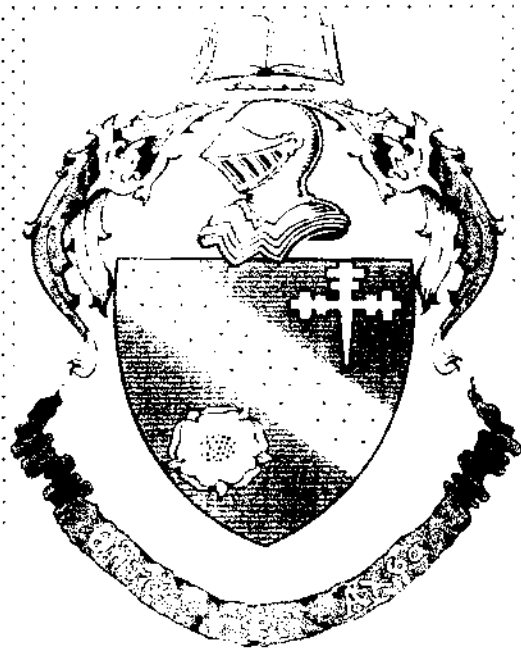


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The Loyola University Student Historical Journal is published annually by the Pi Chi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta International History Honor Society. Each year the Journal serves as the culmination of the chapter's scholarly activities. Since 1966, first The Loyola University Student Historical Association, Phi Alpha Theta publishes the Journal to encourage scholarly activity by students and make public members best research efforts. The papers selected for publication were chosen from among those submitted to an editorial committee that included members of Loyola's history faculty and officers of Phi Alpha Theta. The papers were judged on scholarship and writing. Students who wish to submit a paper for the next publication should contact the Department of History at Loyola University, 6363 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118

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Panic on the Frontier: Southwestern Politics of Survival in the Civil War

"He was both a Rebel and a Federal, just as occasion required, and was rarely mistaken as to what kind of an occasion he was dealing with."¹

Lofty ideologies were a luxury that southwestern settlers could not afford during the American Civil War. In the eastern part of the country, states forged loyalties with either the Union or the Confederacy based on traditional political and social philosophies. Eastern attitudes toward slavery and the concept of states' rights laid the groundwork for unionism and secessionism, and ultimately led to a conflict of romanticized ideals. Although the same philosophies were espoused in the Southwest throughout the War, they played a relatively small part in the initial determination of loyalties. Ovando J. Hollister, a private in the First Colorado Regiment of Volunteers, observed the lack of idyllic convictions among his fellow soldiers, proclaiming that "blind, fanatical devotion to an idea is not a characteristic of the practical American mind. The impulse that moves them to the present crisis does not, as a general thing, spring from so high a source as the unselfish love of Liberty for all."² The "practical American mind" can be equated with the mind of the Western settler which, in the 1860s, was frequently too preoccupied with survival to be concerned with the theoretical politics of the East. Settlers were absorbed with the alarmingly mercurial character of the southwestern environment, which dictated their perspectives and conduct more than pedantry. Had they abandoned their common sense and survival instinct in favor of grandiose ideas, the average settler's lifespan would have been shortened.

Survival, as it applies to the Southwest, reflects an aversion to individualistic subsistence, and a tendency to embrace communal support systems. In many ways, whites' migration to the region deviated from the traditional American model of the self-sufficient, adventurous pioneer. Settlers in the Southwest lacked the benefits of past "frontier" areas, such as timber, accessible rivers, and a general proximity to urban areas. Frederick Jackson Turner noted that in the Southwest "expensive irrigation works must be constructed, cooperative activity was demanded in utilization of the water supply...the physiographic province itself decreed that the destiny of this new

frontier should be social rather than individual.³ There was a shift in American pioneers' disposition as the geographic destinations were pushed further west; solitude and independence became unrealistic aspirations. Environmental difficulties were not the only circumstances that prompted settlers' departure from the individualistic archetype. Violence created by other humans in the Southwest was equally, if not more important to pioneers' affinity for settling in insular, protected communities. Within this context, frontier survival does not recall the stereotype of a lone farmer, valiantly defending his family against marauding Indians. Existence in the Southwest, for white settlers, was contingent on the nearness of protection and social networks, rather than an individual's capacity to survive in an isolated wilderness.

Most well-informed migrants had no illusions about the facility of frontier life before settling in the southwestern territories. The region lacked the developed infrastructure of the eastern United States; travel was difficult, and with the exception of urban areas such as Denver and Los Angeles, isolation was a grim reality. Environmentally, the land in the territories was arid and not conducive to many types of agriculture. In one description of New Mexican terrain, Hollister disparaged it as a barren wasteland, which "can never become the theater of a rich and teeming population – never become endurable to our race while there is still room in hell."⁴ Mining was a more lucrative venture for settlers who sought financial success, but it was also physically hazardous. The most treacherous aspect of the Southwest in the mid-nineteenth century, however, was the precarious relationship between white settlers, Mexicans and Indians, the region's three prominent cultures.

Turner's assertion that "the wilderness masters the colonist" is partially accurate; white colonists were bridled by the southwestern environment, but the term wilderness is a misnomer.⁵ For Turner, wilderness implied a primeval, virgin expanse of land that may be, in the American context, sprinkled with small Indian groups. The southwestern "wilderness" had been conquering humans for centuries prior to Americans' arrival on the scene and, ultimately, white settlers were more troubled by their interactions with Mexicans and Indians than any threat posed by the physical environment. Because the majority of the Southwest had been acquired in 1848 by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo after the Mexican-American War, the territories were still largely populated by former citizens of Mexico when Americans began their westward Diaspora. The Mexicans, in turn, were already accustomed to tense relations with the preexisting Indian groups, notably the Navajos and Apaches. Cycles of violence, beginning with raids and ending with retribution, were common in the Southwest, and all three cultures felt the detrimental effects.⁶

Despite the hostility, the Indians and Mexicans held their ground, and white settlers continued to pour into the region. Although they were relative newcomers, and were consequently less disposed to thrive in the dangerous territories, American settlers were often hopeful about their prospects in the Southwest. The standard of living was less expensive than in the East, many found the image of the untamed West thrilling, and the romantic notion that anyone could make a fortune was intoxicating, if hyperbolic. As a result, migrants came from both the North and the South; and while most were not from the upper-classes, there were some wealthy entrepreneurs who tried their luck in the new territories.⁷ When the number of white settlers in the Southwest grew in the 1850s, so did the demand for protection from potentially combative groups, primarily the Indians.⁸ Federal protection, in the form of military outposts scattered throughout the region, alleviated some of the settlers' concern for their safety.⁹ Apart from providing peace of mind, federal soldiers at these forts were frequently engaged in violent conflicts with neighboring Indians. Despite the regularity of violence, the forts were a moderate deterrent for Indian raids, and made survival a more realistic expectation.

When the Civil War began in 1861, southwestern settlers held a diverse variety of ideologies. Secessionism was understandably a popular philosophy in some circles; a considerable number of Southerners migrated to the Southwest.¹⁰ In certain territories, New Mexico foremost, politicians declared their support for the Confederacy in rhetoric and legislation. Factions of wealthy Southern Californians publicly advocated secessionism, and some individuals conspired with officials in the Confederate government to wrest the state from Union control.¹¹ The pro-Union Colorado Territory was perpetually anxious about the supposedly large degree of secessionist activity in the area. Some territories' geographic proximity to Texas ensured that secessionism was not a distant event, but an immediately threatening (or, if settlers supported the Confederacy, liberating) force. The invasion of the Confederates, led by General Henry Hopkins Sibley and his Army of New Mexico in late 1861, also played a large part in determining the ultimate political inclinations of New Mexico and Arizona¹², but the secessionist mentality was entrenched in the region prior to the arrival of these soldiers.¹³

Clearly, the combination of secessionist political sway, geography, and Sibley's invasion was pivotal to territories' decisions to remain loyal to the Union or join the Confederacy. These ingredients, however, were not singularly responsible for the final allegiances in the Southwest. In this region, the catalyst that influenced territories to support the Confederacy was the

withdrawal of Union troops from the protective forts in the summer of 1861.

¹⁴ When federal protection was removed, the relative certainty of settlers' survival disappeared. New Mexico and Arizona, the territories that suffered the worst effects of federal withdrawal, vigorously encouraged Confederate occupation within their borders. California, largely owing to its strategic value to the Confederacy, never experienced an exodus of its federal protectors. A formidable number of federal soldiers were removed from Colorado after the War's outbreak, but the settlers in this territory quickly recouped and formed volunteer militias to ward off danger. Secessionist factions existed in all southwestern territories after official political alliances were drawn, but they concretely supported the Confederacy only in areas that were neglected by federal protection. If protective troops remained, or the settlers' survival was not inordinately threatened, secessionists had little reason to forcefully advance the Confederate cause.¹⁵

Unlike their white neighbors, Mexicans and Indians in the Southwest did not embrace secessionism as a popular philosophy. They predominantly viewed Confederate aspirations for a southwestern empire and the expansion of slavery as either insignificant and unrelated to their welfare, or menacing. On the other hand, these cultures did not profess loyalty to the Union government or ideology. The federal presence in the region was still in its infancy when the Civil War began, and memories of the Mexican-American War and other expansionist activities fostered animosity toward the American government.¹⁶ Apathy concerning the War was the primary sentiment that characterized Mexicans and Indians, but when the survival of individuals in either culture was compromised, some created tentative loyalties. Such occurrences happened more frequently within the Mexican culture than Indian groups. In New Mexico, a number of Mexicans joined the volunteer forces in the Union Army; a striking percentage of these volunteers later deserted.¹⁷ Some wealthy Mexicans in Arizona were appointed to high positions in the regional Confederate government, while many of their peers resisted secessionist activities. The motivations for these allegiances varied, but they were wedded to Mexicans' prospects for survival. Most Indian groups, alternatively, could afford to have fewer loyalties during the War, because they took measures to ensure their own survival. For groups such as the Apache, the Navajo, and others, this translated into indiscriminate raiding of both Union and Confederate factions in the Southwest.¹⁸ White settlers' response to this violence further illustrates the importance of survival in the region. Although the rhetoric of the Confederate military goals reflected the need for a southwestern empire, and the Union's reacted against this expansionist

dream, the military campaigns of both armies were ultimately more devoted to fighting Indians than each other.¹⁹ The battles at Valverde and Glorieta Pass, while popularly memorialized, were uncharacteristic of most Union and Confederate activities in the Southwest.²⁰

Variances between the societies of the southwestern and the eastern United States existed in the decades prior to the Civil War, but they were cataclysmically manifested by the conflict. In the Southwest, the War was typified by brutal inter-cultural violence, dubious allegiances and paranoia. Political ideologies existed, but they were secondary to white settlers', Mexicans', and Indians' desire to survive. Had the Southwest been an industrialized, secure region, or inhabited by people oblivious to their perilous surroundings, the events of the Civil War in that theater would have occurred in a different fashion. In reality, however, the southwestern mentality was more practical than romantic, and longevity was at the forefront of the region's philosophy. The politics of the Southwest during the War were politics of survival, which rationalized territorial loyalties and military behaviors more than any remote ideology.

When white settlers began to spread across the southwestern frontier in the nineteenth century, they found the region's terrain a far cry from the Garden of Eden promised by Eastern boosters. Sporadic fertile valleys and bountiful areas peppered the landscape, but the Southwest's environment was chiefly distinguished by mountains, deserts and plains. Echoing his earlier diatribe against the southwestern environment, and the complaints of many settlers, Hollister declared that "nothing but necessity can make the desolate place endurable to white men."²¹ The climate was hazardously arid, and essential rainfall occurred less frequently than inhabitants would have wished.²² Hardier crops, such as corn and hay, could be cultivated, but soil in the region was deficient, and harvests were occasionally blighted by drought. Grasslands provided grazing areas for livestock; unfortunately, the quality and availability of the grass was better suited to sheep than more profitable cattle.²³ Other parts of the Southwest lacked any exploitable foliage whatsoever, notably the high mountains and desert areas. Farmers and ranchers from the East encountered a generally inhospitable climate, wherein it was difficult to make a living. Regardless of the hardship, it was still possible to capitalize off the region. Years before white settlers first set eyes on the Southwest, Indian groups had developed systems of intensive agriculture, which relied upon the construction of "canal irrigation, terraces, and checkdams" to alleviate the strain of aridity.²⁴ Mexican and white settlers followed the agricultural example of Indians and employed artificial irrigation, but were more inclined to use the region's

expanses of land for livestock grazing.²⁵ The poor quality of grass and dryness compelled prospective ranchers to own at least five thousand acres of land before attempting this practice.²⁶ Harsh constraints of this nature not only stifled the success of ranchers and farmers, but eliminated the chances that the average, less-than-prosperous settler could enter into either enterprise.

Mining, on the other hand, was a venture that had fewer limitations for southwestern migrants. Starting in 1849, after staggering reports of the California gold rush reached the East Coast, prospective millionaires flooded into the Western territories.²⁷ Miners were unburdened by the monetary requisites of the rancher and farmer. This attractive detail ensured that miners hailed from a myriad of socioeconomic backgrounds, and every area of the East. Unfortunately, financial victory was not an absolute guarantee. Men who entered into mining had to be hardy, daring, money-hungry, and willing to gamble with their survival on a dangerous southwestern frontier. The character of the regular Western miner was, for this reason, maligned at times. One retrospective account denounced these men as

Flotsam, outlaws from Eastern states, ex-convicts made bitter by real or fancied injustice, desperadoes. The Western frontier became in fact the haven of refuge for the horse and cattle thief of Nebraska and Kansas, for the escaped burglar from an Eastern penitentiary, for the counterfeiter who might have new opportunity to ply his illicit vocation. Paroled convicts came from Australia, while Mexican outlaws swelled the numbers.²⁸

Although this description was not applicable to most miners in the southwest, it does illustrate both the perceived and realistic presence of danger in areas where mining was an economic staple. These miners were hard-boiled individuals, bereft of most Eastern luxuries, who willingly rushed into a treacherous region for the sake of capital. Furthermore, most miners in the region were unmoved by politics and other "trivial" matters. In a description of the situation in Cherry Creek, Colorado, the Lawrence Republican claimed that miners "don't care 'a red' who is President, who is Governor, or what constitution is adopted—their time is all occupied in minding their own business, that is, digging for gold and making money."²⁹ Money was the lure for miners, ranchers, farmers, and other entrepreneurs in the Southwest; it compelled them to forgo personal safety and ideological considerations.

If Western migrants were unaware of the dangers the southwestern frontier held for them before departure, the journey itself was elucidatory. Travelers bound for New Mexico and Southern California usually chose the southern route, including the Santa Fe Trail and auxiliary paths.³⁰ Blistering desert, and scarce water and timber were among the natural difficulties these migrants faced.³¹ The threat of attack or robbery was similarly a constant fixture of this route. Nomadic Apache and Navajo Indians frequently crossed paths with white caravans, prompting violence and raids.³² Mexican robbers also camped out along these trails, swayed by "the superior temptation presented by returning miners, or by those going to new fields with their accumulated wealth in their belts."³³ Migrants who aspired to reach Colorado managed to avoid a number of these problems by using northern routes. Different troubles confronted travelers along these trails: high, rocky altitudes and snow, for instance. Indians were similarly injurious in this part of the region, and became "restless (and) revengeful" when migrants began to traverse across and settle on their land.³⁴ The westward journey was conspicuously dangerous, and the individuals who undertook it could never be secure about their survival.

Some migrants exacerbated an already dire situation through their own ignorance and carelessness. Numerous accounts detail how westward migrants embarked on the journey with insufficient provisions, and were reduced to begging for food several weeks later.³⁵ The allure of gold also compelled many migrants to begin the trek without regard for seasonal hazards. A story reached the East of a group of prospectors who, unprepared for the severity of Colorado winters, were trapped in a March snowstorm and forced to cannibalize each other.³⁶ Another anecdote in the Boston Daily Journal made light of prospectors' rashness, when a Kansas farmer stopped a hand-cart train with a salutation,

"Halloa! hold on there." The goldseekers stopped while he came up, and asked: "Are you going to Pike's Peak?" "Yes," was the rather crusty response. "Well, why don't you wait for the grass?" continued the interrogator. "Grass!" ejaculated one of the emigrants impatiently. "What do we want of grass? we haven't any cattle." "Very true; but you are making asses of yourselves, and you ought to look out for provender!"³⁷

Increasingly, however, the nation became aware of the specific perils along the various frontier trails. This awareness helped deter casual pioneers, and created hesitations about the appeal of Manifest Destiny on the East Coast.

Life insurance companies on the East Coast parroted these insecurities in their policy contracts; most companies would not permit policyholders to travel west of the Mississippi or enter into "hazardous occupations" like mining.³⁸

Violence and danger in southwestern culture were exacerbated by the influx of white settlers in the 1850s, but these ordeals were earlier fixtures. Some speculate that in the centuries prior to European involvement, Indian groups in the region warred amongst themselves for various reasons, namely resource allocation. When Spanish colonists began to infiltrate the Southwest in the mid-sixteenth century and establish forts and missions, a new dynamic was added to the cycle of violence. Amicable trade relations existed between the two cultures and the regularity of intermarriage created a large mestizo demographic, but interactions were also marred by power struggles, oppression and raiding. Incidents such as the Pueblo Revolt in 1680 demonstrate the existence of animosity in areas that would later form the territories of New Mexico and Arizona.³⁹ Cultural conflict was a staple of southwestern society by the nineteenth century, after Mexico gained its independence from Spain. Navajo Indians and New Mexicans found themselves in a particularly vicious raiding cycle; the poorest Navajos would raid wealthy Mexican landowners who would, in turn, avenge themselves upon the wealthiest Navajos.⁴⁰ In this manner, the comparatively non-violent Indian landowners were reduced to poverty, and began to raid as well. Farther north in the region, Plains Indian groups were less inclined to raid settlements of Mexicans or whites than their southern neighbors. Contentious behaviors were still pervasive, however; within the Cheyenne and Arapaho groups, there was factionalism and in-fighting, traditional warfare against the Utes and Comanches, and conflicts with settlers.⁴¹ Evidently, before either the Mexican-American War or the periodic mining booms induced frenzied westward expansion, violence was not a foreign concept to Indians and Mexicans in the Southwest.

The preexistence of danger and animosity notwithstanding, whites' Diaspora into the region caused a great deal of upheaval and heightened cultural tensions. When the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo annexed Mexico's northern frontier to the United States, Mexicans found themselves arbitrary citizens of a new country. Economic competition was worsened by the increasing presence of an Anglo-American demographic that was buying up land in massive parcels.⁴² The invasion of white migrants would have been more tolerable for Mexicans, had the newcomers not raucously subscribed to intense prejudice against their fellow Southwesterners. In one of his many tirades against the Mexican disposition, Hollister voices white settlers' disgust for a race of people who "have no decided cast or countenance. Small heads,

black eyes and hair, narrow, receding foreheads...their physiognomy is a good index of their character, which is vacant and insipid – destitute of the heroic virtues."⁴³ Such vocal racism fueled hostility against white settlers in New Mexican society, and intercultural relations were consequently uneasy.

Although white settlers also forged inaccurate stereotypes about the Indian character, they were decidedly less harsh. Hollister describes the "squalid misery of these wasted creatures" in a dubiously sympathetic tone, and advises "utter and speedy extinction" as a means of remedying their situation.⁴⁴ Other commentators venerated the supposed stoicism and polarity of Indian culture, whether or not the native individual in question behaved "in genuine sincerity or unadulterated treachery."⁴⁵ Generally, white settlers were less concerned with the hypothetical defects of Indians than with the possibility that they would be attacked by Indians. This fear, unlike much of the settlers' xenophobia, was rational. Throughout the Southwest, Indian raids and attacks on white settlements burgeoned in the 1850s. In Colorado, one miner fretted for the mining settlements, claiming that "the Indians are thick here. We apprehended danger from them. They have sent us word by some of their chiefs, to quit their country."⁴⁶ For their part, Indian groups such as the Apache and Arapaho were not simply assuming an offensive position, or taking advantage of the increased quarry. Apprehension steadily inundated the various Indian cultures as they witnessed their territories encroached upon and eventually commandeered by American opportunists.⁴⁷ In this regard, fear characterized the Indian activities in this period as much as it did white and, to a lesser degree, Mexican behaviors.

Scattered army posts throughout the region moderately tempered this atmosphere of trepidation on the southwestern frontier. Beginning with the Mexican-American War, the United States Army surged into areas that would later compose the Western territories; with no immediate danger elsewhere in the nation after the war's end, the troops remained stationed in southwestern forts.⁴⁸ Parts of the region overwhelmingly beset by Indian violence were often assured a nearby military presence in the 1850s, as were well-traveled trails and important population centers.⁴⁹ Army stations such as Fort Yuma in Southern California, Forts Buchanan, Breckenridge, Fillmore, Stanton, and Union in New Mexico and Arizona, and Forts Garland and Wise/Lyon in Colorado staved off the threat of Indian attacks. Settlers came to rely on the army's protective watchfulness; it was a relatively effective deterrent in the decade before the Civil War. White and Mexican landowners in the borderlands of the New Mexico Territory placed the most faith in proximal forts, because the ominous menace of Apache raids was perpetual. By virtue of geography, miners were

less dependent on military protection than landowners. Settlements founded near mineral reserves, such as Tubac in southern Arizona, were distant enough from forts to experience more frequent Indian attacks.⁵⁰ Residents of those areas habitually petitioned regional and national governments for increased localized defense. Even the most tenacious southwestern settlers did not want to unduly jeopardize their survival.

A grievous myth about the Western and, by extension, southwestern character in the nineteenth century is that the men who embodied Manifest Destiny were foolhardy, courageous pioneers who tamed the wild frontier by means of individual wherewithal and resourcefulness. In truth, these settlers did need reasonably thick skin to make the journey west and tolerate a life without lavish amenities in the territories. Once they were more acquainted with their dangerous surroundings, however, settlers typically entreated higher powers to guard their lives and interests. Governmental and military efforts in the region were intrinsic to settlers' survival, and as long as they remained in place, popular protest waned. Moreover, the land white migrants settled midway through the century was far from virgin. Indians and Mexicans had been aggressively ensuring their own survival for over two centuries. Americans were latecomers on the scene, but they helped fashion the cultural triumvirate in the Southwest. The circumstances in the 1850s created a potentially explosive regional situation, with three complex cultures vying for power, wealth and existence in an environment of limited resources. Nobody could genuinely risk being an ideologue in a region where being a survivalist was paramount. If this somber reality was visible before the Civil War, the conflict itself intensified it. The Civil War was a watershed event for whites, Mexicans and Indians in the Southwest, because it prompted a clear manifestation of their survival mentalities.

As secessionism pervaded the American South, resulting in the creation of the Confederacy, and unionism in the North, ideological conflict regarding the merits of both institutions erupted in the Southwest. Southerners and Northerners alike had flocked to the region in the 1850s, with a wide array of political allegiances, cultural attitudes and social backgrounds. Union and Confederate politicians were equally logical in their assumption that settlers would support them; each territory had advocates of both philosophies.

Although the geographic location and climate of nineteenth-century Texas tied the state to the Southwest, fundamental socioeconomic differences ensured that its treatment of secessionism was not analogous to the situation in the western territories. In the decades before Texas' annexation by and admission to the United States, Southerners had migrated into the area and

established a slavery-based plantation economy.⁵¹ Many of these landowners were wealthy, and had unequivocal monetary, familial and ideological connections to the states that would later form the Confederacy. The ethnic makeup of Texas further disparages it from the Southwest. White settlers in the area were devoted to the removal of native Mexicans throughout the 1830s, and, to a degree, succeeded in quelling potential danger that could stem from conflict with this group.⁵² Black slaves were subjugated in an even harsher manner, and represented an increasingly sizeable portion of the Texas population. Texan settlers faced similar problems with violent Indian groups as their southwestern counterparts, but their proximity to the South and residence in an actual state offered some comfort in this regard.

Ultimately, despite Texas' physical bond to the Southwest, the state asserted its kinship with the South by joining the Confederacy in early 1861. Texan voters were largely in favor of secession, as they perceived that their economic interests, particularly regarding slavery, were tied to the South.⁵³ Although there were pockets of dissenters, the factions of white plantation owners and their supporters were more influential in secession politics.⁵⁴ A pro-secession referendum in February yielded the Texas Ordinance of Secession, a document which definitively underscored how the same socioeconomic conditions that wed Texas to the Confederacy separated the state from the Southwest. Slavery and states' rights are the exhortations in the text that emphasize how, similar to the rest of the Confederacy, Texas had been wronged by Northern abolitionists and Black Republicans.⁵⁵ There are brief references to the failure of the federal government "to protect the lives and property of the people of Texas against the Indian savages on our border, and more recently against the murderous forays of banditti from the neighboring territory of Mexico," but they are obscured by the overt Confederate ideology of the document.⁵⁶ Texas' defection to the Confederacy was clearly rooted in its ideological unity with the southern states, and was duly a more typical, and less desperate, secessionist venture than those made in the Southwest.

Southern California was a veritable haven for Southerners on the eve of the Civil War, who were able to find economic success in the region and penetrate the upper echelons of society. Assorted gold booms and fertile land not only drew Southerners to the area, but also expanded their good fortune. Even though these men were outnumbered by their Northerner brethren, they created a pocket of cultural similitude by concentrating around Los Angeles. In a testament to their preponderance, chapters of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a pro-slavery organization, sprung up in the southern part of the state.⁵⁷ Unionists across California lamented this phenomenon in 1861, estimating

that over sixteen thousand Southerners and Southern sympathizers were members of the Knights.⁵⁸ Although this figure was likely an exaggeration, it illustrates the tension between Union and Confederate supporters in the state. Secessionists in this region were vocal in their support of the Confederacy at the beginning of the War, and unionists responded to their rhetoric with paranoia. On the whole, the secessionist inclinations in Southern California were comparatively casual; the major focal point of this movement was economic. Confederate supporters even won over some entrepreneurs who would have otherwise been unionists, because they were intimidated by the prospect of painful wartime taxation.⁵⁹

Attitudes about secessionism and the politics of the Civil War were more querulous in the Colorado Territory. Miners made up a dominant portion of the territory's population; as such, both the South and North were well represented.⁶⁰ Contentions arose in mining encampments such as Boulder and South Park in 1861, but they were largely nonviolent arguments. Regardless, Union-minded Coloradoans were unnerved by the real presence of Southerners and the latent promise of Confederate activities in their territory. Territorial governor William Gilpin expressed the Unionists' agitated state with his claim that 7,500 secessionists were in their midst.⁶¹ While hyperbolic, his statement resounded with many Coloradoans who believed secessionists were "lurking behind every door or prowling around the mountains up to no good."⁶² Actual virulent secessionists were few and far between in Colorado, despite what the governor and his fellow Union supporters believed. One of the most publically vilified secessionist activities in the territory was the raising of a Confederate flag in Denver.⁶³ The pro-Confederate presence in Colorado was large, especially in mining areas, but their actions were only mildly provocative, and their secessionist philosophy never came to meaningful fruition.

Southerners comprised a more powerful faction in the New Mexico Territory than in Colorado, for the most part because they were inclined to be wealthy landowners rather than miners. A number of the territorial politicians, in the interest of personal economics as well as backgrounds, aligned themselves with the secessionist ideology. Support for the Southern cause was first lucidly displayed in 1859, when New Mexico created a stringent slave code to regulate the minute number of blacks in the territory.⁶⁴ When the Civil War escalated in earnest in 1861, New Mexico's patrician Southern faction was vocal about its corroborations with the Confederate government, and hoped to stir up interest among the rest of the territory's populace. Yet, the majority remained ideologically supportive of the Union cause or, at the very least, apathetic about the War's politics.⁶⁵ As with Southern California, the

predominant rationale for non-Southerners' Confederate support in the initial stages of the War was economic. Much of the New Mexico Territory had been engaged in a power struggle with neighboring Texas for decades, but remained economically connected to trade with the state.⁶⁶ Wealthy individuals who depended on the health of this relationship tended to show ideological loyalty to the Confederacy, whether or not they had Southern roots.⁶⁷ In spite of the prevalence of such secessionist attitudes, it was commonly thought that the New Mexico Territory would linger with the Union.

The Southwest was strategically precious to both the Confederate and Union forces because it symbolized a corridor to the Pacific Ocean; resultantly, advocates of each government proselytized their cause throughout the region. Politicians belonging to both factions were the most forthright loyalists or insurrectionists, and appealed to territorial voters' geographical origins, economic situations and personal ideologies. California politicians, particularly secessionists, were outspoken about wartime allegiances; much was made of the state's geographical value, its potential for greater wealth, and which government would help in the realization of the latter goal.⁶⁸ Confederate and Union politicians alike viewed the presence of about twenty thousand Southern and pro-secession voters as a grand opportunity or hornet's nest respectively, and needed to be candid in order to sway this demographic.⁶⁹ Moreover, these politicians made frequent attempts to garner support from the East in the form of capital, military strength, and abstract political agreements.

This practice was more frenzied in the New Mexico and Arizona area, which did not have the means to be as self-sufficient as California. Correspondence between a secessionist in the region and the Confederate government in early 1861 placed trust in the territorial politicians and, by extension, wealthy classes, both white and Mexican, whose dedication to slavery and the South would supposedly trickle down and infect the greater masses.⁷⁰ Indeed, there was a general perception in the region that the Mexican demographic would either embrace Confederate politics or be apathetic, so their recruitment to the secessionist cause would be effortless.⁷¹ While this belief reduced the New Mexico situation into overly simplified terms, the populace was at least passively responsive to the secessionist politicians' agenda. Union politicians and supporters, for their part, responded negatively to their political opponents' mobilization attempts and the mere possibility that territorial citizens would revolt. Despite politicians' exacerbation of the volatile situation in New Mexico, there were not concerted efforts by the general population to support either government at the beginning of the War. As in California and Colorado, no pro-Confederate militias were raised, and the only perceptible support from

the South was verbal, not concrete. Even before the withdrawal of federal support in the region, however, the reality of secessionism emerged when the Butterfield Overland Mail Company abandoned southern New Mexico in the spring of 1861.

Although the Butterfield Overland Mail Company had only operated in the region since 1858, settlers had come to rely upon it. The company conveyed goods from Missouri to California, and made stops along the way, including Mesilla, a community in the New Mexico Territory. Dangers along the route would quickly have put the company out of business, but the federal government's establishment of additional protective measures ensured that its operations could continue (if somewhat hazardingly). Moreover, for local settlers, the Overland Mail was both a practical and symbolic sign of civilization and progress; it physically connected them to more prosperous regions, and held the promise of theirs becoming similar in the near future. With the start of the Civil War and the secession of Texas in February of 1861, through which the mail route passed, settlers' ambitions for the company were threatened. In Tucson, before the Overland Mail's passage through southern New Mexico was officially terminated, settlers saw the prospect of its removal as catastrophic "death blow" to the area.⁷² Such fears were well-founded, as shortly after Texas joined the Confederacy, the route was discontinued. In the face of this desertion by the federal government, a number of settlers in Mesilla, Tucson and Pinos Altos convened in March of 1861, and announced the formation of the new Territory of Arizona, and began to look to the Confederacy for protection.⁷³ The Arizona Ordinance of Secession was, unlike the Texas Ordinance of Secession, thoroughly preoccupied with the issue of the federal government's failure to maintain territorial safety. Slavery went unmentioned in the document, and references to states' rights and other ideological issues were sparse.⁷⁴ While some citizens of Mesilla explicitly proclaimed their loyalty to the Confederacy, a large-scale shift of political allegiance did not occur until the summer.

On July 3rd Captain I. N. Moore, the commander of Fort Breckenridge, received orders to abandon the post and relocate to Fort Buchanan.⁷⁵ After he began to move his troops, he was alerted to the forthcoming abandonment of the latter fort as well. Moore did not perceive this as problematic, because "the American population of that part of New Mexico, being mostly outlaws having everything to gain and nothing to lose, in case of any disturbance of the peace and quiet of the country, were early sympathizers with the secessionists."⁷⁶ This distinction between Confederate sympathizers and active secessionists was rapidly blurred after the forts were destroyed and abandoned. In less

than two weeks, settlers in southern New Mexico found themselves without the federal protection they depended upon for survival. Later in the month, Fort Fillmore was similarly evacuated by Major Isaac Lynde, who viewed the advancement of Texan troops as too great a threat to the post. After he and his garrison surrendered to the Confederates on July 27th, he defended his actions to the United States Army, stating that "I had full authority by my instructions to abandon the post if I thought it for the good of the country. If I remained, the troops and the public property would fall into the hands of the enemy."⁷⁷ Federal withdrawal from Fort Stanton followed closely on the heels of Lynde's surrender, also in response to the encroaching Confederate Army, but the post was not successfully destroyed.⁷⁸

From the perspective of the Union Army, abandoning and destroying these forts was defensible. General Canby, the military figurehead of the New Mexico Territory, was obligated to send all regular troops to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where they were more essential to the War effort.⁷⁹ Union leaders had no illusions about Confederate designs on the Southwest and a Pacific corridor, but in the early stages of the Civil War, the region's protection was depreciated in favor of more pressing issues to the east. An inconsequential smattering of troops remained in the territory at Fort Defiance, but this offered no comfort to the isolated Anglo and Mexican communities, who had no barrier between themselves and the threat of Indian raids.⁸⁰ Adding insult to injury, many settlers witnessed firsthand the burning of their local forts. It was strategically logical for Lynde, Moore and other officers to prevent Confederate appropriation of federal goods, but this did not endear them to the Southwesterners they left in their wake.

Settlers in the New Mexico and recently-declared Arizona territories did not have to wait long for the onslaught of raids and bloodshed they expected, once Breckenridge, Buchanan, Fillmore and Stanton were deserted. The Tubac community, which was geographically distant from federal protection prior to the withdrawal, experienced a mass exodus of its populace after Apache raids brought "carnage and horror" in late July.⁸¹ In early August, the remaining settlers succumbed to their fear of being slaughtered by both the Indians and Mexican raiders, and abandoned the town completely.⁸² Tucson fared better than Tubac, but most of its inhabitants fled, and the minority that stayed behind barricaded themselves within the town walls.⁸³ July and August of 1861 were unprecedentedly hellish for settlers in New Mexico and Arizona. In the past, their survival was difficult; when the federal troops left a vacuum of protection, it was increasingly equivocal. Soon after the forts were abandoned, Tucson officially declared its own secession and allegiance to the Confederacy,

and it was widely anticipated that the rest of the Southwest would follow suit.

Confederate supporters who resided in communities such as Mesilla and Tucson expounded upon the virtues of secessionism and the actions of the South during the period leading up to the Civil War and its early stages, but concrete displays of this loyalty were effectively absent until the summer of 1861. Had federal protection continued to ensure their survival, secession-minded settlers may have happily continued in their passive allegiance and never taken active measures to join the Confederacy. Ideological loyalties in the region created a tense equilibrium that was shattered by the watershed of federal withdrawal. Settlers looked to the next viable source of security, the Confederates, more out of fear for their personal safety than individual ideologies, which could not shield them from Apache raids and other violence. Political philosophies were equally useless to settlers in the rest of the region, but the events of 1861 were far less ruinous in Colorado and Southern California than in southern New Mexico and Arizona.

When the majority of federal troops in the Colorado Territory were called east in early 1861, settlers were despondent.⁸⁴ There was no threat as great as the Apaches and Navajos to the south, but whites in the territory were apprehensive of the neighboring Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians, with whom they had a less severe history of violence. Furthermore, the presence of a large Confederate faction was highly demonized in Colorado, and Union supporters feared an insular uprising, or a later invasion of the Confederate Army. Since the regular army's departure, the organized military prowess of Colorado amounted to a handful of militiamen.⁸⁵ Governor Gilpin and other Union politicians in the territory asked for immediate federal aid, but could not be accommodated.⁸⁶ Circumstances in the area could have produced a customized repetition of the events in New Mexico and Arizona; several key fortuities, however, prevented this outcome.

Gilpin realized that he would gain nothing by waiting until the federal government was able to supply him with the troops, arms and supplies necessary for defending the territory. As such, he took independent measures to preserve Colorado's loyalty to the Union, and its protection from potentially hostile groups. Following his denial by the government in Washington, Gilpin awarded himself "despotic powers; absolute command of the army and navy and an absolute veto on the acts of the Legislature."⁸⁷ His first, and most significant, exploit as despot of the territory was to create a volunteer force, consisting of twelve regiments manned by pro-Union Coloradoans. Because the federal government neither requested nor approved such an endeavor, Gilpin and his

supporters faced a number of difficulties.⁸⁸ Much of the effort was undertaken secretly, such as Gilpin's buying up of "all the ammunition, percussion caps, lead, old arms and outfit of every description they could possibly purchase," simultaneously to arm a large military force and thwart any Confederates' efforts to do the same.⁸⁹ The actual recruitment of volunteers was an arduous process, as described by the commander of the regiment, Colonel John M. Chivington,

Governor Gilpin, without authority from the War Department, raised the 1st Regt. himself. The singular thing in connection with that is that he did not have a dollar of money or a single authority to raise it. He did it from the necessity of our surroundings. It was thought to be a wild project when he did it but proved to be the salvation of this country from the hands of the rebels. He issued what we called at that time - Gilpin Drafts - directly on the Secretary of the Treasury of the U.S. and we made the people take them. They were all paid. After we had the first battle everything was recognized as regular and they were all paid.⁹⁰

Moreover, if Colorado's internal Confederate threat had been nominal prior to Gilpin's takeover of the territorial government, it was miniscule afterward. Native Southerners and secessionists left the territory in droves in 1861, bound for their home states and, presumably, service in the Confederate Army.⁹¹

Colorado settlers did not endure the same rapid crisis that individuals in the New Mexico Territory withstood, but the territory's environment in 1861 was similarly colored by paranoia and fear. Federal troops allowed the settlers a greater degree of protection from the Cheyenne and Arapaho, and lessened the severity of factional animosity between secessionists and their opponents. Despite the fact that many migrants to Colorado were from Southern states, and rumors of Confederate conspiracies were endemic in the territory, they probably would not have attempted any collective action against pro-Union Coloradoans without the occupation of the Confederate Army. Unlike in New Mexico and Arizona, there were not large enough numbers of violent Indians and other bandits in Colorado to warrant anything more than ideological secessionism from pro-Confederates. Men who sought to put their Southern ideals into practice were more inclined to return to the South than remain in the territory, because a concrete manifestation of their political leanings, such as the public creation of a Confederate militia, would have been

grossly misguided. Even during the brief crisis between federal withdrawal and the First Colorado Regiment of Volunteers, Colorado settlers' survival was not threatened to an extent that a majority would have supported secession. Rather, such behavior may have jeopardized the secessionists' own survival, considering the heightened trepidation of Colorado settlers such as William Gilpin.⁹²

Anxiety about secessionism in Southern California was comparable to that in the Colorado Territory, but the ultimate passivity of pro-Confederates in the region, and the comfort of more assured survival prevented the rise of any palpable crisis. California's strategically invaluable position to both the Union and Confederacy was widely acknowledged; it would have been irrational to withdraw federal troops from the state's forts, especially in light of the powerful pro-Confederate faction in the south. In the summer of 1861, federal military officials relocated most of the California army regulars from Northern to Southern California, and supplemented these forces with volunteer militia.⁹³ This action frustrated Confederate aspirations of expansion to the Pacific Ocean, and helped stifle the rhetoric of rabid secessionists in the area. Because Indian groups in Southern California, namely the Pima, Maricopa and Papago, had cordial cultural and trade relations with white settlers, communities in the state were not plagued by the fears that characterized the rest of the Southwest.⁹⁴

The dynamic of a well-established, protective military force and an underlying absence of immediate danger in Southern California contributed to these secessionists' tendency to remain ideological, rather than active, insurrectionists. Ardent secessionists in this part of the Southwest did not necessarily have dispositions unlike their counterparts in New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado, but they did benefit from a greater level of tranquility. The average Confederate sympathizer in Southern California did not suffer from any fear of Apaches, raids, or any other comparable threat to their survival. Even pro-Confederate speech on their part went unhampered, as "persons known to hold secessionist sentiments, some of whom were well-to-do businessmen, were not molested so long as they maintained a passive attitude in word and action."⁹⁵ To some degree a comprehension of this requisite passivity existed in the region, as one Union officer suggested that California secessionists were not so foolish as to "embark in any revolutionary movements whereby their utter ruin would be rendered certain."⁹⁶ Survival held a different meaning for the settler in Southern California than for his fellows in the rest of the region; it could pertain to a man's reputation and esteem within the community, as well as physical perseverance. California, being more prosperous and metropolitan

than southern New Mexico, allowed for luxuries such as personal ideologies, whereas the other's society was too harsh to encourage abstract concerns.

Confederate troops were rapidly educated in the brutality of this region after their advance into southern New Mexico in August of 1861. Texan battalions spread throughout the area, unhindered by Union forces that had either been transferred to the East, or evacuated north. Their occupation of towns such as Mesilla and Tucson was heartily welcomed by the majority of white settlers, whether or not they were ideologically united to the Confederacy; this new military presence resurrected settlers' hope for protection from raids and Indians' violence.⁹⁷ One of the early Confederate leaders in New Mexico, Lieutenant Colonel John Baylor, amplified the expectations of white and Mexican settlers with promises to curtail Apache hostilities.⁹⁸ Upon actually experiencing violent conflict with Apache and Navajo Indians, however, Baylor's optimism soured. Several months later, he issued orders that cited an nonexistent Confederate law, that troops should "use all means to persuade the Apaches or any tribe to come in for the purpose of making peace, and when you get them together, kill all the grown Indians and take the children prisoners and sell them to defray the expense of killing the Indians."⁹⁹ Baylor was removed from his post soon thereafter, but his language in this situation illustrates the incredible animosity and frustration felt by the Confederates mere months after assuming control of this region.

By October of 1861, the settlers' general morale had deteriorated in a manner similar to Baylor's. Legitimate secessionists and their ostensible neighbors quickly realized that the intervention of largely disorganized Texan troops did not result in their unmitigated protection and survival. One letter, drawing from an October 3rd edition of *The Mesilla Times*, bemoaned the continuing problem of Apache violence, stating that

The Apaches seem to have united, and their tribes have gathered in hosts and commenced a war or extermination against the whites, in earnest. In such formidable numbers they have never assembled before on the war scout, and never before have they, in all time, evidenced such boldness and daring as to attack a town of two or three hundred houses in open daylight. Nineteen twentieths of the Territory of Arizona is under their undisputed control. We have Indians all around us. The slightest journey must be performed in numbers, and with armed bodies of men. The highways of a continent are impassable, but to armies. Every day brings

from the east, west, north and south, appalling additions to our black list of Indian murders. Homes deserted, friends fallen victims to the savage foe. Added to this is the scourge of war, and our situation is most piteous and most unfortunate. In our very midst is a multitude of friends, willing and ready to render assistance, but prevented by the presence of another foe.¹⁰⁰

In fall of 1861, the Confederate forces were lucidly unable to reestablish the status quo sought by settlers; the ultimate end they desired in the establishment of a secessionist Territory of Arizona appeared unattainable. Some settlers took heart when General Sibley arrived in December of that year and declared Martial Law to curb the "desperadoes, gamblers, &c., who set at utter defiance every rule & system of organized society."¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, when Sibley and his Confederate forces retreated in the summer of 1862, they were no longer heroic icons for many settlers. The faction that displayed the most resistance to Sibley at the end of Confederate rule in Arizona, and rejoiced the most upon his defeat, was that of the native New Mexicans.

During the early stages of Confederate occupation in the region, military officers attempted, for a multitude of reasons, to gain allies in the Mexican community. Baylor was moderately successful in this scheme; he granted political appointments to several native New Mexicans, and selected many more to be his military officers, which contributed to a brief period of respite.¹⁰² Elite Mexicans aside, the many members of the larger population were also initially grateful for the Confederates' incursion into the Southwest, whom "they received...as liberators."¹⁰³ Indeed, much of this demographic had also suffered the swift, fierce repercussions that followed the federal withdrawal earlier in the year, and were as concerned about their survival as were white settlers. As the occupation wore on, however, this relatively peaceful atmosphere disintegrated. Confederate troops, wanting for food and basic supplies that were hard to come by, began the practice of seizing goods from Mexican communities without recompense.¹⁰⁴ After several months, the communities were in a general uproar; not only had the Confederates been unsuccessful in guarding against Apache raids, and restoring prewar conditions, they had seriously depleted the food and supply reserves of native New Mexicans. Some Confederates declared their mystification as to why, in the midst of their retreat from the Southwest, "instead of fighting the Yankees since Sibley left, we have to fight the Mexicans."¹⁰⁵

This is not to claim that the "Yankees," who were, for the most part, Southwest volunteer regiments, coaxed the Mexicans into a genuine loyalty for the Union. General Canby found his options for volunteer recruitment amongst white settlers dwindling in 1861. Desperately needing more soldiers, he began to petition the Mexican communities of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado to join the Union cause. A considerable number did respond to Canby's call, as "some...were touched by appeals to their patriotism, others were won by inducements of bounties and better pay than they had been earning as civilians, and still others were recruited with a promise that service in the Army would end their state of peonage."¹⁰⁶ Attitudes of white volunteers toward the Mexican culture, however, prompted many of these new soldiers to regret their decision. In one of his kinder passages analyzing the Mexican character, Hollister declared that the native New Mexicans were "hard, practical, dark and untutored," a sentiment that was echoed in various callous forms by white volunteers throughout their campaign in New Mexico.¹⁰⁷ The prejudice and injustice with which most Mexicans in these volunteer companies were treated explicitly led to higher rates of mutiny and desertion, which enraged the Union officers.¹⁰⁸

Native New Mexicans' penchant for supporting and reviling both the Union and Confederacy, as well as the fluctuating relief and discontent on the part of white settlers throughout the Confederate occupation, exemplify how unsteady the loyalties were in this region when pressured by survival. This paranoia about personal safety and success was shared across cultures; the milieu of the New Mexico Territory, particularly in the Arizona area, was such that survival was the primary force that dictated political allegiances and ideologies for settlers. One California Volunteer stationed in Arizona observed this phenomenon, stating that

Many of the Secessionists of New Mexico have taken up arms against the Union, not from any feelings or convictions of their own, but through the pleadings and intercession of others, who wielded some influence, and the fear of a clan of desperadoes who have fled into this territory to escape well-merited punishment, and who have nothing to lose but a worthless life, and as much to gain from anarchy, war, and its concomitants.¹⁰⁹

Although somewhat fantastical, this mild defense of "secessionists" in New Mexico shows that some contemporaries understood the motivations of many

settlers to join either the Union or the Confederacy, and choose to remain loyal or, as frequently occurred in this region, become disillusioned and desert. When pressed by the hazards of frontier life, especially after federal withdrawal, settlers turned to the nearest power for protection; if this source failed to deliver, then loyalties would shift accordingly.

After the massive flight of Southerners from the Colorado Territory, and Governor Gilpin's recoup of protective forces, white settlers had little to fear about Confederate activities and protean loyalties in their region. Forts were occupied by volunteers, who were more ferociously devoted to defending their neighbors than the federal army had been in the 1850s, and the Confederate Army was repulsed before it could invade Colorado. By 1864, however, the situation in this territory had begun to unravel. The First and Second Colorado Regiments were disbanded in response to the lack of a Confederate threat, but this left a vacuum wherein local Indian groups, from the whites' perspective, posed a threat. Remaining troops in the territory were so meagerly dispersed that they offered little comfort to settlers, and they were gradually being relocated to areas that were considered more dangerous, outside of the Southwest.¹¹⁰ Once again, Coloradoans were alarmed that the federal government was deliberately abandoning them, albeit to a different enemy. Settlers perceived a heightened Indian menace after this second departure; William Byers mourned the state of his fellow whites, and by 1864

This whole country was practically cut off from all commercial intercourse with the States and had been for months before. They had killed 50 or 60 of our own citizens of Denver who were attempting to pass back or forth between here and the States, they had killed probably a larger number than that in the outlying settlements, isolated settlements, they were preying upon our commerce and our mails. We tried to get our mails through here until it became apparent it was impossible....they took everything they had any use for. They robbed our trains, killed men, women and children, drove off stock...¹¹¹

Other accounts detailed more specific acts of violence, including one case of Indians who attacked a family's ranch and "killed the husband, then went to the house where they ravished the wife, afterwards killing her and horribly mutilating her body."¹¹² These statements illustrate the immediacy of the budding crisis, but hostilities between white settlers and Indians in the

Colorado Territory had been mounting for over a decade. Inimicality from both factions finally erupted in 1864 with the Sand Creek Massacre.

Governor John Evans, Gilpin's successor, wasted little time in raising military forces when incidents of Indian violence began to rise. The volunteer regiment that emerged from these efforts was the Third Colorado Regiment. It existed under the guise of a pro-Union organization, but most well-informed Colorado settlers understood its true purpose: it stymied the Indian threat.¹¹³ Despite the presence of the Third Colorado, a number of whites still believed that their survival was endangered by the interminable potential for a large-scale Indian attack, and were apprehensive about the regiment's forthcoming disbandment in late 1864. Nominal attempts were made by several Colorado officials to negotiate for peace with Chief Black Kettle, leader of the Cheyenne Indians, in September, but they were viewed as insubstantial and ignored by Evans and the general white populace.¹¹⁴ For their part, many Cheyenne Indians were anxious to avert future conflicts with white settlers and protect their territorial interests, which had been increasingly infringed upon by frontier opportunists.¹¹⁵ Other sects within the Cheyenne and Arapaho groups were less inclined to settle for peace, given the territorial and federal governments' propensity for leaving Indian treaties unfulfilled.¹¹⁶

In November of 1864, there was a characteristic lull in the violence between these Indians groups and white settlers, as the former customarily settled down in camps for the winter.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, this interval went unappreciated by Colorado settlers, who had spent the previous year anticipating and preparing for a conclusion to the Indian troubles. From their point of view, their survival would only be guaranteed for a few months, and in the spring the cycle of violence would continue. Evans, Chivington and other Colorado officials also lacked any vested interest in the respite, because "after emitting cries of alarm all summer and finally winning authority to form the Third Regiment [they] could not concede peace without severe loss of credibility in all quarters."¹¹⁸ The general white populace in the territory was dedicated to a concrete reprisal, against the Cheyenne in particular, and clamored for some form of action to be taken before the dissolution of the Third Regiment. Colonel Chivington mustered this volunteer force and marched to the eastern area of the territory and, on November 29th, 1864, the regiment attacked an encampment of Cheyenne Indians.

The number of divergent narratives that emerged from the Sand Creek Massacre is legion. Incongruent details, such as the degree to which Cheyenne Indians violently resisted the invasion, whether or not an American flag flew over the encampment, the number of Indian casualties, and the humane

conduct of the soldiers, pepper the accounts.¹¹⁹ Sand Creek descriptions given by members of the Third Regiment are most cohesive, and telling, in their allegations that there was tangible evidence of Cheyenne cruelty against whites. One gruesome, and cynical, statement claims that after the Third Regiment's defeat of the Cheyenne,

Among the articles captured in camp and brought in here were scalps of white people that were not dry, not cured, a blanket on the skirts of a saddle that had a fringe all round it made of white women's scalps and hair. There was one saddle brought in here that had the skin from the private parts of a woman stretched over the saddle horn as an ornament, childrens clothing partially worn, shoes, stockings, under clothing of all kinds, bills of lading, photographs, letters, private letters and thousands of articles of that nature. And still those Indians were making their head quarters in that camp drawing its daily rations from the Government Depot at Fort Lyon.¹²⁰

Horrors of this variety are chronicled in many of the narratives, and the extent of their legitimacy is unascertainable. The enormity of these atrocities is somewhat incompatible with the frequency of the Cheyenne's attack on whites in the previous years, especially considering that the camp was presided over by Black Kettle, whose disposition was generally more peaceful than bloodthirsty. If anything, evidence points to the Third Regiment's cruelty against the Cheyenne; Theo Chubbuck, a volunteer in the regiment, recalled that immediately prior to the massacre "Chivington here made...a speech to this effect: 'Men, I shall not dictate to you who to kill nor what to kill, but remember our poor murdered women and children.'"¹²¹ Attitudes such as this elucidate why a sizeable portion of the Indian casualties at Sand Creek were women and children.

National opinion impugned the conduct of Chivington and his Third Regiment of Colorado volunteers after the Sand Creek Massacre. Congressional hearings were arranged to determine the legality of the regiment's organization and its behavior, newspapers in the East condemned the whole debacle, and the general outlook of the non-Colorado white population castigated both the territory's disposition toward Indians and the violence its settlers apparently instigated. Most Coloradoans, on the other hand, upheld this case célèbre as a victory for white settlers in the region, whose fears of survival were laid to rest.

As Colorado resident M.H. Slater wrote to a friend, geographical proximity to the whole affair was necessary for an objective understanding of the events, and "there are intelligent people who shed honest tears over the wrongs of the poor Indian - - but they do it at long range."¹²² Settlers believed that the massacre was a justifiable defense of their interests in the territory, and that individuals who did not live in the region could not comprehend the dangers posed by local Indian groups.

In the microcosm of elite Colorado politics, involving figures such as Evans and Chivington, it could be argued that the decision to initiate Sand Creek was made to save face. Yet this political maneuver was still unconnected to any ideology. Territorial politicians acted under pressure from the general white populace, which was more concerned with the eventuality of Indian violence than personal values. In this vein, it cannot be asserted that the Sand Creek Massacre was solely a product of white vengeance against the Cheyenne for raids and various gory happenings. Unadulterated panic swamped Colorado settlers in 1864, and they imagined that if large-scale action could be taken against the Indians, their survival in this regard would no longer be in question. The Civil War was chiefly a pretext for the events at Sand Creek, which only incidentally occurred during the conflict. Even if the War had ended before 1864, the massacre would not have been averted; the primary factors that led to its inevitability were rooted in regional qualms about settlers' survival, not in debates regarding states' rights, slavery, and other issues that beleaguered the East.

The comparative insignificance of these ideologies is underscored by Hollister's succinct description of his regiment, which "contained representatives of every shade of the idea from the opposer of slavery on principle, to the tolerator of slavery on the ground to expediency, and the worshiper of slavery from long association and habit."¹²³ Southwesterners were willing to compromise their personal philosophies for survival's sake. Comfort allowed some individuals to moralize freely about the virtues of the Union or Confederacy, but in most cases, settlers' values were encumbered by the dangerous reality of their regional situation. Eastern Civil War politics rang hollow in the Southwest, where the watershed events were intrinsically tied to federal withdrawals; animosity between whites, Mexicans and Indians; and the customary violence and hazards in the region. Survival was the preeminent philosophy in the Southwest, dictating the political loyalties of its people when loftier recourses were perilous.

Notes

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In Defense of Margery Kempe

On first encountering Margery Kempe, most people are blindsided by her rather boisterous personality. Margery is, undoubtedly, quite different from what comes to mind when imagining a medieval holy woman, and this difference often leaves her misunderstood and underappreciated. On a first reading of the *Book*,¹ many dismiss Margery as a hysteric, a woman suffering post-partum depression, or just plain annoying. However, if one looks past Margery's "in-your-face" personality, it is plain to see that she was not a complete anomaly within late medieval piety. To say that she was an "exemplar" of such piety, as Raymond Powell does,² may be going a bit too far, though; her position as a married English woman necessitated that she express her devotion differently from men or unmarried women. As Susan Dickman says, Margery is at once "exemplary and individual"³ – she wants to follow the examples of other religious, but she must forge her own way due to her position in life.

Before examining Margery's behaviours, it is important to think about Lynn Staley's argument in *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions*.⁴ Staley argues that the *Book* is not the autobiographical⁵ work that it purports to be. Instead, she says, it is a fictional account invented by Kempe⁶ as a social commentary. Kempe inserts herself into the story as Margery, but not in an effort to recreate real events. Instead, she uses the character of Margery along with literary and devotional conventions of the time to examine more carefully the foundations of her society.⁷ As a woman (both as author and character), Kempe is restricted to "a communally sanctioned 'female' form," which she then uses to "test its outer limits." By a firm understanding of the relation between female writing and community, "she creates a work that is open to radically opposed readings."⁸

Whether or not one agrees with Staley's reading of the *Book*, it is necessary to consider what she says about authorship and authority. Kempe has something to say about society, and she uses a controversial holy woman as her medium. Real or not, Margery represents medieval women who were trying (not necessarily consciously) to find their places in the world – places that still are not settled today. In order to support her own theory, Staley points out this bias about women's roles:

Implicitly, however, Kempe's achievement is undervalued precisely because, before we even begin to talk about that achievement, we define the *Book* in terms of its author's gender and so circumscribe our response to it by assuming an absolute equation between the *Book's* author and its subject.⁹

In order to gain recognition for her own unique contribution to society, a woman must make herself stand out and declare her differences. By acting out and making herself a very visible public figure, Margery is saying that she is both a woman and an important person in society. Her struggle to balance her ever-important religious life with the too-real demands of being a wife and mother were undoubtedly reflections of the feelings of many medieval women, although on an exaggerated scale.

While Margery may have been struggling to balance domestic life with religious life, she was certainly not the first one to do so; in fact, she references other such women within her own book. St. Bridget of Sweden is mentioned multiple times, as is Marie d'Oignies.¹⁰ As another married woman who pursued a holy life, Bridget was a natural role model for Margery, although her relationship with her husband was more supportive. Clarissa Atkinson points out "...[Bridget]'s writings made visionary women and their literary productions more than respectable."¹¹ Bridget had far more control over her circumstances than did Margery, although this had largely to do with her social status and childhood. Unlike Margery, Bridget's devotion began at a young age; upon marriage, she immediately convinced her husband to live chastely except for the explicit purpose of having children. Her husband, Ulf, was much more willing to go along with Bridget's plan than John was with Margery's, possibly because these were always the terms of the marriage – Margery demanded a vow of chastity of her husband after many years of marriage and a rather sudden religious conversion. Bridget's circumstances also lent themselves more easily to the holy life when her husband died, freeing her to found a religious order and later go to Rome. Although she worried about her children, she was assured by God that she needed to focus primarily on her love for Him.¹² Like Margery, Bridget had to struggle between her life as wife and mother and her life as the Bride of Christ. Unlike Margery, her circumstances were more favourable for such a balance, and her efforts mostly well received. By Margery's time, she had already been canonized, and her cult was "widespread and influential."¹³ Margery visits various places associated with Bridget during her travels in Rome and later to Syon, and she is not the

only pilgrim doing so, marking Bridget's importance so shortly after her life. Margery may or may not have realized that she would never be able to achieve the same type of piety as St. Bridget, but she certainly strove to do so. It is unsurprising that Bridget and ideas associated with her are mentioned so often within the *Book*: she was everything Margery herself wanted to be.

Although the *Book* does not mention Margery's having explicit knowledge of The Life of Marie d'Oignies in the same way as St. Bridget's Life, chapter 62 mentions that her scribe has read about Marie, and it is actually because of this that he is convinced that Margery's tears are holy and agrees to write her *Book*.¹⁴ The implication is that if the scribe was aware of Marie, then most likely Margery was, as well, and this affected choices about which elements of Margery's life should be included in her story.¹⁵ Whether Kempe was retelling her own life or creating fiction as Staley claims, she most likely made conscious decisions about what to include in her text, and she realized that repeating motifs such as the ones in Marie's Life would help to strengthen her claims to Margery's life as a holy woman. Margery's expressions of devotion did not come out of nowhere; rather, they were gifts from God, and that is proven because her experiences were so similar to those of another recognized holy woman.

It is surprising to many that Margery is not the only one who wept such copious tears – often the trait that is identified as the most annoying and unusual, by both her contemporaries and modern audiences. In fact, the precedent for that expression of piety was Marie d'Oignies:

She obtained the grace of so many tears that, as often as God was in her heart through thought, a stream of tears flowed from her eyes through devotion, so that the traces of her tears appeared on her cheeks from her habitual weeping. Nevertheless these tears did not leave her head depleted but, rather, they restored her mind with a certain fullness and they wondrously invigorated her body and gladdened the whole city of God with the holy stream of the river.¹⁶

Chapter 62 of the *Book* relates the condensed version of the story that convinced Margery's scribe: when Marie's priest demanded that she stop crying (as was frequently demanded of Margery), he ended up experiencing the tears himself as he said mass, with a flood that covered the altar and his clothing. Like Marie (and Margery), he found himself unable to control or cease the tears. Having experienced the crying for himself, he recognized that Marie truly was

blessed by God “and felt much more plenty of grace than ever did he....”¹⁷ Kempe’s inclusion of this story is certainly deliberate,¹⁸ because it validates her own tears. Although Margery frequently claims that she cannot control her crying, she never has the same proof, because no one around her bursts into tears. Some of the people of Lynn and other areas do believe her, but she recognizes that people who do not know her personally may not (after all, even many people who did know her personally did not believe her). Since she has no such event from her own life to include in her *Book*, she adopts the significant event from Marie’s life to serve much the same purpose.

One of the major differences between Marie and Margery was that Marie, like Bridget, was always a holy woman, evident from her childhood. Although she was also a married woman leading a holy life, it was again a different circumstance than Margery. For example, Marie’s husband John agrees to their vow of chastity willingly; de Vitry writes, “the further he [John] was separated from her in carnal love, so much the more closely was he joined to her by the knot of spiritual matrimony through natural love.”¹⁹ Marie is shown to be very pious from a young age,²⁰ and she is more traditional in her devotions – although she cries, she is not as boisterous about it as Margery. Her book was also neither dictated nor commissioned by her; instead, it was written by her confessor after her death in a bid for canonization. Marie’s Life is hagiographical and celebrates the life of a woman who was destined for great religious fervour from childhood; Margery’s *Book* is autobiographical and “relates the conversion of a sinner.”²¹ Like Bridget (and unlike Margery), Marie left a certain legacy behind in a type of pseudo-religious order. Marie influenced (or possibly even began) the beguine movement, a specifically female apostolate which had as its goal a recreation of the *vita apostolica* within society by those members of the laity who, by reason of their sex, had hitherto been viewed primarily as the recipients of the priestly ministry but never as active agents.²²

Margery was not a beguine, but the idea was obviously something that appealed to her on some level, which is the reason why Marie is mentioned within her *Book*. Like Bridget, she was a strong woman who advocated a religious life for women who were still bound to worldly responsibilities. In her introduction to her translation of Marie’s Life, Margot King points out that Jacques de Vitry (Marie’s hagiographer and confessor) admitted that, spiritually, Marie “was master and he disciple.”²³ Margery features a similar idea in her *Book*, when her priest is beneficed and is glad of the many books that she had him read to her, because now he is benefiting from those readings, as well.²⁴

One woman who is never mentioned within the *Book*, but should be considered when thinking about Margery Kempe, is Dorothea of Montau. Unlike Margery, she was another woman who was holy from a young age. However, she did not begin to have “ecstatic states and raptures” until later in life, after bearing nine children.²⁵ Her husband was even less willing than John was, but she managed to extract a vow of chastity from him. Dorothea’s social situation was much closer to Margery’s than either Bridget or Marie, in that each was a middle-class married woman who could not leave behind her responsibilities as life and mother, at least not to the extent desired. Dorothea also shared Margery’s gift of tears and cried for many of the same reasons: “sometimes for herself, sometimes for the people....”²⁶ While Dorothea is not as well-known today as the other holy women who influenced her life, she would have been known during Margery’s own time, and perhaps would have inspired Margery to continue with the recording of her *Book*.²⁷ Like Bridget, Dorothea took on a “traditional” holy life after her husband’s death, living as a recluse attached to a cathedral.

While it is apparent that each of these women influenced Margery in some way, none of them serves as a direct precedent for her. Margery wanted her piety to be very visible and made a point of displaying it for all to see.²⁸ While Margery’s excessive displays of piety may seem very strange today, they are more understandable in a medieval context – although her contemporaries still considered her rather strange.

Because so many medieval people were illiterate²⁹ and had difficulty understanding abstract ideas, they depended on physical evidence to understand or accept something as true. A good example of this is transubstantiation – no one really understood it, so people claimed to see the Eucharist turn into the body of Christ in order to make sense of it. Margery, having lived her entire life in a society so dependent on physicality, needs to put her piety on display for all to see, or else it is not validated. Just as her neighbours force her and her husband to live apart in order to prove that they are upholding their vow of chastity,³⁰ Margery must cry and fast and dress in white to show that she is really having conversations with Christ.

Susan Dickman suggests another reason for such behaviours; she notes that supernatural experiences, such as the visions Margery claimed to have, were much more common among women than among men. That is because having such visions entitled them to roles that were ordinarily denied: “...women’s visions provided them with opportunities to perform priestly functions that theologians denied them. Authorized by Christ in their mystical ecstasies, they became prophets, preachers, and teachers.”³¹ A life of quiet contemplation

may be what Margery claims to want, but it is difficult to imagine her living in such a way; she is more interested in focusing on her relationship with Christ, and in turn saving other people's souls so that they, too, may know the spiritual comfort that she does.

Despite her differences from these holy women, and her different ways of expressing her devotion – none of them are remembered primarily for being loud and obnoxious – Margery undoubtedly saw herself as being on the same level. After all, she spoke to Christ, and he repeatedly reassured her place beside him in Heaven. She is even given opportunities that he denied to Bridget.³² If she is held in that much grace, surely she can rank herself with the greatest holy women. However, regardless of how Margery viewed herself, most scholars today do not rank her with Bridget and Marie. Instead, Margery is in a kind of limbo between “holy woman” and “laywoman,” and no one is really quite sure how to react to her. Kim Phillips explains that even the *Book* does not help in this regard: “While...first and foremost an account of an aspirational spiritual journey, it also offers tantalizing glimpses of one woman's life.”³³ The *Book* does not fit with usual hagiography not only because it is autobiographical, but also because it includes details of a laywoman's life rather than strictly spiritual experiences. Some passages seem like they would be more appropriate within one of the Paston letters than in a book of a holy woman. Many of the accounts of Margery's pilgrimages leave out the spiritual details, instead focusing on her troubles finding a ship or her disagreements with her fellowship; after a lengthy treatment of the difficulties of getting to Spain, Margery's pilgrimage there is covered in less than a paragraph.³⁴

Phillips points out that the *Book* does not fit into traditional hagiographical works because it lacks the emphasis on childhood.³⁵ Each of the holy women after whom Margery modeled herself displayed traits of the holy life from a young age, and so their childhoods are mentioned and considered in their Lives. Margery had no such calling as a child, and so her *Book* skips over her childhood entirely. The *Book* also glosses over her maidenhood, a stage of life that was important for both secular and religious women, as it was considered the “most prized age of woman.”³⁶ It is especially significant that Kempe skips over this stage of Margery's life, because it was during this time that Margery's great sin, which is never revealed, occurred. By leaving out Margery's childhood and maidenhood, which were both conventional within holy women's biographies, Kempe leaves the reader of the *Book* confused as to how to receive it.³⁷

Although much has been made of Margery's need to balance domestic life with religious life, and her limitations due to being a woman, these concerns

were not limited to women such as Margery and the other women she references within her text. A great number of men were practicing affective piety and writing manuals about how to do so for other laity. Margery mentions that some of these were read to her: Hilton's book, *Stimulus Amoris* (and likely other Pseudo-Bonaventure texts), and *Incedium Amoris*.³⁸ Although Hilton's book was intended for a nobleman, Margery adopts the ideas and applies them to her own life. His *Treatise on the Mixed Life* is directed to a nobleman “who desires to devote himself to God without the distractions that arise from involvement with secular responsibilities.”³⁹ However, these responsibilities are inescapable, and both the nobleman and Margery must find ways around them. Hilton suggests that simply wishing to lead a contemplative life is good, and that the desire should not be ignored – instead, one should combine the contemplative life with the active life, pursuing “spiritual sensitivity and profundity in the midst of worldly duties.”⁴⁰

Margery is very concerned with her contemplative life, judging by her many conversations with Christ. When her husband is sick, she worries that the time spent taking care of him will mean that she cannot spend as much time praying and thinking about Christ, and that she will fall out of his good graces; he has to reassure her that she is doing him a service by caring for John before she fully consents to do so.⁴¹ However, Margery is also strongly concerned with the active life, so much so that it is difficult to imagine her leading anything other than a “mixed” life. Yoshikawa explains that the active life “is both the good practical life of charity towards one's fellow Christians and that of discipline and penance which leads to purity of heart, thereby preparing one for the contemplative life.”⁴² Throughout her *Book*, Margery displays charity towards her fellows by being as concerned with their spiritual lives as she is with her own. She views her excessive crying as a type of preaching. As a woman (and especially as a woman who did not want to be seen as a Lollard), Margery could not actually preach, but she considered her tears to do much the same for her. Saint Jerome tells her, “Blessed are you, daughter, in the weeping that you weep for the people's sin, for many shall be saved thereby. And, daughter, dread you not, for it is a singular and a special gift that God has given you, a well of tears which man shall never take from you.”⁴³ Margery's constant crying and weeping serves to remind people of the Passion, whereby they will begin to concentrate on the life of Christ, realize the errors of their ways, and be saved as she is. By caring for the people around her, Margery not only fulfills her role as a religious, but also as a maternal figure. Although Margery seems to neglect her own children, she watches over the people around her much like the Virgin Mary, even stepping in as

intercessor at times.⁴⁴ Margery recognizes the importance of her prayers to the people, and prays, "Therefore I ask now for mercy for the sin of the people, as I would do for my own, for, Lord, you are all charity, and charity brought you into this wretched world and caused you to suffer full hard pains for our sins."⁴⁵

Margery was also undoubtedly influenced by the large number of pseudo-Bonaventure texts floating around medieval Europe at the time: texts written by contemporary mystics but attributed to Bonaventure in order to give them more weight. These included *The Meditations on the Life of Christ*, its loose English translation *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* by Nicholas Love, the *Stimulus Amoris*, and its translation *The Prickyng of Love* (sometimes credited to Hilton).⁴⁶ The piety espoused in these texts focused on the humanity of Christ,⁴⁷ which is exactly what Margery does in Jerusalem when she focuses on Christ's death and has her first cry.⁴⁸ This form of piety also encouraged using the imagination to supplement the Gospel. Inserting oneself into a religious scene, as Margery does with the Virgin Mary,⁴⁹ or imaging an event such as the Passion in great detail "served to heighten the emotional impact of the images on the heart, and it was for this reason that the practice was enjoined upon pious laypeople as an aid to further devotion."⁵⁰ This type of devotion, then, was not intended to be reserved for those leading a religious life – much like Hilton's mixed life, it was intended for anyone who wished to feel closer to God.

Richard Rolle's *Incendium Amoris* was yet another work whose influence can be seen in the Book, especially as Kempe refers to it directly. Rolle himself was influenced by the pseudo-Bonaventure texts (some of those even circulated with his name attached to them), so it is only natural that Margery was familiar with both.⁵¹ He writes that one can feel God's presence by a heat in the heart or hearing pleasant music. Tears can be another response.⁵² Margery's first weeping (different from crying, as she does in Jerusalem) takes place after she hears sweet music in bed with her husband. This incident marks the beginning of her obnoxious religiosity, when she begins announcing to others, "It is full merry in heaven."⁵³ *Incendium Amoris* and other such writings prompted some worry that people would be claiming visions of God or feelings of God that were not really there, and so it became necessary to have one's religious feeling validated by a priest or other holy person. Margery is very concerned with having her feelings confirmed, especially in the first part of the Book. The poem mentions that she had

...much dread for the illusions and deceits of her ghostly enemies. Then went she by the bidding of the Holy Ghost to many worshipful clerks, both archbishops and bishops, doctors and bachelors of divinity also. She spoke also with many anchorites and showered them her manner of living and such grace as the Holy Ghost of his goodness wrought in her mind and in her soul, as her wit would serve her to express it. And they all that she showered her secrets unto said she was much bound to love our Lord for the grace that he showed unto her and counseled her to follow her movings and her stirrings and trustfully believe they were of the Holy Ghost and of no evil spirit.⁵⁴

Even with the approval of "many worshipful clerks," Margery is not always convinced that her visions are really from God. When he shows her unpleasant things, she does not want to believe that they are really from Him and not demons. To show her that she must tolerate both the good and the bad, He makes her suffer through "foul thoughts and foul minds" until she admits that she should accept all visions from Him, good or bad, and must adhere to His will.⁵⁵

By examining the religious climate in Margery's time, it is plain that she actually does fit in, in a way. Contrary to what one first assumes upon reading her *Book*, there are precedents for her behaviour – quite a few of them, actually. However, no one could be considered a direct precedent of her behaviour. Margery takes what she knows of piety and people who are trying to balance religious life with worldly life, and she applies those ideas to the way in which she lives her own life. By virtue of being female, she faces a number of challenges – she cannot leave her family, at least not if she wants to maintain any semblance of a good reputation; she cannot travel on her own because she must have a constant fear of rape. She cannot live chastely without the consent of her husband; without his vow of chastity, she is still subject to the conjugal debt, which is why she declares, "I may not deny you my body, but the love of my heart and my affection is drawn from all earthly creatures and set only in God."⁵⁶ She cannot even go on pilgrimage without his consent, a fact that is used against her during one of her heresy trials.⁵⁷ Even once she has overcome these challenges, she cannot escape from them. She is still tainted as the woman who left her husband and children, regardless of what God thinks. She is defined by her limitations as woman, and the ways in which she stretches the limits. Had Margery lived earlier, at the time

of Bridget or Marie, she most likely would not have been as boisterous in her devotions. Prior to the Black Death, there was already an emphasis on Christ's humanity, but without the same emphasis on the individual relationship with Christ. It is this relationship that Margery cherishes, strives for, and advertises with her devotions.

Margery, then, is a compilation of any number of historical factors. Considering that England had not yet had a famous mystic with tears, perhaps they were overdue for one. One cannot help but wonder if Margery's personality was inevitable at the time – if it had not been Margery, would it have been someone else? While Margery may not be the ideal case to argue proto-feminism, her behaviours were certainly in response to her life as a woman. As a woman, there were few "appropriate" outlets in which to express such great piety and devotion – so Margery made up outlets as she went along. With a husband who was not particularly supportive of her lifestyle and who refused to die at an opportune moment, meaning that she could not achieve the vow of married chastity that she wanted early on in the *Book*, she had to forge her own path in memory of but separately from other married holy women. The amount of influence that the pseudo-Bonaventure texts had at the time also leant to Margery's purpose, because it meant that her imagining herself alongside the Virgin was not unusual. Richard Rolle's text supported Margery's claims toward the physical manifestations of God's presence, and her knowledge of the text certainly informed which instances of "proof" that she would include within her own *Book*.

The question that remains unanswered, however, is why did Margery write her *Book* to begin with? The obvious answer, per the *Book* itself, is that she did so because God told her to. But since it is the general consensus that Margery was not having actual conversations with Christ, the idea to write down her life story was all her own, even if she did not conceive of it as such. By reading the *Book* and comparing its important moments to important moments in Bridget's, Marie's, and even Dorothea's Life, and then again to the ideas written in the pseudo-Bonaventure texts, it is clear that Kempe was very deliberate in her choices about what to include in the text, and where. Margery tells us that the book is not in order, but that simply means that it is not in chronological order. There is a certain thematic feel to sections of the *Book* that cannot be accidental – groups of chapters about her visions, her heresy trials, her pilgrimages, her life after the first scribe, etc. Kempe has organized her *Book* in these sections because she expects her readers to notice the motifs that are shared between her text and the texts of other holy women.

The Lives of these three women were all written as a bid for canonization, although only Bridget's was successful. It seems fair to say that Margery wanted and expected to be named a saint. The desire would not have been uncommon at the time, when people were concerned with leaving a legacy behind so people would remember them. The Black Death's lesson to the people of Europe was that death could strike anyone at any time, and many were not ready to be forgotten so easily. As a self-declared religious woman, who announced her religious devotion to anyone who would listen, Margery would have assumed that people wanted to canonize her. Although she was humble with regards to God, Margery was not very humble in her relations with other people. Some scholars have even suggested that her poor reception among her contemporaries had more to do with an annoying personality than any eccentric religious tendencies: "Someone who talked only about religion, who constantly rebuked her companions for swearing, and who regularly created disturbances in church by her wailing, was considered no better company in the fifteenth century than in the twenty-first."⁵⁸

In writing her *Book*, then, was Margery encouraging the cult of Margery Kempe? The answer certainly appears to be yes. Even the single mention of Margery's name within the *Book* is significant. Margery does not use her name until near the end of the *Book*, in chapter 9 of *Book Two*.⁵⁹ Like so many of her other authorial choices, this is deliberate on Kempe's part. After reading through all of *Book One*, she undoubtedly intended the reader to be brimming over with curiosity as to who this holy woman could possibly be. By saving her identity for the end of the work, Margery hits the reader with an unexpected answer to the question. With the exception of early in *Book One* where Margery slips into first person,⁶⁰ this is the most personal that "the creature" is ever made to be. Early in the *Book*, the first person may be intentional to remind the reader that "this creature" really is a human being, rather than a distant story to be read and forgotten. The shock of reading the sudden first person is electrifying, as it is later when Margery names herself. At the end, the name is a sort of resolution: Kempe has already reminded the reader that Margery is as real as he or she is, and now she is offering a name whose legacy readers may strive to continue – just as Margery herself did with Bridget and Marie.

Gail McMurray Gibson is another who believes that Margery's *Book* was carefully crafted to present her as a candidate for canonization. "If martyrdom by sword was not available to qualify her for sainthood, martyrdom by slander was, and Margery's *Book* seems quite conscious of the validating implications of such suffering."⁶¹ She argues that Margery's suffering is intended to be

read as her own version of imitation Christ. Unlike St. Francis, she cannot suffer Christ's own wounds, so she suffers ridicule and ostracism from others instead. Margery presents her suffering as martyrdom reflective of Christ's own martyrdom, and "indeed, her qualifications for sainthood depend upon that participation."⁶² Katherine Lewis presents another view, noting that while the *Book* goes out of its way to present Margery as a saint, Kempe and her scribe may not have had any realistic expectation that it would help in the case for canonization.⁶³ There had been no English saints since Anglo-Saxon times, so having Margery recognized as a saint would be an "uphill struggle."⁶⁴ While it may be that some people did view Margery as a saint in her own time, she did not have a large enough following to make a difference, and the *Book* alone was not enough to make a case for her canonization. There are no remaining documents about Margery other than the *Book*, and here "silence speaks volumes": without a cult following or shrine, there could be no expectation of Margery's veneration outside of Lynn.⁶⁵

Although it is logical and perhaps even fair to accuse Margery of being an annoying person who was only interested in becoming a saint, it would be completely unfair to leave an analysis of her at that. Margery was not someone who was completely abnormal in the realm of late medieval piety. In fact, she had adopted those conventions that were most familiar to people and made them fit with her lifestyle. This meant that her expressions of piety were different from the conventions, but had the same roots. If one looks past her crying (itself a medieval convention, though it is rarely discussed outside of Margery), one can find many recognizable late medieval ideas about devotion. It is important to consider this before writing Margery off as a woman who suffered from post-partum depression and vision-inducing migraines. Instead, one must consider Margery as a very intelligent creature, trying to find her own niche in the world. She is the creator of the first English-language "autobiography" (still using the term loosely) and certainly had a very active hand in its writing, although how much of the work is her own and how much is her scribe's will forever remain an issue of contention.

Although Kempe intends her *Book* to be a guide to spiritual life, it is more important for what it tells us about Margery's mixed life – both spiritual and secular. Most Lives focused only on the spiritual aspects of the saint's life without any details that make it clear that the saint was a real person. Margery's *Book* blends both, making it clear that Margery had a secular life like everyone else but could still achieve God's grace. This may not have helped her case for canonization, but it is of interest to the modern reader because it shows that devotional spirituality was something that was accessible to anyone,

although the extent to which they could join in on the contemplative life – or even mixed life, for that matter – depending on their social station. Margery may not be a model of late medieval piety, but she should not be dismissed for that; instead, she should be studied for what she has to offer in the realm of laywomen's piety and attempts at recognition.

Notes

1. *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. and ed. Lynn Staley (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001). Abbreviated BMK.
2. Raymond Powell, "Margery Kempe: An Exemplar of Late Medieval Piety," *The Catholic Historical Review* 89, no. 1 (1998).
3. Susan Dickman, "A Showing of God's Grace: The Book of Margery Kempe" in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed. Robert Boenig and William F. Pollard, 176 (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1997).
4. Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1994).
5. Not "autobiographical" in the sense that we think of today, but in the sense of retelling certain events in Margery's life.
6. Staley uses "Kempe" to refer to Margery Kempe as author/narrator and "Margery" to refer to her as the character within the *Book*, a practice that I will use for this paper.
7. Staley, 4.
8. Staley, 5.
9. Staley, 3.
10. For Bridget: BMK, 35, 69, 70, 106, 179 (n. 9); for Marie: 112, 121-2 (not named in text, but in n. 7).
11. Clarissa Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1983), 34.
12. Atkinson 169-72.
13. Atkinson, 175.
14. BMK, 112.
15. Atkinson, 33.
16. Jacques de Vitry, *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. Margot King (Toronto: Peregrina, 1993), 40.
17. BMK, 113.
18. Those who believe that Margery's scribe wielded a lot of influence over the contents of the *Book* may be inclined to argue that this is his own insertion into the story to explain why he agreed to write, but it is too important to Margery's validation to believe that it was not Kempe's own decision.
19. de Vitry, 48.
20. de Vitry, 47.

21. Atkinson, 33.
22. Margot King, "Introduction" in *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, Jacques de Vitry, 8 (Toronto: Peregrina, 1993).
23. King, 9.
24. BMK, 106.
25. Atkinson, 179.
26. Atkinson, 181.
27. Atkinson, 181, especially n. 41.
28. Not only was she known for her tears, she was also known for wearing white, which was inappropriate for a married woman; not eating meat, which was unusual for the laity, except for certain days; and confessing and taking communion as often as she liked, when Church law only required these to be done once a year, typically at Easter.
29. "Illiterate" here meaning unable to read or write at all, but especially in Latin, the language of most religious texts.
30. BMK, 131-2.
31. Dickman, 168.
32. BMK, 35.
33. Kim Phillips, "Margery Kempe and the Ages of Woman" in *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis, 25 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).
34. BMK, 81.
35. Phillips, 29.
36. Phillips, 29.
37. Phillips 30.
38. BMK, 106.
39. Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, *Margery Kempe's Meditations* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 121.
40. Yoshikawa, 122.
41. BMK, 132.
42. Yoshikawa, 122.
43. BMK, 73.
44. See BMK, 125, where a priest asks Margery to pray for knowledge of the fate of prior of Lynn. Interestingly, neither party seems concerned that this could be construed as an attempt at fortune-telling, so great is their faith in Margery's visions.
45. BMK, 104.
46. Powell, 4.
47. Powell, 6.
48. BMK, 51-2.
49. For example, the first vision Margery recounts: BMK, 15.
50. Powell, 7.
51. Powell, 9.
52. Powell, 8.
53. BMK, 10.
54. BMK, 4.
55. BMK, 106-8.
56. BMK, 10.
57. BMK, 18, 90.
58. Powell, 20.
59. BMK, 177.
60. BMK, 26: And the bishop did no more to us on that day, save he made us right good cheer and said we were right welcome.
61. Gail McMurray Gibson, "St. Margery: The Book of Margery Kempe" in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley, 277 (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).
62. Gibson, 278.
63. Katherine J. Lewis, "Margery Kempe and Saint Making" in *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis, 199 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).
64. Lewis, 206.
65. Lewis, 215.

The Importance of Scottish Rebels: William Wallace and Robert the Bruce and the Rise of Scottish Nationalism

"From Greece arose Leonidas, from America Washington, and from Scotland Wallace, names which shall remain through all time the watch words and beacons of liberty," as is inscribed in the tower of the Barnweill Monument dedicated to William Wallace.¹

Millions of people from around the world have heard the name William Wallace, but far less with the exception of those in Scotland, have heard of Robert Bruce. Both are known as freedom fighters and nationalists, but more important than their individual and truthful identities is the relationship they had with the Scottish community and the later world. At times, Wallace and Bruce seem to have worked together against the infiltration of the English, but their goals were clearly different. Wallace's simple hope for freedom clashed with the Bruce's quest for kingship, his usage of propaganda to win over the Scottish populous, and his politique nature in reference to his relationship with Edward I. Both arose in a time of Scottish civil war when the question of freedom from English oppression was a very complex issue. William Wallace and Robert Bruce, therefore, symbolize not only Scottish resistance to England and the rise of Scottish nationalism, but a civil war within Scotland itself.

Historical Background

In order to understand the relationship between Wallace and Bruce and their contributions to Scottish nationalism, it is important to review the conflict between England and Scotland which encompassed the lives of such men and their previous generations. For centuries, the English forces had attempted to bring the Scottish under English law. When the imperialistic Edward I came to the English throne in 1272, however, the Scottish mindset had changed. Europeans of the previous twelfth century had felt a greater sense of national identity, and this sense was ever more heightened within the thirteenth century.² The years between 1296 and 1328 encompassed the dark age of border law between the two countries in which relations began to crumble. England was kept uneasy for fear of conspiracy between the French and Scottish. The Scottish, on the other hand, were in fear of English invasion and prompted a race for succession among the leading baronial families after

the death of their king Alexander III. When Scotland was finally brought under the rule of Edward I of England, Edward's foolishness in not adhering to Scottish customs and practices further fuelled the dispute.³

Edward would not have had an opportunity to infiltrate Scotland without the death of King Alexander III in 1286. Alexander died without a male heir, leaving the issue of succession up to the leading baronial families of Scotland. Before Alexander's death these barons swore to install his granddaughter, Margaret of Norway, as the next monarch of Scotland.⁴ However, the politics of the time were not so simple, since descendents of King David I claimed ties to the throne, the two most influential, the elder Robert Bruce and John Balliol. For the next ten years the crisis of kingship persisted. Six guardians were elected to head the Scottish government, the most important being Bishop Fraser, Wishart, and Alexander Comyn who would soon shape the worsening political struggle. Desperate for help, Scotland sought the aid of Edward by inviting him to take an informal role in Scottish politics. Edward soon arranged for his son to marry Margaret, finally joining the lines of Scotland and England. However, Margaret died during her voyage to Scotland, and the competition for the throne of Scotland continued.⁵

The political struggle for kingship allowed factions within the leading baronial families to finally make way. Early on, the elder Bruce allied with the Stuarts against the Balliols, Frasers, and the Comyns. Both Bruce and John Balliol believed it was time to seize the throne. Feeling the pressure and playing politics, as his son would later imitate, Bruce commissioned the appeals of the seven earls to attack Fraser and Comyn who were accused of attempting to make Balliol king behind the back of the Scottish elitist community. Bruce then asked Edward for aid, thinking he could get on the good side of the English king. Unfortunately, Bruce received more help than he had wanted in that "Edward offered to judge succession and guarantee Scottish peace and security, but [only] as superior lord of the kingdom."⁶ Opposition on both sides to Edward was instant, but options at that point were limited, and both Bruce and Balliol conceded rule to Edward.

By 1292 Edward had made a decision, making John Balliol king, but the civil strife did not easily end here. Perhaps if Edward were to have disposed of the younger Robert Bruce, the earl of Carrick, the ancestral factions may have faded away, but this was not so. In making Balliol king, Edward had created the puppet kingdom he had always dreamed of, for Balliol was not an independent king by any means. He was a vassal king who gave allegiance to his overlord, King Edward. By 1295, however, the vassal-lord relationship between Edward and Balliol had diminished, and in later in that same year

Edward began to seize the lands of King John and his subjects. The Scots had previously allied with the French, and they were hoping for the pope to award them some assistance. However, Edward quickly prevailed over Balliol, forcing him to resign. Edward now had complete control of the Scottish realm.⁷

Scotland was no longer only split over the issue of kingship among the legitimate Scottish families, but the kingdom was also split between those who favored rule by Edward and those who sought rule by a Scot. The younger Bruce immediately joined forces with the Stewarts, but the elder remained faithful to Edward, allowing faction to occur within the same family. Though the young Bruce privately sought the throne for himself, he pledged allegiance to Edward, revealing for the first time his politique nature which he had inherited from his father.

The Rise of Wallace

The Scottish kingdom was now "under rule by aliens, foreigners with no sense of the traditions and limits of the Scottish government," and many Scottish people lived lives full of fear.⁸ It was at this point that the Scottish rebels took their presence in history, first with the revolt of 1297 in Clydesdale. Here, William Wallace and William Douglas made their first appearances.⁹ Douglas, however, was soon defeated by Edward himself. Douglas' lands were confiscated and given to the English throne. Edward was determined to make an example out of Douglas, and would soon do the same for Wallace.

For the time, however, Wallace found a second partner, Andrew de Moray or Murray.¹⁰ Even though the Scots were divided amongst themselves, many joined Wallace and Murray in their battle against tyranny. Their greatest feat was the battle of Stirling Bridge. Unfortunately for Wallace, Murray soon died. Wallace had some good support; he was allied with the Stewarts and Bishop Wishart, but he did not have universal support. After Wallace was knighted, he imposed Lamberton as bishop after the death of Bishop Fraser. Because the Comyn family had backed another candidate, they were instantly angered with Wallace's action; they had lost a powerful ally within the church. Thus, the Comyns were by all means the greatest enemies of Wallace.¹¹

Wallace met his defeat at Falkirk in 1298. His defeat is often blamed on political divisions. The Comyns and others are said to have abandoned Wallace at the battlefield, once more, exemplifying the complexity and civil strife within medieval Scotland. Though Wallace was at the end of his resistance fighting, he did not die at Falkirk. He did, however, resign his guardianship, the key players now being the younger Robert Bruce and John Comyn. The

Comyn family pursued the return of John Balliol as king, whereas the Bruce continued to pursue kingship for himself.

By 1304, however, Scotland was once again under the thumb of King Edward. This time Edward was more careful in his decision making and at least acted as if he held respect for the traditions of the Scots. Edward even promised to abide by the laws and customs of Alexander III. In addition, he offered favor or forgiveness to anyone who captured Wallace who had seemed to have disappeared from the military sphere for some years. Wallace had spent some time on the continent requesting assistance from the French and Rome, but he later returned to Scotland empty handed. In the end, one of the Stewart family betrayed Wallace in 1305 and brought him before Edward where he received a treasonous death.¹²

The Bruce's Quest for Kingship

With Wallace gone, some factions had died with him, but not nearly enough. The battle of kingship between Robert Bruce and John Comyn continued to rage on. Bruce was "convinced of the injustice, his abiding ambition was to retrieve the crown his grandfather had struggled for and lost."¹³ In 1302 Bruce once again submitted to Edward. Bruce was in need of help against Comyn who was supposedly allying with France in favor of Balliol's restoration. Determined to achieve his goal of becoming king, the Bruce's relationship with Edward was obviously only a diplomatic one. Awkwardly, Robert Bruce and his family became quite close to the English family. For example, Edward Bruce lived with the Prince of Wales, and Alexander Bruce attended Cambridge University and was often involved with the elite English society.¹⁴

In the midst of his so-called alliance with Edward, Bruce was busy conspiring for rebellion. The Bruce had acquired little support, his anchoring ally being the Scottish Church. By 1306, the Bruce was ready for bloody war, and he informally killed John Comyn. With his death, came the death of competition for the Scottish throne; the Bruce was the only contender left alive, and so he made himself king. Edward, however, continued to fight back, but was often drawn away due to his failing health. Even though England was weakened with the death of Edward, his son Edward II continued the struggle his father had began. The new king soon proved to be incompetent and surely lacking his father's determination, thus the Bruce was easily able to situate himself on the Scottish throne.¹⁵ The Bruce's support, however, was still lacking the majority of the population, until his success at his hideout in Glen Drool. With continued success, the Bruce won the hearts of many Scottish

nobles; there was now less at stake in joining Bruce. Since England no longer inhibited the rule of Bruce, he concentrated on the rival families within his own nation, until he consolidated his support, eliminating the long reigning factions.¹⁶ Within three years, Robert Bruce had transformed from a fugitive to a well-established monarch, a feat much more astonishing than that of the martyr William Wallace.

Wallace: The Myth

Throughout this entire controversy, Wallace appears to be a very minor character in the Scottish political sphere. Yes, his support from the Scottish nobles was heightened by his success at Stirling Bridge, but after his failure at Falkirk, he no longer offered anything to the elite Scottish community. Wallace was once again a man of simple origin and had never really gained a foothold within the Scottish elite. Why, then, is he noted for being one of the first true nationalists? Graeme Morton suggests that the Wallace myth is the reason why Wallace is so highly revered. The Wallace myth was professed by Blind Harry in the late fifteenth century, nearly two hundred years after the death of Wallace. As Morton proclaims, Blind Harry is the "Scottish Homer," and he thus bore the first Scottish patriot.¹⁷ As a romantic, Harry suggests that Wallace's rage and patriotism were due to the murder of his wife or mistress, Marion Braidflute by the sheriff of Clydesdale, William Heselrig.¹⁸ The rebellion at Clydesdale, therefore, invoked the romantic, but as well as the patriot, within Wallace. He had the potential to penetrate the heart of all Scotsmen, it was Wallace's timing within medieval society which inhibited the growth of his myth. Every nation needs a hero, but the hero must coincide with the wants and needs of the people; it is the "fervor of the masses" which makes men like Wallace legends, and that fervor would not occur for centuries to come.¹⁹

Thus, it is important to understand that Wallace was not a legend within his own time; he began and ended his military career as an outlaw. Wallace's popularity did not increase until the bourgeois class was more accepted within Scotland. Finally, Scotland was ready to accept a man who represented civil society. Ironically, Wallace's simple origin is the main reason his myth was so successful in the following centuries.²⁰

Analyzing the Success of Bruce

Even though Bruce had the wealth and power Wallace would never have, his success was highly unexpected. The Bruce had sacrificed more than Wallace. Not only was Bruce's life on the line, but his wealth and his

integrity.²¹ Having been from a wealthy and powerful family who had long laid claim to the Scottish throne, Bruce offered the hope that Wallace could not. In describing the attitude of the Scottish lords, Walter of Guisborough states that "the common folk of the land followed him [Wallace] as their leader and ruler; the retainers of the great lords adhered to him and even though the lords themselves were present with the English king in body, at heart they were on the opposite side."²² Thus, as much as the Scottish baronial community wanted to brave with Wallace, they could not afford to. During Robert Bruce's time, however, the tides had changed. With England at loss due to the death of Edward I, the incompetence of his son, and the rise of the English civil war, Scottish barons risked less in supporting Bruce.

Even though Bruce took advantage of the situation, it is hard to believe that he had not conspired to seize the Scottish throne from the beginning. During Wallace's campaigns, it appeared as though Bruce was supporting Wallace. When Wallace was seized in 1305, he was found with letters from Bruce.²³ This is what ignited Edward toward a campaign against Bruce, but for many previous years, the Bruce had played it safe. He gave his support to Wallace and the other Scottish rebels when he could afford the risk. Furthermore, in hopes of optimizing his chances for becoming king, the Bruce married Eleanor, John Balliol's sister.²⁴ In modern times, Bruce's ability to play each side of the fence in an effort to optimize his success is of a politique nature, and even though Wallace in all likelihood would see the Bruce as having traitorous qualities, in the end the Bruce succeeded and Wallace was defeated.

Brucean Propaganda

Certainly Robert Bruce would have viewed himself better than Wallace, for not only did he succeed against the English, he had installed himself as king of the Scots. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Bruce attempted not to completely eliminate Wallace from the minds of the Scottish people, but to downplay his part in the resistance movement. Brucean propaganda was clearly an effort by the Bruce to achieve his goal, and to be seen as the man who did it all.

The chronicle of the *Gesta Annalia II* was written by the Augustinian priory of Lanercost in Cumberland whose patrons were the Bruce's. The priory owned both English and Scottish lands, and thus collected a vast amount of information concerning the Scottish war for independence. Within the chronicle, Wallace is described as "an archer of low-birth and poor descent..."²⁵ Furthermore; the chronicle suggests that Wallace was subordinate to the real leaders of the emerging resistance, Wishart and the Stewart. Even when Wallace

is paired with Douglas and later Murray, Wallace is described as not the man in command.²⁶

Why would the Bruce encourage this theft of Wallace's true identity and accomplishments? After the Bruce had proclaimed himself king, he had many Scottish opponents, and his propaganda was the only means of diplomacy in which Bruce could re-unite his kingdom. Bruce, therefore, was not the sole resistance fighter, but he was the greatest, and everyone else was to be forgotten.²⁷

One would wonder why Wallace is even mentioned at all in this chronicle if Robert Bruce were responsible for everything. Though the Bruce was greater than Wallace, he also relied on him as a precedent which legitimized the Bruce as the king of the Scots. Fraser states, "Robert and Wallace were kindred spirits, fighting what was essentially the same struggle, for what were essentially the same reasons, against what was essentially the same foe."²⁸ Not only did Wallace offer legitimacy to Bruce, but Wallace became the scapegoat for everything that went wrong with the Scottish resistance fighting. The chronicle also suggests that Wallace's failure was due to his betrayal of the other Scottish magnates, who were at odds with Bruce at the time of the chronicle's composition. Once again, the Bruce pins the focus of opposition on Wallace to gain support as king.

Ironically, however, the Bruce does not mend the faction between himself and the Comyn family. They are described as those who betrayed Wallace and are the reason for Wallace's resignation of the guardianship.²⁹ Even though the *Gesta Annalia II* is laced with Brucean propaganda, it also includes pieces of pro-Comyn propaganda. The Bruce is described as fighting on the Scottish side at Falkirk, but also is described as leading the English force against Wallace near Peebles in 1304, allowing it hard to shed light on the Bruce's ability to propagate.³⁰

In general, however, the *Gesta Annalia II* is seen as historical proof of Brucean propaganda, and though Wallace is slighted, it is from this that the earliest origins of the Wallace myth emerge. Because of this chronicle, "William Wallace emerges as a greatly significant figure with both a background and a character defined by respectability and a measure of knightly honor..."³¹ Unfortunately, it distorts the image of the real Wallace, but that was not a problem for Bruce. The chronicle had allowed for the Bruce to be accepted as the king and hero.³²

Gesta Annalia II was not the sole piece of Brucean propaganda. Even after his death, the Bruce family continued to spread the goodness of Bruce. In the 1370's "The Brus" was written by John Barbour. Comparable to Blind Harry's

"The Wallace," "The Brus" begins with the Bruce's early claim to the throne and ends with his death. Also, like Wallace's epic, "The Brus" weaves myth and history, adding to the success of Robert Bruce after his death. Although the Bruce's myth plays a huge role within the epic, many of the sources used to compose the epic poem were written very close to the Bruce's lifetime. The work even includes some accounts of survivors and eyewitnesses. Thus, "The Bruce" in all probability is more historically accurate than "The Wallace," making the Bruce far less obscure than Wallace.³³

The Legacy of Wallace and Bruce

Though less truth is known concerning Wallace, today it seems he is favored over Robert Bruce because Wallace is nothing more than a myth. The myth is what makes Wallace. For many today, the facts are irrelevant to his history; he is loved and respected as one of the first true nationalists who began to tear down medieval society.³⁴ For Scotland, Wallace was the glue which held the country together during the persisting years of English oppression. In later centuries, nationalists from several other countries used Wallace to legitimize their attempts at freeing their countries from oppression, especially the Italian patriots Mazzini and Garibaldi. Wallace's myth excited the Confederate patriots during the U.S. civil war.³⁵ He was even mentioned during the Nuremberg trials to describe the oppression the German people felt under the Nazi regime.³⁶ In a letter within "The Scotsman," Wallace is compared to Nelson Mandela insinuating that "today's terrorists may become tomorrow's hero," for it can not be forgotten that Wallace was an outlaw within his own time.³⁷

As for Robert Bruce, he is less popular today because he is less mysterious. Since he was wealthy to begin with and later became king, he could afford for chronicles and such to be composed concerning his success. His great deeds unfortunately are often forgotten outside Scotland. John Fordun in his fourteenth century chronicle of the Scottish nation states, "Great was the task that Robert Bruce took upon himself and unbearable the burdens upon his shoulders."³⁸ But the Bruce, unlike Wallace, was not a martyr. In becoming successful, he prevented himself from becoming a national myth.

Though it is uncertain that William Wallace and Robert Bruce were true comrades, they shared the same quest for freedom against English oppression. The Scottish nationalism which grew from their deeds was only due to the English imperialism of Edward I in the medieval world, but it took many centuries for the factions within Scotland to heal. The Scottish civil war of which Wallace and the Bruce symbolize was not all about faction concerning

favor for English imperialism, but about faction among the classes. Wallace was of a lower subordinate class, and even though he was truly the first Scottish nationalist, his status, even though he was knighted, robbed him of his glory. Even if Wallace eventually won freedom from English oppression, "it would be a subordinate form of freedom," for the ruling class oppressed subordinate classes centuries later.³⁹ The Bruce, however, maintained his wealth and status, but that alone did not win him the throne or the hearts of the Scottish. It was Robert Bruce's abilities within the political sphere to play Edward I as a pawn and disregard the greatness of Wallace which made him triumphant. In the end, however, Wallace's myth prevailed over the truth of Bruce, proving that for many, legend is unfortunately more satisfying than history.

Notes

1. Lewis Spence in Graeme Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 82.
2. Cynthia J. Neville, *Violence, Custom, and Law: The Anglo-Saxon Border Lands in the Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 1-3.
3. Neville, 15-20.
4. Michael Brown, *The Wars of Scotland c 1214-1371* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) 157.
5. Brown, 159-165.
6. Brown, 166.
7. Brown, 165-180.
8. Brown, 181.
9. Brown, 173.
10. Brown, 183.
11. Brown, 186.
12. Brown, 195-198.
13. Ronald McNair Scott, *Robert the Bruce: King of Scots* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1982), 41.
14. Scott, 61-70.
15. Brown, 199-209.
16. Scott, 97-107.
17. Morton, 36.
18. Peter Armstrong, *Stirling Bridge and Falkirk, 1297-98: Wallace's Rebellion* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 19.
19. Morton, 15.
20. Morton, 16-20.
21. Scott, 60-61.
22. Armstrong, 31.
23. Peter Reese, *The Scottish Commander: Scotland's Greatest Military Leaders from*

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Wallace to World War II (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999), 11.

24. Reese, 13.
25. James E. Fraser, "A Swan from a Raven: William Wallace, Brucean Propaganda, and Gesta Annae II," *Scottish Historical Review* 81 no. 211(2002): 5.
26. Fraser, 9.
27. Fraser, 11-12.
28. Fraser, 14.
29. Fraser, 15-18.
30. Fraser, 18.
31. Fraser, 21.
32. Fraser, 21-22.
33. Marinell Ash, "William Wallace and Robert Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth," *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York, 1990), 88.
34. Morton, 32.
35. Morton, 83.
36. Ash, 84.
37. Ash, 92.
38. Scott, 77.
39. Morton, 28.

Michelle Garcia

*Pestilence, Podestas, and Poisonings:
Plague Laws of the Fourteenth Century*

The Bubonic Plague which ravaged Europe during the fourteenth century was noted by contemporaries for, among other things, its ability to inspire great lawlessness and the sharp decline in municipal services. Firsthand accounts speak of the shocking breakdown of civilization which resulted in mountains of unburied dead, unconsecrated burial grounds, as well as priests and doctors deserting their clients. Jean de Venette writing in 1359 spoke of the effects of the pestilence as such:

An enormous number of people died in 1348 and 1349 that nothing like it has been heard or seen or read about... In many towns and villages the result was that the cowardly priests took themselves off, leaving the performance of spiritual offices to the regular clergy...to be brief, in many places not two men remained alive out of twenty...more than 500 bodies a day.¹

The modern reader encounters again and again the similarities in accounts from all across Europe which write of the crumbling of social order at all levels. Not a single segment of European society escaped unscathed from the clutches of this fearsome illness. Physicians were at a loss to explain the causes of the plague, and could further offer no sure cure for the thousands affected by the sickness. As rich and poor, sinner and saintly continued to die in droves, some began to speak of the massive death tolls as a form of divine punishment for the sins of Christian Europe. For Medieval Europeans the "plague and disease in general was a punishment from God," though this was not unheard of in a time when popular opinion fused religion to many aspects of public life.²

The Black Plague of the fourteenth century led to the adoption in many areas of very particular laws which tried to contain the pestilence and can broadly be put into three categories: first there were laws aimed at preventing the plague from arriving in an area; second the laws directed at contain-

ing existing outbreaks; and the third practice which grew out of this era was focused on punishing believed human causes of the Black Plague. The plague laws which stem from European municipal efforts to combat disease occupy a unique place in medical history for they form the beginnings of modern disease control and epidemiology. Though the laws enacted by individual towns were ineffective in their own time, the ideas tested by these governments such as quarantine laws, investigating, and isolating sources of disease are still the methods used today against uncontrollably virulent communicable diseases. It can be said that necessity is the mother of invention, which was especially true for towns affected by the plague which were forced to rely on their rudimentary efforts at preventative measures.

Fourteenth century accounts from this period share a nearly universal fear of the pestilence that was sweeping through Europe at this time precisely because people understood so little about the nature of the disease. The nature of Medieval society was such that few people in positions of power were equipped with useful information about disease in general and the plague particularly- at best cities could focus on collecting hearsay and opinions to make policy. The lack of consensus among medical and religious leaders was a hindrance to efforts made by some cities to calm their residents. The disease appeared to have no clear profile for its victims and attempts made to cure the ill were dubiously fruitless at best.

The pestilence was reported to leave thousands dead in its wake without any cure in sight. News of the plague often reached towns before the sickness itself arrived. In practice this meant that some towns began to try and take preventative measures to ward off the Black Death. In Austria the monastery of Neuberg records write of the local "inhabitants, frantic with terror [who] ordered that no foreigners would stay in the inns, and that the merchants by whom the pestilence was being spread should be compelled to leave the area immediately."³ This is no less than a crude form of isolating a healthy community from the sources of disease outside its boundaries, a type of early quarantine. Mass graves outside city walls were increasingly used for plague dead in Italy as an attempt to limit those exposed to the infected corpses echoing the theme of isolation as the only sure means to avoid the pestilence. The monastery of Orvieto in Italy records the death of 75 lay brothers in 1348 despite their relatively limited contact with nearby Bologna which reported some 480 deaths in July alone of that same year.⁴

The shockingly primitive approaches to containing the spread of disease were greatly limited by Medieval understandings of medicine and epidemiology (or rather the lack thereof) which leaned heavily on pseudo-science, like

astrology, to explain any environmental changes. The report of the Paris Medical Faculty wrote that the "first cause of this pestilence [the black death] was and is the configuration of the heavens"⁵ and proceeded to blame the deaths on the conjunction of three planets aligned in Aquarius. They said the disease was spread by the "noxious alien vapors... gusts of wind."⁶ The final caveat of this esteemed body of physicians was to caution readers to "not overlook the fact that any pestilence proceeds from the divine will."⁷ The inability of Medieval science to explain the devastation caused by the plague put much of the burden on civil authorities to deal with the fallout from disease which was quickly crippling communities across Europe in the fourteenth century.

In terms of civic ordinances against the spread of the plague, Italy and England provide striking examples of how feverishly town officials worked to try and prevent the plague from affecting their citizens. In Pistoia, Italy the city podesta formally wrote in 1348 that all citizens traveling from Pisa or Lucca had to "first obtain permission from the common council... the license to be drawn up by the notary of the anziani and gonfalonier of the city."⁸ The penalty for disobeying this statute was a fine, a "penalty of 10 pence from each of the guards responsible for the gates."⁹ This is one of the more stringent efforts put in place to regulate the flow of people and goods. Again, there is the clear instance that communities were forced to fend for themselves on a city by city basis to try and ward off disease.

Once the sickness had already invaded the city, citizens were often subject to laws arising from plague conditions, as is the case of Reggio, Italy below, where city officials became concerned with mitigating the effects of the illness to limit the number of people affected and the interruptions to the local economy with mixed results. The following was written by the Lord of Milan, one Bernabo Visconti, who wrote that he wished "to preserve our subjects from contagious illness" and recommended the subsequent decrees:

To the noble man, the podesta of Reggio. We wish that each person who display a swelling or tumour shall immediately leave the city, castle or town where he is and take to the open country, living either in huts or in the woods, until he either dies or recovers.

Item, those in attendance upon someone who died shall wait ten days before returning to human society.

Item, parish priests shall examine the sick to see what

the illness is, and shall immediately notify the designated searches under pain of being burnt alive.

Item, all the goods, both movable and immovable, shall be put to the use of the lord's treasury.

Item, the goods of anyone who carries the epidemic from another place shall likewise be put to the use of the lord's treasury, and no restitution shall be made.

Item, under pain of forfeiture and death no one shall enter service from attending upon the sick except as above.

Let all our subjects be informed of these matters."¹⁰

Unfortunately, the nature of Medieval communities appears to have been such that although many responses like these were doubtlessly adopted as soon as possible, this was not always done quickly enough to prevent devastating numbers of dead. Similar lists of statutes and recommendations survive from physicians such as John of Burgundy, and further ordinances from cities like Orvieto in Italy which all have comparable and equally futile suggestions ranging from exhortations to carry perfumed herbs, to avoiding marshes, to praying more often. Some of the best Italian safeguards were enacted by Pistoia which went so far as to impose a quarantine on the city which banned visitors: "importors of textiles and foodstuffs. Crowds were not allowed to gather; even at funerals, attendance was limited to family members. When plague did come church bells were stilled, lest their ringing disturb the afflicted. All was to no avail, however and morbidity was about 40%."¹¹ The case study of Pistoia underscores the fact that contemporaries of these new decrees who actually lived through the plague experience of the fourteenth century were likely to have seen that even the best efforts at containment failed miserably. Interestingly, many modern methods of containing outbreaks of communicable diseases are nearly identical to these measures though mortality rates from Italy show how unprepared most cities were to enforce these laws stringently enough to make a positive difference for their citizens.

The notable exception to the pattern of cities enacting measures to little and too late is the outbreak of plague in England which had the relative advantage of knowing of the plague outbreaks of the continent very far in advance,

especially when compared to Italy where many towns were taken unawares. Trade from continental Europe was closely monitored due to the uniqueness of England among European nations in that "England's geographical setting as an island and its attendant features of royal control and a high degree of economic centralization" gave the English countryside much more control over possible routes of infection, unlike central or Southern Europe where travelers were harder to contain and boundaries much more difficult to enforce.¹²

However, England had several large ports, which meant that "like Italy, England afforded plague multiple points of entry and thus suffered particularly heavy mortality."¹³ 1348-1349 were the plague years of England and despite precautions taken by governing bodies like Parliament which began to regulate water because "the offal and entrails of slaughtered animals along with other filth dumped into ditches, rivers and other waters and also in many other places...with the result that the air there is greatly corrupted and infected, and many illnesses and other intolerable daily befall both the inhabitants and residents" the British Isles were as badly affected by the plague as the continent, though later than almost anywhere else in Europe.¹⁴

The third type of practice which arose and was exacerbated by the large death tolls of the black plague was the targeting of portions of the population as scapegoats for the cause of disease. Jews, clerics, Arabs, Christian sinners, and merchants were among the many blamed for the spread and/or cause of the pestilence. One wide-spread belief, which was especially popular in Northern Germany, centered on anti-Semitism and claimed that Jews were poisoning wells in a world wide conspiracy to kill off Christians. In Strassburg, the city wrote to neighboring towns "enquiring whether they had evidence that Jews were poisoning wells and what steps they were taking against the perpetrators."¹⁵ The story which emerged under torture as Jews were "put to the question" was that "Jews plan to wipe out all the Christians with poison and had poisoned wells and springs everywhere and many Jews confessed...that they had bred spiders and toads in pots and pans and had obtained poison from overseas."¹⁶ Roving bands in Northern Europe began to take justice into their own hands and killed whole communities of Jews, often burning entire religious communities alive in their local synagogues, despite the papal bull, *Sicut Judeis*, issued by Pope Clement VI which specifically instructed clergy to take action against those persecuting Jews. The towns of Northern Europe took charges of well poisoning very seriously and the fact that formal investigations were carried out by multiple towns working in synch to investigate their minority groups as part of a desperate effort to offset plague deaths supports the idea that it was a vital tool in some community responses to deal with

the plague. This can be more easily understood when seen in the larger context of many town's distrust of Medieval medicine which developed into a kind of fatalism rationalized by one chronicler thus: "A divine plague from which no doctor could possibly liberate the stricken."¹⁷

The initial outbreaks of the Black Death were traced by contemporaries to Genoese traders. A description of the plague from Messina "at the beginning of October, in the year of the incarnation of the Son of God 1347, twelve Genoese galleys . . . entered the harbor of Messina. In their bones they bore so virulent a disease that anyone who only spoke to them was seized by a mortal illness and in no manner could evade death. The infection spread to everyone who had any contact with the diseased."¹⁸ Accounts from chroniclers in Italy and modern epidemiology suggest strongly that there is more than just a grain of truth to plague outbreaks stemming from Italian ports as the bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic strains of plague may be endemic to Asian regions where the disease was earlier encountered and then spread along trade routes—a pattern to be repeated in Europe via Italy.¹⁹ The trade routes of the 1300's very nearly mirror the spread of the plague and help explain why areas like England were affected much later than the interior of the European continent. The aforementioned quarantine measures focused on traders and by extension all foreigners to cities as possible vectors of disease.

Some religious leaders pinned the plague outbreaks on Christian sinners and bought into the commonly believed ties between sin and disease which saw sickness as a kind of divine punishment for wrongdoing. After the initial deaths of the fourteenth century had begun to wane, writers like Chaucer satirically wrote of the hypocrisy of religious leaders during plague years— which was hardly a unique opinion. The clergy suffered extremely high mortality rates as did doctors so that in many towns few or none remained in the weeks after an outbreak. As some modern writers have suggested, "a more important effect of the plague on the moral life of the people derived from the fact that among the hardest-hit groups were religious men. It must have been puzzling to see that those religious men who were most diligent in caring for and burying the victims of the plague were also those who in the greatest numbers contracted the disease themselves and subsequently died. In the end, the church was served by far fewer numbers than before, those remaining being the least conscientious and the least devoted to the spiritual needs of the people."²⁰

It was precisely this seeming inadequacy of the temporal religious leaders to mitigate the pestilence which drove waves of popular piety. The flagellant movements of Northern Europe and the municipal reforms of some Italian cities are popular examples of this medically motivated morality. By the fif-

teenth century an Italian book of medical remedies had been published and in concern to the plague, the 'remedy' suggested was distinctly religious and was comprised of "the last rites administered to the dying confession, the receiving of the viaticum and the final unction."²¹ The flagellants similarly advocated Christian morality under the aegis of popular opinion which claimed that the plague was a symptom of divine wrath directed at sinners in Europe. "The flagellants showed a tendency to kill Jews they encountered, and even killed clergymen who spoke against them. In October 1349 the pope condemned them and ordered all authorities to suppress them...[they] reappeared in times of plague well into the fifteenth century."²²

If one of the most well known hallmarks of the Medieval era is the all encompassing reach of the church, then it must be recognized that the Black Plague was a huge departure from this European model of church control and definitively shifted accountability to the communities directly affected by plague disruptions. Individual case studies done on Medieval towns like Norwich in England support a reading which shows that, "the Black Death decimated the longer-established families of the city and was followed by a new influx of migrants from the countryside. Poverty and ambition combined in some of these migrants to produce a measure of lawlessness and disregard for city customs."²³ The degree of relative anarchy experienced in some of these small English towns, due to the loss of so many local leaders, was all too similar to the aforementioned deaths of Italian city-state's movers and shakers in 1348. The pattern of extreme municipal change appears to have occurred in direct proportion to the community's disruption of normal practices by the plague as a general historical trend as noted by "historians [who] have seen the aftershocks of pestilence as raising the levels of violence, tearing asunder secular cultures, and spawning pessimism and transcendental religiosities."²⁴

The backdrop of the plague's effects must be seen as the weakening of two major power structures of the Middle Ages: The Church and family ties. Classic hierarchies were based on static social structures which were broken down by the plague which is reflected in plague laws. The Black Death ravaged every sphere of European society, unlike other social woes like wars or famine which left some segments untouched. The sheer uncertainty of life in the fourteenth century cities of Europe definitively shifted more power to cities which became increasingly self-reliant out of a need for their own preservation in the face of near certain disaster. England and Italy provide striking firsthand examples of plague laws at work. Fourteenth century Italy was based on the model of city-states whereas "the population of fourteenth century England was mainly rural, widely scattered and not given much to travel."²⁵ While esti-

mates of mortality rates for plague deaths vary widely among modern historians, it is indisputable that chroniclers who lived through the plague in these areas report major disruptions to trade and daily town life.

The plague laws of the fourteenth century are indicative of the societies which produced them. The efforts of Medieval towns were very simply the best measures municipal leaders could put in place with the resources available at the time. It is hard for modern readers to grasp the import of the changes undergone by Medieval culture at all levels during this period, surrounded as we are by the benefits of modern medicine and epidemiological advances. But, the towns of fourteenth century Europe did not have the contingency plans in place to combat disease on any wide scale. Preparations made for times of pestilence were at best haphazard. However ill-prepared these areas were for the Black Death we today owe a great debt to their experiences. The trial and error methodology employed by their leaders led to early protective measures and a greater awareness of the need for autonomous town disease control- this is a legacy of the plague laws.

Notes

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The Humanity Factor

A strip of land ripped asunder by war is only viewed through the spectrum of rhetoric, distancing any viewer from the heart of a conflict through politicizing, remote struggles and the great galvanizing figures, but the general humanity is forgotten in what is considered to be objective sweeps of any conflict. For years the Holy Land, now Israel and the occupied territories, has been immersed in a bloody conflict of two peoples struggling to cement their national identities within a land they believe is their own. Both peoples view each other through lenses of their own historical perspective, dehumanizing each other through stereotypes created in a spirit of defense for a land both perceive to be special to their own people. However, it is that very love for the land that unites them under a common banner of humanity, allowing for the war scarred land to be re-evaluated through people that populate its borders. So, instead of discussing broken peace treaties and bloodstained soil, the focus will be on the orange blossoms that scent the wind and the hopes and beliefs of two peoples who view their neighbors through a net of fear and political language. This focus, perhaps, will strengthen a view garnered not in fear and political jargon but in the common threads of a general humanity that both the Israelis and the Palestinians share.

Aldous Huxley once wrote that "nations are to a very large extent invented by their poets and novelists."¹ Huxley's statement resonates throughout recent, eclipsing all modern nations. Literature in itself is a reflective mirror for society, constructing and capturing the collective identity and personifying it into an encapsulating story or poem. The ability of literature to express national sentiments is the core of Palestinian and Israeli prose—almost every story has shaped collective national ideas. These communal themes are the heartstrings of both peoples; they are the beliefs and hopes that lie at center of the struggle. The nucleus of these uniting elements is the love of land that both peoples acutely feel.

One of my principle resources, *Literature and Nation in the Middle East*, bases its ideas on the framework of a constructivist view of the nation. The authors, Ibrahim Muhawi and Yasir Sulieman, found their theories on the principle of a nation constructing itself through literature. This theory requires an essential understanding that these literary pieces have been

worked, molded, and reshaped to fit into the collective national identity. One fundamental element within the nation-making process of the Middle East is the "Palestinian Problem." The Palestinian Diaspora has draped over the modern Middle East and shaped not only the refugees but the literature of all the surrounding countries. Within the view of a constructivist nation the Palestinian people's progress as a national consciousness can be viewed.

There are two major periods of developments of the Palestinian condition in the 20th century, framing the Palestinian viewpoint towards every political situation and conflict. The first is during the thirty year British mandate that culminated in *Al Nakba*, the great catastrophe, which is the flight of the Palestinians from the majority of the land and the formation of the state of Israel. The second transformative period was in the years between 1948 and 1964, ending in the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964: "During which time the Palestinians seemed to many to have disappeared from the political map as an independent actor, and indeed as a people."² Indeed, it is after the 60's that the Palestinians view their land with a deep spiritual connection and a longing that is just as strong in refugee camps as it is in a comfortable suburban home:

whether, after 1948, he lived in Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, or elsewhere—did not consider himself at any time other than an alien (*gharib*) in these countries, any argument that the Palestinian refugees would gladly and easily settle in other Arab countries but for the evil schemes of their leaders and politicians is a misrepresentation of the genuine feelings of the Palestinians.³

The deep longing to return and a feeling of alienation are constants in Palestinian poetry since 1948. Alienation and the longing for return are so deeply imbedded in the hearts of Palestinian people that their poetry has become as firmly grounded in these themes as much as in the intrinsic theme of God.⁴ The following quotation from Mahmud Salim al-Hut's poem *al-Mahzala al-Arabiyya* profoundly exhibits the depth and passion placed within these themes:

Jaffa! My eyes shed blood after the tears
had dried.
Will I ever see you again?

My Memory of you is fresh day and night,
living within my innermost soul.

.....

What ails my heart! Wherever I go it
sadly cries:

Alas my homeland!

Whatever opulence in life he gains,
derision for that life is his only response.⁵

Usually while expressing longing for the land the poet continues to tie his spirit deeper into the soil of Palestine by inquiring to the stars, birds, and the earth itself of how his home fairs. One of the most beautiful poems demonstrating this theme is by the poet Fadwa Tuqan. The poem goes deeper than most in the desire to return home by not just inquiring of the birds or the stars, but by the land actually calling to the refugee. The poet concludes that the refugee cannot just miss his homeland but must make a desperate effort to return to it. The poem *Nidá al-Ard* (The Call of the Land) begins by the poetess describing the refugee's nostalgia for his lost homeland and the miserable condition that he currently lives in:

He recalled a land which had raised him and fed him
generously from her breast
since his infancy.

He, nostalgically, recalled the sight of the trembling
soil in the spring, and saw the field of wheat
undulating in the breeze, treasuring wealth for him.
He saw the orange trees flickering and spreading
fragrance and shade.

Then a stormy idea flared up in his mind: how can I
see my land, my rights usurped, and remain here, a
wanderer filled with shame?

Should I live here and die as a stranger in a foreign
land?⁶

The refugee, filled with such emotions, makes a desperate decision, fleeing his tent one star-filled night he heads for his homeland. As he approaches he can see the lights of Jaffa and smell the orange blossoms floating on the wind, reaching the border fence that separates him from his home he realizes crossing it would be death, but he does not care so long as he dies on the soil he loves.

This segment will show how the true climax of the poem is in the joy of embracing his land:

He fell passionately on his land, smelling the soil,
kissing the trees and grasping
the precious pebbles.
Like an infant, he pressed cheek and mouth to the
soil, shedding the pain
he had borne for years
He listened to her heart whispering tender reproof:
-You have come back?
-I have, here is my hand.
Here I will remain, here I will die, so prepare my
grave.
... ..
Two paces away, sentries of the ignoble enemy were
lurking; their eyes were darting
arrows of hate.
Then two shots ripped the silence of the night.⁷

The poem delves deeply into the Palestinian longing and affirms their determination to reunite with their land. This feeling is an inherent part of being a Palestinian. It is the love of the land, deeper than the love of their own life that unites them during their own Diaspora, calming them in the reassurance that their love will reunite them with their lost home. This view is universal in Palestinian culture and is epitomized by a statement made by a Gazan science teacher in a fit of rapture: "I love Gaza as I love my finger—my eye—my son."⁸

Modern Zionism is a political movement designed to free Jewish people from their segregated and backward ways during the Diaspora and instill in them a form pride in one's heritage and self. This movement believed that normalcy and freedom could only be achieved through statehood in their ancient homeland. Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people are the Chosen people of God and that Israel is the land promised to them: "The Zionist's burning desire was for normality; to make the Jewish people a nation like any other."⁹ This biblical belief mixed with political aspirations of a home of their own offers startling parallels to the Palestinian refugee's point of view towards loss and the land—a spiritual connection and a feeling of redemption with the land is embodied in both peoples.

Israeli literature and poetry are dominated by a concern for national interests. The novelists of the 1948 generation created fictional works whose entire world was centered in the state of Israel with Europe seen as a distant fairy tale. A new type of writing emerged in the 1960's and 1970's that encapsulated a new outlook towards nationalism and the world. The writers of the 60's and 70's continued to obsessively write about national concerns but began to do so with a more universal scope, trying to widen the world around which Israeli literature revolves around. The new writers were working towards a more Universalist point of view which is related to the principles of Classical Zionism. Classical Zionism garners the hope that the Jewish culture and Hebrew will be able to influence the world much like its Latin and Greek counterparts:

Modern Hebrew literature was born out of the German Enlightenment, with a vision of progressive cosmopolitanism, the dream of a new brotherhood of man in which a renascent Hebrew culture within European sphere would be accorded the opportunity to play its *rightful* role...Zionism nevertheless argued for a nationalism which could somehow be universal in scope.¹⁰

One of the most signature aspects of Israeli writing is the chronic feeling of nervousness. This nervousness is not particularly about a certain national goal but rather from the fact of actually being in Israel—a nation state the size of Rhode Island cut adrift in the Eastern Mediterranean, surrounded by hostile forces. This nervousness, however, is not characterized by anti-Zionist sentiment, as some foreign observers believe, but serious Israeli writers are grounded in a deep commitment towards their nation: "Whatever radical doubts they may, on occasion, raise in their writing, they are notable for their unwillingness to drop out of, or rebel against, the troubled national enterprise."¹¹ To most Israeli writers their national identity is an incontestable fact, scrutinizing the surfaces and depths of their national identity, delving deeper into collective sentiment while sometimes longing for a connection with the larger world—some even secretly wonder whether life would be easier to live elsewhere, but all show an adherence to a love of their home.

One poem that beautifully reflects the duality of the Israeli condition—nervousness and pride is *Here* by Yehuda Amichai. This poem is a beautiful introspective look into the Israeli mindset of a forming self in a new but

Promised Land. Here places the reader squarely in his spot, under a sky filled with kites and the whispering of trees and it goes on to reflect how this place which could easily be flown from has swept through him, buried him under the weight of his ancestry and nation, but for just a moment he can be the one supported by his people and it is his greatest reward:

Here, under the kites that the kids fly
and those caught by last year's telephone wires, I
stand
with branches of my silent decisions grow strong
within me, and the small birds
of hesitation in my heart, and the great rocks of
hesitation
before my feet
... ..
and how I've been an exchange mart for many things.
Export. Import. Frontier post. Customs barrier.
Watershed and graveyard. Meeting place. Departure
point.

The wind comes through treetops and pauses
at every leaf; nevertheless, it passes
without stopping, and we
come and stay a while, and fall.¹²

The imagery he uses is grounded in the land, sites, and names common around him, but interestingly enough he, like other Israeli poets, slightly mocks the government and the world around him. He compares his world as a Big Top and his ancestors as circus acrobats, questioning whether it is all worth it, but in the end he realizes that the blood tracing itself to the Jewish ancestry—his people—makes it all worth it, lifting him higher than he could ever be on his own:

So much similarity in the world; like sisters:
thighs and hill slopes. A distant thought
like an act that grew here in flesh and hill;
like cypresses, dark events on the ridge.
The circle closes. I am its buckle.

Until I discovered that my hard forefathers
were soft inside, they were dead.
All the generations before me are circus acrobats,
standing on each other's shoulders.
Generally I'm at the bottom, with all of them,
a heavy weight, on my shoulders.
But sometimes I'm on top: one hand raised high
Toward the Big Top. And the applause
in the arena below
is my reward, my blood.¹³

Yehuda's poem is a great example of the sentiments of the Israeli people. Their nation is built upon dreams and hopes that in their belief stretch back thousands of years: "This had been the land of the Jews for more than a thousand years until they were driven out, into the Diaspora, into the Holocaust."¹⁴ This weight can be simultaneously stifling and freeing, but the overwhelming feeling that all Israelis feel is of a true home; their own nation: "I can look all the way to Tel Aviv in the south, and to the hills of the Galilee and Mount Hermon, covered with snow in winter, to the north. Standing amidst scented, blossoming orange groves I can see green hillsides and snow covered mountains. This must be the most beautiful place on earth."¹⁵

"Literature is a highly effective vehicle of expressing national energies, conflicts and aspirations."¹⁶ Translations of literature help to bridge the gap between foreign cultures. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians view each other in distance, regarding one another as inferior or merely as enemies, but since the Oslo accords in 1993 both sides have begun to realize that mutual recognition and peacemaking would be beneficial to both sides. The Palestinian people as a whole lack the institutions that would translate and discuss Hebrew literature, but the Israelis have multiple institutions and magazines that devote time and energy to translating Arabic works. This process of understanding did not begin in the 90's but started after the 1967 war when the Israelis began to allow translations of Palestinian and Arabic poetry into Hebrew:

The 1967 war partially changed this attitude—the euphoria that followed Israeli victory over the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan was eventually followed by a slow but steady realization that those Palestinian Arabs who had conveniently turned since 1948 into the abstract 'refugee problem' were, in fact real people living in the now Israeli Occupied Territories.

This aroused a growing interest in both newly occupied Palestinians and their Israeli Arab counterparts largely ignored so far.¹⁷

There are many complementary elements to understanding the translation and reception of translated texts. One of the largest elements is a modified combination of the work of an Israeli translation scholar, Itamar Even Zohar, of Tel Aviv University. Even Zohar's polysystem theory may be used to explain the constant struggle of Arab-Palestinian literatures to assimilate into the Israeli Jewish culture, through translation. Target literature is described as one of many systems which combine together to form a cultural polysystem. Each of these systems, as well as the overall polysystem itself, has a center. In the center lies the most prestigious literature and it is the heart of cultural influence. On the periphery lie the institutions and works that are constantly trying to find their way into the center but are being pushed away. Hebrew culture is the polysystem and Hebrew literature is one of the systems. Foreign literary translations are a sub-system with Palestinian and Arabic translations acting as an independent, and smallest, sub-system. This small sub-system is kept running by Israeli academics who believe in co-existence and the belief that literature will give an insight into the lives of the Palestinian people. However, most Israelis see the reading of Arabic literary texts as an obligation in order to relieve the guilt of responsibility:

The introduction of Arabic literary works into Hebrew culture was not necessarily a beneficial reading experience but should be seen as a moral duty. It was meant to relieve Israeli Jewish conscience of its guilt of ignorance of the Arabs, in the naïve belief that literature directly reflected real life and that the so-called Arab nature and ways of life could be learnt through reading translated literature.¹⁸

Through the present collection I have attempted to draw a representative picture of Palestinian literature. I did not seek solely to find the best of what there is but also [sought to include here] the best of the representative short stories. I was therefore forced to include some stories of mediocre quality or even much less. I wish to make Hebrew readers familiar with the mind, life and thought of the Palestinian who, although

still separated from us by walls of estrangement and enmity, is our partner over this land and under the blue sky above.¹⁹

Ballas' view represents a minority among the Israeli populace—mostly among the intelligentsia. The most prevalent response to Arabic literature is that of surprise. Most Israelis do not believe that there is such a thing as Arabic literature and are even more surprised by its high quality. The second most common reaction is that of scrutinizing the role of Jews in their literature to a point of hypersensitivity: "Israeli Jewish critics often expressed extreme sensitivity to the depiction of Israel and Jews by Arabic literature, consequently exaggerating the importance of that element in the works under discussion."²⁰

The Israeli outlook towards Arabic literature is one of self-centeredness, trying to analyze their minor depictions and compare certain themes, like the Palestinian ones of refugees, longing of return and love of their homeland, to their own condition or past—something that does allow understanding but reshapes the impact of the themes to suit a more sympathetic and optimistic outlook. Through adopting certain tragic works and assimilating it to the plight of Jews the works become less tangible to the understanding of the Palestinian's suffering—their suffering is downplayed while the remembrance of Jewish suffering is emphasized. The last reaction to translated Arabic works is one of paranoia. Certain critics and translators are shocked by anti-Israeli sentiments within the literature to a point where they believe it is representative of the political situation, denying an objective analysis of the literature and using it to stress the absurdity of continuing peaceful dialogues. This reaction is the worst because it denies the artistic and aesthetic qualities of the works and focuses on the political background of the texts. Although some of the reactions are still derogatory, focusing on the differences and political situations the translations in themselves show a segment of the Israeli Jewish population that wishes to come to an understanding with their Palestinian neighbors and their condition, furthering the cause of peace.

Humanity is the first casualty in any war. The Holy Land, Israel and the Occupied Territories, requires a new outlook focusing on bonds both the Israelis and Palestinians share, allowing another dimension of the conflict to be looked at. The hopes and beliefs of both forming peoples are centered on the land. The literary discussion of this theme shows a communal bond that both share. Understanding the outlook brought forth in literature allows for a distanced analysis of the communal mindset of both peoples, gaining a new perspective into the conflict. By reading the literature of both the

Palestinians and the Israelis an understanding of the humanity factor can be gained, allowing for the conflict to be re-evaluated by the hopes and beliefs of the people who populate its borders. Although more is needed for peace to be realized, literature offers an insight to the deepest realms of a communal psyche and helps garner an outlook grounded in understanding rather than in politicizing and fear.

Notes

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5. Sulaiman, 123.
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Beyond Mountains: Toward a New Historiography of the Haitian Revolution

Haiti's is a story of dark-skinned hands, scarred with cuts from sugar cane stalks, ripping the tricolor French flag apart, and sewing the red and blue stripes back together. It is a story of uniting the tragic histories of people of color, of Amerindians and Africans, people of mixed races, and sewing them together to create a hopeful new nation, based on the principles of freedom and equality. Yet, there has been, and continues to be, a distinct absence of Haitians writing about their own histories.

For years, Haiti has been the subject of numerous academic studies. Scholars have analyzed it with a variety of interpretations; examining its history, politics, geography, as well as the practice of vodou, the Creole language, food, proverbs, and traditions. The story of its conquest, colonialization, slave economy, revolution, establishment of independence, and political violence of recent years has been told again and again, through many lenses, and with various agendas. The non-Haitian scholars who engage its history have tended to present the Haitian Revolution in a Eurocentric context, in which the French Revolution sparks a rebellious spirit in the previously complacent black slaves of Saint Domingue, and inspires them to revolt. The question of French colonialism is treated politely in many interpretations, as though France, suddenly realizing the horrors of slavery, abolished slavery in a grand act of benevolence.

Crucial discussions are often left out of these interpretations; for instance, the history of the Taino Indians who originally inhabited the islands of the Caribbean. Similarly omitted are the internal factors of the Haitian Revolution; the heightening political tension among the grands blancs and petits blancs of Saint Domingue prior to the Haitian Revolution, the passion of vodou figures like Mackandal and Boukman, and the inflammatory effects of their mysticism just days before the first acts of revolution in the north. Leaving these factors, and many others, out of the historical analysis of Haiti does a great disservice not only to the people of Haiti, but to the historiography of the Caribbean. A consideration of the agency of black slaves in the revolution is crucial to understanding the events that transpired, and it may be the key to unlocking its true historical significance. By examining the internal factors

that led to the Haitian Revolution, as well as the external factors that may have inspired it, we can begin to piece together an account that is less Eurocentric than previous interpretations. We may never be completely free from bias, but it is beneficial to the integrity of our discipline to embrace the idea that most history occurs from the bottom-up, acted out by the masses of ordinary people. The topdown model of historical analysis has been used for centuries, and it is time to begin seriously questioning the assumptions and judgments which it has made. In his incisive work, *The Power of the Poor in History*, Gustavo Gutierrez suggests this sort of reexamination of history: "But rereading history also means remaking history. It means repairing it from the bottom up. And so it will be a subversive history. History must be turned upside-down from the bottom, not from the top."¹

If we are concerned with discovering the truth, or at least, getting as close to it as possible, we must begin with a critical question. What is so important about Haiti, and its relationship with Europe and the Americas? There have been scholarly and journalistic works claiming to explain the relations between Haiti, Spain, France, the U.S., and Latin America, but many of them have made prejudiced generalizations, and ignored the multifaceted complexities of the relationships between the countries. Much of the contemporary commentary on Haiti has "tended to depict the country as isolated and disconnected- a static country of backward peasants caught in a time warp."² Anthropologist Eric Wolf posed a question to those interested in a deeper understanding of Haiti: "If there are connections everywhere, why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things? Some of this is owing, perhaps, to the way we learned our own history." If, until recently, scholarly ideas have situated Haiti in a place of historical isolation and disconnect, we must now begin to understand that it is a contentious ground containing a multiplicity of histories- Taino, Spanish, French, and African. But it is also a "a creation of expansionist European empires," making it inextricably connected with Europe, despite its independence as a nation.

David P. Geggus notes the surprising lack of probing research and legitimate primary materials on the slave insurrection that created the nation of Haiti:

One of the greatest servile rebellions and the sole successful slave revolt in world history, the insurrection that destroyed France's richest colony and led to the creation of Haiti has been the subject of a great deal of writing and controversy, but relatively little basic research... The appearance of a new

scholarly biography of Toussaint Louverture provides a good occasion for reviewing the vast quantity of largely neglected manuscript material that concerns this unique and profound event.

Geggus praises Pierre Pluchon's biography of Toussaint Louverture for its solid base upon the government correspondence in the Archives Nationales in Paris, but highlights the fact that even Pluchon does not fully utilize the material available in Paris on Louverture and his rebellion. In France, there are collections in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Sonthonax and Laveaux correspondence, which contain many of Toussaint's remaining letters, as well as a series generated by the Comites des Colonies, and a valuable collection of miscellaneous documents by Moreau de Saint-Mery. Geggus encourages scholars of Haitian history to venture beyond the standard levels of primary research, and to turn their attention to "some of the entirely neglected material to be found not only in France but also in Spain, Great Britain, the Caribbean, and the United States that might illuminate further "the strange twilight period in which Saint Domingue was transformed into Haiti."⁶ The documents composed by the Spaniards of Santo Domingo, who became involved in the revolution, are vital, primarily because "they provide a firsthand account of Saint Domingue's revolution by persons not directly involved in it" and "register the shock waves of that revolution in the colony where they were felt most severely."⁷

These documents, divided between the Archivo General de Indias in Seville and the Archivo General de Simancas near Valladolid, describe the early career of Toussaint Louverture, the structure of the rebel slave forces, as well as "the extraordinary experiment of recruiting rebel slaves into a European army to defend a slave society."⁸ Geggus goes on to explain that there is a wealth of primary sources throughout the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica, Scotland, England, France, and the United States, but many of these sources are left largely unused in academia.⁹ A journal kept by a British soldier who served in "the West Province" between 1796 and 1798 provides information on the fighting between Toussaint Louverture's rebel forces and the Anglo-colonials who attempted to defeat them.¹⁰ Geggus presents an eerie quote from the young soldier, who poetically predicted the demise of Saint Domingue.

Camped amid the overgrown ruins of the Cul-de-Sac, he paints a picture of apocalyptic desolation, well aware it would be the epitaph of slave-owning Saint Domingue. "Unhappy

colony, I do not know if you merited your fate... I leave that to Him who in His wrath sends the destroying Angel to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm."¹¹

Perhaps the best way to construct an understanding of Haiti is to start at the beginning, or at least, as close as we can get to it, given our limited knowledge of pre-Columbian Amerindian territories. With a greater awareness of the events that transpired in Haiti before French colonial rule, we will have a more clear perspective with which to interpret the Haitian Revolution. Of particular importance in this paper will be the French model of colonialism, the racialized slavery that fueled its economy, and the intense debate over abolitionism during and after the French Revolution. Examining the dynamic and at times, volatile, relationships between France and its Caribbean colonies will reveal the subtle external factors that led to the Haitian Revolution. But without the bottom-up model of historical interpretation, which turns its attention to the agency of the half of a million black slaves laboring in French Saint Domingue at the time, we will not be able to tell the stories of the individuals, the groups of human beings who rose in violent revolt. Without regarding each of them individually as the agents of revolution, we resign ourselves to the incomplete picture which has been painted for years: one huge, faceless mass of black slaves exterminating the white planter population of Saint Domingue. With a pursuit of a more complete and just truth in mind, we start at the beginning.

For centuries, the lush, mountainous island in the Caribbean was inhabited solely by a large indigenous population called the "Taino."¹² Most of the natives on the island were members of a peaceful tribe who spoke a language called Arawak, and their tribe later became known by that name, because the Spaniards knew of no other name to call them. They called their land "Ayiti", which means "high country."¹³ The entire island, after European conquest, became the Spanish colony of Hispaniola, while the western third later became French Saint Domingue. Centuries after Columbus' arrival, the French colony of Saint Domingue would become the first independent black republic of the Atlantic world. It would also regain its ancient name, uttered for thousands of years by the Taino Indians who called it their homeland; "Ayiti" or Haiti.

"Ayiti" was technically situated on the western edge of the island, but since no political boundaries had been imposed upon the geography of the land, most of the Taino lived and roamed throughout the entire island. By the fifteenth century, a group of Carib Indians- who Columbus described as

more warlike than the Arawaks- had arrived and settled on an eastern portion of the island.¹⁴ While Hispaniola was not the first landfall of Christopher Columbus' expedition, it became the site of "the first European settlement in the New World."¹⁵ When his ship, the Santa Maria, meandered precariously on the northwest coast of Haiti, Columbus decided to put out an anchor and venture onshore with his men. They were pleased to find an idyllic natural setting, and indigenous natives who greeted their unexpected visitors with kindness and dignity. Columbus and his soldiers and sailors were amazed by the exotic surroundings, and they were particularly impressed by the elegant gold adornments which the noble members of the Arawaks wore. Based on the fertile landscape, healthy natives, and gold jewelry that they wore, the Spaniards assumed that the island was full of exploitable resources, and immediately decided to claim the territory for the Spanish empire.¹⁶

Columbus erected a fort called La Navidad, and installed one of his crews to maintain it. He had high hopes for this new settlement, whose success seemed almost inevitable, given the paradise-like setting and the agreeable natives. He set sail for Spain, to announce his success to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and to secure the funding, materials, and men needed to take advantage of the resources available in Hispaniola. But when he returned to the island in 1493, his dreams were shattered by grim reality- La Navidad lay in ruins, and many of the Spaniards had been killed. But this was not the aftermath of an arbitrary massacre by the Indians of Hispaniola, on the contrary- it was a retaliatory response to the abuse of the Arawaks by the Spanish settlers. When it became apparent that the Spaniards were indiscriminately kidnapping and raping Arawak women, the chiefs of the island were outraged, and launched an attack on La Navidad to seek revenge.¹⁷ The Spaniards' violent exploitation of the Arawaks' kindness was a omen of sorts- a turning point in Taino history. The natives whom Columbus had originally described as "lovable, tractable, peaceable, gentle, decorous Indians" had welcomed their own terrible fate.¹⁸ Their population would soon be decimated by a combination of "imported infectious disease, slavery, and outright slaughter."¹⁹

Discouraged about the unfortunate end of La Navidad, but still determined to exploit the natural resources of the island, Columbus used the violence that had occurred in his absence to justify forcing the Indians to convert to Catholicism and mine for gold for the Spaniards' profit.²⁰ He had returned from Spain the second time with "seventeen ships and two hundred men, including four priests" and quickly implemented more aggressive tactics in dealing with the Arawaks.²¹ While they had traditionally used meager amounts of gold from their land to create jewelry, Columbus' men carried out

royal orders which mandated that the Arawaks immediately begin working long hours to extract as much gold as possible, to be made into currency for the Spanish crown. The Arawak had never used gold for currency before, and were bewildered by the Europeans' voracious hunger for this precious metal.²² Many of them fled into the densely forested mountains, to escape the misery of the mines.²³ But, whether they labored in the mines, escaped into the mountains, or worked as slaves in close contact with the Spaniards, all of the Arawaks began falling prey to strange diseases- European diseases- to which they had never before been exposed.

One of the Spaniards who had come with Columbus on his second voyage to Hispaniola was a conquistador named Bartolome de Las Casas, who later became a Dominican priest. When he finally finished his studies in Spain and returned to Hispaniola in 1511, his eyes were opened to the plight of the Indians on the island. He observed the conditions in which they lived and worked, and concluded that the Indians were being cruelly abused. Most Spanish individuals- particularly sailors, soldiers and conquistadors- believed wholeheartedly that the Indians were primitive, barbaric, and violent, and that their very nature condemned them to slavery.²⁴ It is interesting that their impressions of the Arawaks were not immediate. Not long before then, Columbus and his men had initially been impressed with the gracious welcome they received onto the island. Prejudice against the Arawaks was greatly reinforced by the massacre of Columbus' first crew at La Navidad, but it was built upon a general European suspicion of all dark-skinned, non-Christian peoples in the New World.

When Las Casas began to grasp the magnitude of their maltreatment, he began to advocate for an end to the abuse of Indians in Hispaniola. He noted that the Arawaks were dying in great numbers under these conditions, and although he did not know that European germs were killing many of them, he fought to bring attention to Arawaks' rapidly dwindling population.²⁵ He believed that Indians possessed reason and intelligence, even though they did not speak Spanish or practice Christianity, and tried to convince Spanish officials that the Arawaks did not deserve to be held in slavery, nor could they survive its conditions.²⁶ Along with a few concerned others, he began suggesting that the Spanish empire might do well to explore the resources of African native labor, as the Portuguese had recently begun to do.²⁷ He thought that African slaves might be hardier, healthier, and more able to endure slavery in Hispaniola without dying in such great numbers like the Arawaks.²⁸ He also believed that Africans had no reason and were incapable of accepting Christianity.²⁹ Las Casas was certainly not alone in his opinion, and he was

not the first to conceive of it. The African slave trade had been initially set in motion by the Portuguese, but the theories of Las Casas and his contemporaries brought about a racialized slavery which modern civilization had never before seen. This dramatic shift in the labor force help to create the Transatlantic Slave Trade, whose brutal memories continue to haunt the countries once involved in it. He later realized that he had been wrong in his assumptions about Africans:

In the old days, before there were any ingenios, we used to think in this island that, if a Negro were not hanged, he would never die, because we had never seen one die of illness, and we were sure that, like oranges, they had found their habitat, this island being more natural to them than Guinea. But after they were put to work in the ingenios, on account of the excessive labor they had to endure, and the drinks they take made from cane syrup, death and pestilence were the result, and many of them died.³⁰

Some argue that Las Casas' arguments against the enslavement of Indians laid the first proverbial stone of an ideology of rebellion in the Caribbean. Some go so far as to assert that they "had much in common... with the idea of natural and universal human rights which would later drive the American, French, and Haitian revolutions."³¹ But it is important to be critical of such an argument. As a European priest, Las Casas possessed power and privilege which allowed him the right to speak against injustice without censorship, or the threat of violent response. While his arguments were somewhat admirable, they represented a small step, made with limited knowledge, toward concern for non-European peoples. His supposed "rebellious" ideas were profoundly different from those that African slaves on Saint Domingue acted upon, since he himself was never enslaved. We must not forget that the suggestion posed by Las Casas and others, while sympathetic to the Indians, also sparked the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade and a widespread exploitation of the continent of Africa. Las Casas himself later grasped the enormity of the mistakes he had made.

Thirty years after Columbus's second arrival on Hispaniola, the native population- mostly Arawak- had been reduced from a thriving mass of 1.3 million to a meager five or ten thousand.³² And despite the seemingly exceptional death rate in Hispaniola, tribes of Indians on other islands in the Caribbean, and throughout North and South America, suffered similar

consequences of European invasion during the fifteenth and sixteen centuries. The human population of the New World; made up of thousands of diverse tribes of native peoples, with varying degrees of advanced civilization, culture, and technology, all of whom had existed in those lands for thousands of years, was drastically reduced in the course of a few short centuries.

The Spaniards continued capturing Indians in the West Indies to use as slaves, but they also began bringing slaves into Hispaniola from a fresh source—Africa. The Taino either died in slavery, or ran away into the mountains, but on the whole, their entire race was disappearing. Yet, there was one final, courageous attempt made for Indian freedom. In 1519, an indigenous man named Enriquillo launched what would be the last effort to free the Indians of Hispaniola. Educated by Franciscan monks, and converted to Christianity, he managed to gather nearly five hundred Indian rebels to launch guerilla-style attacks on the Spanish, steal supplies from plantations, and free any Indian slaves they could. Enriquillo began his assault on the Spanish high in the mountain range in the western part of Hispaniola, in what is now Haiti. He fought against the Spanish for fourteen years, deftly evading capture until 1533, when he finally signed a peace treaty with them: "In return for a pledge that the Spaniards would leave the Indians in peace, Hispaniola's last cacique gave his word to drive escaped African slaves back to their plantations."³³ And, as simply as that, the last significant rebellion of the Taino Indians ended.

After several decades of Spanish rule, Hispaniola's economy was far from successful. As many of the gold-seeking conquistadors left for the richer empires of Latin America, and sugar production progressed at a snail's pace, Hispaniola's natural resources were left largely unexplored by the Spanish empire.³⁴ Profit was made gradually, slowed by the general disorganization of the colony, and the high death rates of Indian slaves. But soon, the economy of the western part of the island would be entirely transformed by a shift in imperial rule.

France established its first Caribbean colony in 1625, on the island of Saint Christopher, but it took ten more years to colonize the larger islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.³⁵ Both of the islands were inhabited by the fierce Carib Indians, who managed to keep the Spanish away from those islands for over a century. Once colonized, the French began planting tobacco on the islands. Colonists of Martinique and Guadeloupe had to submit to a ruling hierarchy, first under colonization companies, then in 1674, under direct royal rule. According to Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, "French Saint-Domingue, in contrast, began as outlaw territory."³⁶ In the early seventeenth century, the high mountain ranges of the western portion of Hispaniola

prevented the Spanish from preventing illicit trade between Dutch merchants and farmers along the western coastline. Finally, Spain ordered its colonists to abandon the western portion of the colony of Santo Domingo, and move to the east. Others quickly moved to take advantage of the situation:

Once vacant, however, this coast- and the thriving livestock herds left behind by the Spanish- attracted a mostly male population of adventurers, naval deserters, castaways, and indentured servants fleeing the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Hunting wild cattle and selling leather and boucan (smoked meat) to passing ships, they became known as buccaneers. After 1640, as the population of livestock declined, the buccaneers increasingly turned to piracy.³⁷

French authorities claimed responsibility for the buccaneers, and sent a governor in 1664 to colonize the western coastline where the rough-and-tumble group of men resided. The French called the entire island "Saint-Domingue," which became the name of their colony on the western edge.³⁸ French authorities recruited the buccaneers for attacks on Spanish forts in Latin America, and tried to promote French immigration to the unofficial colony.³⁹ They began planting a variety of crops, while focusing primarily on the sugar cane that grew so well in the hot, humid air climate.

Before long, the presence of the French outlaw territory instigated a fierce debate between Spain and France as to which empire the western third of the island should ultimately belong. Finally, in 1697, King Louis XIV signed the Treaty of Ryswick with King Charles II of Spain, which made official the cession of the western part of Hispaniola to the French empire, and an era of French colonial rule. Saint Domingue supposedly "belonged to the French by virtue of conquest" for forty years beforehand, but the legal cession of Saint Domingue placed it officially in the control of France.⁴⁰ This would prove to be a economic boon for the French empire.

The French immediately set to work boosting the economy of their official colony. Within a mere four-year span, they had quickly built around one hundred new sugar plantations, and they began "importing" large amounts of African slaves to do the arduous work of sugar growth and production.⁴¹ Thousands of slaves were brought on ships, crammed together like animals, only to be further dehumanized upon their arrival in the New World.⁴² Slaves were introduced into the colony "within an overall context of social alienation and psychological, as well as physical, violence."⁴³ Most of Saint

Domingue's human property came from Senegal, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast (Ghana), the Slave Coast (Togo, Benin, Nigeria), Congo, and Angola, and a great majority of them were young men.⁴⁴ Carolyn Fick explains these unique slave demographics:

Slaves were literally worked to death because they were the units of production and, as such, represented an investment that, once amortized, had already yielded its profits. So, once dead, infirm, or otherwise physically unable to continue working, they were replaced by additional investments in new slaves. Indicative of this pattern was the age distribution of slaves on most plantations: the principal age group consisted of slaves between the ages of seventeen or eighteen and thirty-five. Given the disproportionately low fertility rate among slave women, this necessarily required a constant influx of new acquisitions in slaves.⁴⁵

In addition to African slave labor, also imported was a large group of white women, many of them prostitutes from Paris, to meet the "demands" of the predominantly male population of white, French colonists on the island.⁴⁶ This was an interesting collection of whites; elite French officials, new plantation owners, male immigrants arriving to make their fortunes in the sugar trade, and French prostitutes imported to fulfill the desires of the profit-hungry men. These French people combined with African slaves of a wide variety of wealth, status, and countries of origin, and a few surviving Arawaks roaming the mountains, to make Saint Domingue's population truly distinctive.

Many Frenchmen took African slave women as sexual partners, who had no political power with which to resist the advances of their masters. Those who tried to resist or fight back were punished severely. However, there were some genuine relationships between whites and blacks, which blurred the boundaries of race and power, and made racial and biracial interactions more complex. By 1789, "30,000 persons of mixed European-African ancestry were counted in Saint Domingue, as compared with a white population of 40,000."⁴⁷ Contrary to the British and American slave systems, under which one sixteenth part of African blood could define a person as African (and therefore, a slave) the French system of slavery defined this group of racially mixed people as a race unto itself. People of mixed race, with their diversity of appearance and ancestry, were given a few choice names in Saint Domingue,

and were subject to exclusions and inclusions from both the white and black communities. They were called "mulattos," a "a less-than-polite term derived from the French word for 'mule,'" while others were "courteously described as 'colored people,' gens de couleur."⁴⁸ Instead of being held under matrilineal slavery, the gens de couleur were treated as the offspring of both their mothers and fathers, and were often freed by their white fathers.⁴⁹ Some others remained enslaved, while interestingly, many gens de couleur who were freed eventually became slave owners themselves.⁵⁰ People of all races recognized this intersection of race and class, as is evident in the old Haitian proverb, "Negue riche cila milate; milate povre cila negue, A rich negro is a mulatto, but a poor mulatto is a negro."⁵¹

The white population of Saint Domingue was stratified along economic lines, according to their social status and financial success on the island. The elite who owned plantations and who lived in the large, opulent homes with their families, were known as grands blancs, or the "big whites."⁵² This category of people also included absentee sugar planters- whose plantations were run by managers and overseers on the island- and generally encompassed all of the Frenchmen who had invested heavily in the sugar trade of Saint Domingue, and were enjoying its profits. A second group of French people known as petits blancs, or the "little whites" were made up of poorer white immigrants from France, sailors, artists, and bohemians, all of whom came to seek their fortune on Saint Domingue.⁵³ They lived in humble houses in the cities along the coast, nowhere near the sprawling plantations of the grands blancs in the countryside. While the white population was separated along economic lines, those boundaries were blurred because "the entire white community was united by fervent racism and a mutual investment in the slave system."⁵⁴ However, the grands blancs and petits blancs would later find the racial unity they shared torn apart by the issues of the French Revolution. After 1789, Frenchmen throughout the colonies of the empire suddenly found themselves in vicious arguments of class struggle, which widened the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat even further.

From the beginning of French colonial rule in Saint Domingue, the conditions under which African slaves labored were extraordinarily harsh. The nature of sugar production meant that slaves had to do dangerous physical labor for long hours in the tropical heat, in order to harvest and process the sugar cane. The life expectancy for slaves in Saint Domingue was shockingly brief, due to the exhausting labor, and the moist, hot climate, which promoted the growth of deadly diseases like malaria and yellow fever. Mortality rates were very high. In order to replace the dead and dying slaves and maintain

the workforce, plantation owners had to import thousands of new slaves to Saint Domingue regularly. In six years, between 1784 and 1790, "a total of 220,000 slaves were brought in" to the conditions of labor under which they, too, would soon perish.⁵⁵ High rates of mortality and import of African slaves created an unexpected situation; that "two thirds of the more than half a million slaves in the colony had been born free in Africa," a situation very different from the slaves in America, whose descendants had no memory of Africa or of freedom.⁵⁶ What the French planters did not suspect was that owning 500,000 African slaves who, not so long ago, were free men in their home countries, would create a volatile environment in which a slave rebellion could easily explode into action.⁵⁷

Slave labor in the French colonies was regulated, at least in theory, by the Code Noir, which was a collection of royal edicts promoted by Louis XIV in 1685. The Code Noir (black code) established a precedent of discipline, and while it attempted to regulate the actions of slave owners as well as slaves, its harshest rules were reserved for the slaves who deviated from appropriate behavior- especially if they harmed their masters.⁵⁸ Specifically, the Code states, "Article XXXIII. The slave who has struck his master in the face or has drawn blood, or has similarly struck the wife of his master, his mistress, or their children, shall be punished by death."⁵⁹ According to the Code Noir, slaves had- for all intents and purposes- no rights. Slave masters were supposed to be reprimanded with corporal punishment or by fine if they harmed their slaves, but since such infractions were hardly ever reported or taken to trial, the rules affecting their punishment were very loosely enforced.⁶⁰

However, the Code Noir was not followed very closely. While some planters may have consulted it occasionally, there were plenty of incidents that were not held to the rules and punishments of the Code Noir. Many harsh overseers, in the absence of the plantation owners, took liberties in administering punishments on slaves however they pleased, which usually meant that they were grossly disproportionate to the crimes.

With the inescapable burdens of hard labor, disease, and the constant threat of violence from overseers and owners, slaves were left with very little, except for the occasional comforts of friendship and community and the hope of eventual liberation. The possibility of freedom which inspired hope among slaves had a very different effect on slave holders. The planter elite secretly lived in fear of the large presence of slaves, of people of mixed races, of the idea that slaves might run away and form renegade Maroon communities, and of the mysterious drumming, dance, and vodou which African slaves brought with them to the New World.⁶¹ But the most intense fear of slave owners was the

idea that their slaves might turn against them in violent revolt.⁶²

Laurent Dubois reminds us that the practice of Vodou, and its veiled history, is of special significance to historians studying Haiti. "The history of Vodou is part of a history through which the objectified slaves of St. Domingue became citizens of Haiti. It is a piece of a story of a triumph of representation, and for this very reason it frustrates the methodologies of traditional history."⁶³ Although the practice of Vodou, which originated in African tradition, acted as a connective tissue of community, a source of faith, and a touchstone of subversive ideas, among slaves in Saint Domingue, the illiteracy of most of its followers meant that any efforts to document the social and cultural significance of the tradition were frustrated. Today, what is called "voodoo" still inspires trepidation and horror in the minds of those who know nothing about it. But in Haiti, it is still practiced, in a unique mixture with Catholicism, by a majority of the population.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Saint Domingue was a tremendous financial asset to the French empire. According to David Geggus, Saint Domingue made up "some 40 percent of France's foreign trade, its 7,000 or so plantations were absorbing by the 1790s also 10-15 percent of United States exports and had commercial links with the British and Spanish West Indies as well."⁶⁴ Word of its extremely profitable sugar trade spread throughout the Atlantic world, and France came to rely heavily on Saint Domingue to support the economy. Sugar was highly desired among the elite of Europe, along with other raw products of the plantation colonies throughout the Caribbean and North and South America; such as cotton, indigo, coffee, and cacao.

But for Saint Domingue, its most profitable commodity would be sugar, above all other cash crops. Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus explain the importance of sugar during this period: "During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Caribbean became a crucial source of sugar for several northern European empires, supplying an expanding consumption of this addictive food and driving economic expansion and social change in the process."⁶⁵ Saint Domingue's second most important crop was coffee, a stimulating drink which was also in high demand from those who could afford it in Europe. Because of its prolific production of these two powerful crops, the tiny French colony was suddenly the center of attention in the Caribbean. "The most profitable colony in the New World, this territory was the size of Maryland and produced 40 percent of Europe's sugar and 60 percent of its coffee. In the process, it consumed more enslaved workers from Africa than did any other New World society after Brazil."⁶⁶

As the "pearl of the Caribbean," Saint Domingue garnered the admiration of the French people. Many people praised its impressive generation of profit, while some abolitionists criticized the cruel system of slavery which produced that profit. All discussions of Saint Domingue had one thing in common; a reverent recognition of its importance to the French empire. Médéric-Louis-Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, a writer who commented in 1797 on the importance of Saint Domingue, said of the island, "[It is] a Colony whose distance from the mother country prevents it from being particularly like France, but its loss or rescue form one of the great subjects on which France must mediate."⁶⁷

During the French Revolution, the question of slavery, raised by French abolitionists many decades prior to 1789, was considered more seriously than in the past. Given the social problems that led to the French Revolution—specifically, socioeconomic stratification and the pressures of poverty—it is no surprise that slavery in the French colonies was called into question during that time. The revolutionaries who touted liberty and equality as their integral values created an ideological environment that was highly conducive to abolitionism. But a discussion of the injustice of slavery did not happen automatically. On the contrary, throughout the duration of the Revolution, abolitionists worked hard to convince the National Assembly that slavery ought to be eradicated throughout all French colonies, but were often met with economic justifications for keeping it in place.

Between 1789 and 1790, there were 32,000 free whites, 28,000 free people of color, and 500,000 slaves living in Saint Domingue, which meant that slaves made up nearly nine-tenths of the entire population.⁶⁸ Ninety-four percent of slaves were black, with so-called "mulattos" constituting 5% and "other" races making up the last 1%.⁶⁹ This imbalance of power in the population tended to inspire paranoia in the minds of the white planters, who knew that they would be overwhelmingly outnumbered if a violent revolt were ever to happen. Unlike their American counterparts, whose suspicions were hardly ever made manifest (except for a few localized rebellions), white slave holders in Saint Domingue had the unique experience of having their worst fears come true; a violent, and ultimately successful, slave revolt.

When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, white planters from Saint Domingue quickly approached the new National Assembly of France to advocate for representation.⁷⁰ But their demands came at a time of great change, when the citizens of France were critically examining all of the institutions around them, and the National Assembly could not promise them anything. Without a definite guarantee of representation, the planter elite had to resign themselves to living with the unsettling suspicion that their slaves

might be inspired by the ideals of the Revolution to stage a revolt of their own. Meanwhile, free black and mulatto planters sent delegates to the National Assembly to demand rights for themselves. They demanded representation and a continuance of the practice of slavery, all of which was outlined in a list of grievances written in September of 1789. In this article, they demanded that the Declaration of the Rights of Man be applied to colored creoles just as it is to whites. They requested a revised version of the Code Noir be drafted to reflect those changes in the rights of free blacks and creoles:

Article IV. For that purpose, the colored Creoles request that the Declaration of the Rights of Man, decreed by the National Assembly, be applied to them, as it is to Whites. Therefore, it is requested that Articles LVII and LIX of the Edict [the Black Code] dated March 1685, be rewritten and carried out in accordance with their form and content.⁷¹

Years before the Revolution, there had been a nascence of abolitionist movement throughout France, and a growing number of people were sympathetic to the idea of the abolition of slavery in France and all of its colonies. In 1787, an antislavery committee was formed in France called the Societe des Amis des Noirs, and it was merely one of many antislavery groups forming in the British North American colonies, and all throughout Europe.⁷² The "Friends of the Blacks" was made up of Abbe Gregoire, Abbe Raynal, the marquis de Lafayette, and others.⁷³ Baptiste-Henri Grégoire was a priest, and later, a member of the National Assembly, who advocated for the rights of minorities, especially black slaves, and he expressed disgust at the fact that, "The whites, having might on their side, have pronounced unjustly that a darkened skin excludes one from the advantages of society."⁷⁴ He boldly noted, "Bearing all the burdens of society more than whites, only partially sharing the advantages, being prey to contempt, often to flagrant insult, to anguish, this is the lot of the people of color, especially in St. Domingue" and strongly suggested that people of color have full rights of French citizenship, and representation in the Assembly.⁷⁵ A powerful voice for change such as Grégoire's blended with the increasing number of radical journalists, members of the Assembly, feminists, and philosophers who were pushing for abolition, and for full and equal rights to be granted to slaves.⁷⁶ A feminist (and Royalist) writer and playwright named Olympe de Gouges wrote of her love for her country, "being truly French, I idolize my homeland; I have sacrificed everything for it; I hold it as dear as I hold my king," but that stated she could

not support the practice of slavery within France's territories, because, "the odious treatment of the Negroes has always stirred my soul and aroused my indignation."⁷⁷ She was not alone in her sentiments.

During this time, the intense fear of abolition grew more urgent among the *grands blancs* of Saint Domingue, and the royal governor of Saint Domingue noticed some slaves responding to the news of the Revolution by sporting revolutionary cockades in support of the victory of the "white slaves" across the Atlantic.⁷⁸ While the reactionary fervor grew in Saint Domingue, deputies of the National Assembly were hesitant to mandate the abolition of slavery, because of the devastating effect it would have on their economy.⁷⁹ In a letter from Monseton de l'Aunay, a deputy of the Chamber of Commerce of the port city of Nantes, to the Marquis de Condorcet, president of the Society of Friends of the Blacks, de l'Aunay implores the Marquis to protect French interests by resisting abolition, and cites, with a sense of urgency, the economic importance of the issue, "Consider that these colonies are France's destiny. Consider the sixty million [francs] profit from their exports each year, and the enormous importance of the income already lost."⁸⁰

In March of 1790, the Assembly attempted to calm the agitated white planters by issuing a decree that the constitution would not be applied to the colonies of France, and that anyone attempting to revolt against slavery would be severely punished.⁸¹ However, the free black and mulatto planters of Saint Domingue were not satisfied, since the decree had left out the issue of their political rights, and in October of 1790, Vincent Oge, a free merchant of color, led several hundred friends and neighbors in the parish of Grand Riviere in revolt. After a face-off with a unit of French troops twice their size, the rebels east fled into Santo Domingo, where Spanish authorities quickly returned them to the French. Oge and twenty-three others were executed in February 1791, in Cap Francais. The tension caused by Oge's violence, and by "radical whites in the Saint Marc Colonial Assembly" who threatened secession, was palpable.⁸² Authorities in the Paris Constituent Assembly began to worry about what might happen. Dubois and Garrigus describe the escalating tension:

In April 1791, news arrived in Paris of yet more trouble in Saint-Domingue: poor white Patriots in Port-au-Prince had convinced newly arrived French troops to join them in revolutionary action against the "tyrannical" royal government." Rioting crowds killed the royal commander of Port-au-Prince and took over the city. In an attempt to diffuse the situation there, deputies in the Constituent Assembly

ordered more troops to Saint Domingue, but instructed them to be sensitive to free colored citizenship, and Robespierre himself addressed the Assembly, arguing that "he saw no difference between the rights of Frenchmen and the rights of colonial free men of color."⁸³

Many people in France who were concerned about slavery, including Gregoire, kept applying pressure to the Assembly, and finally, "on May 15, 1791, the National Assembly granted political rights to all free blacks and mulattos who were born of free mothers and fathers" to which the white planters responded with outrage, and the vow to do whatever they could to resist the new law.⁸⁴

A few months later, in August 1791, a well-organized system of many groups of slaves started an insurrection in the north province. Delegates-many of them slave drivers- from plantations around the colony had planned the revolt in secret, and sworn their intentions at a large vodou ceremony a few nights before. They moved quickly, and gathered in number nearly overnight: "The speed and fury of the uprising shocked and overwhelmed planters, many of whom believed that their slaves did not have the capacity to carry out such a revolt. Many whites were killed on their plantations, while the rest fled to the safety of Le Cap. Workers burned cane fields, ransacked houses, and destroyed plantations' industrial machinery."⁸⁵

Their rebellion sent shock waves of paranoia throughout the Atlantic world. American slave holders feared that their own slaves might try to rebel, and they responded by tightening the reigns of control over their plantations. In a Philadelphia newspaper article, concerned readers were assured, "by keeping watch and patrol, we have prevented the Negroes from attempting any thing against this place. We are secure from any danger at present."⁸⁶

In response, the Assembly withdrew the rights of free blacks and mulattos, which only sparked yet more violence, but in 1792, they voted to reinstate their rights once more. When France sent delegates to try to stop the slave insurrection in Saint Domingue, the rebel slaves responded by joining with British and Spanish forces in the area, who were interested in capitalizing on France's problems by promising the rebels freedom if they joined the army, and many of them did just that. With masses of rebel slaves poised to help Britain and Spain take over Saint Domingue, the French government decided to abolish slavery in the colony, and finally, in 1794, the Convention voted to abolish slavery in all French colonies, thus bringing an end to the era of French capitalist colonialism in the Atlantic world. But by then, Saint Domingue was nearly in ruin after years of violent fighting, thousands of white planters had

fled at the beginning of the rebellion, and the freed slaves remaining on the island could not work in great enough numbers on the plantations to produce a decent amount of sugar for export.⁸⁸

The area remained in political and economic disarray until a "free man of color and ex-slave" named Francois-Dominique Toussaint Louverture joined the French army after Emancipation was declared, and "rose to be Saint-Domingue's highest ranking military officer."⁸⁹ He organized Saint Domingue in a militaristic manner that made the rebels work more efficiently and become unified as a solid group.⁹⁰ He was praised as possessing, "powers of invention in the art of war, and domestic government" and was said to be both a courageous and benevolent leader.⁹¹ In 1801, he appointed a committee to write a constitution for the new Saint Domingue, and was subsequently named governor-in-chief for life.⁹² Later, when Napoleon Bonaparte seized power of France and ordered that slavery be reinstated in Saint Domingue, Louverture was captured by Bonaparte's forces, but his strong, organized rebel force, led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, continued their fight.⁹³ With the additional factor of the French men's susceptibility to the tropical diseases of the Caribbean, Louverture's rebels defeated Bonaparte's forces, and in 1804, they established the independent republic of Haiti.⁹⁴ On January 1, 1804, the Haitian Declaration of Independence was written overnight, and read by its author, Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, to a crowd at Gonaives, a town north of Port-au-Prince.⁹⁴ The radical words of victory resounded throughout all of Haiti:

We must, with one last act of national authority, forever ensure liberty's reign in the country of our birth; we must take any hope of re-enslaving us away from the inhumane government that for so long kept us in the most humiliating stagnation. In the end we must live independent or die.⁹⁵

It is reasonable to assert that the ideology of the French Revolution was unlike any other in Western history, and that its atmosphere- of radical change, the pursuit of equality and liberty, and the overthrow of oppressive, arbitrary institutions- probably stirred up a great deal of inspiration in the slaves of Saint Domingue. When the slaves of the Saint Domingue overheard colonists talking about what was happening in France, they felt a sort of solidarity with the downtrodden French peasants. This was not because they had a great awareness of their plight, or because they had slavery in common, but because the slaves of Saint Domingue were amazed by the idea that another group

of oppressed people had the capacity and the courage to rise up against their oppressors in pursuit of their own freedom.

This is one of the most lasting legacies of the French Revolution; its ability to change one's perspective entirely regarding the balance of power in society. After 1789, monarchy began to lose its grip on the Western world, and the poor who found themselves treated with injustice never again thought, at least to the degree that they had in the past, that they deserved such treatment because of their socioeconomic status in society. Coupled with the Enlightenment, the impact of the French Revolution has profoundly altered the course of Western history, and continues to affect the way that people think today about politics and society. The French Revolution acted as a catalyst for the abolition of slavery in Saint Domingue and all French colonies, for two reasons; first, because the pursuit of liberty, equality, and fraternity forced people to see the brutal inhumanity of slavery, and second, because the Revolution gave the slaves of San Domingue a spark of hope- that perhaps freedom was possible, after all.

There is one piece of work to which almost all historians refer for Haitian history, and its theories seem to retain their potency and relevance, despite the many decades that have passed since its publication. Hilary McD. Beckles suggests that C. L. R. James' 1938 text *The Black Jacobins* is more than a crucial, foundational work of Caribbean historiography:

Conceptually, *The Black Jacobins*... situates the Caribbean as the primordial site of Atlantic modernity, and as one of several important locations where its contradictory tendencies were acted out as ideological contest. For James, the politics of bringing Enlightenment ideas nearer to reality is seen as a mandate taken up by the enslaved against colonizing men who sought to monopolize privilege and power.⁹⁶

If the Caribbean is the primordial site of modernity, then Haiti- as the New World's first settlement, the Caribbean's first nation-state, and the Atlantic world's second independent republic- is the ground upon which the "paradoxical nature of modernist rationality" has battled against itself for centuries.⁹⁷ French Saint Domingue provides us with a model of "the paradigm of African labor enslavement and European capital liberation... that became the basis of the revolutionary reorganization of productivity for European economic development" but its impact goes further than that.⁹⁸ The ideals of the Enlightenment, and of the French Revolution, transformed Saint

Domingue, in the sense that they finally highlighted the glaring contradictions and injustices of modernity. But what is commonly overlooked is the fact that African slaves, Indian slaves, gens de couleur, biracial women, and other "marginalized groups denied social justice by managers of the imperial project" were not mere pawns of French ideology; moved about in accordance with its changing philosophies.⁹⁹ These people, although largely uncredited, were responsible for their own shift toward determination for revolution. They did the courageous and tragic work of the revolution, struggled through its battles, and bore its bloodstains. The French Revolution did not cause the Haitian Revolution; it was created by "the colonized subaltern."¹⁰⁰ If the Haitian revolutionaries must bear the historical burdens of being killers, we should also allow them the dignity that is warranted of any person who revolts in order to free their people from oppression and suffering. We must demand a more equitable consideration of the Haitian Revolution in comparison to others. After all, if the sans-culottes and Jacobins are granted respect for the bloody work which they did in France, should we not look respectfully on "the Black Jacobins" of Saint Domingue, who also killed in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity? C. L. R. James believed that the opposition of marginalized groups against imperial power would "bring home the true value of Enlightenment ideas and render obsolete the racism and sexism standing in the way of human progress."¹⁰¹ While French revolutionaries may have overthrown monarchy in France with the ideals of the Enlightenment in mind, it was ultimately thousands of enslaved and disenfranchised people who brought those ideals into action in the broader Atlantic world. They are ones who threw a wrench into the well-oiled machine of the slave-based colonial economy in the Caribbean. Their actions sent shock waves into the rest of the West Indies, Latin America, Europe, and the United States.

The slavery question had officially, and violently, been pulled out of the shadows and into the political spotlight by the Haitian Revolution. Slaves would never again be looked at in the same manner as they were before 1791. Even pro-slavery theorists agreed that Africans and African-Americans were perhaps not as senseless and primitive as they once thought them to be. Suddenly they were forced to recognize that slaves had the self-reflection, strength, intelligence, determination, and agency necessary to implement a successful slave revolt. Slaves were seen as legitimate threats to their white owners, more than ever before. The Haitian Revolution confirmed and reinforced white paranoia, in the West Indies, Latin America, and the United States. High levels of fear often produced dangerous results for plantation slaves; intensified suspicions, restrictions, false accusations, and abuses.

When news of the slave uprising reached France, it was initially regarded with "considerable skepticism."¹⁰² In the last month of the Constituent Assembly, the new leaders of France were concerned with the threat of white secession in the colony. But as France stood on the brink of a new century, with a new system of government in place, it was the slaves who subverted the ancien regime of French colonialism with their revolution, and it was they who would bring "not only racial equality and slave emancipation to the French empire but also colonial secession and, in 1804, its first independent state."

In the end, we are still left with a question. The extent of influence of the French Revolution upon the slave population in Saint Domingue remains obscure because slaves did not have the opportunity to document their experiences during that time. With plenty of records of the French perspective, and virtually none on the perspective of the slaves, we are left without a concise answer. What we do know is that the time has come to let go of old presumptions and prejudices, and reject the old, flawed historiography of Haiti. We must have a historiographical "revolution" of our own. We must do it for the sake of the millions of people throughout history who changed society around them with their individual and collective actions, who made history from the bottom up. While it still remains crucial to study the leaders of monarchy, government, religion, and politics, we must now add in the histories of those who have been overlooked; the ordinary people.

The remarkable truth about the Haitian Revolution is that it affected France as much, if not more, than the French Revolution affected Saint Domingue. The radical cultures of abolitionism were as controversial in the metropolis as they were in the cane fields.¹⁰³ In *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, Sibylle Fischer observes: "The truncation of an emerging transnational and syncretistic modernity we have observed in the nineteenth-century Caribbean around the phenomenon of Haiti thus has an unexpected counterpart in the silences of the historiography of the metropolis."¹⁰⁴

Perhaps that is why so many historians are drawn to the study of Haiti and its unprecedented slave revolution; because it is highly nuanced, a bit difficult to penetrate, and rather mysterious; like the mountains of that country, rising in the mist. Perhaps, those who are sensitive to social conscience are drawn to study Haiti because of its modern conditions, and the fact that its present remains intertwined with its haunting history. What was once the richest sugar colony in the Caribbean has now become the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, riddled with political violence, extreme poverty, a crumbling infrastructure, hunger, environmental degradation, and serious diseases like

tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. But the souls who inhabit it are not merely the product of a rebellious experiment that fizzled out; they are human beings, affected by a multiplicity of histories and influences, struggling to survive in a country still suffering the aftermath of European exploitation, and the political instability of a post-revolutionary nation. Like their ancestors, they each have a story to tell. And in order to truly hear them- whether they are stories of Haitians in the eighteenth or the twenty-first centuries- we must venture beyond our Eurocentric tendencies. We must venture, with compassion, into the proverbial mountains. The real mountains of Haiti cover most of the country, and their geography has become a story of its own; the haunted feeling of the landscape, the peaks and chasms shrouded in mist.¹⁰⁵ It will be a long journey- at times seemingly endless- whether we are traveling physically or metaphorically. According to an old Haitian proverb, "Dèyè mòn gen mòn, beyond mountains are mountains." So we continue, on the earthen road that leads us up into the heart of the altitudes, toward a deeper understanding of Haiti.

Notes

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