the conditions that will snuff it out. The culture among the brotherhood was the backbone of Atlantic piracy and once it broke, it was the beginning of the end. On board the *Fames Revenge*, we witness this breakdown. At first, the pirates vote on their destinations, who to attack and what to do with the spoils, as was customary in “the government” of pirate ships. Their downfall, however, was the seamen they

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<sup>49</sup> Slush, *Navy Royal*, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 88.

<sup>51</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 74.

<sup>53</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 61, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Lunsford, “Model of Piracy,” 131.

<sup>55</sup> Mather, *The Vial*, 3-4.

forced to work on the *Fames Revenge*. The changing global political realities of the world in which the pirates lived made them increasingly desperate and as a result, encouraged a breakdown in their culture through increasing reliance on forced labor over the enthusiastic volunteers that they had previously relied upon.

Based on the war on piracy waged by colonial and imperial governments in the next century, one might guess that Atlantic piracy started as just that: an anti-government phenomenon. The truth, however, is far more complicated. In fact, for the majority of piracy's Golden Age, "pirates worked for European rulers, represented commercial interests, and participated in communities on shore in ways that belie their image as 'enemies of all mankind.'"<sup>56</sup> Because the Treaty of Tordesillas divided the Americas exclusively between Spain and Portugal, any non-Iberian ships in the area were considered—at least by the Spanish and Portuguese—to be pirates. Additionally, European wars spilled over into the New World considerably, creating a theater of violence far larger than the piracy it contextualizes. The Americas were producing incredible wealth that created particularly lucrative targets for raiders when it was carried back to Europe by sea.<sup>57</sup> In addition, "The Spanish practices of deeming all who entered the Caribbean as pirates and treating the relatively harmless with the retribution that true piracy deserved heightened animosities and encouraged the descent into violence."<sup>58</sup>

In fact, many of the most famous names in pirate history were very entwined with the objectives of colonial governments. In his famous account of his own piratical adventures, Alexandre Exquemelin wrote that Spanish kings complained repeatedly to the English and French governments about "the molestations and troubles, those Pirates did often cause upon the coasts of America; even in the calm of Peace. Unto whose Embassadors, it hath always been answered: That such men did not commit those acts of hostility and Piracy, as subjects unto their Majesties."<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, France and England benefitted from the predations against their rival even when they were not specifically ordered. Later, Exquemelin writes of the adventures of Captain Henry Morgan—whom he knew personally, and alongside whom he had taken part in many of these raids—without mentioning that Morgan often had official sanction (or tacit permission) to commit these acts of piracy. Morgan's famous raid on Panama was commissioned by the English and even though he was eventually imprisoned in England, he was then appointed lieutenant governor of Jamaica and knighted by the same government.<sup>60</sup> Even before Morgan,

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<sup>56</sup> Pestana, "Atlantic Piracy," 15.

<sup>57</sup> Pestana, "Atlantic Piracy," 15-16.

<sup>58</sup> Pestana, "Atlantic Piracy," 17.

<sup>59</sup> Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 79.

<sup>60</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, "Morgan, Sir Henry (c. 1635-1688), privateer and colonial governor," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Sep 23, 2004, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19224>; Pestana, "Atlantic Piracy," 20.

privateers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh preyed on Spanish vessels with explicit permission from the crown.<sup>61</sup>

The “legal” status of piracy changed as politics shifted across the Atlantic. As Spain and Portugal relinquished their exclusive claims to the Americas, it became more and more in the interests of other European empires to be able to trade with their former enemies without having to worry about raiders. Piracy, which had in many ways enabled non-Iberian empires entry to the Americas, became a nuisance, and had to be stamped out.<sup>62</sup> In 1717, Cotton Mather declared, “Robbery and Piracy!... All Nations agree, to treat your Tribe, as the Common Enemies of Mankind, and Extirpate them out of the World.”<sup>63</sup> And extirpated they would be. Marcus Rediker writes of a “rhetorical, military, and legal campaign” to this purpose that would, just nine years after Mather’s speech, succeed in “cleansing the seas.”<sup>64</sup>

Eleven years before the *Fames Revenge* saw its first mutiny, the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, effectively ending the perpetual conflict between the Spanish empire and those who wished to steal her colonial profits for themselves, including other European empires. The geopolitical circumstances that allowed piracy to thrive were over. Instead, the goal of European empires became domination through trade with each other rather than warfare. Virginia W. Lunsford argues that there were “six qualities integral to resilient piracy”: a strong pool of potential recruits spit churned out by the imperial systems at play in the Atlantic world, secure bases of operation, colonial wealth—especially Spanish wealth—that was accessible for raiding, support from Spain’s imperial rivals, effective organization, and strong community solidarity among the pirates themselves.<sup>65</sup> The first of these pillars to fall was support from European nations such as England and France who began to trade with the Spanish rather than constantly war against them—caused the decay of buccaneer culture and in turn the end of the Golden Age.<sup>66</sup>

As England, France, and the Netherlands used other ventures to advance their interests in the Caribbean, they placed increasing pressure on buccaneer culture. As seen above, it had long been in England’s best interest to encourage piracy in the Atlantic, but as their position in the region changed, so did their policy toward the activities they had once supported. Once Spain ceded the British claim to Jamaica in 1670, the British began efforts to end the island’s role as a primary pirate base—an effort that was aided by the devastating earthquake that hit Jamaica in

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<sup>61</sup> Pestana, “Atlantic Piracy,” 19.

<sup>62</sup> Pestana, “Atlantic Piracy,” 27-8.

<sup>63</sup> Cotton Mather, *Instructions to the living, from the condition of the dead : a brief relation of remarkables in the shipwreck of above one hundred pirates, who were cast away in the ship Whido, on the coast of New-England, April 26, 1717 : and in the death of six, who after a fair trial at Boston, were convicted & condemned, Octob. 22 : and executed, Novemb. 15, 1717 : with some account of the discourse had with them on the way to their execution : and a sermon preached on their occasion.* (Boston: Printed by John Allen, for Nicholas Boone at the sign of the Bible in Cornhill, 1717) Library of Congress, 17.

<sup>64</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 127.

<sup>65</sup> Lunsford, “Model of Piracy,” 135-38.

<sup>66</sup> Lunsford, “Model of Piracy,” 144.

1692. Beginning in 1702, the War of Spanish Succession encouraged the crown to welcome current and former buccaneers as privateers to prey on Spanish ships, but once the war was over, their policy resumed its anti-piracy course. In fact, efforts to suppress piracy became even more aggressive as trade with Spain increased in importance to the British economy. As a result, two of Lunsford's pillars to support piracy fell, "diluting their beliefs and weakening their bonds of solidarity."<sup>67</sup>

Along with military action, Marcus Rediker credits the "terror of hanging" with killing piracy.<sup>68</sup> Six years before the saga of the *Fames Revenge*, an admiral stationed in the West Indies wrote that "the fear of a Halter may affect what the fear of the Lord is ineffectual for among such abandoned Wretches," and credited such punishments with a "Wonderful reformation" among sailors.<sup>69</sup> In the face of state-enacted violence, pirates played their own role in this "dialectic of terror" with increasing zeal.<sup>70</sup> Rediker describes how "as naval captains and executioners killed more and more pirates, those who remained at large became more enraged, more desperate, more violent and more cruel."<sup>71</sup> On board the *Fames Revenge*, we see this phenomenon in the conditions which caused the mutiny against Fly. Increasingly isolated, desperate for manpower in the face of their relatively new status as the enemy of all nations, Fly and his compatriots forced sailors to join them and destabilized the sense of community that had been the strength of piracy from its inception. The result on the *Fames Revenge* was a mutiny and the end of its buccaneering career. The result in the larger sphere of the Atlantic was a "climax in carnage" that ended the Golden Age.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

Pirates have been cemented as a fixture in popular culture, both in their own day and now. Besides stories of swashbuckling heroes, they can shine a light on the complex systems of oppression and resistance in the lives of those ensnared in colonial machinery. Carla Gardina Pestana writes of Atlantic piracy that, "Ignoring complexity silently takes sides in debates about legitimacy and rights that are at the heart of accusations and acts."<sup>73</sup> It would be a mistake to simply label all pirates as evil people, but it is also a mistake to romanticize away the less pleasant aspects of their story. They were real people who at times did atrocious things and who were living in a dangerous and dehumanizing context. To omit the violence and oppression they experienced and participated in is to lose their autonomy and to lose the stories of those whom they harmed.

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<sup>67</sup> Lunsford, "Model of Piracy," 145.

<sup>68</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 144.

<sup>69</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 146-47.

<sup>70</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 170.

<sup>71</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 170.

<sup>72</sup> Rediker, *Villains*, 170.

<sup>73</sup> Pestana, "Atlantic Piracy," 21.

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# "She Who is Not"<sup>1</sup> Living In the "Footsteps of Christ": Trans, Fluid or Gender Nonconforming Identities of Female Italian Saints in the Later Middle Ages

By Andrew Žero

When thinking of the medieval period, many people instantly harken to ideas of the era's supposed backwardness. While there may be aspects of medieval society that *were* this way in comparison to the modern day, non-conforming gender expressions and generally queer or trans experiences were not as far behind as one may first think. This is because, for many, taking on the habit and entering religious life—be it men or women made people be more able to become what some scholars have labeled as a "third," separate gender.<sup>2</sup> More broadly, medieval people "could occupy a variety of gender positions depending on the situation," with the centrality of the male-female binary being blurred and played with through Christian belief and expressions of said belief and the binary itself being in flux. With that, throughout the remainder of this paper, I will refer to individuals as either male-at-birth and female-at-birth people instead of terms like 'men' or 'women.'

Two famous female-at-birth saints from medieval Italy were *vitae* or stories written about their lives post-mortem and own writings clearly showcase gender nonconformity or even a complete transcendence of their assigned sex and perceived gender identities, which were only able to be expressed through their religion. Though both have been noted as being outside the norm of medieval society in some way or another by medievalist scholars, this has not been labeled 'queer,' or been studied more, even though their lives are much more indicative of a non-normative existence, especially when it comes to gender. As this paper will show, both individuals were able to transcend their sex at birth and subsequent gender identity to be more androgynous or fluid—neither fully 'female' nor 'male' as a result—through medieval religious expression. This religious expression provided a space where people could be more openly queer, trans or gender nonconforming in a way that was rendered socially acceptable.

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<sup>1</sup>\*Though this phrase, featured in Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, trans., Conleth Kearns, O.P. (Wilmington: Glazier, Inc., 1980), 85, is not used or discussed in-depth within the paper, its wording felt appropriate and title-worthy.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Mazzo Karras and Katherine E. Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023), 7; Jacqueline Murray, "One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?" In *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, edited by Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 34-8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhcn6.5>.

With that, queerness—and by extension gender nonconforming or 'trans' identities—will be referred to in how it is *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*. The association of queerness to medieval saints in particular is not aimed at attempting to find a 'truth' of how saints identified, as the only ones who would be able to say are the saints themselves. Instead, the instance of queerness within saints' lives comes from the word "queer" itself describing “a variety of sexual and gender transgressions since “to be ‘queer’ is simply to challenge norms,” as Clare of Assisi and Catherine of Siena did throughout their lives.<sup>3</sup> Their stories are all the more representative of queer experiences due to their existence within medieval Italy, arguably a much more patriarchal society than other parts of medieval Europe in the late Middle Ages. The ways people themselves saw gender has become even more popular and has expanded into queer and transgender studies of the medieval period and its own ideas about gender, which were in flux or show examples of figures who showcase as much more gender nonconforming or fluid in expression of their genders in some way, shape or form. Therefore, with closer analysis of saints and the hagiographies or *vitae* written about them versus their own writings, and the ideas from gender and queer studies, these, I argue, provide clear examples of gender non-conformity or a transcendence of gender with two particular saints from medieval Italy who have not yet been studied through these specific lenses.

The importance of gender nonconformity, or even its mere presence, has existed when Eve was formed from Adam's rib that "the intrusion of gender" and sex made their way into the Garden of Eden, and by society as a whole<sup>4</sup> Leah DeVun adds onto this point this in her book *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance*, explaining the early Christian view of Adam's original identity within the Book of Genesis as an "androgynous" or a ""man-woman", " with no male or female sex being present. Instead, non-binary-ness was seen as the example of purity in a human, being a combination of the male-female binary and, for many, “the original condition of humanity.” With that, it was this “original condition” that many religious people especially identified with and would then strive to return to.<sup>5</sup>

With that said, many passages from the Bible itself emphasize the importance of this singular, uniting flesh, and therefore, the androgyny that is possible with humanity. In reference to the Book of Genesis, 2:20-4 in particular shows Adam and Eve being at this equal, androgynous level, as through Adam's rib, "he made into a woman... from the rib he had taken out of the man" or Eve, made from "bone of my [God's] bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.” Later, man and wife "become one flesh,” both male and female.<sup>6</sup> Further on, Galatians 3:28 states, "there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” seeing no distinctions between male and female, being all people and

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<sup>3</sup> Karras and Pierpont, *Doing Unto Others*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Jacqueline Murray, “One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?”, 50-51.

<sup>5</sup> Leah DeVun, "Introduction," In *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance*, (Columbia University Press, 2021), 11-12, 21, 25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/devu19550.6>.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 2:20-24. Retrieved from <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%202&version=NIV>.

from the same place, or rather, person—God.<sup>7</sup> However, the importance and possibility of achieving gender transcendence of any kind that was so closely tied to early Christianity was not lost past the book itself, as many early venerated Christian figures—be it martyrs or saints—expressed ideas of gender non-conformity and bending, with even complete transitions of gender from female-to-male. For example, Saint Perpetua (182-203), who “changed into a man” and fought as one, or Saint Euphrosyne or Euphrasia of Alexandria (414-470), who had made herself known as “Smaragdus,” and identified as male in order to enter a monastery and escape having to be married. Saint Catherine of Siena herself is said to have wanted to replicate Saint Euphrosyne’s example, even wanting to become her.<sup>8</sup>

Centuries later, beginning around the 11th and 12th centuries with the urbanization of medieval life, this social shift would continue making this behavior present through religious expression. More specifically, through the formation of cities and urbanization, inequalities such as poverty and struggle being more apparent, making religious expression evolve into that of more emotionally expressing sorrow for Christ and focusing on his corporeal, physical self, which came from his mother Mary, and for people to reflect emotional on their sins and feel guilt and on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This belief and desire to live the *vita apostolica* boomed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and, more importantly, the idea of *imitatio Christi*, or the voluntary taking on the pain and suffering Christ put himself through as if it was their own, sharing it with Christ, and being like the Apostles and Christ himself through altruistic service to others and abstaining from goods of the world, boomed alongside it.<sup>9</sup> This gave opportunities to female-at-birth people to express themselves and imitate 'masculine' individuals escaping what was expected of them as female-at-birth people, with *imitatio* meaning both understanding Christ's pain, but also being or even becoming Christ, with people like Clare and Catherine able to become men or something more fluid and outside of the gender binary.

With this in mind, Jesus Christ—and by extension God—were then identified as being more than just male: being both 'male' and 'female', masculine and feminine, Father and Mother, 'He' and 'She'.<sup>10</sup> Earlier scholars saw this and discussed its appearance in medieval texts, most notably Caroline Walker Bynum and her groundbreaking work such as *Jesus as Mother and Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, being one of the first

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<sup>7</sup> Galatians 3:28. Retrieved from

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%203%3A28&version=ESV>; Dr. Tanya Stabler-Miller, "Bride of Christ or Devil's Gateway," HIST 310C: Medieval Women (class lecture, Loyola University-Chicago, Chicago, IL, Fall, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> H.R.Musurillo, “The Passion of Ss. Perpetua and Felicitas.” In *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, translated by H.R. Musurillo, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 73; <sup>8</sup> Aelfric of Eynsham, “XXXIII. Of Saint Euphrasia.” In *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol. 2, edited by Walter W. Skeat, trans., Walter W. Skeat, et al. (London, N. Trübner & Co., 1881) 336-355. Retrieved from [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/%C3%86lfric%27s\\_Lives\\_of\\_Saints/Of\\_Saint\\_Euphrasia](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/%C3%86lfric%27s_Lives_of_Saints/Of_Saint_Euphrasia).

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Tanya Stabler-Miller, "Gender, Body, Soul" and "Eucharistic Piety in the High Middle Ages," HIST 310C: Medieval Women (class lecture, Loyola University-Chicago, Chicago, IL, Fall, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 260-1 264-7, 270-3, 275, 289.

historians to discuss and use gender as a possible category to study or analyze history with, let alone queerness. Bynum discusses themes of androgyny or fluidity in expressions by saints, most through the idea of Jesus as a mother or a motherly figure because of this humanity coming from his mother, Mary, making him a more fluid or non-conforming figure that is able to then lactate and feed his believers from his "nurturing...breast-wound," with this reversal being popular amongst male and female religious people to experience suckling from this "breast-wound," or generally being fed by Christ in some way in visions or focus on this idea in their writings.<sup>11</sup> With that, Christ was identified as a more fluid being, both male and female, and religious people who were female-at-birth, wanting to imitate or even become like Christ in this way were able to do so through this fluid identity, showing how many arguably wanted to—and then could—go beyond their sex-based and gendered expectations from society.

Therefore, Bynum's discussions on gender and the possible transcendence of it is essential to medieval conceptions towards broader Bynum points out clear differences between male and female piety. Using Clare of Assisi, and her male counterpart that she is oftentimes juxtaposed with, Saint Francis of Assisi, as an example in one chapter as a comparison between male-at-birth saints and female-at-birth saints, Bynum states, "Clare and Francis expressed the same craving for self-abnegation and world denial," but this was expressed through contrasting metaphors and behaviors.<sup>12</sup> The important factor here is what was available to said saints, as Bynum herself discusses, male-at-birth people, in wanting to imitate Christ, had to make themselves less dominant, while female-at-birth people did not have that option whatsoever, as they were already in that position and needed to find other ways to express themselves religiously, physically and mentally.<sup>13</sup>

With Clare, for example, Bynum discusses how she had shown interest in renouncing her worldly goods—specifically her wealth—like Francis. However, when wanting to follow this lifestyle through renouncing her own wealth like he did, she was "simply not permitted by" her family or the Church to do so, and it would be all the more difficult and dangerous to go against either the family or against any type of authority, especially in Italy in the Middle Ages for Clare and Catherine, no matter the century gap.<sup>14</sup> Bynum argues that because of how closely connected food and its preparation was to women due to it being a more feminine activity, that was one of—if not the only—part of life they could control around them, as according to Bynum, the woman's role of preparing food was also a way "to control food", making it the one resource females-at-

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<sup>11</sup> Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 273; DeVun, Leah, *The Shape of Sex*, in particular Chapter 6: "The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Alchemy in the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance," which discusses the idea of Jesus being both male and female, and a non-binary or hermaphroditic figure in detail, 164, 185-199; Dr. Tanya Stabler-Miller, "Saints and Suffering," and "Gender, Body, Soul," HIST 310C: Medieval Women(class lecture, Loyola University-Chicago, Chicago, IL, Fall, 2024).

<sup>12</sup> Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 101-102.

<sup>13</sup> Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 295.

<sup>14</sup> Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 24, 193.

birth could realistically control in order to engage in *imitatio Christi*.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, by renouncing food, female-at-birth people like Clare and Catherine, were then able to renounce what was expected of them. Instead, they were able to have almost complete power over themselves, others, and transcend and detach themselves from their expected femininity and past womanhood almost entirely through said rejection. As a result, they bend their perceived, outward identities and their actual gender expression into something more expansive and of their own, whilst adhering to gender norms associated with women or female-at-birth people, such as their historic relationship to food.

Even if not inherently seeing either Clare or Catherine as 'queer', Bynum opened the door for other medievalists to be able to further interpret saints' gender expressions. However, this and any expressions that were queerer or showcasing transgender identities, such as that of Clare of Assisi or Catherine of Siena, are still viewed as 'female' with expressions of sanctity that go out of gender norms. Because of this categorization, much of Bynum's work, though foundational, has larger issues which need to be addressed. It is Bynum and other scholars' relationships towards gender and sex as one and the same limit their analysis, as the gender symbols used are representations of AFAB saints are still very sex-based—even enhancing it—linking gender assigned at birth intrinsically to behavior, making these saints still fully and complete feminine women, even if their gender identity presents as much more fluid, opting out of womanhood completely. Because Bynum associates behaviors as 'male' or 'female,' and sees identifying these figures as certain things—such as being queer—as being presentist, limiting these saints down to their parts, applying the strict gender binary of her time onto the medieval one, which was itself much more in flux. So, though Clare and Catherine are female-at-birth, their gender expressions go outside any molds of femininity, being much more fluid in relation to medieval ideas about gender and what was expected of their sex. Even with these issues, Bynum still does find evidence of these types of behaviors through primary sources, especially these saints' *vitae*.

Medievalists, like Bynum, and their work with the available primary sources, especially that of religion and saints' lives, often have to find their examples within the writings of saints. As when female saints' writings barely survive, if at all, many are dependent on their *vitae* rather than their own texts. Consequently, these can be skewed negatively with what was socially associated with female-presenting or female-at-birth people and the expectations of what a 'female' saint should be, turning into a check-off list of stereotypes or exaggerations that should appear in a hagiography or *vita*, such as extreme fasting and body mutilation for female saints. These extra extremities could also be what makes a saint stand out and be gender nonconforming, and should still be taken into account, as these details would still have to be

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<sup>15</sup> Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 189-191, 193-194; Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 279, 289, 296.

mentioned for one reason or another—intentional or not—as any details of someone's life could slip into a formulaic genre like the hagiography.

For Clare of Assisi in the *Legenda* or *Legend of Saint Clare of Assisi*, written by Franciscan friar Thomas of Celano, for example—whose hagiography is much shorter and less in detail due to Celano's lack of a close relationship to her—makes it initially seem like nothing would be able to be uncovered. However, even with this lack of length of Clare's *vita*, there are still details embedded within, occurring early on in her life, showcasing a want to transcend her female status. In the segment about her upbringing before even knowing of Saint Francis of Assisi or the Franciscans, there is a portion which mentions her wearing a shirt made of hair and discusses her negative relationship towards the corporeal—physical—world. Here, there is clear discomfort with her physical self when she still has to present as a noble girl to the world. As Celano details, "hid beneath her soft and costly garments in outward dress she would wear a little hair shirt, thus confirming to the world in outward dress but inwardly "putting on Christ".<sup>16</sup> This detail, though small, showcases how Christianity brought a sort of comfort through nonconforming aspects, as she "inwardly" was more comfortable though her love and belief in Christ, even if in a hair shirt, while still having to wear what she "despised" which were "worldly pleasures," which include what she had to wear and be perceived in by others.<sup>17</sup>

A little later, Clare runs away from home to join Francis of Assisi and his friars, as she "cast aside the filth of Babylon before the altar" and gave the world "a bill of divorce," having her hair cut into a tonsure, which Catherine Mooney, in her article "Clare's Childhood and Conversion to Religious Life, 1193 to 1211," describes as a "ritual act that symbolized a rite of initiation, a sign of penance, and flight from the world," giving her the power of taking herself away from the world which perceived her as female and enforced traditional behavior onto her.<sup>18</sup> She later shows herself off to her family, who try to take her back "from such a sorry choice so unworthy of her noble race and so contrary to all family traditions" as they no longer had her "in their power." She was no longer in the hands of others, but instead, now able to make and shape her own identity and overall existence molding the strict, binary-driven world into something of her own, becoming a "beloved brother" of Francis.<sup>19</sup> Clare of Assisi's dedication to her Christianity is reminiscent, through a transgender and queer lens, of hardship due to a non-supportive family—and is later seen in Catherine of Siena's *vita* with her mother in particular. Being able to go past it, they "kept up their opposition to her purpose of holiness," by throwing hurtful words and other "ill-treatment" her way because she had removed herself from her

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of Saint Clare". In *The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, (St. Bonaventure: NY, The Franciscan Institute, 1953), 20

<sup>17</sup> Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of Saint Clare". In *The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine M. Mooney, "Clare's Childhood and Conversion to Religious Life, 1193 to 1211." In *Clare of Assisi and the Thirteenth-Century Church: Religious Women, Rules, and Resistance*, 15–29. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1dt0107.6>, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of Saint Clare". In *The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, 23; Christina Cedillo, "Habitual Gender: Rhetorical Androgyny in Franciscan Texts", in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 81, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.31.1.65>.

womanhood: of being a daughter, of being a future wife or mother, and beyond what was expected of her as an upper-class Italian girl, and in her family's view, soon-to-be woman at that time. Instead, she is adamant in her expression as she says that "under no circumstances would she be separated from the service of Christ," in effect "putting on" Christ, almost becoming him or a more masculine person due to this hair on her body.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, Catherine of Siena's hagiographer, Raymond of Capua, in *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, her confessor and spiritual advisor in the last years of her life from 1374 to 1380.<sup>21</sup> This text covers Catherine's entire life, alongside contemporary medieval Italian history, being written in the midst of and describing some of the beginnings of more immense societal uncertainty and upheaval throughout medieval Europe, such as the papal schism. With that said, gender and the importance of gender binaries are also essential to Catherine's story due to Italy's intense patriarchal societal structure. Arguably, there was less room for women or female-at-birth people to maneuver within the social landscapes of Italy--as compared France and the Lower Countries, where the option of being a *beguine* or a lay religious woman who does not take a vow like a nun would, was available--or one had to join a convent, like Clare eventually did through the Second Order of the Franciscans, or the Poor Ladies. However, these binaries were not abided by--or are completely rejected--by Catherine, just like Clare throughout her life. Indeed, Capua himself reveals it was "the part assigned to her by God" to exist "more manfully," going against her female-at-birth status, making her much more fluid, and therefore, queer through expression of her sanctity.<sup>22</sup>

The *vita* is split into three parts, with Parts I and II being where much of her behavior is noted as being un-womanly, or manly, making her hagiography stand out by including such details instead of omitting them entirely. Capua's work goes into detail about Catherine's life, starting from her birth to when she joined the *mantellates*, or a group of widowed religious women in Italy, in order to escape her family's expectations, especially marriage, and her political work in the midst of the papal schism and her interactions with Pope Gregory IX to Pope Urban VI.<sup>23</sup> This is especially true in her youth, as "she [Catherine] wanted to imitate the way of life of Saint Euphrosyne" with Euphrosyne--a famous, in what Bynum would term a "transvestite saint"--being mentioned multiple times, who had pretended to be a man in order to enter a monastery. Catherine also sought to imitate the majority male Desert Saints of early Christianity, figures who lived outside of regular gender norms.<sup>24</sup> Though such an awareness of holiness or wanting to live a holy life from youth is itself typical of a female saint's hagiography, Catherine's intent to transform herself into a man or a more masculine role, even if it meant

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of Saint Clare." In *The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> Conleth Kearns, O.P. "Introduction," in *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, trans., Conleth Kearns, O.P. (Wilmington: Glazier, Inc., 1980), lviii for historical context of Capua and medieval Italy at the time.

<sup>22</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, trans., Conleth Kearns, O.P. (Wilmington: Glazier, Inc., 1980), 108.

<sup>23</sup> Kearns, Conleth, "Table of Contents," in *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, v-ix.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 27, 38; Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 314-5.

risking her own reputation, and by extension life, by doing things like cutting her hair and rejecting any and all attempts to feminize her by her family, especially her mother, in a society like medieval Italy makes these hagiographies all the more unique.<sup>25</sup>

An entire segment recounts expectations on Catherine's appearance, she "arts of feminine make-up" and how it should be done, instead, Catherine felt, her "purpose...debarred her from all this [marriage, makeup, being feminine], [and] refused to comply...Her whole intent was set on pleasing God, not man" making her be more than just her female-at-birth status, and something more beyond that.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, it is then that Capua states, "God had filled her [Catherine] with this zeal," but, "He never permitted her to put her idea into practice in the way she then planned." This is in reference to her wanting to be like Euphrosyne, being inspired by her for as long as she could remember.<sup>27</sup> As F. Thomas Luongo finds in his book *The Sainly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, moments like these showcase how Raymond of Capua placed an immense amount of attention on Catherine's status, through her relationship with God, as he had an "awareness of the anomaly Catherine represented as a woman, let alone a saint," especially her behavior as a child in her wishes to be like Euphrosyne, or later on in life, through how independent and open she was in the city of Siena and beyond Italy itself, the seeming need to editorialize it through God himself as to not make her too much of an anomaly than she already was throughout her life is important to note.<sup>28</sup> This is because it makes it all the more apparent that there is still a gender binary being enforced on her for being female-at-birth from all ends, as, Catherine being "filled" by God with this want to be like an infamous gender-bending saint makes Catherine's hagiography all the more evidence of an inherent queerness or fluidity that religion provided medieval people on either side of the male and female binary, showing the ability to go beyond entirely through her beliefs and behavior, even if physically still required to be female.

The bending of gender norms and binaries by Catherine—and by extension Clare—also makes its way into their beliefs and their expression of sanctity as well. Catherine, in her *vita*—and life as a whole—is shown to express herself and her non-conformity much more extremely than Clare. Even when she is referred to as his, or others' mother or as a motherly figure to her disciples, she does so in a similar way to Christ, as a travelling preacher, who is both masculine and feminine, an androgynous person spreading the word of God by being so close to God as his 'child' or 'spouse', with Catherine identifying as both simultaneously. In having Christ as her 'spouse,' Catherine is using a more gender neutral term—even when being referred to as His bride—and being as active as she is religiously and politically, makes her a non-woman to those around her, as she is compared to both male and female religious figures, which in and of itself

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<sup>25</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 38, 41-46.

<sup>26</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 41.

<sup>27</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> F. Thomas Luongo, *The Sainly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 52.

seems to be unusual for a hagiography of a female saint such as this, as he relates her to both the Virgin Mary and Paul, or to both Mary Magdalene and Moses, just to name a few.<sup>29</sup>

Most interesting, however, are segments where Capua recounts conversations with Catherine and the ways in which gender is bent throughout by Catherine, and by extension, God, as her helper. Firstly, there is a conversation where she cries to Raymond of Capua, confessing this after her soul had left her body to meet with God, where she is described as saying she saw her body as a "prison" and generally "dark" for her to exist within, and seeing it much better when she is able to escape it.<sup>30</sup> As she asks Raymond, "would you not feel pity for a soul that had been set free from some dark prison-cell and brought into the sweet light of day, and then once more locked up in the same old darkness as before?" seeing her body as limiting her soul's freedom, with her physical body possibly not matching how she internally feels through her soul, which God was able to release from her "prison" of a body.<sup>31</sup>

This phrasing, similarly to that found in her *vita* with Raymond, arguably showcases signs of a dualist belief system, seeing the body and soul as separate beings, with an inherent body-related dysphoria which gender nonconforming individuals oftentimes feel themselves, seeing their inner selves as more of themselves than their body, which is a 'prison,' like it is for Catherine. Most notable, however, is a conversation noted later on in the *vita* by Capua, when she seemingly turns into Christ, transcending gender in this transformation from woman to man, or against the gender binary as a whole. In the course of the conversation, her face "became the face of a bearded man" which "bore a stamp of majesty which unmistakably marked out its owner as a lord amongst men" with Catherine gaining secondary sex characteristics of a beard and, therefore, the "majesty" of a man.<sup>32</sup> It is because of how powerful she was becoming—through her growing relationship with God, her dedication to a religious life, and her service to God and the Church—that her physical body is now able to miraculously be transformed into that of Christ, or a Christ-like figure. This "stamp of majesty," that Capua refers to makes her be "a lord amongst men," or holier than the average person and then able to shift from female-presenting to male-presenting, with this fluidity being permitted because of her willingness to dedicate her life to Christianity.<sup>33</sup>

Others, though not as obvious as this interaction, continue this pattern of gender transcendence and bending. In a conversation between Catherine and God, Raymond is told that she openly discussed her female sex and its negative aspects, especially in being involved in activities and spaces for men, with God replying, "No thing shall be impossible with God," and "Male and female I created them. Does it not depend on my own will where I shall pour out my grace? With me there is no longer male and female" as, to God, both "stand equal in my sight."

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<sup>29</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 202, 337.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 202, 337.

<sup>32</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

This expresses a nonconforming ideal of Christianity, promoting the inherent androgyny between men and women in the eyes of God, inspiring Catherine to continue taking on a public-facing role. She continues to live publicly preaching to others and being directly involved in Church-related matters, rejecting the binary completely by doing so.<sup>34</sup> In another, Catherine describes a conversation between her soul and God and how he "dealt" with it in a difficult time: "He did just what a mother does with the baby in her arms" as when the baby cries, "she [God] lets him [Catherine] have the breast to his heart's content" with Catherine being the baby, and using male pronouns and God as the mother, and using female pronouns, bending gender both ways.<sup>35</sup>

However, this is where the issue of hagiography can come into play as evidence towards queer identities in medieval people. More often than not, these saints' lives are editorialized or written in such a way that is 'acceptable' or is beneficial to the author, making their femaleness essential to their identity, even when it was not. As F. Thomas Luongo points out, hagiography creates "a more acceptable saintly persona" for the saint in question. This especially goes for Clare, Catherine and their hagiographers, Raymond of Capua and Thomas of Celano, as hagiographies are always structured to make a point of some kind--to represent a particular order or belief within the Church, to promote the hagiographer, to ensure an image of a saint that is recognizable while also not diverging too much from the norm, or all three at once, especially for saints perceived as female.

While someone as close to Catherine as Capua—being both her confessor and then spiritual advisor—wrote her hagiography, his purpose of writing this hagiography when he did was to get Catherine canonized as a saint. However, there is a second, more self-serving point to writing this, which is to make particular statements about the Dominican Order and the Church during a period which was marked by immense chaos and.<sup>36</sup> This is made apparent as Capua expresses his worries to Catherine, asking, "how can we possibly experience greater evils than these – Christians losing all sense of loyalty and reverence towards holy Church," propagandizing for the Order and, by extension, the Church, which were heavily impacted because of what was happening in the world at the time.<sup>37</sup> Capua wanted to help Christianity through promoting Catherine herself and writing her *vita*. This is done by including scenes of Saint Dominic and other famous herself. He discusses these figures both one-on-one and as a group, additionally praising Dominic and the Order, the power of Christ or God and belief, and even including an entire chapter about Saint Dominic himself.<sup>38</sup> Through Catherine's example, with a heavily accomplished life and a deep dedication to her piety, her relationship with God and her direct connection to reforming the Church would possibly make others want to follow

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<sup>34</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 116-117.

<sup>35</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 183.

<sup>36</sup> As discussed in-class, but also discussed by Raymond of Capua and Conleth Kearns, O.P., Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 232, 238-249, 264-7; Kearns, O.P., Conleth, "Introduction," in *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, xxx-xxxii.

<sup>37</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 264-5.

<sup>38</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, 48, 50, 30, 70-73.

her example and believe in the goodness of Christianity once again. Through this, Catherine's example not only brings a much better image to the Dominican Order and simultaneously helps Capua in showing his own knowledge and dedication, also strengthening his position within the Order and the overall Church hierarchy by bringing in a potential saint.

The same goes for Thomas of Celano and his *vita* for Clare of Assisi, which is all the more egregious. As Catherine Mooney notes in her essay in *Gendered Visions, "Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Marie?: Clare of Assisi and Her Interpreters,"* Clare's interpreters did not have much of a relationship with her and were trying to distance the Franciscan Order from the Poor Ladies entirely amidst Francis' death, as they had no connection to them or to Clare as a person, and did not want to because of her perceived female.<sup>39</sup> Because of these kinds of biases, hagiographers and their *vitae* can—and do—oftentimes misrepresent the subjects they write about, such as Clare and Catherine being deemed “womanly” or “feminine,” even when they showcased behaviors and beliefs which were the complete opposite, forcing the binary opposite of their actual expressions onto them. For Clare, this meant being an imitator of Mary, instead of what she actually was: an imitator of Christ himself.<sup>40</sup> This goes for Catherine as well, as throughout her hagiography Raymond of Capua clearly tries to hide the fact she was a woman that was active and in the world, instead making sure to emphasize how it was through God's 'marriage' and direction that she did so, minimally referencing her work and not regarding her letters whatsoever. Because of their perceived female role, they were expected to either imitate other religious women or have similar experiences and 'plot' points as other holy women in their *vitae*, making their work something outside of that mold needing to be approved of by external forces—the highest being God. They are both then associated with being feminine, and by extension, perfect examples for women to follow, with the whole picture not being available for those just learning about them.

However, the use of hagiography as a primary source should not be completely disregarded. Looking at the evidence, many scholars still find the value in using hagiographies in their own research, and in the case of gender nonconformity and transcendence, this is no different. These sources still showcase possibilities available not just for female-at-birth individuals finding these stories, but the true transcendence of gender that Christianity gave in the *vitae* is available for further analysis. As discussed by Catherine Cedillo in her 2015 article “Habitual Gender: Rhetorical Androgyny in Franciscan Texts,” she uses a queer lens and zooms it in on the genre of hagiography itself, with this “rhetorical androgyny” being defined as an androgyny which “exists as spiritual motivation...but finds no corollary in everyday life due to social constraints. More simply, they are able to be expressed internally and can be seen in

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<sup>39</sup> Catherine M. Mooney, “*Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Marie?: Clare of Assisi and Her Interpreters,*” in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 71-74.

<sup>40</sup> Mooney, “*Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Marie?*”, 70-71.

personal writings or correspondences, but not physically identifiable through ways such as appearance or the body itself.<sup>41</sup>

Focusing on Clare of Assisi, Cedillo's focus on the androgynous and arguably gender nonconforming existence was, in her eyes and seemingly in the eyes of the Medieval Church, essential to piety as the "ideal state" of a Christian, even when this androgyny was expressed through heavily gendered binaries. This piety was an "out" for many medieval people who did not identify with their sex-based expectations, finding Christianity as a space of open expression for their own identities.<sup>42</sup> Cedillo showcases that hagiographies could and did showcase that androgyny, and arguably, gender nonconformity, was possible, even if it was only possible to be spiritually expressed through religious beliefs. Cedillo argues these hagiographies could represent a means for people assigned female-at-birth to just 'be,' or exist as androgynous or outside of the binary, escaping the expectations of femininity or womanhood almost entirely through religious means.<sup>43</sup> The more modern scholarship, like Cedillo's and others work, look at medieval sources within the lenses of queer and trans lenses—even if they are still seen as 'new'—offer a broader framework for understanding the gender fluidity that was apparent and possible during the medieval period, saints were then able to blur the strict and heavily imposed gender categories and expectations of their time, creating a space that was open to expressions of fluidity or complete androgyny in their own identities and for their orders as female-at-birth or female-presenting people, which could even extend to a gender nonconforming existence, even if it could not be expressed physically due to the dangers it could pose to said person.

Medieval scholar Ruth Mazzo Karras, similarly, sees hagiography as useful in identifying queer experiences, especially in female-identified saints as, "[w]hile medieval authors would still have identified any female-bodied person as a woman" they were still able to see the "genderqueer or gender nonconforming achievement of overcoming the feminine weakness" that women—according to general Medieval thought—had, going past their femininity and, by extension, womanhood which was recognized and praised within women's *vitae*, like Clare and Catherine.<sup>44</sup> Luckily, with the writings of both Clare and Catherine surviving, these sources support and share these gender bending, nonconforming or transcending qualities that are merely slipped into their hagiographies being at the forefront of their own writings, and by extension, identities.

Clare's letters showcase an intense want to imitate Christ himself and keep Francis of Assisi's original practices of the Franciscan Order, or First Order, into her own, the Poor Ladies, or the Second Order of the Franciscans, which in it of itself, was a battle to receive papal

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<sup>41</sup> Christina Cedillo, "Habitual Gender: Rhetorical Androgyny in Franciscan Texts." In *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 31, no. 1 (2015): 65, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.31.1.65>.

<sup>42</sup> Cedillo, Christina, "Habitual Gender", 66, 72.

<sup>43</sup> Cedillo, Christina, "Habitual Gender", 77, 81; <sup>43</sup> Cedillo, Christina, "Habitual Gender", 66-9, 81.

<sup>44</sup> Karras, Ruth Mazzo, *Doing Unto Others*, 58.

approval for an order that was to her liking.<sup>45</sup> She talks about following the "footprints" of Christ, of "Him" and the importance of *imitatio Christi*, which Mooney uses towards her argument in her essay in *Gendered Voices*, seeing how much these phrases other scholars see as a clear depiction of religious expression along the binary lines of female (Clare) and male (Francis).<sup>46</sup>

As Mooney discusses—and is evident throughout both Assisi's writings—Francis only uses the exact phrase of *imitatio Christi* once in his writings in their original language. Even with this, he is still associated heavily with *imitatio Christi*, seemingly being the poster child for it. Meanwhile, Mooney and my findings within the translated version of the letters *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* show Clare using the term and its translated meaning of following in Christ's "footprints" multiple times, advising those around her to imitate Christ at any chance she gets. However, as Mooney points out, this is not made apparent in any texts other than her own writings.<sup>47</sup> Her clear passion for imitating Christ more than Francis that makes it all the more apparent that she was wanting to bend gender and, arguably was gender nonconforming and queer herself through her expressing of a deep want, even need, to imitate and even become Christ, rather than wanting to imitate any female religious figures. This gender nonconformity extends itself to the official sanctioned rules of the Poor Ladies, with this androgynous identity seemingly integral to the order. According to the official *Rule of Saint Clare*, when entering the Poor Ladies, those entering are required to cut their hair—like Catherine had with the Franciscan friars—and to live impoverished in the way that the Franciscan Order did in practicing intense poverty and renunciation of goods, which included food, being like Christ and Francis himself.<sup>48</sup> Alongside this, in *The Testament of Clare*, it states “[t]he Son of God became for us the Way which our Blessed Father Francis” who “has shown and taught us by word and example,” and to keep on his teachings and examples as The Poor Ladies, making the order a more gender nonconforming and fluid by following in the way of Francis and the First Order. By fasting, they were truly taking away any corporeal goods from themselves and acting more ‘male,’ due to them being more like Francis, by extension, like Christ.<sup>49</sup> There is also an idea that she discusses with Agnes of Prague in one of the four letters found from Clare to her, imploring her to contemplate God transform her “whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through

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<sup>45</sup> Regis J. Armstrong and Brady, Ignatius C. Brady, "Clare of Assisi: Introduction," In *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, (Paulist Press, 1982), 171-4. This specific book is cited in Catherine M. Mooney's "*Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Mariae?* Clare of Assisi and Her Interpreters," In *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, edited by Catherine M. Mooney, ( Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 52-77.

<sup>46</sup> Armstrong, Regis J. and Brady, Ignatius C., "The Second Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague," "The Third Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague," and "The Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges," *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 195, 197, 199, 200, 208; Mooney, Catherine M., "*Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Mariae?*", 63.

<sup>47</sup> Mooney, "*Imitatio Christi or Imitatio Mariae?*", 63; Armstrong, Regis J. and Brady, Ignatius C., "The Second Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague," "The Third Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague," and "The Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges," *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 195, 197, 199, 200, 208.

<sup>48</sup> Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, "The Rule of Saint Clare". In *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 210, 212-3.

<sup>49</sup> Armstrong and Brady, "The Testament of Clare". In *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 227.

contemplation," citing the words of Corinthians 3:18, which is, according to the editor "a prominent theme of Christian spirituality," and makes a Christian gain "a likeness to God."<sup>50</sup> Seeking to take the form of God, and by extension Christ, who had been interpreted throughout the later Middle Ages as either completely male, both male and female or androgynous by religious authority, meant that taking on this likeness, as Clare promoted to Agnes of Prague, indicative of a want to transcend into another type of person or being—like God or Christ.

For Catherine of Siena, who has hundreds of letters which survive, her life in it of itself was gender nonconforming, most scholars still identify her as a woman without looking further. As emphasized by F. Thomas Luongo, her writings reflect a fluidity with gender do so and her work engaging in political matters as intense as the Papal Schism make her all the more "boundary-defying" and a "violation of categories" female-at-birth.<sup>51</sup> Throughout her letters, she is direct in who she is speaking to, not taking any chances to sound 'feminine' by being understanding, gentle, or weak. Instead, she instructs many to "follow" in God's footsteps, saying that even those on the receiving end "ought" to in her letters to both men and women in power.<sup>52</sup> As Luongo explains in studying Catherine's letters and their importance in reading them in their original political context: "she...sent her words where she as a woman could not easily go but addressed an audience few men could achieve."<sup>53</sup> This idea she sent letters that went against her perceived identity as a woman. In a letter to the Curate of Casole, and others, she states: "I don't want us acting this way [sinfully] anymore. No, I want you to follow the way of the Lamb who was slain with such blazing love."<sup>54</sup> In another letter to the priest of Semignano, she is strict in what she says, using demanding phrases like "you must", and that "[t]his is what you are obligated to do [be a chosen vessel, reconcile with God]". Using demanding phrases like "you must", and stating what she wants clearly in following Christ, or "the Lamb," and seeing themselves as one of them, referring to all of them together as "us."<sup>55</sup>

Catherine's more known and famous work however, *The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena: A Conversation with God on Living Your Spiritual Life to the Fullest* fluid gender dynamics are at play, as she refers to the soul through feminine pronouns, such as "she" or "her," and does so separately from a different figure—seemingly but also by "thee," "thy," and "thysself", separating the two different characters or beings and referring to others androgynously as a way to describe her own soul when talking with God. She is much more fluid with her use of gender in describing herself, especially in separating her soul and her physical self. There are multiple references throughout of God telling Catherine that the soul—assigned a feminine role—

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<sup>50</sup> Armstrong and Brady, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 200.

<sup>51</sup> Luongo, *Saintly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, 3, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Catherine of Siena and Suzanne Noffke, *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*, Vol. 1, trans. Suzanne Noffke (Tempe, Ariz: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 285, 301.

<sup>53</sup> Luongo, *Saintly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Catherine of Siena and Suzanne Noffke, *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*, 276

<sup>55</sup> Catherine of Siena and Suzanne Noffke, *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*, 277

needs to act "manfully," or generally be "manful," *Dialogue*.<sup>56</sup> With the importance of a 'manly' disposition, there are references to following in the "footsteps" of Christ, just like she had in her letters and Clare had in hers. Along with all this, similarly to her *vita*, Catherine details of the "heaviness" and torturous nature of the body, using the same phrasing in referring to it as "dark" or a "prison...cell", as she had in Capua's account, with God making mention of this relationship towards the body in telling Catherine or the soul "thou fliest thy cell as if it were a prison".<sup>57</sup> With that said, in one segment in particular, gender is bent multiple times and describes the possible transcendence the soul can achieve through God. As "through the effect of love...the soul becomes another Himself", with God referring to "His servants" or "creatures" neutrally alongside the soul, who like her, "are another Myself, inasmuch as they have lost and denied their own will, and are clothed with Mine, are united to Mine, are conformed to Mine". This wording is like what is referenced in Corinthians 3:18, in one being able to become like God through contemplating him and expressing one's adoration for him or be "another Myself" to God.<sup>58</sup> This gender-bending is dispersed all throughout of what the soul should do or what the soul wants through and from God, never finding any strictness in its pronoun use and in who identifies as what, making it all the more apparent that Catherine was not limited in her gender identity and was potentially queer herself.

In conclusion, the cases of the two medieval Italian saints, Clare of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, analyzing their *vitae* and their own writings shows just how much more can be further studied about medieval Christianity, the saints it praised, the inherent queerness present in the writings of and about medieval saints, and how religion was oftentimes used as a space for many to transcend gender norms and gender entirely, making saints more gender nonconforming than one may expect at first glance. Medieval Christianity offered some type of escape from society, saints themselves becoming queer and being praised for said queerness, or diversion from the norm of others through their holiness. These two saints' physical practices, spiritual ideas and inspirations, and the rhetoric used in their writings and contemporary writings about them, the complexity and fluidity in medieval Christianity in terms of gender and its expression and seeing two saints as more gender nonconforming or fluid than they previously have been. This makes trans or gender lenses all the more essential to be utilized by medieval historians and other scholars to find such patterns throughout history, as being gender nonconforming or trans has never been anything new or of the modern day: it is only in its presentation that it is different from what people know it to be now.

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<sup>56</sup> *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena: A Conversation with God on Living Your Spiritual Life to the Fullest*, trans., Algar Thorold (Ashland: TAN Books, 1991), 26, 63, 84, 125, 139, 158, *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/luc/reader.action?docID=4465408&ppg=1>.

<sup>57</sup> *The Dialogue*, 196.

<sup>58</sup> *The Dialogue*, 26-7.

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## Limitations Among Transgressions: The Evolution of Lesbian Activist Fashion from 1950-1980

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*By Grace Kubek*

When Judy Lederer gets off a bus in New York City with a pageboy haircut, a women's skirt, and a blouse. In a nearby alley, she changes into the shirt and slacks she stole from her half-brother and uses stale beer to slick her hair back into a "duck's ass." She walks down the streets of New York, drawing power from her appearance, looking for a bar at which to make her butch debut.<sup>1</sup> About fifteen years later, Barbara Gittings puts on a white collared shirt and a knee-length pleated skirt. She takes up her picketing sign that reads, "sexual preference is irrelevant to federal employment," and walks past a line of policemen along with several other homophile rights activists similarly dressed up, prim and proper.<sup>2</sup> Five years later, Martha Shelley pulls on a T-shirt that reads, "LAVENDER MENACE," which she covers with a plain button-up shirt. She stands with her fellow "Radicalesbians," all similarly dressed, prepared to storm the Second Congress to Unite Women and force the attendees to grapple with lesbianism as it relates to the feminist struggle.<sup>3</sup> Lederer, Gittings, and Shelley, all prepare themselves for visibility through their clothing. Over a span of thirty years, the three lesbian women dress in vastly different ways, with different ideologies guiding their appearances. Fashion is a language. It can be secretive, used as a means of survival and communication for the initiated. It can be translated, bridging a gap between two cultures that would otherwise fail to understand each other. It can also be exclusive, keeping out those who do not understand or wish to learn it.

Fashion is undeniably important in queer history. It was and remains a mode of protest, visibility, and community for LGBTQ+ people. One finds a gap, however, when researching lesbian fashion history. This research aims to fill that gap. Lesbians have historically used fashion as a means of forming community and communicating messages. In the butch-femme bars of the 1950s, for example, clothing acted as a means of communicating desires between women. Within these bars, a community around clothing formed, and the idea of using clothing as a means of communication was established. When lesbians began organizing politically for their rights, they sought this feeling of community and adopted the method of using clothing to

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<sup>1</sup> Judy Lederer, "A Letter," in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 95-96.

<sup>2</sup> Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings in Picket Line*, October 23, 1965, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b64c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>3</sup> Diana Davies, *Lavender Menace at Second Congress to Unite Women, NYC, May 1970*, May, 1970, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/00dadfc0-4cbe-0131-ff15-58d385a7bbd0>.

send messages. Their message and audience, however, differed from those of bar lesbians. Politically organized lesbians reached out to straight society through their clothing, using respectable dress to show that they deserved rights.

As protests emerged in the 1960s, this uniform became all the more important. Butch and femme women, the originators of the lesbian clothing language, and creators of strong lesbian communities, did not fit into this respectable image. Lesbian women had to don respectable clothing, or step back from the homophile fight. With the dawn of lesbian-feminism, lesbian activist communities once again shifted the language spoken by their clothing, and its message to straight society. Lesbian feminists wore androgynous clothing, embracing a genderless appearance to highlight their deviance from society. Once again, however, butch and femme women found themselves excluded. Whereas before they faced exclusion due to their deviance from respectable and traditional clothing, this time they found themselves excluded due to their apparent adherence to gendered appearance. This development of lesbian activist fashion from 1950-1980 shows the ways in which the movement's beliefs and methods changed, largely becoming more radical. The exclusion of butch and femme women on the basis of appearance, however, shows the continued limitations that came with each bold, radical transgression.

Lesbian history remains a growing area of study. When historian John D'Emilio wrote *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* in 1983, a very small pool of previous scholarship on homosexual emancipation movements existed.<sup>4</sup> D'Emilio focuses his analysis on homosexual movements and communities, a model I will use in this paper. D'Emilio occasionally mentions important fashion trends among lesbian movements in the 1950s and '60s, but does not put special emphasis on them, nor does he track them into the 1970s. This paper, alternatively, will use fashion as a throughline rather than an element of passing mention. Since D'Emilio wrote this book, the scholarship surrounding lesbian subculture and resistance has grown, filling important gaps. In 2024, fashion historian Eleanor Medhurst published the first book-length study of lesbian fashion history, *Unsuitable*. Though her text presents more of a survey of lesbian fashion history than a deep analysis, it serves as a jumping off point for this paper. Medhurst highlighted the importance of studying lesbian fashion as a means of protest and resistance and recognized that resistance through fashion can take many forms.<sup>5</sup> Through the inclusion of multiple communities and time periods, Medhurst tried to fill a gap that has existed in the lesbian historical record and the fashion historical record.

Historians Madeline D. Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy sought to fill a gap in representation with their 1993 book, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*. This important text studied working-class butch-femme bar culture from 1940-1960 in Buffalo, New York. Like *Unsuitable*'s focus on fashion, *Boots of Leather* made history as the first book-length study of

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<sup>4</sup> John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: Second Edition*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1998), x.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Medhurst, *Unsuitable: A History of Lesbian Fashion* (Hurst & Company, 2024), 8.

the mid-century bar community.<sup>6</sup> Kennedy and Davis depicted working-class lesbians as agents of change, just as effective and important as politicized lesbians. They criticized historian Lillian Faderman, author of the 1991 text *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, for not giving agency to lesbians “unless they are involved in explicitly political institutions.”<sup>7</sup> Faderman wrote a social history of lesbianism, and asserted that lesbian identity forms as a result of societal attitudes and opinions toward lesbianism.<sup>8</sup> While my study acknowledges the importance of situating lesbian communities within the outside social and political environment, it will not attribute the creation of lesbian community or lesbian identity entirely to outside societal forces. Though Faderman’s work in the field of lesbian history is undeniably important, it is also important to view lesbians as agents of their own change, creation, and identities.

While the aforementioned studies may mention clothing and fashion occasionally – with the obvious exception of *Unsuitable* – they do not give special focus to the fashion choices lesbian women made. D’Emelio, for example, mentions the importance of feminine expression in the homophile movement, but fails to analyze it as an indication of the movement’s overarching ideology. Faderman, similarly, brings appearance up in reference to butch-femme culture, but only as an indication that this dichotomy reflected straight culture in appearance. Though historians like Medhurst have made important strides in emphasizing the importance of fashion history, Medhurst’s broad approach forces her to skip over key parts of lesbian fashion history. For example, Medhurst’s section on protest fashion completely excludes the American homophile movement, and the idea of respectability that they embraced. Though Medhurst’s work is an important contribution to the field of lesbian fashion history, more specific and detailed approaches are vital to creating a clear historical narrative. Fashion history, much like lesbian history, often goes overlooked. The study of clothing and fashion, however, is vital in understanding identity and the growth of a group ideology.

### **Transgressive But Tethered**

In his essay “A Preface to Transgression,” Michel Foucault posits the theory that transgression and limitations exist in relation to each other, forming a spiral pattern. Foucault’s definition of transgression suggests that transgressions only refer to actions with no moral or ethical aims. People do not transgress norms for the sake of creating positive change in the world, but for the sake of shocking or even appalling others. Despite this separation of transgression from politics or social change, Foucault’s ideas of the relationship between transgressions and limitations offer an interesting framework through which to study fashion

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<sup>6</sup> Madeline D. Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of A Lesbian Community* (Routledge, 1993), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Davis and Kennedy, *Boots of Leather*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in 20th-Century America* (Columbia University Press, 1991), 7.

within the lesbian activist movement. According to Foucault, when an old limit dies out, an opportunity emerges to go further, to subvert the old barriers. The relationship of these subversions and barriers, however, “takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust.”<sup>9</sup> According to Foucault’s theory, every transgression simply creates a new limit. This spiral theory applies to the history of lesbian protest fashion, and the ways they radically subverted social norms while creating their own limiting rules of what a lesbian should look like.

Lesbian protest fashion changed very clearly between 1950 and 1980. The evolution of lesbian activist fashion occurred as new means of protest emerged, replacing old approaches set by previous generations of lesbian activists. These new fashion movements are examples of transgressions against old limitations. Foucault clarifies that these transgressions do not destroy the old limits, but “[affirm] limited being.”<sup>10</sup> Every time lesbian rights activists transgressed a norm set by their predecessors, they created a new limit that restricted the way politically involved lesbians could dress. The reason this exclusion existed changed as approaches toward activism changed, but the main subject of exclusion remained the same: butch and femme-identified lesbians. The way that protest fashion changed over time continuously created new reasons for excluding butch-femme expression and reflects the spiral pattern Foucault identifies between transgression and limitation. Every time lesbian protest fashion changed, a new exclusionary element to the movement emerged.

### **The Butch-Femme Bar Brand**

Butch-femme identity gave many women a means of understanding their lesbianism. Lesbians often expressed their respective identities through clothing and appearance. The scholar Joan Nestle, a self-identified 1950s femme, defines butch-femme as “a way of looking, loving and living that can be expressed by individuals, couples, or a community.”<sup>11</sup> Nestle’s 1992 definition of the butch-femme identity captures its complexity. Such primary accounts clearly show that lesbians used clothing as a means of expressing these identities. Marge McDonald, in a diary entry from March 31, 1955, recorded her first experience alone at a lesbian bar in Columbus, Ohio. She goes home with a woman she met at the bar, who “was obviously butch. She wore men’s jeans, a t-shirt, and she walked like a boy.”<sup>12</sup> McDonald easily identifies this woman, Lynn, as a lesbian due to her masculine clothing. Figure 1 shows another possible version of the butch bar lesbian. Frankie, the subject of the image, sits with her right leg raised on the table, and a cigarette in her hands, which rests on her lifted knee. Frankie wears black leather boots, trousers, and a cardigan over a collared shirt, collar popped. Her hair is slicked

<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault, “A Preface to Transgression,” 35.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, “A Preface to Transgression,” 35.

<sup>11</sup> Joan Nestle, “The Femme Question,” in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 138.

<sup>12</sup> Marge McDonald, “From the Diary of Marge McDonald (1931-1986),” in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 126.

back in the “duck’s ass” style.<sup>13</sup> Both of these women “use traits associated with masculinity to signal their lesbianism,” which cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin identifies as one purpose of



Figure 1: *Frankie, a 1950s Butch*, 1950s, in Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (Columbia University Press, 1991), 92.

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<sup>13</sup> *Frankie, a 1950s Butch*, 1950s, in Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (Columbia University Press, 1991), 92.

the butch identity.<sup>14</sup> Femme expression also deployed gendered codes to communicate sexual desire and preference. According to Nestle's own femme experience, femme expression included wearing "makeup, high heels, skirts, [and] revealing clothing."<sup>15</sup> Butch and femme lesbians alike used their appearances to communicate their identities to each other. Far from the re-creation of heterosexual gender norms, it served as a means of communication and cultural subversion. Probing butch-femme fashion and expression disproves the claim of heterosexual replication as a superficial summary and deep misunderstanding.

The fashion conventions in the butch-femme bar scene provided many women with an environment to explore subversive forms of self-expression. Historians such as Faderman, however, accuse butch-femme women of replicating a "heterogenderal pattern."<sup>16</sup> Faderman's analysis assumes that lesbian women only understood their relationships through a heterosexual lens. The evidentiary record, however, refutes this claim. In her revolutionary and semi-autobiographical novel *Stone Butch Blues*, Leslie Feinberg expresses annoyance at assertions like Faderman's. Feinberg's main character, Jess Goldberg, defends her butch expression as a genuine form of expression rather than a product of lesbian oppression, insisting "women like me have existed since the dawn of time, before there was oppression."<sup>17</sup> For many women, butch expression served not as a form of oppression, but as an escape from oppressive female expectations. For Jeanne Cordova, a butch lesbian who discovered her identity in the 1960s, men's clothes "spoke to [her] soul!" in a way that women's clothing never had.<sup>18</sup> Cordova's elation makes clear that butch fashion did not represent a woman dressing like a man, but a woman using men's clothing to express her most authentic self. Femme fashion functioned in a similar way. Nestle recalls the confidence and power she found in feminine expression. Dresses, skirts, and revealing clothing were what she wore when she "[felt] sexually powerful and [wanted] to share it with other women."<sup>19</sup> Nestle did not wear feminine clothing to attract men or a male-adjacent figure. She wore feminine clothing to express her sexuality and her inner power and share that power with others. The sources from women who participated in this culture clearly show butch-femme expression was a means for lesbian women to find genuine self-expression in a hostile world. This language of clothing also created a bar subculture vital to creating a sense of lesbian community.

Lesbians could not visibly express their sexuality outside of bars due to safety concerns but continued to dress in subversive ways despite the risks. One New York rule, for example, dictated that people had to wear a minimum of three garments that adhered to their biological

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<sup>14</sup> Gayle Rubin, "Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries," in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 467.

<sup>15</sup> Nestle, "The Femme Question," 141.

<sup>16</sup> Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 167.

<sup>17</sup> Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (Alyson Books, 1993), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Jeanne Cordova, "Butches, Lies, and Feminism," in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 278.

<sup>19</sup> Nestle, "The Femme Question," 141.

sex. This law would come to be known as the “three-piece clothing law,” a law that directly impacted butch women such as Feinberg.<sup>20</sup> In a 2006 speech, Feinberg gestured to her suit and tie, declaring “I wear this suit and tie today as a reminder that for many years, I walked through the streets of Buffalo, risking arrest, for wearing just this clothing.”<sup>21</sup> Feinberg also includes the brutality of this law in *Stone Butch Blues* when her main character, Jess, recalls getting arrested in a club: “He [the policeman] put his hands all over me, pulled up the band of my Jockeys, and told his men to cuff me—I didn’t have three pieces of women’s clothing.”<sup>22</sup> Feinberg shows through personal and fictional accounts the danger butch women faced by existing visibly. Femmes also faced this police brutality due to their proximity to butch friends and partners. Joan Nestle recalls how she and other young femmes “took on the vice squad, the plainclothes policewomen” in lesbian bars.<sup>23</sup> Even so, butch women continued wearing masculine clothing, and their femme partners continued walking with them on the street, and dancing with them in the bars. These women made an active and radical decision to authentically express themselves through clothing, despite the risks such actions posed. Though they faced violence from the law and bigots on the streets, they continued to frequent bars, maintain these community spaces, and dress authentically. Though not politically organized, bar lesbians radically insisted on their right to exist.

Butch-femme visibility allowed many women to reach an important state of self-recognition and self-acceptance. Such an environment arguably made later organization in a political capacity possible. Before Marge McDonald’s first experience in a lesbian bar, she recalls “I was a homosexual but... had never been around my own kind before.”<sup>24</sup> The bars gave McDonald a place to find and engage with other lesbians, an undeniably important experience for self-acceptance and actualization. In the late 1960s, Jeanne Cordova similarly found a sense of community at lesbian bars specifically due to the fashion. She recalls going to a bar in Baldwin Park, New York City, called Tommy’s and studying the other butches’ clothing so she could replicate the style.<sup>25</sup> This desire to dress like the other women around her shows the importance of clothing to the bar community, which took on special importance due to homophobic outside threats. Though butches and femmes dressed differently, they came together in the face of these threats. Joan Nestle, for example, recalls butches and femmes uniting to protect each other against police raids, and taunts from outsiders on the streets.<sup>26</sup> Leslie Feinberg similarly remembers butch and femme women coming together in bars to fight against bigoted attackers.<sup>27</sup> The protective community within these bar spaces is incredibly important as it shows

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<sup>20</sup> Medhurst, *Unsuitable*, 104.

<sup>21</sup> Leslie Feinberg, “Leslie Feinberg in Buffalo, June 2, 2006,” posted by Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, December 12, 2014, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEdwzKPT114>, (00:18:54).

<sup>22</sup> Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Nestle, “The Femme Question,” 139.

<sup>24</sup> McDonald, “From the Diary of Marge McDonald,” 126.

<sup>25</sup> Cordova, “Butches, Lies, and Feminism,” 279.

<sup>26</sup> Nestle, “The Femme Question,” 143.

<sup>27</sup> Feinberg, “Letter to a Fifties Femme,” 104.

a solid lesbian community that would fight for the protection of its people, no matter how they dressed or identified. It is also important, however, to acknowledge the limitations that these bars imposed upon their attendees when it came to appearance and dress.

Some lesbians did not feel comfortable with the restrictions that many bars imposed upon attendants when it came to butch-femme expression. One common restriction that many butches reiterate in their accounts of bar culture is the ban on dating other butches. Cordova recalls in her many “lessons” on butch identity, the most important rule was “never let on if you find yourself sexually attracted to another butch.”<sup>28</sup> In her memoir on her life as a butch lesbian, Esther Newton similarly recalls “getting it on with another butch would have been beyond queer.”<sup>29</sup> The emphasis on only pursuing lesbians of the “opposite” identity suggests a pattern of limitation that did, in fact, mimic heterosexual norms. Lesbians attending bars faced severe pressure to choose between butch or femme modes of expression. Women who did not choose faced ostracization or a reputation of untrustworthiness. For example, Cordova calls ki-kis, “switch hitters who flip-flopped from butch to femme depending on who they were trying to make.”<sup>30</sup> To Cordova, nefarious motivations were the only reason for more than one mode of expression.

Butch-femme expression and lesbian bar subculture played an indispensable role in building a sense of lesbian community. John D’Emilio acknowledged the importance of this subculture in the formation of later lesbian movements. He argues that the bars created a “group consciousness among gay women” that allowed them to organize politically later.<sup>31</sup> D’Emilio, however, does not consider the way clothing played into this group consciousness, and the effects bar fashion had on future organizing. Lesbian bars established clothing and fashion as purveyors of symbolic meaning and messages. If women did not dress in a way that appropriately communicated these messages, however, they faced isolation. The relationship established in lesbian bars between liberatory visibility and limiting requirements continued into the eras of lesbian political organizing.

### **Homophiles are Here: The Emergence of Lesbian Rights Groups**

The first lesbian rights group formed in 1955. The Daughters of Bilitis, or DOB, first organized as a social group intended to bring lesbians together in an environment other than lesbian bars. In an interview from 1989, DOB founders Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon recall the meeting at a friend’s apartment that would lead to the formation of the DOB. Their first thought

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<sup>28</sup> Cordova, “Butches, Lies, and Feminism,” 278.

<sup>29</sup> Esther Newton, *My Butch Career: A Memoir* (Duke University Press, 2018), 130.

<sup>30</sup> Cordova, “Butches, Lies, and Feminism,” 281.

<sup>31</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 99.

upon receiving the invitation was, “great, we can meet some other lesbians.”<sup>32</sup> Martin and Lyon felt uncomfortably shy in lesbian bars and found it difficult to meet other lesbians in the bar environment. They also recognized that the bars were always subject to police raids, and stressed “DOB was an alternative to the bars that were being raided.”<sup>33</sup> The community created by Lyon, Martin, and other founding members of the DOB offered an alternative to lesbians who did not find community in the bars. Barbara Gittings, the first president of the New York chapter of the DOB, “didn’t have much success talking to people in the bars, especially about the literature.”<sup>34</sup> Gittings instead found her community within the DOB, where she was able to surround herself with lesbians who had similar interests and goals. Even Jeanne Cordova, a lesbian who strongly identified as butch and did have a sense of community among bar lesbians, eventually tired of the bar environment. She “wanted being queer to mean more than spending my life in a bar,” and joined the DOB to seek social and political change for lesbians.<sup>35</sup> The DOB image of what a lesbian should look like, however, differed greatly from the women who frequented lesbian bars.

*The Ladder*, DOB’s periodical published from 1956-1972, launched its very first issue with a description of the Daughters of Bilitis, its history, and its mission: to gain “greater personal and social acceptance and understanding.”<sup>36</sup> The main goal of the DOB centered on acceptance from straight society. This influenced the ways DOB women presented themselves. From 1956-1967, the DOB’s statement of purpose began with “education of the variant” and “advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.”<sup>37</sup> The very first point in the organization’s statement of purpose hinged on educating lesbians to fit into society. Dressing in a manner acceptable to straight society, it stated, would lead to the acquisition of lesbian rights. The call for acceptable clothing rather than increased visibility contrasts the highly visible butch-femme dress code at lesbian bars. The DOB looked at clothing from a perspective of social and political advancement, unlike women going to socialize in bars.

Homophobia ravaged the 1950s, as demonstrated by the police raids in working-class lesbian bars, and the McCarthy-era purges directed against middle-class lesbians. Though Joseph McCarthy’s investigation of communists and homosexuals in the government began only in sectors concerning national security, they quickly spread. When Dwight D. Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450 in 1953, he made “sexual perversion,” code word for homosexuality, a valid reason to terminate someone’s federal employment.<sup>38</sup> The threat to job security

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<sup>32</sup> Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, "Season 3: Episode 7: Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin," interview by Eric Marcus, *LGBTQ Oral Histories from the Archive*, Making Gay History, November 30, 2017, audio, 06:26, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jicWWyu2JcQ>.

<sup>33</sup> Martin and Lyon, Interview, 10:58.

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Gittings, “Founding the New York Daughters of Bilitis: ‘It was a long, hard journey,’” interview by Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.*, July 19, 1974, Transcription, 422.

<sup>35</sup> Cordova, “Butches, Lies, and Feminism,” 281.

<sup>36</sup> *The Ladder*, October 1956, 3.

<sup>37</sup> “Daughters of Bilitis – Purpose,” *The Ladder*, October, 1956, 4.

<sup>38</sup> McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*, 37.

understandably made clothing conformity extremely important, especially as people understood “to be accused is to be guilty.”<sup>39</sup> Clothing and appearance best served as camouflage for anyone who wanted to maintain their jobs. There was also an understandable incentive to prove, through acceptable dress, that lesbians were not perverts, as the executive order insinuated. A woman wearing slacks and a men’s button-up faced much greater risk of being accused, fired, and feared than a woman wearing a dress and high heels. Politically informed lesbian visibility thus had to assume a very specific form and style.

DOB style had to carefully balance visibility and assimilation. They achieved this through fashion, an impressive balancing act that past historians have neglected to properly examine. Del Martin’s first message in *The Ladder* called the lesbian “a very elusive creature,” especially considering “current modes in hair style and casual attire have enabled her to camouflage her existence.”<sup>40</sup> Martin pointed to the assimilation that many lesbians practiced maintaining their safety during the McCarthy era, but highlighted the way it posed a barrier to lesbian community. Though the DOB encouraged respectable dress and attire, the organization also sought lesbian community. They encouraged lesbians to come out of hiding to an extent as “nothing was ever accomplished hiding in a dark corner,” while also donning respectable and acceptable clothing. Lesbians, the DOB argued, should not increase their visibility through butch-femme expression that emphasizes their difference from straight women. Rather, lesbians should use popular means of feminine expression to show they are not so different from straight society. As Lorraine Lesnam put it in her article in *The Ladder*, “this is our form of LIVING PROPAGANDA.”<sup>41</sup> Lesnam and others recognized that they could not just hide in a corner hoping their oppression went away. At the same time, DOB members thought they had to fight for their rights in a respectable way. The DOB thus emphasized middle-class values and appearances while distancing themselves from bar culture and the butch-femme women within it.

The focus on respectability led to significant problems for the DOB’s goal of community building since “respectability” referred to middle- or upper-class white ideals. Working-class lesbians found themselves excluded from DOB’s objectives. For example, Del Martin’s first letter in *The Ladder* claims that “while women may not have so much difficulty with law enforcement, their problems are none the less real - family, sometimes children, employment, social acceptance,” emphasizing middle-class issues. In the same year that this letter appeared, a raid at Kelly’s Alamo Club, a lesbian bar in San Francisco, ended with thirty-six women in jail.<sup>42</sup> Butch women who frequented bars often include the dangers of law enforcement in their accounts. The accounts outlined in Leslie Feinberg’s fictional and real-life work clearly showed such dangers. Martin’s decentering of police persecution and emphasis on social acceptance reveals the values she and the rest of the DOB prioritized. While the DOB tried to improve the

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<sup>39</sup> Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 142.

<sup>40</sup> Del Martin, “President’s Message,” *The Ladder*, October 1956, 6-7.

<sup>41</sup> Lorraine Lesnam, “Accidental Living Propaganda,” *The Ladder*, August/September 1969, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 165.

lives of lesbians, they did so within a framework that emphasized middle-class ideals, expression, and appearance, distancing working-class women in the process.

The DOB formed its own language of lesbian clothing, attempting to use respectable dress to achieve civil rights. Their language did not involve shouting to other lesbians that they existed through subversive clothing. Instead, DOB lesbians spoke softly to straight society, assuring them in comforting tones that lesbians were not so different. The DOB offered lesbians a new environment where they could form a community and take on a political purpose that would improve their lives. DOB lesbians broke a barrier when they formed their own organization, separate from any men's homophile league that could silence their voices. They also showed lesbians that bars were not the only place to form a community. Despite these great strides, the limitations in presentation greatly impacted the number of women who felt welcome in this new community. Rather than inviting the women who had formed such strong camaraderie within the bars, the DOB actively distanced themselves from bar culture and butch-femme expression. They acknowledged the significance of visibility to the lesbian movement, but also limited this visibility to respectable, middle-class appearance. This relationship with visibility and respectability remained at the forefront of the homophile rights movement, even as it became increasingly radical.

### **Radical While Respectable: The Dawn of Homophile Protests**

By the mid-1960s, the consciousness within many homophile rights groups had shifted to more radical action. The emphasis on education had clearly proven ineffective, which Barbara Gittings and other homophile rights activists recognized. Gittings recalls that “by the late ‘60s, we began to see that discussing the cause and nature of homosexuality would not help us. We began to insist on our rights.”<sup>43</sup> One way that homophile groups shifted to this demanding tone was through the advent of protests and pickets. The picket lines that homophile rights groups organized increased the visibility of these groups. Increased visibility, however, was not at the cost of respectability. The emphasis on respectable appearance and dress did not disappear as the homophile rights movement became increasingly radical. Lesbian activists recognized that it was time to come out into the open but did so in a very specific fashion.

Respectability remained the name of the game for homophile rights groups who organized protests. The Mattachine Society, a mostly male homophile rights group that worked with the DOB on pickets and protests, declared that protest clothing should be “conservative and conventional.”<sup>44</sup> As historians Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman observe, “the women wore dresses, stockings, and heels and the men donned suits, white shirts, and ties.”<sup>45</sup> Images of

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<sup>43</sup> Gittings, Interview, 428.

<sup>44</sup> McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*, 152.

<sup>45</sup> McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*, 152.

Barbara Gittings at protests in 1965, 1966, and 1969 reflect these fashion rules. Figure 2 shows Gittings in a white collared blouse and a knee-length pleated skirt. Behind her walk other men and women dressed in a similarly respectable fashion. The men wear suits and ties, and a woman behind Gittings wears a knee-length skirt, a blouse, and heels.<sup>46</sup> In Figure 3 (1966) and Figure 4 (1969), Gittings wears knee-length dresses while marching.<sup>47</sup> None of these picketing images include women who look like Frankie, the 1950s butch from Figure 1, nor do they include the highly feminized women described by Joan Nestle. Figure 5 depicts Gittings setting up for a Christmas party. Gittings wears a knee-length dress, like those she wears in the protest images.<sup>48</sup> The similarity between Gitting's event attire and her protest clothing shows the importance of effort and propriety to homophile picketers.

The expectations of appearance extended to any butch-femme women involved in the movement. While the DOB did not explicitly turn butch-femme women away, the expectations surrounding appearance did not change for women who identified as butch or femme. The DOB expected all lesbians to play the part of the respectable, middle-class woman. Rita Laporte, one of the DOB presidents, is one example of a self-identified butch woman who adhered to respectability principles through clothing. In *The Ladder* article "No Ordinary Lesbian," Robin Jordan recalls Rita Laporte's public appearance in front of a mostly straight audience of college students. Jordan reports on the crowd's reaction to Laporte's appearance, calling it "a disappointment for everyone who expected a bulldyke," or in other words, a very masculine-looking lesbian. The audience instead exclaimed, "'She's wearing a skirt!'" and, in their shock and surprise, consequently listened to what Laporte said about lesbianism.<sup>49</sup> Laporte subverted the audience's expectations and used her surprisingly feminine appearance as a strategy to engage the crowd. Though she identified as a butch lesbian, she donned a skirt for this public appearance. Barbara Gittings recalls instances where butch-presenting women faced pressure to wear women's clothing for the sake of public appearances. At an early DOB conference, a woman who wore men's clothing practically all her life was told to wear feminine clothing for the sake of the convention. Gittings recalls another woman who was accepted for wearing men's clothes everywhere she went, even at her job, "but in the DOB there was a discussion over her appearance, whether it was acceptable."<sup>50</sup> Historian John D'Emelio includes this account in his book, though fails to analyze the symbolic importance of the feminine clothing. D'Emelio concludes that this feminization represented an aim for lesbian women to obtain better, middle-

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<sup>46</sup> Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings in Picket Line*, October 23, 1965, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b64c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>47</sup> Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings Picketing Behind a Police Barrier*, July 4, 1966, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b699-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> and Nancy Tucker, *Barbara Gittings Picketing*, July 4, 1969, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b6bb-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>48</sup> Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings Preparing for a Christmas Party*, 1960-1965, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-93c6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>49</sup> Robin Jordan, "No Ordinary Lesbian," *The Ladder*, December/January 1969/1970, 8.

<sup>50</sup> Gittings, Interview, 429.

class jobs.<sup>51</sup> He does not, however, address the fact that this respectable fashion had a symbolic importance outside of a job interviewer's office. Respectable feminine clothing served as a political statement, communicating to the world that lesbians could exist as respectable members of society.



Figure 2: Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings in Picket Line*, October 23, 1965, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b64c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

<sup>51</sup> D'Emelio, *Sexual Politics*, 106-107.



Figure 3: Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings Picketing Behind a Police Barrier*, July 4, 1966, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b699-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.



Figure 4: Nancy Tucker, *Barbara Gittings Picketing*, July 4, 1969, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-b6bb-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.



Figure 5: Kay Tobin, *Barbara Gittings Preparing for a Christmas Party*, 1960-1965, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-93c6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

Such pressures of appearance caused a divide between the DOB and working-class lesbians, which both groups faced difficulty in bridging. Many historians recognize this divide and similarly attribute it to class distinctions. They do not, however, connect these class distinctions directly to dress and appearance. The sources, however, suggest that appearance played an important factor in the divide. Judith Schwarz, a working-class lesbian who went to DOB meetings, recalls the response she received from working-class friends whom she invited to

DOB meetings: “Who,” her friend asked, “would want to hang out with those stuffy dames?”<sup>52</sup> Though Schwarz clarifies that the DOB women were not stuffy, there is a clear assumption among her friends that working-class women would not mix with DOB women. An article that ran in *The Ladder* criticized butch-femme bar culture and is one example of the messages DOB women sent to working-class women, earning them this “stuffy” reputation. In her article “The Butch/Femme Question,” Rita Laporte calls bars the locations where “the butch/femme phenomenon is played out in its crudest form... it is here that one encounters a genuine copying of heterosexual sex roles.”<sup>53</sup> Laporte tells her audience that butch-femme identity is okay, so long as it does not go to the extremes found in working-class bars. Laporte thus alienates an important part of the lesbian community who bravely practiced radical visibility for years within these bars.

The dawn of protests in the homophile rights movement greatly advanced lesbian visibility. Rather than just focusing on education and assimilation, lesbians began asserting their existence, and demanding they have the rights they deserve. The worthiness of these rights, however, seemed to hinge on respectable appearance. As visibility increased with protests, adherence to rules of acceptable appearance also increased. Though lesbian rights activists transgressed the norms that kept them quiet and invisible, they maintained the limitations that dictated what respectable lesbians look like. Butch-femme women still found themselves left out unless they changed their appearances. While visibility increased, the capacity of the movement to accept butch-femme lesbians did not. The stress on respectability, however, would soon face challenges from younger activists, who adjusted the requirements of lesbian dress while maintaining the exclusionary nature of previous decades.

### **Lesbian-Feminism, Not Butch Femme-inism**

In the late sixties, feminism and lesbianism began an interesting affair that would eventually result in the lesbian-feminist movement. The 1969-1970 edition of *The Ladder* clearly reflects the increasing interest of lesbian groups with feminist ideology. This edition contained multiple articles centering the feminist movement, as well as criticism of butch-femme identity that ran rampant in the lesbian-feminist movement. One article in this 1969/1970 edition of *The Ladder*, “A Radical View: The Homosexual, Male Supremacy and Cultural Conditioning,” criticizes butch-femme expression, claiming it is a replication of straight gender relations. The author, Louise Pelton, specifically states that butch lesbians are imitating men, and male oppression.<sup>54</sup> Pelton gives a preview to the lesbian-feminist animosity towards butch-femme

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<sup>52</sup> Judith Schwarz, “Technicolor Dykes,” in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 194.

<sup>53</sup> Rita Laporte, “The Butch/Femme Question,” *The Ladder*, June/July 1971, 4.

<sup>54</sup> Louise Pelton, “A Radical View: The Homosexual, Male Supremacy and Cultural Conditioning,” *The Ladder*, December/January 1969/1970, 22.

expression, and feminine or masculine expression in general. This article, however, does not reflect the entirety of *The Ladder's* articles. Laporte, for example, asks “why not let an especially ‘feminine’ Lesbian... invite men to explain why she is such an object of terror.”<sup>55</sup> Such a suggestion shows femininity as a legitimate means to prove lesbians are not so scary, reflecting older strategies of feminine respectability. Additionally, *The Ladder* publishes poetry that speaks of butch-femme dress and culture. “Invitation” by Margaret Elliot reads, “You night walker / passing under the streetlight / in your khaki shirt / flinching at a drift of / laughter at your back / hoping no one but someone / will notice / Come to the bar tonight / I will be there.”<sup>56</sup> The speaker invokes fashion signals and bar culture that points to butch-femme expression. Such acknowledgment of butch-femme identity and bar culture, however, would not be permitted in the younger radical groups forming at the time.

In 1969, a divide began between older and younger generations of lesbian activists. Alice Bingham wrote a letter to *The Ladder* about her experience at the Fifth Annual Reminder Day Picket in Philadelphia on July 4, 1969. Bingham records a visible generational gap “the older, more discreet, conservatively dressed people; and the young casually attired hand-holders.”<sup>57</sup> The older generation still bought into the idea of respectable dress and behavior. The younger generation, on the other hand, did not buy into this ideology. Martha Shelley began her lesbian activist career with the DOB. Even so, she came to agree with the mindset of other lesbians of her generation, who said “we don’t want that kind of white middle-class America. We have other ideas of what we want.”<sup>58</sup> These “other ideas” drove Shelley and other lesbians to form their own activist communities that did not adhere to the politics of respectability.

Lesbian-feminism quickly became the dominant lesbian movement of the 1970s. Protestors no longer wore knee-length skirts and high heels. Instead, lesbian-feminist adopted the “dyke uniform,” which centered intentional ugliness based on societal expectations.<sup>59</sup> The dyke uniform typically included “hair to dyke regulation shortness... jeans, corduroys, and boys’ shirts,” as was the style Lyndall MacCowan adopted when she joined the lesbian-feminist movement.<sup>60</sup> Figure 6, which depicts Martha Shelley and her fellow Radicalesbians, clearly shows the androgynous style of the day. Every woman outside the building wears a collared button-up shirt and pants. Only one woman has hair past her shoulders. Every other woman has short hair and is not visibly wearing makeup.<sup>61</sup> This androgynous style served a political

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<sup>55</sup> Rita Laporte, “Dear Editor,” *The Ladder*, February/March 1970, 44.

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Elliot, “Invitation,” *The Ladder*, February/March 1970, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Alice Bingham, “Dear Editor: I’ve been thinking about the picket,” *The Ladder*, February/March 1970, 46.

<sup>58</sup> Martha Shelley, “Martha Shelley,” interview by Mason Funk, Outwards, August 17, 2017, video, 40:48, <https://theoutwardsarchive.org/interview/shelley-martha/>.

<sup>59</sup> Medhurst, *Unsuitable*, 176.

<sup>60</sup> Lyndall MacCowan, “Re-collecting History, Renaming Lives: Femme Stigma and the Feminist Seventies and Eighties,” in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Alyson Publications, 1992), 313.

<sup>61</sup> Diana Davies, *Lavender Menace at Second Congress to Unite Women, NYC, May 1970*, May 1970, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/00dadfc0-4cbe-0131-ff15-58d385a7bbd0>.

purpose, just as the homophile's respectable dress had. The lesbian feminists' "deliberate ugliness" displayed their denouncement of social norms for women.<sup>62</sup> It also meant that they could protest without a picket sign. Their androgynous style increased their visibility as lesbians in everyday life, which carried extreme importance for the larger lesbian community. Though this uniform seems extremely liberatory when compared to previous expectations of respectable presentation, it still had its limitations. Just like every other political fashion movement in this paper, it created an exclusive environment.

Lesbian-feminist groups failed to consider what clothing meant to lesbians of color and working-class lesbians. As Lyndall MacCowan observes from her time in the movement, "its construction of both 'woman' and 'lesbian' is based on a white, middle-class, *heterosexual* experience of women's oppression."<sup>63</sup> Barbara Smith, a founding member of the Combahee River Collective, a black lesbian-feminist collective, had a very different relationship to style and fashion than other lesbian-feminists due to her experience as a black woman. Smith remembers getting her hair braided for the 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights as she knew of the event's significance and visibility to the public. Smith reflected, "being raised by Black women as I was, you never try to go out looking like you just rolled out of bed."<sup>64</sup> Smith valued putting effort into her appearance due to her background and upbringing, which many lesbian-feminist groups actively discouraged. Lesbians who grew up poor and working class also had a different relationship with clothing and appearance than their middle-class lesbian feminist sisters. Sue Katz, for example, viewed fashion as a means of free expression. She did not see clothing as "ephemeral and replaceable" as she thought the middle-class members of her collective did.<sup>65</sup> MacCowan remembers looking into the mirror and seeing "*street trash or poor white trash*" due to the androgynous clothing she had to wear as a lesbian-feminist. This pressure to adhere to androgynous clothing reflects the homophile movement's pressure to adhere to respectable clothing, and remained exclusionary toward anyone who did not dress correctly.

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<sup>62</sup> Medhurst, *Unsuitable*, 178.

<sup>63</sup> MacCowan, "Re-collecting History," 317.

<sup>64</sup> Medhurst, *Unsuitable*, 180.

<sup>65</sup> Sue Katz, "Working Class Dykes: Class Conflict in the Lesbian/Feminist Movements in the 1970s," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2017): 284, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17541328.2017.1378512>.



Figure 6: Diana Davies, *Lavender Menace at Second Congress to Unite Women, NYC, May 1970*, May 1970, photograph, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/00dadfc0-4cbe-0131-ff15-58d385a7bbd0>.

Lesbian-feminists centered their movement around the idea of political correctness, which included politically correct dress.<sup>66</sup> Butch and femme fashion became antiquated and even demonized as their forms of fashion became politically incorrect, and therefore, enemies to the lesbian-feminist cause. Jean Cordova's claim that "feminism tore apart [her] butch identity" is both literally and philosophically true. When Cordova sought a leadership position in the lesbian-feminist movement, a fellow member told her she could not hope to advance in the movement with "male-identified" chains on her boots. For Cordova, her boots tied her to her butch identity and the power she associated with it. To adhere to lesbian-feminist rules of appearance, however, she ripped the gold chains from her boots.<sup>67</sup> Femmes also found lesbian-feminist rules dictating their appearance. For example, they labeled Cordova's femme girlfriend, Gayle, a "'female impersonator' because of her polished nails and makeup."<sup>68</sup> Such attention to traditionally feminine fashion norms automatically branded any woman an enemy to the lesbian-feminist

<sup>66</sup> Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 230.

<sup>67</sup> Cordova, "Butches, Lies, and Feminism," 283-284.

<sup>68</sup> Cordova, "Butches, Lies, and Feminism," 284.

cause. If lesbians did not agree to “liberation” on lesbian-feminist terms, they could not be part of the lesbian-feminist movement. The dyke uniform, though seemingly radical and revolutionary, maintained patterns of exclusion within the lesbian liberation movement.

## **Conclusion**

Lesbian protest fashion clearly changed between 1950 and 1980. Each era of the movement, however, imposed fashion trends that quickly became exclusionary and limiting. The dominant lesbian rights movement at any given time decided they knew the best way to fight for lesbian liberation. Anyone who did not fit into this image, therefore, was an enemy to the cause. More often than not, butch-femme women of the working-class bar scene found themselves excluded and even demonized. Michel Foucault claimed that transgression and limitation create a spiral. Every time a new lesbian fashion movement emerged, as new limitations emerged with it. For true lesbian liberation, Foucault’s theory must be broken. We must transgress the very idea that there should be limits on what a lesbian can look like. Only then can we ensure that everyone achieves liberation. MacCowan sums it up nicely and succinctly at the end of her essay. “It’s time,” she says, “we reclaim the right to fuck around with gender.”<sup>69</sup> Every day, people choose what they wear. They communicate with others through the language of clothing. However, they should not be limited by their gender or sexuality in choosing how they communicate with the world.

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<sup>69</sup> MacCowan, “Re-Collecting History,” 323.

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