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History in the Making

A Journal of History



Volume 15, 2022

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

California State University,
San Bernardino
Journal of History

Volume Fifteen
2022

**Alpha Delta Nu Chapter, Phi Alpha Theta National History
Honor Society**

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Phi Alpha Theta's mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. The organization seeks to bring students, teachers, and writers of history together for intellectual and social exchanges, which promote and assist historical research and publication by our members in a variety of ways.

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Original cover art "Hopi Prisoners at Alcatraz" (1895) from
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History in the Making

History in the Making

Volume 15

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

Editors of History in the Making

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Introduction

“What is history? An echo of the past in the future;
a reflex from the future on the past.”

- Victor Hugo (1802–1885).¹

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of California State University, San Bernardino’s annual student-run history journal, *History in the Making*. As with all of our previous versions, the journal is composed of work from talented and rigorous students from CSUSB and other collegiate institutions. Year after year, the editorial board strives to create a volume that is intriguing, timely, and historically insightful. The editors sought to create a journal that reflects the dynamic nature of history; a journal that invites discussion and analysis to get closer to non-tangible truths about the past. Our hope is to impart onto readers an informative and captivating journal that further contributes to the discourse and complexity of various historical events and subjects, while also igniting a passion to pursue historical scholarship.

This year’s board is honored to present six full-length articles, four in memoriam pieces, two book reviews, three film reviews, and three museum exhibit reviews. Topics vary from the imprisonment of Hopi nation members on Alcatraz to the development of synthetic rubber in the United States during World War II to the importance of enslaved Africans’ provision gardens in the colonial transatlantic botanical exchange. The fifteenth edition of the journal grapples with timely themes such as Indigenous and Latinx communities and their reclaiming of mainstream history, the complexities and intricacies of Black identity, culture, and resistance, and United States politics ranging from the American

¹ Victor Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2011), 702.

Revolution to the War on Terror. Equally important, there are additional pieces that focus on women, gender equality, and disability.

The image on the cover of this year's journal is a portion of a photo showing nineteen Hopi Elders who were imprisoned by the United States in 1894 and sent to Alcatraz for one year. The full image is featured in the first full-length article titled, "Alcatraz, A Pelican's Brief," by Cecelia Smith. As Smith discusses, the United States government imprisoned these Hopi men for refusing to abandon traditional agricultural practices and send their children to American boarding schools. She also reflects on a group of Indigenous activists known as the "Indians of All Tribes" (IOAT), who protested the colonization of the island and requested the land be returned to Native sovereignty in 1969.

Our second article is "Coping with Trauma" by Erika Kelley. Drawing from transpersonal psychology, Kelly examines how ancient Egyptians relied on religion, magic, and communication with their deities during childbirth. She describes various Egyptian gods and goddesses known for creating children and providing protection for both mother and child during childbirth and infancy. Analyzing various archeological artifacts and ancient documents, Kelley considers the interconnectivity of modern psychology and how ancient Egyptians believed that performing rituals and spells connected them to deities who could help during the laborious and often dangerous event of childbirth.

Our third article is Deborah Zuk's "Oration and Theater in the American Revolution." Adding to the discourse on colonial America, Zuk considers the influential role orators and performers played in rallying support from colonists to revolt against the British. Moreover, she examines the similarities and differences of both careers. While colonists' had opposing social stigma between oration and theater, one being revered and the other condemned,

both held significant sway over colonists and were used as grounds to advocate for independence.

Nyla Provost is the author of our fourth article, “The Development of Synthetic Rubber and its Significance in World War II.” Prior to World War II, the United States relied solely on natural rubber supplies, primarily from Southeast Asia. During the height of the war, with Japan occupying the majority of the Pacific, Provost discusses how the American government, scientists, and businessmen came to manufacture synthetic rubber. She highlights the race between Germany and the United States in the development of synthetic rubber, as well as the rationing efforts imposed by the United States government.

Next, our fifth article is Jesus Ruvalcaba’s “The Recognition of the United States: The Process of How European Countries Recognized America.” Also focusing on the American Revolution, Ruvalcaba explores how the United States received recognition as a sovereign nation on the global stage. He argues that even though the United States declared independence in 1776 with the Declaration of Independence, the timing and process by which different European nations (France, Dutch, and Britain) came to view America as a new nation varied greatly.

Our sixth and final article is “Uprooted: Doorway Gardens and African Plant Cultivation in the Colonial Atlantic World” by Brittany Mondragon. Adding to scholarship on the Columbian Exchange, she observes the impact African-native plants had on the Americas and their cultivation on plantations during the eighteenth century. Traveling across the Atlantic, these plants made their way onto provision gardens of enslaved Africans. Mondragon suggests these provision gardens provided enslaved Africans some mild autonomy as they cultivated their own food and medicine, prepared culturally-significant dishes, and sold or bartered surplus goods.

History in the Making

This year, the journal remembers the lives of four prominent figures who passed away within this last year. Cecelia Smith begins the in-memoriam portion of the journal by reflecting on the life and legacy of the American writer, bell hooks, and her social activism in regard to race, feminism, sexuality, and socioeconomics. George “Matt” Patino remembers the influence and achievements of actress and television pioneer, Betty White, in “Betty White, Ms. Television.” Next, Gary Crethers reflects on the career and influence of Noble Peace Prize recipient Desmond Tutu, a South African Anglican bishop and theologian, who is renowned for his anti-apartheid activism. Lastly, co-authors Devin Gillen and Levi Gonzalez extensively explore the life, influences, and legacy of Donald Rumsfeld, a long-term Republican politician and the former State of Defense under former President Gerald Ford and former President George W. Bush.

The last section of *History in the Making* comprises eight insightful reviews on recent books, films, and museum exhibits. The first literature review portion begins with Jose Castro’s book review of *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, which explores the history of the Latinx community in East Los Angeles. Next, Brittany Mondragon reviews the book, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*.

The film review portion starts with Brittany Mondragon reflecting on the life of British artist Louis Wain and his struggle with mental illness in a review of *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*. The next two film reviews focus on Black identity and culture in the United States. Cecelia Smith provides a review of the fictional historical film, *Passing*, which focuses on racial identity during the 1920s Harlem Renaissance in New York City. Cameron Smith then examines the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival in the historical documentary on the *Summer of Soul (... Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)*.

Starting the museum reviews, Michelle Curtis discusses the planning and implementation process between CSUSB students and the Sherman Indian Museum to develop a virtual exhibit in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in her review entitled “*Brave Hearts: A Virtual Exhibit’ with Room to Grow.*” Next, Michael Chavez reviews The First American Museum, which opened in September 2021, in Oklahoma City. Concluding this year’s journal is a museum review of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum in Los Angeles by Jose Castro.

Jacqulyne R. Anton and Brittany Mondragon
Chief Editors

History in the Making

Acknowledgements

The journal would not have been possible without the hard work, dedication, and compassion of CSUSB students, faculty, and staff. We would like to begin by thanking the talented authors and editors who contributed to this year's edition. From the "call for papers" to the meticulous editing process and the final copy-editing stage, the authors and editors worked diligently to produce the best long-form research pieces, in memoriams, film reviews, museum reviews, and book reviews possible. Due to their commitment and passion for history (and those it affects), we created a timely and thoughtful edition of *History in the Making*.

The editorial board would like to extend their gratitude to Dr. Jeremy Murray for his diligence and constant availability. While the journal is a student-run publication, work of this caliber would not have been possible without his guidance, patience, and insight. The editorial board would also like to thank Dr. Tiffany Jones for lending her expertise, enthusiasm, and knowledge of the editing and publishing process. Dr. Murray and Dr. Jones are integral to the publication of the journal. In addition, we must also acknowledge the contributions of CSUSB's History department faculty who worked with the authors and editors to ensure the academic integrity of their work. The editorial board is grateful for their willingness and enthusiasm to work with the journal and its contributors.

Lastly, we would like to thank CSUSB's Laura Sicklesteel and her colleagues in Printing Services and Keith Askew in Shipping and Receiving who offer their outstanding services and support to bring our journal to print every year.

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Editorial Staff

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History in the Making

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Alcatraz, A Pelican's Brief

Cecelia Smith
CSUSB

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Articles

Alcatraz, A Pelican's Brief

By Cecelia Smith

Abstract: Jutting out into the middle of San Francisco Bay is a large rocky formation known as Alcatraz Island, its name loosely translated from the Spanish word for “pelican.” Tourists leave from Pier thirty-three and travel to the island which has been designated as a National Park. It offers visitors the opportunity to experience history as the location was once a fortress and a prison. Many visitors, however, are unaware of the connection of Indigenous populations to the island thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. With the advent of settler colonialism, the impact of European colonial settlers on Indigenous populations had negative consequences, compounding a system of genocide and repression. Alcatraz eventually became an asset for the United States government, incarcerating those who did not conform, including members of Indigenous populations. In 1969, a group calling itself Indians of All Tribes (IOAT) occupied the island, taking over what was now considered surplus federal property. Their effort at decolonization – the process of dismantling colonial occupation by returning land and recognizing Indigenous sovereignty – was based on broken and unratified treaties between Indigenous tribes and the United States. Currently, the National Park Service’s conservation efforts help to vocalize the relevance of California’s original occupants and add an important narrative to the state’s history.

Alcatraz, A Pelican's Brief



Figure 1. Alcatraz Island, 2007. Photograph courtesy of the author, Cecelia Smith.¹

Pier thirty-three creaks with age as tourists load onto its wooden planks. Nearby, the island's permanent residents, boisterous sea lions, lounge beneath a muted sun and bark out their greetings; seagulls and the occasional pelican soar smoothly overhead drifting upon a streaming, cool breeze. The boat at the edge of the pier rocks gently as passengers begin to board, excited for their destination, a large rock in the middle of the San Francisco Bay called Alcatraz. Someone on the boat checks off the location on their bucket list of National Parks to visit; another tourist marks off her checklist of lighthouses photographed, the first one erected along the coast of California in 1854.

Off in the distance, Alcatraz Island is prominent though sometimes shrouded in fog. In November 1969, perhaps the air was colder and the bay waters a little choppier, but the scene was not so dissimilar. Except, the passengers on board the vessel headed for Alcatraz Island had grand emotions regarding their

¹ Photograph courtesy of the author, Cecelia Smith.

destination. The group known as “Indians of All Tribes” (IOAT) headed out toward Alcatraz Island and started a movement.

Alcatraz Island, whose name translates loosely from Spanish as ‘pelicans,’ was added to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1972 by the United States federal government.² It offers visitors the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of notorious gangsters such as Al Capone (1899–1947), Meyer “Mickey” Cohen (1913–1976), and Ellsworth Raymond “Bumpy” Johnson (1905–1968) while reimagining episodes of daring, cinematic-like escapes. Visitors can step inside decommissioned holding cells and photograph themselves trying to recreate the lives of the imprisoned. Nevertheless, very few, if any, visitors attempt to re-enact or truly consider the Indigenous experiences on the island.

The island’s fort and prison history, along with its crumbling façade, are not so subtle reminders of the imprisonment and decimation of Indigenous populations and the laws and broken treaties used by the United States government to forcefully quell a people. The federal government’s failures drove an attempt to decolonize Alcatraz, culminating in an “occupation” on the island for nineteen months to compel adherence to Treaty K. The struggle for decolonization on Alcatraz Island highlights the plight of Indigenous populations across the United States.

The Importance of Tradition – A History of Alcatraz Island

Among the Indigenous peoples, the history of the lands before European and American intrusion is revealed in oral traditions, its stories handed down via practices such as song and dance. Songs, stories, dances ceremonies, and traditions performed and passed down through generations demonstrate an association and

². National Park Service, “Alcatraz Island, Golden Gate National Recreation Area,” National Park Service, accessed October 25, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/alcatraz-island.htm>; National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 76000209, listed 6/23/1976, accessed October 25, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>.

reciprocity with the land. Native traditions look to the primacy of direct experience, interconnectedness, and relationships in the natural world.³ Their traditions validate a connection to the land, a connection which the United States government has dismissed as irrelevant.

According to Troy Johnson (d. 2013), a historian of American Indian activism in the 1960s and 1970s, ten to twenty thousand years before the arrival of Europeans, the island was occupied by Indigenous groups native to the area. Johnson states that ten thousand Indigenous people, known as the Ohlone, lived between Point Sur and the San Francisco Bay. He notes that the history of Alcatraz is difficult to reconstruct, but it appears that Alcatraz was used as a place of isolation or ostracization, a camping spot, an area for gathering food and bird eggs, and a hiding place for those attempting to escape from the California Mission system.⁴

The Spanish established the California Mission system beginning in the late eighteenth century—the first one was founded by Father Junipero Serra (1713–1784) in 1769 as Mission San Diego de Alcalá— as an effort to convert Native Americans to Catholicism, but also as a method for expanding European territorial control. On a website documenting the history of the missions, the California Missions Foundation states that their foundation is committed to a full and accurate depiction of the institutions.⁵ They assess that the mission system was highly coercive and that once California Indian people entered the community, they were expected to live in ways that the padres and

³ Anthony Madrigal, *Sovereignty, Land & Water: Building Tribal Environmental and Cultural Programs on the Cahuilla & Twenty-Nine Palms Reservations* (California: Center for Native Nations, 2008).

⁴ Troy R. Johnson, “We Hold the Rock,” National Park Service, Alcatraz Island, accessed October 25, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/alca/learn/historyculture/we-hold-the-rock.htm>.

⁵ California Missions Foundation, “California Indians, Before, During, and After the Mission Era,” accessed March 19, 2022, <https://californiamissionsfoundation.org/california-indians>.

military officials deemed acceptable.⁶ It is easy to surmise that the distance and isolation of Alcatraz would offer a safe haven for the Ohlone, and for others who did not wish to be forced into a system intent on eliminating Indigenous traditions and lifestyles.

According to author Jennifer Graber (n.d.) in her work on the struggle for the American West, “Reducing Indian landholdings had been an important feature of United States Indian policy since George Washington’s presidential tenure (1789–1797).

Washington’s vision for Indians’ future also assumed their ‘progress’ toward ‘civilization.’”⁷ By 1882, for example, Kiowas faced the Americans’ unrelenting effort to sever their ties to their lands and to each other.⁸

In a work on the history of the Ohlone people, anthropologist Lowell John Bean writes:

The Ohlone peoples comprised a complex series of cultures that spoke related languages and occupied a large area bounded by the Carquinez Strait and the Golden Gate to the north, and Big Sur and Soledad to the south. Like many other California native peoples, the Ohlone-speakers were subjected to the disastrous experience of missionization under the Spanish Empire, and, following the admission of California to the United States, were dispossessed of their remaining lands and denied legal status by the state and federal governments.⁹

⁶ California Missions Foundation, “California Indians.”

⁷ Jennifer Graber, *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 21.

⁸ Graber, 153.

⁹ Lowell John Bean, “The Ohlone Past and Present: Native Americans of the San Francisco Bay Region,” Bancroft Library, accessed October 25, 2021, http://www.muwekma.org/images/The_Ohlone_Back_From_Extinction_Nov_1_994.pdf.

It can be gleaned from Bean's research that a refusal to understand Indigenous oral traditions on the part of government officials ultimately marginalized the Indigenous populations. This demonstrates a dismissal of their histories, heritage, and connections to the land. The author's conclusions also function to highlight the main motives used by the Spanish and American empires to assert authority and domination in their efforts to usurp these lands, the belief that it was a God-given right. According to Mark David Spence in his book, *Dispossessing the Wilderness* (1999), the government tried to achieve what they called "expansion with honor" which was how they intended to incorporate tribal territories into the United States without belligerently undermining Native societies.¹⁰ However, in these efforts toward expansion, there was an unwillingness to interact and learn from an already present populace, an unwillingness to consider another point of view, perhaps with the hopes that the Indigenous populations would simply disappear from the dialogue. The ideology of a God-given destiny and a belief in European superiority created an environment in which White, male, Christians could justify national aggrandizement and territorial acquisition.¹¹ Furthermore, they could step onto land not their own, and develop a system of ownership, not stewardship, and craft the tools necessary to rule over, keep out, and imprison those who they deemed others. Some scholars argue that the belief in European superiority and the ideology of Manifest Destiny (the white European-American belief in a God-given destiny to expand from

¹⁰ "Expansion with honor" is noted as then-President George Washington's administration's unofficial Indian policy. Efforts would be made to negotiate the succession of Native land, government-to-government, but Washington was willing to go to war if diplomacy failed. Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1999); Ryan Winn, "George Washington and the Resiliency of Indian People," *Tribal College, Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, July 2, 2018, <https://tribalcollegejournal.org/george-washington-and-the-resiliency-of-indian-people/>.

¹¹ Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

coast to coast) were used to justify the taking of land; they were not the driving force. As historian Anders Stephanson has observed, “Americans wanted land to exploit, not Indigenous peoples to assimilate.”¹²

One of the first references to the concept of Manifest Destiny is found in journalist John O’Sullivan’s (1813–1895) article entitled, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” published in *The United States Democratic Review* in 1839. O’Sullivan was fixated on the glory and magnificence of America and wrote that “America has been chosen to be great by Providence, by God’s will.”¹³ He espouses the considerable principle of human equality; however, he neglects to address the Native American populations that lost their lands based on this philosophy.

The idea of futurity and destiny facilitated the impediment that was settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is defined as a distinct type of colonialism that functions through the replacement of Indigenous populations with an invasive settler society.¹⁴ In line with the mentality that this was their destiny and right, European colonial settlers intentionally moved to stay, not to coexist, thus removing and eliminating Indigenous people from their homelands. Historian Patrick Wolfe, in his examination of the impact of settler colonialism on Indigenous populations, argues that “settler colonialism destroys to replace. The logic of elimination not only refers to the summary liquidation of Indigenous peoples...it strives for the dissolution of native societies.”¹⁵ Author Lisbeth Haas, in her discussion of the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), considers the plight of the

¹² Stephanson, 26.

¹³ John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” *The United States Democratic Review*, Vol. 6, Issue 23 (1839): 426.

¹⁴ Adam Barker and Emma Battell Lowman, “Settler Colonialism,” *Global Social Theory*, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/settler-colonialism/>.

¹⁵ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 8, Issue 4 (2006): 388, <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

Indigenous population because of the efforts of colonial settlers. She concludes that their condition was perilous as more and more settlers and soldiers encroached upon their land. This encroachment would have a negative impact on their sovereignty and autonomy, as their interactions with the “settler society became ever more heavily policed.”¹⁶ The impact of settler colonialism compounds a system that perpetuated genocide and repression and normalizes the continued occupation and exploitation of Indigenous lands. Following the Mexican-American War, the United States acquired what are the present-day states of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and California. Not long after, the United States began settling and colonizing the rich state of California, including the little island off the coast: Alcatraz.

Alcatraz Becomes a Prison

The building of a military fort and subsequent prison on Alcatraz served as a defensive move important to the United States for two reasons: first, the end of the Mexican-American War, which resulted in the creation of the state of California in 1850, and second, the frenzy of the Gold Rush era (1848–1855). Because of the possibility for fortune there was a large amount of maritime activity along this section of the coast, including vessels bringing people and supplies to the area, which required the placement of a lighthouse on the land in 1854. In addition, historically the area had been explored by Europeans, colonized by the Spanish and occupied by Mexico; Russia even maintained a fort north of San Francisco.¹⁷ Therefore, thought to be necessary to deter possible invasions, Alcatraz became a crucial asset during that period, as

¹⁶ Lisbeth Haas, “War in California, 1846-1848,” *California History*, Vol. 76, no. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1997): 331–355, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25161671>.

¹⁷ California State Parks, “Fort Ross SHP: A Russian Fort by the Sea,” California Department of Parks and Recreation, accessed June 8, 2022, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=449.

well as during the Civil War (1861–1865). It eventually morphed into a prison facility, frequently incarcerating those who did not conform to the United States government’s rules and regulations (*Figure 2*).



Figure 2. Joseph Whittle, Early Oil Painting of Alcatraz as a Military Prison, ca. 1860. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.¹⁸

In an article published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, dated February 26, 1894, a journalist told the end of the story of Alcatraz as a military prison. The fort was described as follows:

Rising abruptly from the bosom of the bay, the precipitous cliffs that mark its outlines have a most forbidding aspect, and give to the incoming voyager whose steamer skirts its uninviting shores the impression that it is a veritable Gibraltar, whose

¹⁸ Joseph Whittle, “Early Oil Painting of Alcatraz as a Military Prison,” ca. 1860, Bancroft Library, accessed March 19, 2022, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf100006jh>.

guns, which may be seen peeping over the parapets upon the hilltops, would repulse the invading fleets of all the world. ...the fort is a point of the greatest strategic value for the defense of this city, but instead of being famous as one of the great fortifications of the country, it is notorious as a place of detention, a prison where military offenders, while expiating their crimes, may... look wistfully across the stretch of water.¹⁹

“The Rock,” as is its nickname, held military prisoners and Civil War southern sympathizers, but it was also a place of incarceration for Indigenous prisoners. Nineteen members of the Hopi Tribe from Arizona were imprisoned at Alcatraz in 1895 for nearly a year. The reason for their imprisonment was due to their resistance to the United States’ policies meant to “civilize the savages.” Deemed “Hostiles,” this group of Hopi Tribe members did not follow the agricultural guidelines for planting crops established by the government, instead seizing land and planting wheat. In addition, they refused to allow their children to be sent to government boarding schools, which were overcrowded and unhealthy (*Figure 3*).²⁰

This use of Alcatraz to detain these Hopi men is a clear example of the method for the punishment of Indigenous tribes who refused to “behave” in accordance with United States’ assimilation policies. The significance of their imprisonment on this island is found in the reference made by Johnson regarding isolation or ostracization methods used by Indigenous tribes many centuries before. The methods were implemented by tribes in

¹⁹. “Alcatraz Island: No Longer a Bugbear to Soldiers: The Fear of ‘the Rock’ has Vanished,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1894, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/27407613/?terms=alcatraz&match=1>.

²⁰. Holliday is the historian of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office. Wendy Holliday, “Hopi History: The Story of the Alcatraz Prisoners,” National Park Service, accessed October 25, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/hopi-prisoners-on-the-rock.htm>.

conjunction with their *own* governance. The imprisonment of these Hopi men was a method of punishment by an authority attempting to force its governance on independent Indigenous communities; its rules and regulations were in direct conflict with how the Hopi desired to live.



Figure 3. *Hopi Prisoners at Alcatraz (1895)*. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.²¹

The nineteen Hopi men were released from Alcatraz on September 23, 1895.²² Their imprisonment was indicative of how the United States government interacted with the Indigenous tribes of this land. Preconceived notions and prejudicial perceptions ensured that the Indigenous tribes would be contended with in a manner that would diminish their standard of living and demolish

²¹. TradingCardsNPS, "Hopi Prisoners at Alcatraz," Wikimedia Commons, accessed May 14, 2022, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hopi_Prisoners_at_Alcatraz_\(7222901166\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hopi_Prisoners_at_Alcatraz_(7222901166).jpg)

²². Laurie Ann Doyle, "The Hopis of Alcatraz," Alta Online, April 15, 2020, <https://www.altaonline.com/dispatches/a7179/the-hopis-of-alcatraz/>

their political, economic, and military power or independence, sovereignty, or autonomy.²³

The Secret California Treaties

The United States government's National Archives indicates that:

From 1774 until about 1832, treaties between individual sovereign American Indian nations and the United States were negotiated to establish borders and prescribe conditions of behavior between the parties. In 1871, the House of Representatives ceased recognition of individual tribes within the United States as independent nations with whom the United States could contract by treaty, ending the nearly one-hundred old practice of treaty-making between the United States and American Indian tribes.²⁴

According to an article by the United States Office of the Historian, the government used treaties as one means to displace Indians from their tribal lands, a mechanism that was strengthened with the Removal Act of 1830.²⁵ They violated the treaties and, in addition, used the rulings of the Supreme Court to facilitate the

²³ Doyle, "The Hopis of Alcatraz."

²⁴ "American Indian Treaties," National Archives, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties>.

²⁵ The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by then-President Andrew Jackson (1829–1837) on May 28, 1830, which authorized the granting of lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. It resulted in the forcible removal of the Cherokees from their lands into a march that became known as the "Trail of Tears." Office of the Historian, "Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830," accessed March 19, 2022, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/indian-treaties>; "Indian Removal Act: Primary Documents in American History," Library of Congress, accessed on March 19, 2022, <https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act>.

spread of European Americans westward across the continent. Over the following decades, Indigenous peoples were murdered, killed by disease, or driven from their lands and livelihoods by miners and colonial settlers.

In 2016, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, located in Washington, D.C., presented an exhibit of compacts (treaties) between the United States and Native American nations. The rarely seen Treaty of Canandaigua (1794) was one of the first enacted (*Figure 4*). According to author Hansai Lo Wang, in his article on the broken treaties displayed in the exhibit, this specific agreement was also known as the Pickering Treaty. It returned more than a million acres to the Haudenosaunee, an Iroquoian-speaking confederacy of First Nations peoples in the Northeast, but their territory has been cut down over the centuries.²⁶ One portion of the treaty that remains intact is the provision of \$4,500 in goods, provided to tribal members annually, which is dispensed in bolts of cloth. Haudenosaunee leaders have said that cloth is more important than money because it is a way to remind the United States of the treaty terms, large and small.²⁷

²⁶ Hansai Lo Wang, “Broken Promises on Display At Native American Treaties Exhibit,” NPR, January 18, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/01/18/368559990/broken-promises-on-display-at-native-american-treaties-exhibit>.

²⁷ Wang, “Broken Promises.”

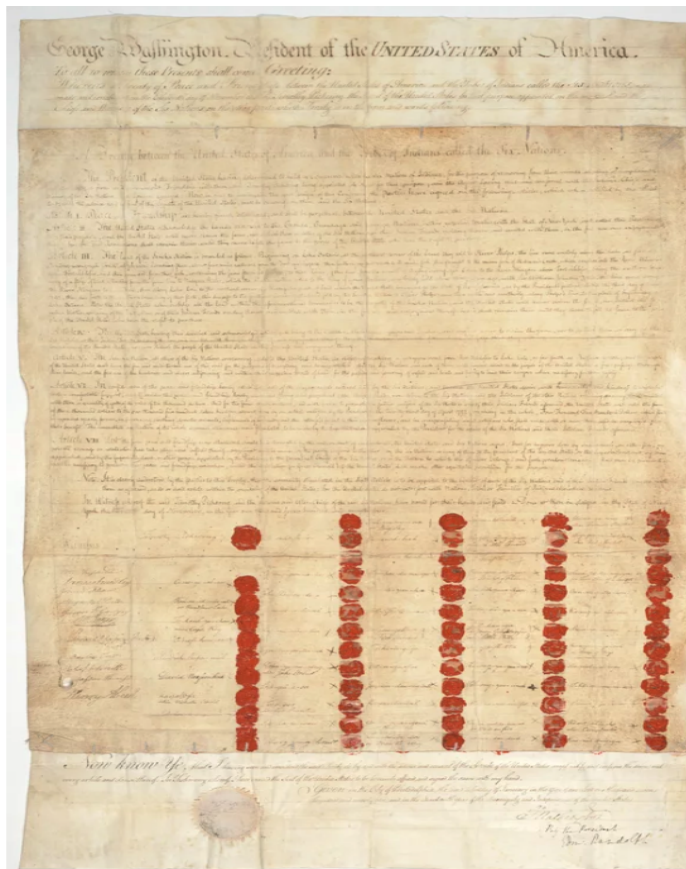


Figure 4. The Treaty of Canandaigua, 1794. Courtesy of the United States National Archives and Records Administration.²⁸

One particular treaty of importance in the exhibit references Native American tribes in California during the Gold Rush era. The United States and persons associated with the San Luis Rey (Luiseno), Cahuilla, and Serrano Indians signed a compact known as Treaty K in 1852; however, it was not ratified by the United States Senate, under pressure from California lawmakers. According to one of the exhibit's curators, Suzan Shown Harjo of

²⁸ Wang, "Broken Promises." Courtesy of the United States National Archives and Records Administration.

the Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee Indian nations, money was the reason behind the unratified treaty. She reasoned, “the answer is always gold. And if it’s not gold, it’s silver. And if it’s not silver, it’s copper. And if it’s not, go right through the metal chart.”²⁹ She said that many American Indians in California suffered without treaty protection.³⁰

This statement is augmented by the government’s confirmation that “no compensation has ever been made to the California Indians for their lands, as the Government seems to have followed the policy of Mexico, from whom it got its title to California, in not recognizing the Indians’ right of occupancy.”³¹ Even more disturbing is the fact that the existence of the treaties themselves had been buried. Not until 1904, in an unearthed letter from R. Woodland Gates (n.d.), private secretary of Senator Thomas Bard (1841–1915) of California, to Charles Edwin Kelsey (1861–1936), a lawyer and field worker for the Northern California Indian Association, were the concerned treaties even located (*Figure 5*).

From the Smithsonian website, the California treaty described above is listed as “Unratified California Treaty K, 1852.” A photograph of the document is not included; however, the transcript provided indicates the orders restrict Indigenous movement and migration, deny Indigenous peoples the right to vote, and ban them from testifying in court against any white person. This “Treaty of Peace and Friendship” indicates in Article 3 that the efforts are “to promote the settlement and improvement of said nations.”³² The treaty acknowledges the United States as,

²⁹ Wang, “Broken Promises.”

³⁰ Wang, “Broken Promises.”

³¹ Larisa K. Miller, “The Secret Treaties With California’s Indians,” *Prologue*, Vol. 45, no. 3-4 (2013): 38-45, <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2013/fall-winter/treaties.pdf>.

³² “Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations,” *Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian*, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://americanindian.si.edu/nationtonation/unratified-california-treaty-k.html>.

The sole and absolute sovereign of all the soil and territory ceded to them and stipulates that the said nations and their tribes...will never claim any other lands within the boundaries of the United States, nor ever disturb the people of the United States in the free use and enjoyment thereof.³³

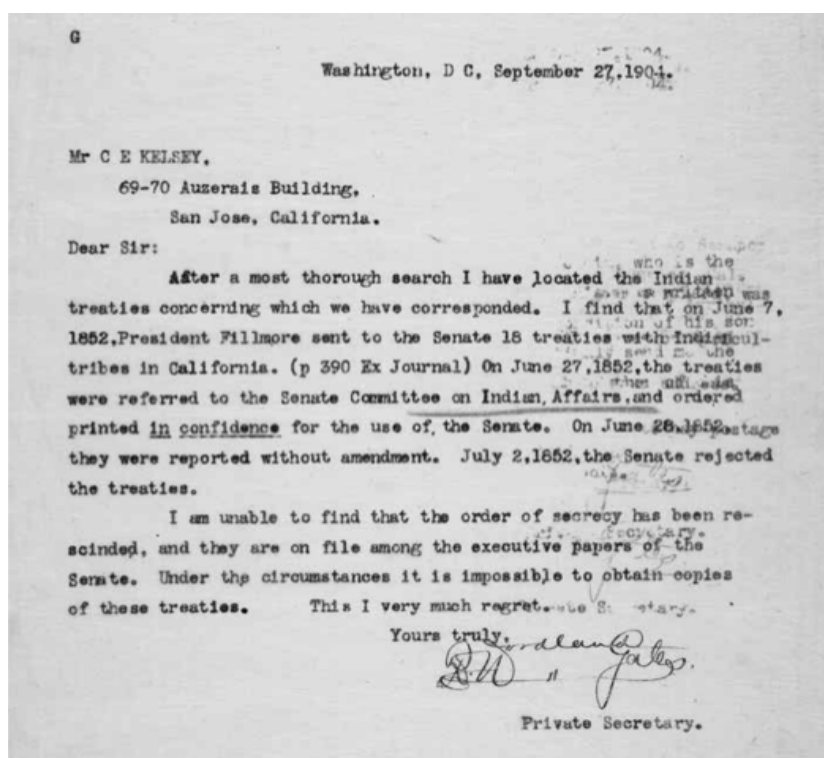


Figure 5. Letter to lawyer Charles Edwin Kelsey. Courtesy of Larisa K. Miller.³⁴

³³ Charles J. Kappler, "Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties," Vol. IV (Laws) Compiled March 4, 1927, <https://americanindian.si.edu/static/nationtonation/pdf/Unratified-California-Treaty-K-1852.pdf>.

³⁴ Miller, "The Secret Treaties."

It is inconceivable to believe that all of the various Indigenous tribes merely accepted the outcome of treaties compiled by the United States government or the acquiescence of their lands to the disservice of settler colonialism. There was a series of conflicts known as the Indian Wars (1609–1924), with major incidents occurring from the 1860s to 1890s. And as far back as the sixteenth century, historians have documented struggles between the Indigenous population and White colonial settlers. Valiant efforts of resistance were witnessed at tragic confrontations in such places as Wounded Knee Creek in the Dakota Territory in 1890.³⁵ However, different methods of resistance and achieving Indigenous sovereignty awakened on Alcatraz Island. The idea of decolonization, as demonstrated on the island, forced a nation to reexamine itself and its relationship to its Indigenous populace.

Decolonization: The Efforts of Indians of All Tribes (IOAT)

It was a calculated response to the breach of various treaties when a group that called itself “Indians of All Tribes” (IOAT) climbed aboard a vessel named *Monte Cristo* and set out across the waters of the San Francisco Bay to seize Alcatraz in 1969.³⁶ No longer in use as a prison after closing in 1963, the group saw the land as unoccupied and determined that it was now considered to be surplus federal land. Citing the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, the claim was made that the abandoned surplus federal land would be returned to Native Americans.³⁷ Close to the shores of the island, Richard Oakes (1942–1972), the leader and spokesman for the

³⁵ Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Indian Wars* (New York: American Heritage Press, Inc., 2002).

³⁶ Kent Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom: Richard Oakes, Alcatraz and the Red Power Movement* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018).

³⁷ University of Massachusetts Lowell Library, “The Occupation of Alcatraz, 1969,” accessed March 19, 2022, <https://libguides.uml.edu/c.php?g=945022&p=6820208>.

IOAT group, jumped into the frigid water with his boots still on and swam to land.³⁸

On November 9, 1969, IOAT landed on Alcatraz and posted their demands in a lengthy proclamation. Their proclamation addressed the United States government directly, delivering the following message “To the Great White Father and All His People” (*Figure 6*):

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery. We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land and hereby offer the following treaty. We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about three hundred years ago... We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all white men.³⁹

³⁸ Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*.

³⁹ The group consisted of Indian students and a group of urban Indians from the Bay Area. Many different tribes were represented which is why the all-encompassing name was selected. Ilka Hartmann, “Alcatraz Proclamation,” Shaping San Francisco’s Digital Archive @Foundsf, accessed October 25, 2021, [https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=File:Nativam\\$alcatraz-proclamation-photo.jpg](https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=File:Nativam$alcatraz-proclamation-photo.jpg);
Johnson, “We Hold the Rock,” accessed October 25, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/alca/learn/historyculture/we-hold-the-rock-htm>.



Figure 6. Proclamation of the Indians of All Tribes posted on Alcatraz. Courtesy of Shaping San Francisco's Digital Archive.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ilka Hartmann, "Alcatraz Proclamation."

Oakes explained in a press conference the significance of Alcatraz to Indigenous tribes, stating, "Alcatraz offers the insulation necessary for us to develop intellectually."⁴¹ A second (unnamed) spokesman offered a more in-depth explanation and reasoning for the group's seizure of the island. He stated:

Several Indians throughout the United States have the right to appropriate a certain amount of the so-called public domain or public property of the United States. ...Alcatraz Island is the original property of California Indian people collectively in California. The federal government has never acquired title to California Indian property. And that property that the federal government still holds within the state, which would include Alcatraz, would, it seems to me, still have an unextinguished Indian title. The federal government has never paid for the land, has no deeds to the land.⁴²

The Regional Director of the United States government's General Services Administration, Thomas E. Hannon (n.d.), responded to Oakes statements saying there were no immediate plans to remove the group from the island. When asked about a deadline, Hannon did not have one and acquiesced to the reporter that the group's stay on the island was indefinite.

Richard Oakes' biographer, Kent Blansett (n.d.), explains Oakes' participation and the occupation of Alcatraz as one that reinforces Native Nationalism. Oakes was perhaps the most recognizable face on the island. His participation in the occupation inspired the Red Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which

⁴¹ "Occupation and Ownership of Alcatraz," Christopher Newport University, Primary Sources: Native Americans-American Indians: Alcatraz Occupation, accessed on October 25, 2021.

<https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/187793>.

⁴² "Occupation and Ownership of Alcatraz."

ultimately had a tremendous impact on Americans' view of Native American history.⁴³

The efforts of IOAT sparked a revolution for Indigenous activism. The group would have to remain on "The Rock," however, for nearly two years to enact significant change (*Figure 7*). According to Blansett, most historians focus on Oakes' role, but in reality, Alcatraz was a spark. The Red Power Movement gained greater notoriety after the occupation of Alcatraz. The Red Power Movement fought for protection and autonomy in the face of an encroaching White culture that sought the termination of tribal statuses and culture. The movement is credited with changing the federal government's policies, which sought to strip tribal members of their rights, their identities, and recognition of tribal citizenship.⁴⁴

Richard Oakes resided with his family on Alcatraz during the occupation, and there are many videos of his interactions with the media. He left the island in 1970 after the death of his daughter from an accident in one of the abandoned buildings but remained involved in the Red Power Movement. He was shot and killed in Sonoma, California, in 1972 by Michael Morgan (n.d.), a man whose claims of self-defense against Oakes eventually led to an acquittal of all charges. Oakes' supporters allege his death was in cold blood and racially motivated.⁴⁵

⁴³ Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*.

⁴⁴ University of Massachusetts Lowell Library, "The Red Power Movement," accessed March 19, 2022, <https://libguides.uml.edu/c.php?g=945022&p=6820187>.

⁴⁵ University of Massachusetts Lowell Library, "Richard Oakes," accessed March 19, 2022, <https://libguides.uml.edu/c.php?g=945022&p=6820208>.



Figure 7. Landing site on Alcatraz Island, including the graffitied phrase, “Indians Welcome.” Courtesy of the author, Cecelia Smith.⁴⁶

As tourists exit the boat at Pier thirty-three on their return from Alcatraz, they might take one last look back at the island and try for that perfect picture. But they often move on, without thought or conversation about the history, or the possibilities for Indigenous people. The possibilities were demonstrated by IOAT in their occupation of Alcatraz, and it is these possibilities that we should always consider. While IOAT was not successful in retaking the island, the group did bring focus to the plight of Native Americans as well as center the debate on decolonization.

In an article on the website “Interdependence: Global Solidarity and Local Actions,” the definition of decolonization is presented as being about “‘cultural, psychological, and economic freedom’ for indigenous people with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty—the right and ability of Indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, and political

⁴⁶ Photograph courtesy of the author, Cecelia Smith.

and economic systems.”⁴⁷ The site also includes a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Talk about decolonization, presented by Nikki Sanchez, an Indigenous media maker, environmental educator, and academic. In her TED Talk, Sanchez’s references are to the Canadian territories, but she does say that colonization is global, and there is not a single corner in the world that colonization has not been enacted upon. She remarked, “In order for us to know where we want to go together, we need to know where we are, and for us to know that we need to know where we’ve been.”⁴⁸ Her words prompt us to think about who we are, but most importantly, we are prompted to think about the land and its people, the Indigenous communities whose entire existences were nearly vanquished. Decolonization is more than just handing back territory; it requires an understanding of how we arrived at where we are today. It begins with understanding the past.

The National Park Service is doing its part to ensure the history of Alcatraz Island is not forgotten. Its website maintains crucial information about the site, including illuminating articles written by historians. In 2012, the federal government unveiled a rebuilt tower with the freshly painted words in bold red letters, “Peace and Freedom. Welcome. Home of the Free Indian Land.” It is a replica of the graffiti rendered when IOAT activists occupied the island. A spokeswoman for the National Park Service, Alexandra Picavet, commented that “normally, the federal government is not in the business of preserving graffiti. The water

⁴⁷. E. Hartman & S. Brandauer, eds., “What is Decolonization, Why is it Important, and How can we Practice It?,” *Interdependence: Global Solidarity and Local Actions*, 2021, <https://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/what-is-decolonization-why-is-it-important/>.

⁴⁸. Tedx Talks, “Decolonization is for Everyone/Nikki Sanchez/TedxSFU,” YouTube Video, 13:19, March 12, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP9x1NnCWNY>.

tower was the occupation's most outwardly focused message to the world, and it is an important part of the island's history."⁴⁹

Spence writes that the American adventurer, painter, and traveler, George Catlin's (1796–1872), view of wilderness,

Reflected the romantic ideals that had defined Western intellectual thought since the eighteenth century. Consequently, wilderness not only offered an escape from society but also provided the ideal setting for romantic individuals 'to exercise the cult they made of their own souls.'⁵⁰

Alcatraz is a rock out in the bay. It has no accessible freshwater and resources must be shipped in. It does not fit into the ideal of romanticism and were it not a tourist attraction today, it is doubtful people would want to visit a seemingly barren rock. But as Oakes explained, it is a place for intellectual growth for the Native population.

Thorough knowledge of Alcatraz should be an important component of this state's history; vocalizing the relevance of California's original occupants, in addition to the island's military and prison history, and its interrelatedness to the Gold Rush makes for a rich, all-inclusive story. Its history is ultimately immortalized by an occupation boosted by decades of the fight for civil rights by marginalized groups, as well as the National Park Service's recent attempts to restore and maintain graffiti-riddled monuments.

It is easy to dismiss the beauty of Alcatraz as it doesn't fit neatly into "American" perceptions of romance. It does not have the attractiveness and wildlife of Yosemite or Yellowstone; the breadth and height of trees in the Redwood Forest; nor the multi-layered, colorful geological wonder of the Grand Canyon.

⁴⁹ Malia Wollen, "Antigovernment Graffiti Restored, Courtesy of Government," *The New York Times*, December 24, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/25/us/alcatraz-american-indian-occupation-graffiti-preserved.html>.

⁵⁰ Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.

However, Alcatraz was a place for retreat, a place for isolation, and a place for food for the Indigenous population that resided on this land. A place does not have to exhibit the niceties that we might require for a romantic getaway for it to be functional. In the perception of the Native population, Alcatraz is not merely a rock; rather, it is a wondrous and functional territory of sovereignty.

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Author Bio

Cecelia M. Smith was born and raised in Los Angeles County and attended Howard University after high school. She transplanted to San Bernardino County as an adult and resumed her pursuit for higher education at Chaffey College and California State University, San Bernardino. She graduated from California State University, San Bernardino with a bachelor of arts in history in 2013. She retired from her position as a 911 police operator and dispatcher for the city of Los Angeles in 2017 with over thirty-five years of service. In 2020, she began studies in the inaugural class of the master of arts in history program at California State University, San Bernardino, with a focus on African American history. Her thesis explores factors involved in the lynching of women. She graduated with her master's degree in May 2022. Cecelia is currently an adjunct professor at La Sierra University in Riverside. She enjoys writing and art and wishes to focus on completing a fictional novel or screenplay based on her current research. She would eventually like to return to school to further her education, perhaps pursuing a second master's degree. She currently resides in Fontana with her family.



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Coping with Trauma: Evidence that Suggests the Ancient Egyptians used Transpersonal Psychology to Cope with Birth-Related Trauma

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Coping with Trauma: Evidence that Suggests the Ancient Egyptians used Transpersonal Psychology to Cope with Birth-Related Trauma

By Erika Kelley

Abstract: Giving birth in the ancient world was very difficult, stressful, and dangerous with many mothers and children sadly not surviving the ordeal. To deal with this often-traumatic event, many ancient Egyptians used rituals, tools, and spells to ensure that their deities would be present during these difficult times and help either physically or mentally. For the ancient Egyptians, interacting with their gods was a way to ensure their survival, but in modernity, relying on religious or spiritual practices during stressful events correlates with psychology. Modern scholars have named this idea transpersonal psychology, and it is a subsection of humanistic psychology that focuses on the spiritual aspect of life and having sacred experiences with higher powers. There are many different approaches to this form of psychology, but by combining David N. Elkin's and Gregg Lahood's models, a better understanding of how the ancient Egyptians might have used proto-techniques of transpersonal psychology can be constructed. Their proto-techniques are seen in the reliefs, artifacts, and texts left behind by the ancient Egyptians. By examining these relics through the lenses of transpersonal psychology, modern scholars can better understand the rituals and practices the ancient Egyptians participated in and how they dealt with trauma they experienced specifically relating to birth.

Across time and space, birthing practices have varied widely. Even with the invention of modern medicine and modern medical practices, childbirth has been extremely dangerous for both mother and child. An analysis of one Roman-Christian cemetery located in

the Dakhleh Oasis, dating to about 50–360 AD, found that sixty-six percent of the 770 individuals buried there were children under the age of ten.¹ Furthermore, fifty-three percent of all the women found were of childbearing age.² Modern medicine has made surviving childbirth easier and, as a result, the 2019 maternal mortality rate in the United States was 20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, while the infant mortality rate was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is a considerable change compared to the cemetery in the Dakhleh Oasis.³ Without modern medicine, ancient people had to find alternative ways to help cope with the dangerous situations related to childbirth. One common way this was done was to seek assistance from their deities and find comfort in their religion. This common practice is still used today and falls under the field of transpersonal psychology, which is a subset of the field of humanistic psychology. Transpersonal psychologists suggest that both traumatic experiences and personalized rituals can help stimulate or cause a transpersonal experience. These experiences vary and manifest differently for each person, but they are generally described as an intense interaction with an otherworldly being or state of consciousness. While psychologists call these experiences different names, they will be referred to as sacred experiences throughout this article.⁴

¹ Tosha L. Dupras, Sandra M. Wheeler, Lana Williams, and Peter Sheldrick. “Birth in ancient Egypt: timing, trauma, and triumph? Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis.” *Egyptian Bioarchaeology: Humans, Animals, and the Environment* (2015): 48.

² Dupras, Wheeler, Williams, and Sheldrick. 48.

³ Products - Health E Stats - Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2019,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 23, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality-2021/maternal-mortality-2021.htm>; “Infant Mortality,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 8, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm#infant>.

⁴ Other names scholars use when referring to these experiences include religious experiences, self-transcendence, and spiritual growth and refer to transcendentalism. For information on the various names for sacred experiences

Modern scholars also found that ancient Egyptians from 3100 BCE to 30 BCE used their religions and deities to cope with their trauma. Their art, text, and artifacts suggest that they were actively trying to have these sacred experiences throughout their life and especially when it came to traumatic experiences like childbirth. By examining ancient Egyptian birthing practices through the lens of transpersonal psychology, this article discovers that the ancient Egyptians actively used early forms of transpersonal psychology to cope with the trauma they experienced during childbirth.

An Overview of Transpersonal Psychology

In order to apply a transpersonal lens to ancient Egyptian artifacts, transpersonal psychology needs to be defined and explained. Transpersonal psychology is a part of the humanistic perspective and focuses on understanding an individual's freedom of action and searching for meaning in life.⁵ Transpersonal psychology is considered a subsection of the humanistic perspective as it focuses on the spiritual aspects of the human experience and how spirituality affects a person.⁶ Additionally, transpersonal psychology suggests that there are some ways for people to achieve an elevated form of consciousness and potential compared to what is traditionally believed.⁷ When a person enters a higher form of consciousness, it can take many different forms depending

and transcendentalism please see: Thomas Bradford Roberts, "Transpersonal: The New Educational Psychology," *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 56, no. 3 (1974); Russell Goodman, "Transcendentalism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University, 2019), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendentalism/>; Denise H. Lajoie, and S. L. Shapiro, "Definitions of Transpersonal Psychology," *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Vol. 24, no. 3(1992): 79–98.

⁵ Elizabeth D. Hutchison, and Leanne Wood Charlesworth, *Essentials of Human Behavior: Integrating Person, Environment, and the Life Course* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publishing, 2022), 65.

⁶ Hutchison and Charlesworth, 65.

⁷ Hutchison and Charlesworth, 166.

on the person, but it is thought that they are having a transpersonal experience with some specific examples being peak experiences, self-transcendence, and spiritual growth.⁸

While there are many ways to study transpersonal psychology the two models used in this paper come from David N. Elkins and Gregg Lahood. Elkins is a licensed psychologist and professor of Psychology at Pepperdine University in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology.⁹ He has worked as a family and marriage therapist for thirty years, is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), and served as the president of the Society for Humanistic Psychology twice.¹⁰ Lahood has his Doctorate in Philosophy and is an “anthropologist of consciousness.”¹¹ Lahood has written many articles on transpersonal events among childbearing parents, the ritual dynamics of contemporary childbearing, and transpersonal rituals for combating the ritual trauma of childbearing. He is currently doing global research that focuses on gathering narratives from people who have participated in extraordinary or blessed events during childbirth.¹²

Over the years, Elkins developed an accessible theoretical model to understand how individuals can use spirituality to nourish their souls, develop their spiritual lives, and reach these higher levels of consciousness.¹³ In Elkins’ model, there are three major constructs between a person and their spiritual life, the soul, the

⁸ Roberts, 191.

⁹ David N. Elkins, *Beyond Religion: A Personal Program for Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Traditional Religion* (Illinois: Quest Books, 1998).

¹⁰ Elkins, *Beyond Religion*.

¹¹ Gregg Lahood, “The Participatory Turn and the Transpersonal Movement: A Brief Introduction,” *ReVision: A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, Vol. 29, no. 3 (2007): 2–6, <https://doi.org/10.3200/revn.29.3.2-6>.

¹² Lahood, “The Participatory Turn and the Transpersonal Movement,” 2.

¹³ Kirk J. Schneider, J. Fraser Pierson, Bugental James F T., and Christopher M. Aanstoos, *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 206.

sacred, and their spirituality, which all interact with each other and help an individual reach a higher state of consciousness, thus resulting in an individual having a transpersonal experience, or as Elkins calls them sacred experiences.¹⁴

In Elkins' model, sacred experiences vary in intensity depending on what that individual has done to nourish their soul, the sacred, and their spirituality.¹⁵ Elkins has a number scale (*Figure 1*) to represent the different levels of intensity which he then groups by low, medium, and high intensity.¹⁶ The first level of intensity a sacred experience can be is low intensity, and Elkins calls these types of experiences poignant moments.¹⁷ Poignant moments are considered lower on Elkins' scale, numbers one through three, and are considered the most common encounter an individual can have.¹⁸ These incidents are usually something simple like playing with a child or walking by the ocean, which "are not earthshaking or life-changing, but they certainly touch our hearts and nourish our souls."¹⁹

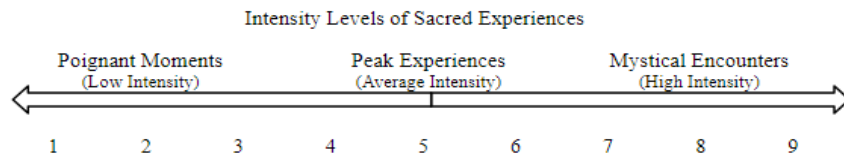


Figure 1. A recreation of Elkin's intensity levels of sacred experience. Courtesy of David Elkins, *Beyond Religion*.²⁰

¹⁴ Schneider et al., 206.

¹⁵ Elkins, 83.

¹⁶ Elkins, 83.

¹⁷ Elkins, 83.

¹⁸ Elkins, 83.

¹⁹ Elkins, 83.

²⁰ Elkins, 83.

The next grouping on Elkins' scale for sacred experiences are peak experiences, and this group is an experience that is of average intensity, represented by numbers four through six.²¹ As its name and ranking suggest, peak experiences are more intense than poignant moments and “tend to last longer, touch us more deeply and produce more lasting changes in our lives.”²² Like with the poignant moments, peak experiences can take many different forms depending on the person, but the example Elkins uses is a woman coming to terms with eternity as she stares into the ocean, saying that at that moment,

[She] felt eternity. [She] knew these things had gone on for millions of years before [she] came and that they would go on for millions of years after [she was] gone. It felt good to be alive, to be a part of all this. [She was] was deeply moved and began to cry.²³

The final group of intensity levels of sacred experiences is called mystical encounters.²⁴ These encounters, numbered seven to nine, are considered the most intense sacred experiences.²⁵ Like with all the other groups, mystical encounters take various forms, but Elkins says that these are “‘border events,’ events that mark a transition from one way of life to another.”²⁶ Elkins also argues that these types of experiences can have been recorded in different religious texts with indigenous examples including individuals entering a state of possession.²⁷

²¹ Elkins, 83-84.

²² Elkins, 84.

²³ Elkins, 84.

²⁴ Elkins, 84.

²⁵ Elkins, 84.

²⁶ Elkins, 84.

²⁷ Elkins, 84.

Likewise, Elkins also details Western religious examples such as Judeo-Christian prophets having conversations with a higher being; specifically, Moses and the burning bush or the conversion of the apostle Paul.²⁸ When Moses approaches the burning bush, God speaks directly to him and tells him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land.²⁹ Paul's transpersonal experience, who was originally named Saul, consists of being overcome with blinding light and hearing a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? ... I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," which causes him to have a change of heart.³⁰ Since Elkins has argued that these kinds of experiences existed in the past, it stands to reason that the ancient Egyptians also had these types of sacred experiences when they came to birth and recorded them in their art, text, and artifacts.

In all the examples Elkins provides, the sacred experience an individual experienced seemed to happen randomly. While this seems to be the case for some people, Elkins argues that modern therapists can use transpersonal psychology and sacred experiences to "heal" their patient's souls and make them a more well-rounded individual.³¹ Therapists can work with their patients to find activities or experiences that they can ritualistically engage in and nurture their souls and make them more attuned to their spirituality.³² These activities can vary from person to person and take many different forms, like going to a museum or walking on a beach, but the key, Elkins states, is having the person consistently engaging in the activity, so their soul is constantly nurtured.³³

From Elkins' model, sacred experiences can happen randomly and through employing ritualistic activities. Lahood, however, also suggests that time of intense trauma or stress can

²⁸ Elkins, 84-85.

²⁹ Elkins, 85.

³⁰ Elkins, 85.

³¹ Elkins, 176-177.

³² Elkins, 177-178.

³³ Elkins, 177-178.

trigger a sacred experience.³⁴ Lahood is a transpersonal scholar, who examines the relationship between the ritual and build-up, the birthing giving process, and the dissociation that can occur during childbirth.³⁵ In his research, Lahood found that there are several indigenous cultures who conduct specific rituals before, during, and after a woman has given birth to ensure that the woman's high consciousness is "activated," which allows for an easier connection between the woman and their deities.³⁶

In addition to this, Lahood found that many women recall being visited by otherworldly beings while they were giving birth especially when their labor became extremely difficult or dangerous.³⁷ During these visits, the women attested that the otherworldly beings helped during the childbirth process. One woman, in particular, felt like she was going to die, but then a being appeared and "helped guide her safely through the labor."³⁸ Another woman said that her labor had been long and difficult, but once the being appeared she calmed and reassured her and quickly assisted with the birthing process.³⁹ Lahood (and other scholars), conclude that during periods of intense trauma and emotions, individuals will have the high intensity sacred experiences that Elkins discussed, to help cope with their dangerous experiences.⁴⁰ While it is not certain what is happening to these individuals or what they are experiencing, these sacred experiences are extremely helpful for individuals who need additional assistance outside of their normal states of consciousness.

³⁴ Gregg Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives: Anthropology of transpersonal events and childbirth," *Women and birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives* 20, no.1 (2007), 3-4.

³⁵ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 3-4.

³⁶ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 4.

³⁷ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 4-5.

³⁸ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 5.

³⁹ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 5.

⁴⁰ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 9.

Unlike Elkins, Lahood does not specify what intensity level a woman might be experiencing when she has trauma induced experiences, but by using Elkins' scale it is clear to see that these women are having high intensity mystical encounters. Like with Elkins' examples, Moses and Paul, these encounters with otherworldly beings are aiding the individual in emotional distress and these encounters usually end positively. Even with today's modern medicine, giving birth is a very dangerous time for the women involved and can cause a lot of trauma, so it makes sense that an ancient Egyptian woman would also experience a trauma induced sacred experience to cope.

While both models are articulated separately, that does not mean they do not work in tandem with each other. In Lahood's fieldwork, he mentions that many communities have rituals surrounding birth that are done to make the actual birth easier and ensure an otherworldly being appears if necessary.⁴¹ This example is an instance of the utilization of both methods because the community has their pre-birth ritual that, when coupled with the pain and trauma childbirth causes, helps the woman have an out-of-body experience during the actual birthing process. Ultimately, while each model can be looked at and applied separately, they can also work together to ensure a sacred experience happens.

An Overview of Ancient Egyptian Magic and Medicine

The ancient Egyptians believed in and practiced *heka*, which can be translated as the word magic but does not have the same western connotations.⁴² *Heka* was integrated into Egyptian society and played a prominent role in their religion as well.⁴³ While anyone could use *heka*, the power behind it was knowing how to

⁴¹ Lahood, "Rumor of Angels and Heavenly Midwives," 9.

⁴² Kasia Maria Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 122-123.

⁴³ Szpakowska, 123.

use it correctly.⁴⁴ A person had to know the right words, gestures, and materials needed for a specific ritual or spell for it to work, but an individual could learn this knowledge in numerous ways.⁴⁵ Complex rituals and spells were reserved for a selected group of priests, but information regarding *heka*, spells, and rituals related to mundane activities like childbirth or curing a disease, could have been passed down orally from generation to generation.⁴⁶

Heka also played a large role in the Egyptian medical field.⁴⁷ Many different medical papyri have been found within Egypt that contain remedies on how to cure certain diseases or treat individuals who have experienced trauma but there have also been magical treatments found for similar issues.⁴⁸ Deciding on what treatment to use would depend on how serious the illness or issue was so the magical treatment was not always used.⁴⁹ Using *heka*, using a religious ritual, or asking a deity for help for curing an ailment or some larger issue was a valid option in ancient Egyptian society.⁵⁰

Another big aspect of ancient Egyptian religion is the gods and deities they worshiped. Throughout their history, the ancient Egyptians worshiped over a thousand different deities all with semi unique characteristics and qualities.⁵¹ As this paper focuses on birth, the deities that will be discussed will be the ones that are most heavily associated with childbirth, fertility, and domestic protection. These deities include, but are not limited to,

⁴⁴ Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt*, 123.

⁴⁵ Szpakowska, 123.

⁴⁶ Szpakowska, 123.

⁴⁷ John F. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 96.

⁴⁸ Nunn, 24-41, 96.

⁴⁹ Nunn, 96.

⁵⁰ Nunn, 96.

⁵¹ Richard Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc, 2003), 6.

Meshkenet, Khnum, Heket, Hathor, Isis, Nephthys, Bes, and Taweret.

Out of all the deities mentioned, the one that is most closely associated with childbirth is Meskhenet (*Figure 2*).⁵² This is because the ancient Egyptians are thought to have given birth on objects called *meskhenet* bricks (*Figure 3*), or small, rectangular mud bricks, that symbolically represent Meskhenet.⁵³ The goddess Meskhenet is either depicted as a woman, a woman with a *meskhenet* brick as her head, a *meskhenet* brick with a woman's face, or just the *meskhenet* brick.⁵⁴ In addition to representing a physical object the Egyptians probably used, Meskhenet is also one of the five deities that assist Rudedet with her difficult labor in the *Westcar Papyrus* (c. 1700–1500 BC) and is also thought to have been the deity that decides the destiny of the newborn child.⁵⁵

⁵² Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1897), Plate LI.

⁵³ *Meskhenet* bricks will be further discussed in the sections entitled “An Overview of Ancient Egyptian Birth” and “Ancient Egyptian’s Poignant Moments and Peak Experiences.” Josef Wegner, “A Decorated Birth-Brick from South Abydos: New Evidence on Childbirth and Birth Magic in the Middle Kingdom,” in *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of the Middle Kingdom*, edited by David Silverman, et. al., 447-496 (New Haven: Department of New Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2009), 449.

⁵⁴ Wilkinson, 153.

⁵⁵ The *Westcar Papyrus* is a piece of ancient Egyptian literature that dates to the Middle Kingdom. There are five stories within this papyrus, however, the one used most frequently in this article is entitled, “The Birth of the Kings,” and details the birth of three kings from the Old Kingdom. In this story, their mother, Rudedet, has a very difficult and dangerous birth, so she and her husband call out for help. At that moment, five deities hear her pleas and come to help her deliver her children. Once these deities appear, her birth is no longer difficult or dangerous and she successfully gives birth to three children who go on to rule the Old Kingdom. Miriam Lichtheim and Lorieno Antonio, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume I, The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2006), 220; Wilkinson, 153.

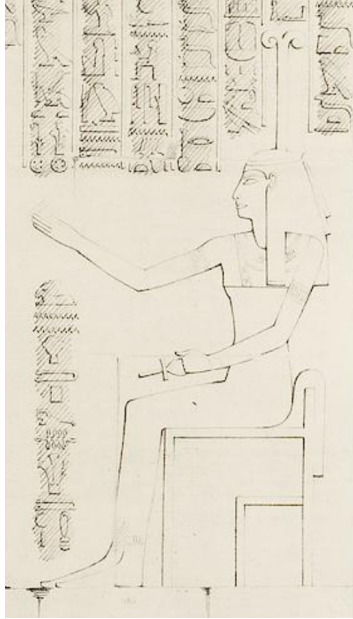


Figure 2. The goddess Meskhenet. Courtesy of Edouard Naville.⁵⁶

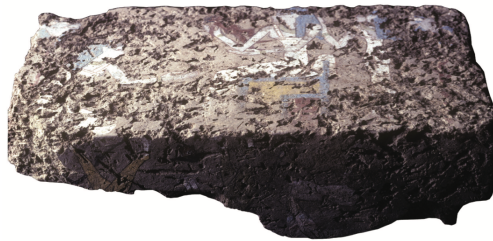


Figure 3. The meskhenet brick. Courtesy of Josef Wegner.⁵⁷

Khnum is depicted as a being with a ram's head and a man's body (Figure 4).⁵⁸ While he has many essential roles throughout Egyptian religion, Khnum plays a vital role in how the

⁵⁶ Naville, Plate LI.

⁵⁷ Wegner, 153.

⁵⁸ Wilkinson, 194; Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1897), Plate XLIX.

ancient Egyptians believed a child developed. In many images depicting Khnum, he is seen sitting next to a potter's wheel, shaping a child as the Egyptians believed that Khnum shaped all living things on a potter's wheel.⁵⁹ This specific motif frequently appears throughout Egyptian history, but it is explicitly seen in the *Divine Birth of Hatshepsut* and the Late Period (525–332 BCE) Mammesit or birth houses.⁶⁰ This motif appealing in both places suggests that Khnum's assistance was critical when creating children. Khnum is also one of the five deities that assists with Rudedet's difficult labor, as described in the *Westcar Papyrus*.



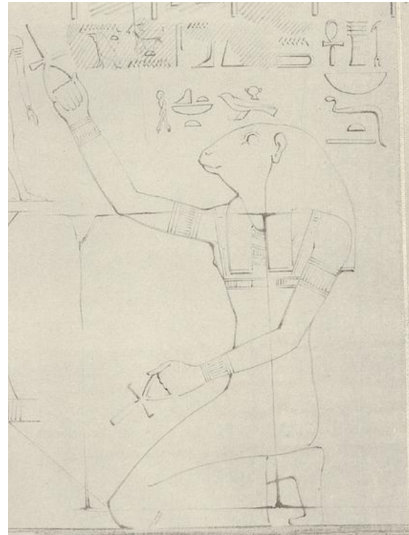
Figure 4. the god Khnum. Courtesy of Edouard Naville⁶¹

⁵⁹ Wilkinson, 194.

⁶⁰ Khnum's role in the Divine Birth of Hatshepsut will be further discussed in the section titled, "Ancient Egyptian's Mystical Encounters." Mammesit, or birth houses, will be further discussed in the section entitled "An Overview of Egyptian Birth." Many of the artifacts that have been found, like the ivory tusks or the *meskhenet* brick, related the birth date to this time. During this period, Egypt was a unified country and had a strong central government.

⁶¹ Naville, Plate XLIX

Heket is usually also depicted in the same scenes as Khnum because she is Khnum's female counterpart (*Figure 5*).⁶² Heket's iconography is a woman with a frog's head or just a frog itself, and she has many additional connections to childbirth besides being Khnum's counterpart. Heket is also one of the deities that assist with delivering Rudeddet's children in the *Westcar Papyrus*, and the title "servant of Heket" appears to have been given to ancient Egyptian midwives.⁶³ Beyond these two examples, objects thought to be related to childbirth, like the ivory tusk of the Middle Kingdom (2030–1650 BCE), are frequently decorated with frog imagery.⁶⁴



*Figure 5. The goddess Heket. Courtesy of Edouard Naville.*⁶⁵

⁶² Wilkinson, 229; Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1897), Plate XLVIII.

⁶³ Wilkinson, 229.

⁶⁴ Wilkinson, 229.

⁶⁵ Naville, Plate XLVIII

Isis, Hathor, and Nephthys are also all very important goddesses but play similar roles when it comes to birth (*Figures 6–8*).⁶⁶ These three goddesses are also among the five goddesses that assisted with Rudedet’s delivery in the *Westcar Papyrus* and can be seen as motherly or protective figures to different gods or deities and people, specifically Horus or the king.⁶⁷ While these goddesses are usually depicted as women, they can take other animal forms as well with one example of this being Hathor sometimes being depicted as a cow.⁶⁸ When she is in this cow form, Hathor is additionally associated with nursing or suckling the Pharaoh which makes her an important goddess when it comes to not only childbirth, but child rearing as well.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ “The Goddess Isis and Her Son Horus,” Metmuseum.org, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548310?searchField=All&%3BsortBy=Relevance&%3Bhigh=on&%3Bao=on&%3Bft=isis&%3Boffset=0&%3Bhpp=40&%3Bpos=2>; “Hathor,” Wikipedia, March 30, 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hathor>; “Amulet: British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed April 24, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA11991.

⁶⁷ Lichtheim and Loprieno, 220; Wilkinson, 140-141, 146-145, 160.

⁶⁸ Wilkinson, 140-141.

⁶⁹ Wilkinson, 141.



Figure 6. The goddess, Isis, and her son Horus. Courtesy of Met Museum.⁷⁰



Figure 7. The goddess Hathor. Courtesy of Wikipedia.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “The Goddess Isis and Her Son Horus,” Metmuseum.org, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548310?searchField=All&%3BsortBy=Relevance&%3Bhigh=on&%3Bao=on&%3Bft=isis&%3Boffset=0&%3Bpp=40&%3Bpos=2>.

⁷¹ “Hathor,” Wikipedia, March 30, 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hathor>.



Figure 8. The goddess Nephthys. Courtesy of The British Museum.⁷²

Bes and Taweret are also significant deities when it comes to childbirth and child-rearing as they are both protector deities (Figure 9).⁷³ Deities that are like Bes seem to have existed throughout ancient Egyptian history and take many different forms and names, but Bes himself is depicted as either a male lion rearing up on its hind paws or, in the New Kingdom (1550 –1077 BC), as a dwarf that is a mix between a human and an animal.⁷⁴ Bes is thought to be a general protective deity, but his image appears specifically in the Late Period mammesis and other rooms thought to be associated with childbirth or children which suggests that he played a crucial role in protecting children or women giving birth.⁷⁵

⁷² “Amulet: British Museum,” The British Museum, accessed April 24, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA11991.

⁷³ Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II*, Plate LI.

⁷⁴ Wilkinson, 103.

⁷⁵ Wilkinson, 103-104.

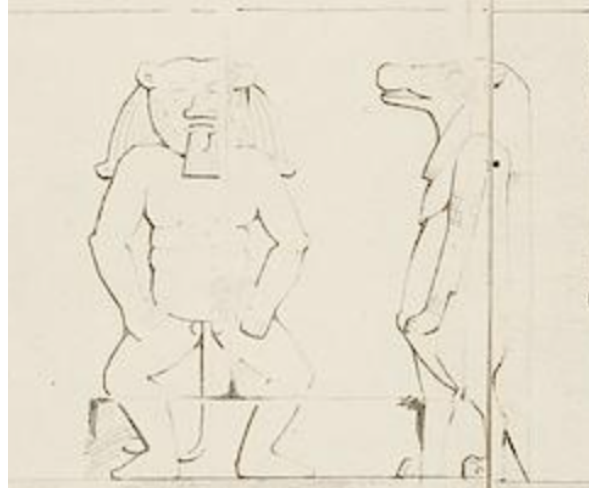


Figure 9. The deity Bes (left) and Taweret (right). Courtesy of Edouard Naville.⁷⁶

Taweret is usually depicted as a hippopotamus or woman with large breasts and a swollen stomach which makes it seem like she is pregnant.⁷⁷ The Egyptian sign for protection, *sa*, is frequently depicted alongside her, and her mouth is usually pulled back into a snarl or grimace, which suggest she is a fierce protective deity.⁷⁸ She is portrayed as a bipedal hippo with a considerable pregnant stomach and swollen breasts, strengthening her connection to pregnant women and children. Her connection to the *sa* sign, the ferocity of hippos, and her figure suggest that Taweret was a fierce protector of pregnant women and children in ancient Egypt.

This section gives a short introduction to ancient Egyptian religion and deities. Ancient Egyptian beliefs and understandings regarding religion, *heka*, and their deities were much more complex in practice. However, from the information provided, it is clear to see that the Egyptians used magic significantly and truly

⁷⁶ Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari Part II*, Plate LI.

⁷⁷ Wilkinson, 185.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson, 185.

believed their deities were involved in the pregnancy and birthing process and protected them throughout their lives. This belief in their gods and religion added to the psychological power they had over the ancient Egyptians. They truly believed that if they conducted the proper rituals at the right time and asked their deities for assistance, they would have a favorable outcome. If these beliefs are true, it can be assumed that the Egyptians might have tried to have sacred-like experiences in their lives and during traumatic times.

The Egyptian Use of Transpersonal Psychology

Based on our understanding of ancient Egyptian religion, we can see what activities the ancient Egyptians might have been doing to experience the three levels of sacred experiences in Elkins' model. For Elkins' poignant moments, described as ordinary activities or experiences that make an individual feel more connected to their spirituality, the Egyptian version would have been using domestic altars, saying daily prayers or spells, or any other causal interaction between themselves and their religion.⁷⁹ These actions are seen as poignant moments because they are relatively common interactions that anyone in ancient Egypt could be having on a semi-consistent basis. Using domestic altars, daily prayers, and other common religious practices were a way for the Egyptians to ritualistically confirm their connection to their gods and their religion. These actions are not an intense sacred experience mainly because the individual is not physically interacting with an otherworldly being. They are just small, everyday occurrences that are impactful but not life-changing.

Slightly more intense or purposeful actions, such as conducting a specific ritual or utilizing a specific object, would make an ancient Egyptian's action a peak experience. These actions are considered peak experiences because, as Elkins outlines, they are seen as more intense and have a longer-lasting

⁷⁹ Elkins, 83.

impact on the individual using the object or participating in the ritual. An example of birth-related rituals and objects mainly center on the *meskhenet* brick as this object and ritual are used during a specific time in an individual's life, before, during, and after birth, are not something that can just be done daily.⁸⁰ These rituals and use of objects are more purposeful and have a more specific meaning, so they result in a more intense and impactful experience.

Elkins describes mystical experiences as a direct interaction with an otherworldly being, and the ancient Egyptians seem to have left evidence of this occurring as seen in their art and texts. There are many instances of ancient Egyptians interacting with or becoming a deity in temple art, spells, and stories so these would be examples of mystical experiences as they are seen interacting with the deity in some capacity outside of just praying to them.⁸¹

While the bulk of this paper will focus on the Egyptians using transpersonal psychology regarding birth, some of which are mentioned above, they also might have used it during other situations as well. One clear example of this comes from *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus* Spell 20 as the wording of the spell allows the reader or speaker of the spell to “become” a deity and simultaneously ask another deity, of that same deity, for help.⁸² In the spell entitled “a spell for purifying anything during the plague,” the speaker says, “I am Horus... I am your Horus, Sakmet. I am your Unique One... I am the King inside his shrine.”⁸³ Through recitation, the speaker turned himself into a god and “became” Horus. With this shift, the speaker is also becoming everything that Horus is and has the same power that he has. This spell and the individual's shift to becoming Hours worked because the

⁸⁰ A more detailed explanation of this object will be given in the section entitled “An Overview of Ancient Egyptian Birth.”

⁸¹ These experiences will be examined later in this article.

⁸² J. F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 17.

⁸³ Borghouts, 17.

Egyptians believed in the *heka* behind the incantation and truly believed that their gods would protect them if necessary.

Spell 20 is also an example of Elkins and Lahood's models working together. This spell is explicitly used for warding off the plague which was a very deadly and troubling issue for the Egyptians. Therefore, this disease would probably cause the Egyptians to feel fear and stress over its danger. So, it makes sense that they would desire a high intensity sacred experience in which an individual believes they can become a god and wield the power to save themselves from the fear and severe symptoms that a deadly plague would bring. The psychological trauma of having a severe illness or plague would initially trigger or make an individual more susceptible to having a sacred experience. However, the ritualistic nature of repeating this spell repeatedly, and believing in the words they are saying would work in tandem to make the experience happen and calm the individual down.

Another example of the Egyptians reaching out to their deities for assistance comes from *Papyrus Leiden I 349* Spell 117, "another conjuration against a scorpion."⁸⁴ In this spell, the speaker is not physically "becoming" a deity but is instead asking the god to be with them saying,

I have gone out during the night ... Horus is behind me, Seth is next to my shoulder, gods and goddesses whose mouths are like a book are what is before me... do not attack me! See, a great god is the one who is the one who is at my side.⁸⁵

This occasion still counts as a sacred experience but is a lower intensity sacred experience because the speakers are not becoming a deity or directly receiving any assistance from them; they are just asking the deities to be near or around them so they can be protected. On Elkins' intensity scale, this would probably fall on

⁸⁴ Borghouts, 80.

⁸⁵ Borghouts, 80.

the higher end of the average intensity group, numbers five or six. The act of reciting this spell is very ritualistic and provides comfort to the individual but the individual is not interacting with their deity on an intense, intimate level.

Another example of ritualistic inducing a sacred experience is the continued use of an embalming priest wearing an Anubis mask when mummifying bodies. In her article, "Egyptian Masks: The Priests and His Role," Arelene Wolinski argues that while these masks probably had a functional purpose, a way to block the odors coming from the dead body and the dusk in general as well as to keep the priest's identity a secret, the masks had a more ritualistic and spiritual function as well.⁸⁶ By wearing the masks, the Egyptian priests could physically and ritually "become" the god Anubis. So, when it came time to participate in festivals, mummify a body, or interact with the kind, it was not just a priest doing their work; it was Anubis himself making all these experiences more divine.⁸⁷ This occasion would be a high-intensity sacred experience triggered by rituals, somewhere between the average and high-intensity groups on Elkins' scale, because the individual is physically "becoming" the god and reaping the benefits of the transformation. While the individual themselves are not inherently getting protection or assistance from the god, wearing the mask and "becoming" the god gives the individual the ability to do all the things Anubis could do, so they are still directly benefiting from the experience. Ultimately while the focus of this paper is the ancient Egyptians using transpersonal psychology with birth-related activities, there is evidence to suggest that they used transpersonal psychology in other aspects of their lives as well.

The later examples given in this section do not directly correlate to birth. However, they are necessary because they illustrate how magic and religion played a crucial role in the Egyptians' lives. The Egyptians needed reassurance that their

⁸⁶ Arelene Wolinski, "Egyptian Masks: The Priest and His Role," *Archaeology*, Vol. 40, no. 1 (1987): 27.

⁸⁷ Wolinski, 24-28.

deities were present and protecting them in many different instances throughout everyday life, not just during pregnancy and childbirth. The examples above help support the argument that the Egyptians were using an early form of transpersonal psychology during their lives, which makes it justifiable to assume that they were using the same tactics in issues regarding pregnancy and childbirth.

An Overview of Ancient Egyptian Birth

Modern medicine has made giving birth less dangerous and slightly more manageable, but the ancient Egyptians did not have access to the same treatments or procedures that are available today.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the ancient Egyptians had their own versions of tools and practices they used while giving birth which seemed to make labor and giving birth slightly more manageable. Although the goal of protecting the mother and child has stayed the same, the tools and practices used to protect the ancient Egyptians evolved throughout their history. What little evidence the Egyptians left about said tools and practice can also give modern scholars additional information about how the ancient Egyptians used transpersonal psychology to make giving birth and dealing with the trauma it produces easier.

One of the most significant differences in how the ancient Egyptians gave birth compared to today is the position they did it in. In many modern western societies, women give birth lying down, but this is not the case for the ancient Egyptians. The evidence available to scholars suggests that ancient Egyptian women gave birth standing, squatting, or kneeling on dried mud bricks, as seen in *Figure 10*.⁸⁹ As mentioned earlier, the mud

⁸⁸ While modern medicine has made giving birth more manageable and less dangerous, many individuals today do not have access to the treatments and procedures developed for a number of different reasons. This means that being pregnant and giving birth for many people is still a very dangerous and deadly time even with modern advancements.

⁸⁹ Wegner, 473.

bricks the woman is standing on are called *meskhenet* bricks. Scholars believe these bricks were used to physically assist the woman with giving birth as they gave her something to stand or lean on during labor.

These bricks also metaphorically and spiritually symbolized the goddess Meskhenet and ensured she was present during the delivery process.⁹⁰ Only one physical *meskhenet* brick has been found and it was founded by Josef Wegner, who detailed the discovery of the brick and the brick itself in his article, “A Decorated Birth Brick from South Abydos: New Evidence on Childbirth and Birth Magic.” This article focuses on the discovery and explanation of a decorated birth brick found by Wegner during an excavation in South Abydos.⁹¹ Wegner suggests that the birth brick was found in the women’s quarters of a mayor’s house and most likely belongs to a Middle Kingdom princess, Reniseneb (c. 1450 BCE).⁹²

⁹⁰ Wegner, 471-472.

⁹¹Wegner, 448.

⁹² Wegner, 448-491.



Figure 10. An ancient Egyptian woman giving birth on meskhenet bricks supported by two deities depicted to look like Hathor. Courtesy of Josef Wegner.⁹³

In addition to the bricks, women were more than likely assisted by one or two additional women who understood how to give birth safely and the ritualistic process behind it, like a midwife or a woman from the community who had given birth before. These women were there to support the mother, physically and emotionally, help deliver the child, and recite spells or incantations that range from “separating the child from the womb of the mother” to speeding up the entire ordeal.⁹⁴ The very existence of these spells also suggests that the Egyptians saw childbirth as a traumatic and dangerous event in which help from their deities was necessary. If it were a painlessly, uncomplicated event, spells like

⁹³ Wegner, 473.

⁹⁴ Gay Robins, *Women in ancient Egypt* (Harvard University Press, 1993), 82.

these would not have been needed. However, their existence suggests that, in the past, the delivery of a child had been burdensome, so spells like these were created so future deliveries were less difficult and safe.

Women also most likely gave birth in some secluded area of their house or, as evidence from later periods supports, in an entirely different and secluded structure called a *mammisi*.⁹⁵ *Mammises* are subsidiary buildings attached to several Late Period temples that are dedicated to a specific child-God.⁹⁶ The walls of the *mammisis* were decorated with scenes of suckling, and other themes related to child rearing and birth.⁹⁷ Secluded areas seemed to have been the desired option for women because textual and archaeological evidence suggests that immediately after giving birth, the woman and the child had to enter a period of isolation so they could be purified.⁹⁸

Beyond the *meskhenet* bricks, there are various other objects and tools the Egyptians might have used during the birthing process to make the ordeal easier. These objects include things like magical wands, knives, amulets, and divine figurines.⁹⁹ While all these objects and the *meskhenet* brick have their own individual uses, they are all very religious and ritualistic objects. The objects were made for and used purposefully at specific times and rituals because the Egyptians truly believed that they were necessary to ensure the safety and survival of an individual. This gave the

⁹⁵ Robins, 83; Holger Kockelmann, “Birth House (Mammisi),” *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Vol. 1, no. 1, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8xj4k0ww>.

⁹⁶ Kockelmann, 1.

⁹⁷ Kockelmann, 5.

⁹⁸ Robins also mentions that these periods of isolation and purification rituals are somewhat common among other cultures even today. Lichtheim, 221; Joanne Backhouse, “‘Scènes De Gynécées’”: ‘*Scènes De Gynécées*’ *Figured Ostraca from New Kingdom Egypt* (Archaeopress, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxrq1dt.11>; Robins, 83-84.

⁹⁹ These objects will be discussed in more detail in the section entitled “Ancient Egyptian’s Poignant Moments and Peak Experiences.” Wegner, 481-483.

object psychological power over the ancient Egyptians and would allow for them to find comfort in the existence and use of them which allows the argument that the ancient Egyptians used transpersonal psychology to cope with trauma to be mad.

When examining birth in ancient Egypt, the objects they used, and the text or imagery surrounding birth, it is clear that the ancient Egyptians were using transpersonal psychology to cope with the mental trauma of giving birth. The different objects, texts, spells, rituals, and imagery were purposefully made, said, or conducted to ensure that the mother and child were safe during the process and protected by their deities as it was a hazardous and deadly time. The different artifacts left by the Egyptians and what they signify also suggest that the Egyptians were trying to stimulate poignant moments, peak experiences, and mystical encounters to further connect with their religions and provide some solace for the mental trauma that comes with giving birth.

Ancient Egyptian's Poignant Moments and Peak Experiences

Poignant moments are common everyday activities or experiences a person can have that result in feeling slightly more connected to their spirituality. These kinds of activities existed within ancient Egyptian society and took many different forms, but there are few examples when it comes to birth.¹⁰⁰ However, one of these few examples is the domestic altars found throughout the houses at Deir el-Medina.

While they are sometimes referred to as beds, many of the houses excavated in Deir el-Medina have a domestic altar in the

¹⁰⁰ Giving birth can be a very private and intimate activity which the ancient Egyptians did not commemorate as often as they did their deaths. Because of this, the artifacts that have been left behind that directly relate to birth, or that can be thought to have related to birth, are very few and far between. Archaeologists and Egyptologists, however, have been able to find a handful of texts, images, and artifacts that they believe relate to birth in ancient Egypt, most of which will be discussed in the following sections.

first room of the house.¹⁰¹ While many of these altars are not entirely intact, the walls surrounding the areas are decorated with paintings of women and deities like Bes or Taweret.¹⁰² In addition to the walls, ostraca have been found surrounding the areas with imagery on them containing images of plants, deities like Bes or Taweret, women dancing, receiving gifts, having their hair done, and holding children as well (*Figures 11–13*).¹⁰³ Scholars have suggested that this type of imagery relates these areas to childbirth and childrearing, which is only encouraged by the existence of Bes and Taweret being found in the area as well.¹⁰⁴ These altars are located at the front of the house, which means the Egyptians would have interacted or looked at them multiple times throughout the day.

¹⁰¹ Szpakowska, 25.

¹⁰² Szpakowska, 25-26.

¹⁰³ Backhouse, 168.

¹⁰⁴ Many Egyptologists still argue as to what the true nature of these areas was and what they were used for. In this article, I argue that these were altars, not beds. Szpakowska, 26.



Figure 11. A sketch of an ostraca from Deir el-Medina with a woman, child, and possibly Bes. Courtesy of J. Vandier d'Abbadie and Annie Gasse.¹⁰⁵

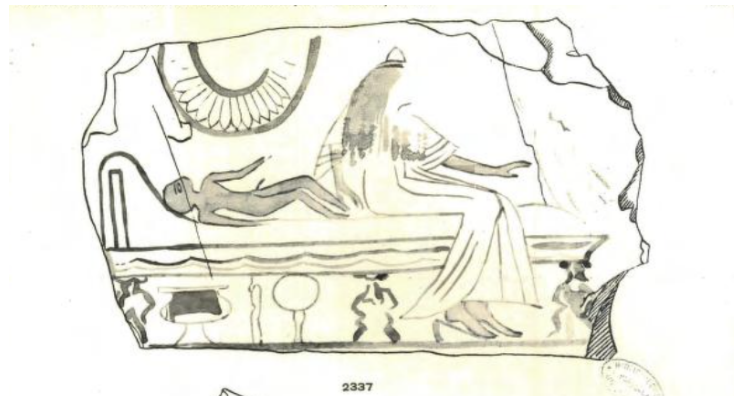


Figure 12. Sketch of an Ostraca from Deir el-Medina with a woman and child sitting on a bed. Courtesy of J. Vandier d'Abbadie and Annie Gasse.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ J. Vandier d'Abbadie and Annie Gasse, *Catalogue Des Ostraca Figurés De Deir El-Médineh* (Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1936), Plate LII.

¹⁰⁶ d'Abbadie and Gasse, Plate L.

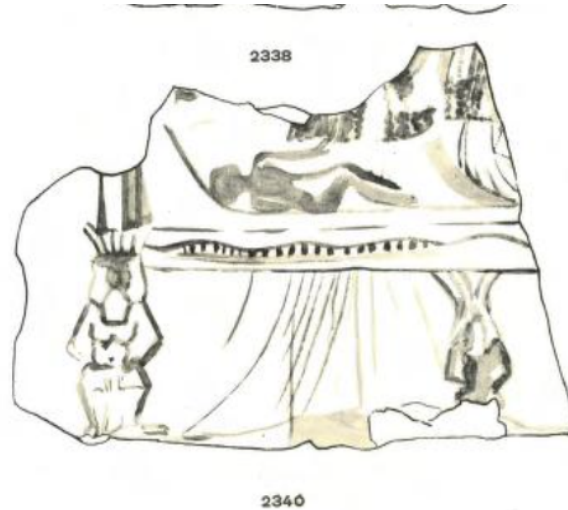


Figure 13. Sketch of an ostraca from Deir el-Media with a child on a bed, possibly with Bes. Courtesy of J. Vandier d'Abbadie and Annie Gasse.¹⁰⁷

If these areas were as domestic altars, this would also give some insight into how ancient Egyptians had poignant moments throughout their lives. Poignant moments are everyday actions a person can do, so with these altars being at the front of the house, it would mean that the ancient Egyptians probably passed by them at least once a day, assuming they left their house once a day. These areas being altars would also mean that the ancient Egyptians would pray near them and use them to worship their domestic deities like Taweret and Bes, which explains why their imagery appears around the area.¹⁰⁸ When applying this information to transpersonal psychology, scholars can see that using these altars every day or on a semi-regular basis is somewhat ritualistic and constantly forms a connection between the ancient Egyptians and their religions or deities. Using these altars meant they had poignant moments almost daily and helped to “activate” their higher forms of consciousness. Hence, it is easier for them to have

¹⁰⁷ d'Abbadie and Gasse, Plate L.

¹⁰⁸ Robins, 85.

mystical experiences when needed. Additionally, praying to these gods and using these altars daily mentally reassured the ancient Egyptians that their gods are present and protecting them and their households.

While things like the altars have ritualistic connotations, some objects that the ancient Egyptians used specifically for rituals regarding childbirth and child-rearing would have assisted in helping the Ancient Egyptians have peak moments. Two of these objects include the birth brick, also known as the *meskhenet* brick, and the birth tusks.

The *meskhenet* brick is another object that Egyptians probably used to have peak experiences with their deities, but it first needs to be described. Wegner found the birth brick in an elite person's house at Abydos. It is an unfired mudbrick and decorated with very detailed imagery relating to childbirth.¹⁰⁹ The first side of the brick, the "A" side, depicts a woman sitting on a chair holding a newborn child with two additional female helpers and emblems surrounded with Hathor cow heads on top of them.¹¹⁰ The other sides of the brick, sides "B" to "E," depict a variety of different animals and deities like Taweret and Bes.¹¹¹ A line drawing done by Wegner that depicts what the imagery looks like is seen in *Figure 14*.¹¹² Ancient Egyptian women most likely gave birth standing or squatting on two to four bricks like these so that gravity could assist with the birthing process and make grabbing the child as it leaves the vagina more accessible.

¹⁰⁹ Wegner, 448.

¹¹⁰ Wegner, 454.

¹¹¹ Wegner, 454.

¹¹² Wegner, 454.

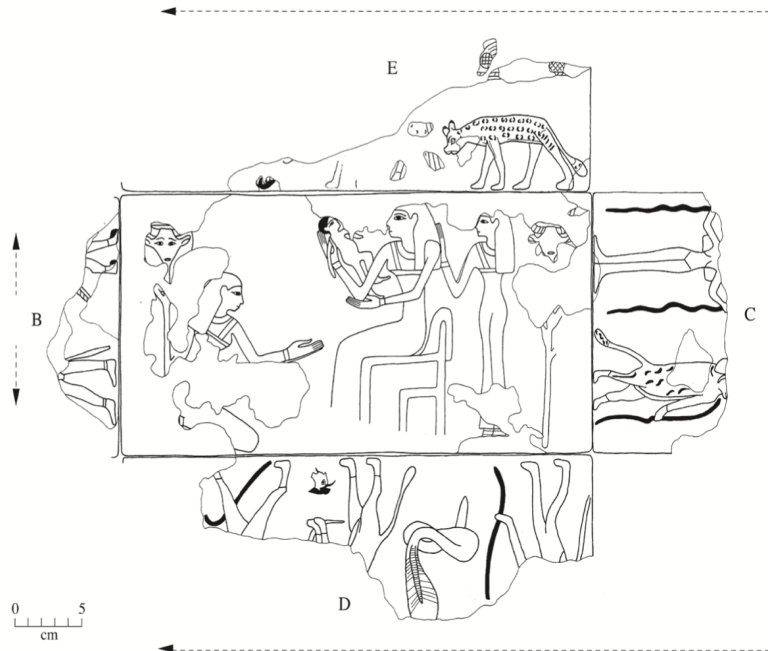


Figure 14. Line drawing of the imagery on the birth brick. Courtesy of Josef Wegner.¹¹³

Going beyond the physical uses, religiously, this brick was also significant as it represented the goddess Meskhenet. The goddess Meskhenet is one of the chief deities associated with childbirth, so having her present via brick form was essential to ensure a woman had a successful and safe birth. While only one brick was found, Wegner believes that an individual would use four bricks while giving birth, saying, “the use of four bricks of birth may be expressed in divine symbolism through the manifestation of the goddess Meskhenet as the ‘four Meskhenets,’ each syncretized with a different creator goddess (typically Isis, Nephthys, Nut, and Tefnut).”¹¹⁴ In addition to having the imagery

¹¹³ Wegner, 454.

¹¹⁴ Earlier scholars believed that women only used two bricks, however, Wegner states that there are “copious” amounts of textual evidence that points to four bricks being used with one of these texts being the Westcar Papyrus and a

that connects it to religion, Wegner also suggests that magical practitioners and the women using the bricks would participate in some sort of ritual to “charge” them, which would ensure that the set of bricks had “been magically imbued with their identity as *meskhenet* bricks.”¹¹⁵

Using generally accepted information surrounding Egyptian birth and the newly found birth brick, Wegner created his version of what ancient Egyptian childbirth was like and the objects the ancient Egyptians used. Wegner suggests, like other scholars, that Egyptian women gave birth standing or squatting and using a set of birth bricks for physical and spiritual support.¹¹⁶ Wegner also agrees that the pregnant woman would be assisted by two or more “nurses” who would either support her on the bricks or assist with removing the child from the birth canal which was, and still is, a very traumatic and hurtful process.¹¹⁷ Besides the birth bricks, Wegner notes that there are various ritualistic objects, like magical hippo tusks, divine apotropaic figures, and spells, that would have been used before, during, and after the delivery in addition to the birth brick to ensure protection and successful childbirth.¹¹⁸ Wegner goes as far as to include a visual of what his model of childbirth looks like using the birth bricks and it is included below in *Figure 15*.¹¹⁹

mistranslation changing a phrase from “cushion or bed of mudbrick” to “four bricks.” Ultimately, it is unclear if women gave birth with two or four bricks. Textually and artistically, when looking at the Westcar Papyrus and The Divine Birth of Hatshepsut, four makes more sense because each brick, as Wegner suggests, represented a different deity associated with childbirth. *Figure 2* depicts an ancient Egyptian birthing house and shows a woman standing on only two bricks. Birthing practices, tools, and techniques most likely changed over time so it is possible that it changed from two to four (or visa versa) at one point which is where the confusion comes from. Wegner, 472-473.

¹¹⁵ Wegner, 483.

¹¹⁶ Wegner, 483.

¹¹⁷ Wegner, 483.

¹¹⁸ Wegner, 481.

¹¹⁹ Wegner, 481.

Coping with Trauma

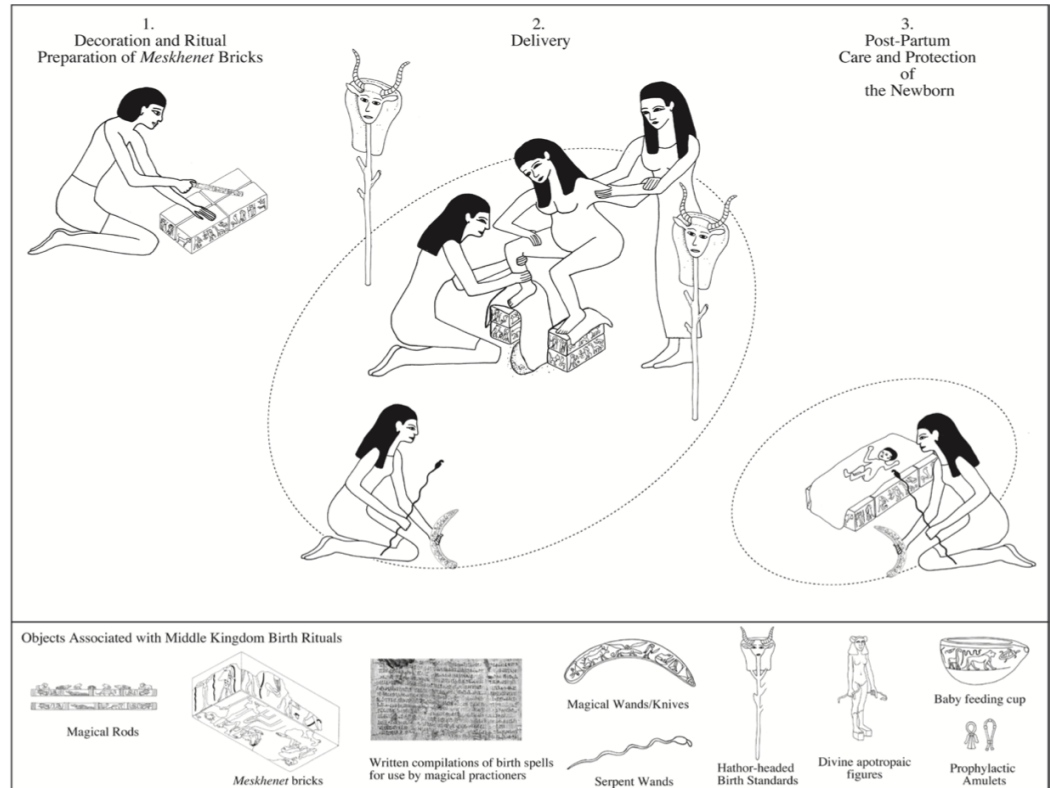


Figure 15. Wegner's model of ancient Egyptian childbirth. Courtesy of Josef Wegner.¹²⁰

In his model of childbirth, “there appears to exist an unbroken continuity of magical practice with the extended use of many of the same ritual implements” before, during, and after childbirth.¹²¹ Women and children needed to be protected during birth because it was a very dangerous and deadly time which is why the ancient Egyptians had these ritualistic objects, spells, and assistants. Looking at this through the lens of transpersonal psychology makes it clearer to see how the ancient Egyptians used objects like the birth brick to cope with their trauma. These birth

¹²⁰ Wegner, 481.

¹²¹ Wegner, 484.

bricks, the imagery on them, and the rituals they were used in were extremely purposeful and full of intent. The Egyptians wanted these objects to work ritualistically, and these rituals had lasting impacts on the individuals involved in them, making it more than likely that they experienced a peak experience, if not a low-level mystical encounter, in the aftermath of using them.

Birth tusks, also known as birth wands or knives, are ivory hippopotamus tusks that have been cut in half horizontally and then decorated with different images related to childbirth (*Figure 16*).¹²² A majority of the tusks found date to the Middle Kingdom and have a wear pattern on them that suggests they were used to draw a defensive perimeter around the mother and child while she was giving birth and after the delivery.¹²³ When looking at the objects through the lens of transpersonal psychology, scholars can see how these objects were used as a way for an individual to have a peak experience due to the amount of intentional spirituality that these tusks contain and what they were used for. These tusks are made of hippo ivory, and hippos are protective creatures, with the ancient Egyptians even having a hippo goddess, Taweret, dedicated to protecting mothers and infants.¹²⁴

¹²² Szpakowska.

¹²³ Szpakowska, 27.

¹²⁴ Szpakowska, 27-28.



Figure 16. A birth tusk with childbirth imagery. Courtesy of Met Museum.¹²⁵

The idea of these objects being used to protect an individual is only strengthened when the imagery on the tusks is examined. The tusks have images of crocodiles, lions, snakes, and many other fierce creatures holding daggers carved onto them. This was done to show that the creatures on the wands are the ones protecting the child and mother from any entity that wants to do them harm.¹²⁶ This imagery and the fact that they are made from hippo ivory, which represents the protective deity Taweret, adds to the intention behind drawing a perimeter with it. When the individual is drawing said perimeter, they are not just drawing any perimeter; they are creating a sacred area imbued with all the protection that any hippo deity possesses in addition to the protection that the fierce dagger-holding creatures depicted on the tusk possess.

Since there is so much intention behind the construction, using an object like this will leave a longer-lasting and more impactful result on the individual, making it more likely that they have a peak experience. The Egyptians made these objects intentionally and used them for specific rituals related to birth and

¹²⁵ “Magic Wand ca. 1850–1640 B.C.,” Metmuseum.org, accessed June 10, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/556561>.

¹²⁶ Szpakowska, 28-29.

childrearing. Their construction is full of religious symbolism, so it is straightforward to see how much effort and time the Egyptians put into making and designing these objects. This overt exertion was done to ensure that they actually provided protection for the mother and child and represented the deities they depicted. Since these objects are so purposeful and full of intent, they would not invoke a casual, poignant moment but an intense peak experience.

Ancient Egyptian Mystical Encounters

There are also many examples of the ancient Egyptians having mystical encounters related to birth seen in their art, text, and the artifacts they left behind. As stated earlier, mystical encounters are very high intensity sacred experiences that usually include an otherworldly being either becoming, communicating, and/or assisting an individual, which in this case would be an ancient Egyptian mother. One example of this is the spells they used before, during, and after the labor. Like with the other spells mentioned earlier, the language the Egyptians used in these spells alludes to the idea the woman or her assistants is physically “becoming” a deity or wants them to be present for a specific situation. Like with the other texts, the Egyptians fully believed that the gods would come and help them or allow them to become a god during these situations. One example of this transmutation comes from a spell entitled “another spell, of the dwarf,” which comes from the *Papyrus Leiden I 348*. This text is translated as:

Oh good dwarf, come, on account of the one who sent you... come down, placenta, come down! I am Horus the conjurer! And the one who is giving birth has (already become better than she was, as if she were delivered... See, Hathor will place her hand on her [as] an amulet of health. I am Horus who saves her!¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Borghouts, 39.

This spell shows that the magical practitioner reciting the spell is assuming the role of the god Horus while still calling for the assistance of the dwarf, who could possibly be Bes. The spell also suggests that Hathor is already present in the room and assisting with the birth and after birth. This event is seen as a high intensity sacred experience because, again, the woman and the medical practitioner ask for direct intervention and assistance from multiple gods due to a difficulty after birth. They want their deities to physically assist them with the afterbirth so that this stressful and dangerous activity, birth, can be over and the woman and child can be safe.

Another example of the ancient Egyptian's desire for a high intensity sacred experience for the benefits to their physical health is found in "Another spell, for speeding up giving birth" from *Papyrus Leiden I 348*.¹²⁸ In this spell, the magical practitioners again equate themselves to a higher entity by saying, "[o]pen for me! I am the one whose offering is large, the builder who built the pylon for Hathor... Hathor, the lady of Dendera is [the] one who is giving birth!"¹²⁹ As with the spell above, the language in this spell suggests that once the speaker has recited it, the woman "becomes" the goddess Hathor. This recitation could have been done to ensure that the birth was successful and that the woman would have the same powers that Hathor had. This metamorphosis allows for the birth to be successful because the mother truly believes that she has become Hathor and has her powers. With the goddess's help and powers, the stress and anxiety associated with birth might be lessened which allows for the mother to believe that she and her child will not die and be safe.

The ancient Egyptians might have used these two spells to make childbirth easier and ensure that their deities were present throughout the whole ordeal and help when needed. These two spells show that the Egyptians were actively trying to have these

¹²⁸ Borghouts, 39.

¹²⁹ Borghouts, 39-40.

high intensity sacred experiences where they “become” a different, otherworldly being. These spells also show how Lahood’s and Elkins’ models can work in tandem. The reciting of the spells is a ritualistic activity that the Egyptians did during birth, but it is coupled with the trauma that giving birth brings, effectively mixing both methods.

The *Westcar Papyrus* is another textual example that clearly outlines an ancient Egyptian woman having a sacred experience. This papyrus was written in the Middle Kingdom and comprises five stories, of which only the last three are mostly complete.¹³⁰ While this papyrus dates to the Middle Kingdom, the stories are all set in the Old Kingdom (c. 2700–2200 BCE) and tell wondrous stories about the kings of the Old Kingdom and highlight how grand and powerful these kings were. Of the three stories, the last one, entitled “The Birth of the Royal Children,” is the one that most clearly depicts a transpersonal experience. This story focuses on the birthing experience of a woman named Ruddedet, who is purported to give birth to three of the Old Kingdom kings. “The Birth of the Royal Children” is a possible example of the Egyptians’ desire to have these sacred experiences. In this story, Ruddedet is visited by five deities on the night she gives birth to her children. The deities that come to assist with the birth are Khnum, Isis, Nephthys, Meskhenet, and Heket. Ruddedet “is the woman who is in pain; her labor is difficult” during her delivery, meaning she is likely having trouble birthing her children due to intense pain or duration. Since Ruddedet is in pain, needs assistance, and is giving birth to the future kings, these five deities have come to offer their assistance and ensure she has a safe and successful childbirth. Specifically, it is said that:

Isis placed herself before her, Nephthys behind her,
Heket, hastened the birth. Isis said: ‘Don’t be so
mighty in her womb, you whose name is Mighty.’
The child slid into her arms, a child of one cubit,

¹³⁰ Lichtheim, 215.

strong boned, his limbs overlaid with gold, his headdress of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, having cut his navel cord, and laid him on a pillow of cloth, Then Meskhenet approached him and said: 'A king who will assume the kingship in this whole land.'¹³¹

After the birth of the first child, the goddesses then help deliver Ruddedet's two other children, and the description of what the deities do is the same.¹³² "The Birth of the Royal Children" is an example of the Egyptians' desire to have a high intensity sacred experience during childbirth. This story shows the deities swiftly coming to Ruddedet's aid and almost immediately making her delivery process more comfortable and manageable. While this is just a story, it shows that the Egyptians truly believed that their deities would come to help them if they were in a dangerous or difficult situation. Since there are four different deities assisting Ruddedet with the process, they could each individually help Ruddedet in a specific way. Again, it would be considered a mystical encounter because the goddesses have come to Ruddedet's aid and are personally interacting with her.

The Egyptians also depicted their mystical encounters in their art. *The Divine Birth of Hatshepsut* is a series of scenes and inscriptions found on the temple wall at Deir el Bahri. Hatshepsut (d. 1458 BCE) built this temple during her reign as king, and the images used to decorate the walls are full of political propaganda. Hatshepsut likely commissioned these images to legitimize her claim to the throne because they depict her as the legitimate daughter of Amun-re and Thutmose I (r. c. 1506–1493 BCE), also known as King Aakheperkare. Even though the purpose of these images is politically motivated, the story shared also incorporates aspects of sacred experiences as many of these scenes either show

¹³¹ Lichtheim, 220.

¹³² Lichtheim, 220.

an individual personally interacting with a god and receiving assistance from them.¹³³

While this is not the first scene in the vignette, the first relief that depicts a sacred mystical encounter directly related to childbirth and pregnancy is when Hatshepsut is being made by the gods (*Figure 17*).¹³⁴ In this scene, the deities Khnum and Heket are making Hatshepsut and her double on Khnum's potter's wheel, which is how the Egyptians believed the gods made future kings.¹³⁵ Khnum creating kings on his potter's wheel, as he did with Hatshepsut, is a theme in Egyptian art and kingship for the next millennia as Khnum was the one that "shaped all living things upon his wheel," which is exactly what he is depicted doing in the figure.¹³⁶ In addition to this, this theme of Khnum using his potter's wheel to create children is found very frequently on the walls of Late Period mammises, which suggests that this aspect of the child's development is crucial.¹³⁷ Since Khnum is depicted as making Hatshepsut and her double, the person that would be having the high intensity mystical experience would be Hatshepsut herself.¹³⁸ Khnum is personally making her and her double, so she is having a very personal and direct interaction with the god and receiving assistance from him, which, by Elkins' definition, is what a mystical experience is.

¹³³ Ann Macy Roth, "Hatshepsut's Mortuary Temple at Deir el-Bahri: Architecture as Political Statement," in *Hatshepsut from Queen to Pharaoh*, edited by Catharine H. Roehrig, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.) 149.

¹³⁴ Naville, Plate XLVIII; Naville, Plate XLVIII.

¹³⁵ Landvatter, "Unpublished translation of Hatshepsut's Divine Birth and Coronation," 4-5; Wilkinson, 194.

¹³⁶ Wilkinson, 194.

¹³⁷ Wilkinson, 194.

¹³⁸ On Elkins' scale of intensity this would most likely be around an eight as Khnum is not becoming Hatshepsut, just making her.

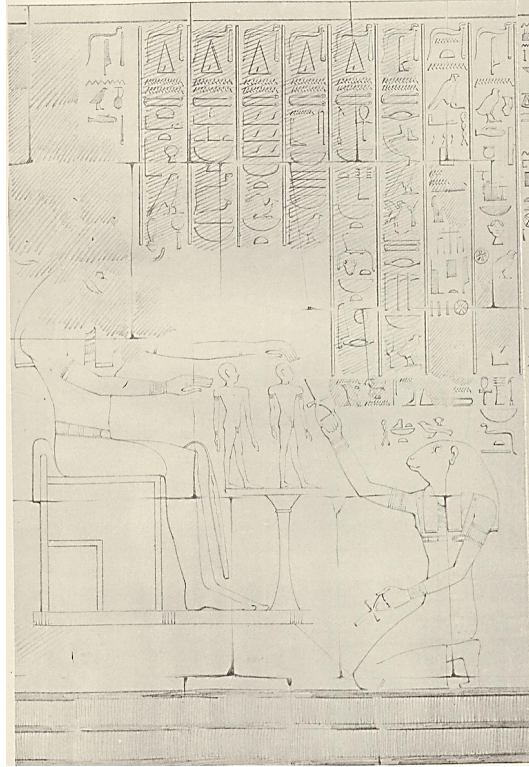


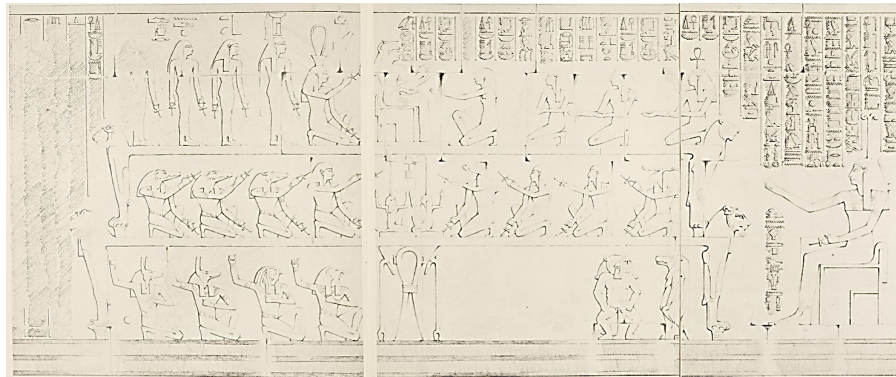
Figure 17. Khnum and Heket making Hatshepsut and her double. Courtesy of Edouard Naville.¹³⁹

While she is not visible in this scene, Queen Ahmose (c. 1570–1505 BCE) is also having a sacred experience. This argument can be made because this scene depicts Khnum creating the child that she is carrying in her womb, which would mean he is assisting her during her pregnancy. Specifically, this depiction suggests that he is creating the child for her and taking on part of the burden that comes with being pregnant. This assistance would also be considered a mystical experience because she again receives divine assistance from the gods.

¹³⁹ Naville, Plate XLVIII.

Heket also appears in this scene as she is usually depicted as Khnum's counterpart in art and mirrors the work that Khnum does.¹⁴⁰ Since she is also present in these scenes, Hatshepsut and Ahmose also have a mystical experience with Heket for the same reasons they have one with Khnum. Heket, like Khnum, is seen assisting in the creation of Hatshepsut, which helps Hatshepsut as she is being made by a divine being and helps Ahmose as Heket is taking some of the burdens of creating the child off her.

Figure 18 is the next scene in Hatshepsut's Divine Birth that shows a possible transpersonal experience.¹⁴¹ In this scene, Ahmose has either already given or is actively giving birth to Hatshepsut and several deities surround her. The ones that are the most noticeable are Meskhenet, Isis, Nephthys, Taweret, and Bes. All these deities are present during the birth, and by simply being there, they are having a mystical encounter with Hatshepsut and her mother by supporting them and assisting with the ordeal.



*Figure 18. The Divine Birth of Hatshepsut. Courtesy of Edouard Naville*¹⁴²

Ahmose's mystical encounter with Isis, Nephthys, and Meskhenet is like the mystical encounter Rudeddet had in the

¹⁴⁰ Wilkinson, 229.

¹⁴¹ Naville, Plate LI.

¹⁴² Naville, Plate LI.

Westcar Papyrus.¹⁴³ These goddesses are most likely reprising the roles they played when assisting with Rudeddet's birth and actively aiding in delivering Hatshepsut.¹⁴⁴ Once these goddesses appeared in the *Westcar Papyrus*, Rudeddet was able to safely deliver her children even though it was initially challenging and long.¹⁴⁵ While it is unknown how difficult Ahmose's labor was, having these goddesses depicted near her would suggest that they assisted in the delivery, effectively making it easier and safer. This account is seen as a mystical encounter because these three goddesses directly assist Ahmose in delivering her child and easing the pain that comes with it, thus personally interacting with her. For these same reasons, Hatshepsut is also having a mystical experience with these goddesses for the same reasons Ahmose is. Hatshepsut is the one being born, so these goddesses made her experience that much easier and quicker. Once again, this relief depicts mother and child directly interacting with a multitude of different deities, making it a mystical encounter.

Ahmose and Hatshepsut are also having a sacred experience with Bes and Taweret. Bes and Taweret are protector deities, and are depicted on ritualistic objects like the birth tusks and birth bricks.¹⁴⁶ These deities being depicted in this scene and during this moment of Hatshepsut's birth suggest that they protect the mother and the newborn and help in keeping them safe during

¹⁴³ Lichtheim, 220.

¹⁴⁴ Hatshepsut was seen as King during her reign. Due to this, there were special privileges she had when it came to interacting with the gods that normal Egyptians would not have. That being said, normal Egyptians would still want to have these types of interactions. The Pharaoh was believed to be a god amongst men by the Egyptians. Since he was such an elite and otherworldly being, it was believed that they would have intimate interactions with the gods. Regular Egyptians would want to emulate what the pharaoh was doing which explains why, in addition to the mental assurance they give, the Egyptians would want to have these sacred experiences. By having these scenes depicted, a normal Egyptian could imagine what their birth would be like if they did have these interactions and ensure that they are protected during it.

¹⁴⁵ Lichtheim, 220.

¹⁴⁶ Wilkinson, 103-104, 185; Szpakowska, 27-29; Wegner, 454.

childbirth. While this is just a temple relief, it works to reinforce the idea that these gods are physically there during the birth, and their presence alone is providing protection and keeping the mother and newborn safe. This scene is a mystical encounter because Hatshepsut and Ahmose are personally being kept safe by Bes and Taweret during a perilous time in both of their lives.

Ultimately, Egyptian art, artifacts, and texts are full of early forms of transpersonal psychology that further explains why the ancient Egyptians might have created what they did. In these examples, the Egyptians create and depict direct, personal interactions with a variety of deities that all result in these entities assisting them in some way. These interactions are examples of mystical encounters, and the Egyptians wanted these encounters to happen as they gave them a way to connect with their religion more deeply. Having these deities present during these demanding events was also a way the Egyptians could cope with the pain and fear that childbirth creates.

Conclusion

The ancient Egyptians used transpersonal psychology in many aspects of their lives, especially when it came to birth and the trauma that it caused. Transpersonal psychology might have appealed to the Egyptians because it allowed them to have a deeper connection with their deities and religion and receive assistance or help from them by having sacred experiences. By combining Lahood's and Elkins' approaches to transpersonal psychology, modern scholars can better understand what practices and methods the Egyptians used to have these sacred experiences successfully. In Elkins' approach, he details a three-tiered system where individuals can do different activities to nourish their souls, further promoting interactions with divine beings ranging in intensity. For the ancient Egyptians the activities manifested in doing things like reciting spells, using specific ritualistic objects, and creating specific art pieces which could trigger these higher intensity experiences and give them the deeper connection they wanted.

Lahood suggests that these high-intensity experiences are often triggered by severely traumatic events that people have no absolute control over. It seems like the Egyptians were using a combination of both Lahood and Elkin's models. They continued to engage in everyday, religious activities in the days before a traumatic or stressful event. The combination of ritualistic activities and the stress of the actual event ensured they would experience the highest intensity sacred experience, either the god being present or someone becoming a god during the event. Having these high intensity experiences were very important to the Egyptians to cope with the trauma as they relied on their deities and needed whatever assistance or help they could get from them. Even if a person does not have a high-intensity sacred experience, they were still most likely doing the common everyday activities or more ritualistic activities, so they were still creating a deeper connection with their religion and deities.

Understanding how the Egyptians coped with trauma gives modern scholars more insight into how the ancient Egyptians dealt with trauma. It adds a psychological layer to understanding ancient Egyptian culture, and we can see the ancient Egyptians using personal religion daily. The creation of objects like the birth brick or the birth tusks shows that the ancient Egyptians were actively trying to cause birth-related trauma. In addition, the creation and use of these objects show intent and purpose within Egyptian culture. They were not just making these objects to make them; they had a specific purpose, function, and were fully embedded with religious symbolism. The fictional mystical encounters suggest that the ancient Egyptians believed that their gods would come and help them if the situation became seriously dangerous and deadly. The altars at Deir el-Medina also give scholars an insight into what religion in ancient Egypt looked like outside of temples and tombs. They can see the ancient Egyptians' interaction with these altars daily and show that the Egyptians wanted their deities to be around them constantly, not just during certain times. Ultimately, transpersonal psychology allows modern scholars to

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understand the ancient Egyptians, their mentality surrounding trauma, and their religion on a slightly more profound level.

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Oration and Theater in the American Revolution: Equivalent Influences or Separate Spheres

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Oration and Theater in the American Revolution: Equivalent Influences or Separate Spheres

By Deborah Zuk

Abstract: During the American Revolution (1775–1783) public speaking and the theater were an important part of politics and society. However, the two mediums were viewed differently. Oration was a valued skill, while acting was scorned and even outlawed. This paper argues that both aspects of society were equally crucial to the American Revolution. They were both taught and trained in similar ways and used to push political agendas. This article examines the manuals and history of both oration and the theater and how their influences touch upon all levels of society. It concludes that oration and acting are equal in their influence on revolutionary ideas, and both were vitally important in the fight for Independence.

Setting the Stage

Picture it: You are standing in the wings, ready for your spotlight. You are dressed in your best clothes. You have practiced the words over and over. Your training has taught you that this is so much more than just the words you speak. You know how to use tone and volume to evoke emotion. You understand that pauses can help your audience feel anticipation and even move them to action. Hell, you have even practiced your hand and arm gestures in the mirror. The lights go down, and you step up to the audience and speak your words. But who are you? Are you an actor dressed in a Roman robe, performing as Cato (234 BC–149 BC), fighting the tyranny of Julius Caesar (100 BC–44 BC)? Or are you an orator reading a declaration to convince your countrymen to throw off the shackles of tyranny and declare independence?

This article argues that oration and acting were the same in the eighteenth century. Oration and acting exhibited the same

behaviors, methods, and gestures to create an emotional response from an audience. In both oration and acting, performers were trained in similar ways based on the ancient traditions of rhetoric. There were guidebooks for both professions on how to speak with emotion and conviction, and they were trained on how to use pauses, tone, volume, and gestures to convey their message without just words. Many plays carried messages that were relevant to the times in the hopes of inspiring action for or against the American Revolution (1775–1783). Many documents were written with diacritical accents indicating where and how long to pause when reading aloud, including the Declaration of Independence (1776).¹ Both actors and orators were achieving the same ends by the same means.

Rhetoric and Oration in the American Colonies

In England and the American colonies in the late eighteenth century, oration and rhetoric were highly esteemed; however, the theater was looked down upon. Acting as a profession was ridiculed by religious and political authorities.² On the other hand, rhetoric was so revered that it was established as a field of study at Harvard University in 1809 with John Quincy Adams (1767–1848) as the first chair of the department.³ Numerous instruction books were written on public speaking, including John Rice's (n.d.) *Introduction to the Art of Reading with Energy and Propriety*, published in 1765, and Thomas Sheridan's (1719–1788) *Lectures on the Art of Reading*, published in 1762.⁴ They knew how to, not

¹ Julian Boyd, "The Declaration of Independence: The Mystery of the Lost Original," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 100, no. 4 (1976): 438-467.

² Jared Brown, *The Theater in America During the Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1.

³ Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 39.

⁴ John Rice, *Introduction to the Art of Reading with Energy & Propriety* (London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson, 2010); Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (London, 1762).

just read the words, but use cadence and well-placed pauses to inspire and motivate people to look at things according to the author's intentions; how they read the words was as important as the words themselves. As Daniel John DeWispelare states,

As figures like Thomas Sheridan [1719–1788], John Walker [1728–1796], and others claimed in the second half of the eighteenth century, language was a public spectacle that immediately identified one's class origins, vocational potential, and social standing, not to mention one's national, regional, and ethnic derivation.⁵

Successful orators read news of the revolution to the masses in taverns and courtyards. Literacy rates were reasonably high for White males.⁶ The culture of discussion, debate, and discourse encouraged the vocal sharing of information in public gatherings, and the ability to share ideas and hear opposing viewpoints led to increased knowledge and moral good. John Locke (1632–1704) promotes this idea in his essay, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. While he argues that we can never know the absolute truth of all things, public debate is essential to gaining that knowledge. According to Locke, “Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion [sic] and agreement, or disagreement and

⁵ Daniel John DeWispelare, “Spectacular Speech: Performing Language in the Late Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 51, no. 4 (2012): 858–82.

⁶ Literacy rates among white males in the colonies varied by region, sixty to eighty percent. Literacy rates were higher in the colonies than they were in Europe at this time. They were also higher in urban areas than in rural areas. These increases are attributed to New England legislated schools as well as high literacy rates among German, Dutch, and English immigrants. For details on literacy rates see: F.W. Grubb, *Growth of Literacy in Colonial America: Longitudinal Patterns, Economic Models, and the Direction of Future Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

repugnancy of any of our Ideas. In this alone it consists.”⁷ Locke’s belief that knowledge is unrealized without first analyzing and contrasting ideas was essential to the foundations of oration during this time.

There are three different kinds of oration. The first is *forensic oratory*, which is legal speech for defense or accusation. The second is *deliberative oratory* which concerns political policies of taxation, revenue, property, and more. The third category, and the one that is most like acting, is *demonstrative oratory* which is used for display and during important events. These recitals of grand proclamations were meant to commemorate or publicly ridicule those events or people that influenced American lives.⁸

American literature scholar, Jay Fliegelman, explains the evolution of rhetoric from argumentative speech to performative speech in the 1750s and 1760s when it shifted from arguing for or against something to becoming an “art of moving and influencing passions.”⁹ Rhetoric was essential to persuading the colonists in America to revolt against their monarchical overseer and establish a brand-new way of governing. In the hundred years preceding the revolution, rhetoric was a form of speech that supported or opposed established topics. By the eighteenth century, a new form of public speaking had taken hold: elocution, or, the “physical performance of language.”¹⁰ Elocution became the basis for political thought and expression in the republic, which wished to distinguish itself from the oration of the monarchy. While old traditions of oration focused on supporting or disproving an argument, the new style, promoted by Sheridan and Rice, encouraged a discourse of political and moral values interlaced

⁷ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 332.

⁸ James M. Farrell, “Above All Greek, above all Roman Fame: Classical Rhetoric in American during the Colonial and Early National Periods,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* Vol. 18, no. 3 (2011): 415-436.

⁹ Fliegelman, 30.

¹⁰ Fliegelman, 30.

with a passion and style that articulated the intentions of the author's words and thoughts.

Public speaking could only be effective if the audience believed what the speaker said. Therefore, reputation mattered. It was essential for the audience to be moved by the words; therefore, the speaker's lifestyle was as important to motivating the audience as the words he or she spoke. If the speaker were untrustworthy, a criminal, or an undercover Tory, he or she would not be able to persuade an audience to act.¹¹ In fact, some of the most effective orators spoke at pulpits. With a captive audience every Sunday, pastors and preachers—influential men in their communities—often spoke on political matters and were very persuasive in their speeches for or against revolution.¹²

Oratorical Documents

In 1776, Thomas Paine (1737–1809) wrote two influential documents that were read aloud to citizens and troops of the American Revolution. The first was *Common Sense*, which explained the reasons for fighting for freedom.¹³ Published anonymously in January 1776, *Common Sense* immediately became a popular piece for reading in taverns and street corners. It laid out why America should declare its independence from Great Britain. It inspired the American colonists to seek a break from England with the words, “The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the

¹¹ Tories were loyalists to the British cause. It is estimated that one-third of colonists were Tories during the revolution with most of them residing in New York. Fliegelman, 79.

¹² The Baptists and Quakers took up arms in the call to freedom however, Methodists were English supporters while Lutherans were neutral. Everett Emerson, *American Literature 1764-1789: The Revolutionary Years* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press), 73-85.

¹³ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/31270/31270-h/31270-h.htm>.

principles of all Lovers of Mankind are affected.”¹⁴ The second document, *The American Crisis*, published from 1776 to 1783, extolled the virtues of those who fought for independence. General George Washington (1732–1799) had *The American Crisis* read to his troops on the Delaware River: “Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”¹⁵ These words inspired the troops to victory at the Battle of Trenton.¹⁶

Jefferson added pause marks while drafting the Declaration of Independence, indicating his intention that it be read aloud; this idea was first introduced by Julian Boyd (1903–1980) in 1976.¹⁷ Like those used by Rice, these marks indicated “rhythmical pauses of emphatical stress.”¹⁸ Although misinterpreted in the publishing of the piece as quotation marks, the pause marks were intended to provide a guide for those reading the declaration to committees, assemblies, and the general public. People gathered around professional orators and heard the famous words “all men are created equal.” A letter written by Henry Alline Jr (n.d.) on July 19, 1776, describes the reading of the Declaration of Independence from the balcony of the Town House in Boston. According to Alline, once they finished reading the Declaration:

There [were] three hearty Cheers given, given,
And the field pieces were discharged a Number of
times, & the Musquettry, & the Several batteries in
Town & upon the Islands and at Nantaskett fired,
the Bells rang, and in the Afternoon was tore down
the Lion & the Unicon upon the East End of the
Town House & the Kings Arms taken down from
the Council Chamber, Court House & other places

¹⁴ Paine, *Common Sense*, 1.

¹⁵ Thomas Paine, *The Writings of Thomas Paine, Vol. I (1774-1779)* (G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1774).

¹⁶ Paine, “The Writing of Thomas Paine.”

¹⁷ Boyd, 438-467.

¹⁸ Fliegelman, 10.

& towards Evening all were Committed to the flames to the Satisfaction of every body but Tories.¹⁹

After the reading of the Declaration of Independence, there was a volley of gunfire, and church bells rang. The townsfolk then removed the King's Coat of Arms from every tavern and building and started a bonfire to burn them, spurred on by the effective reading of the Declaration to a large crowd. When the Declaration was written, the authors intended for the orator to inspire his countrymen to celebrate their declared independence when reading the document aloud. The orators who read the Declaration of Independence all over the colonies used the elocution style, the skill or ability to give a clear and expressive speech, to emphasize that a government's power came from the "consent of the governed" and "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."²⁰ On July 9, 1776, George Washington had the Declaration of Independence read to his troops. The Continental soldiers had just entered New York from Boston and gathered on the Lower Manhattan parade grounds; a very vocal "huzzah" was given after the reading.²¹ More than simply a document, the readings of the Declaration of Independence became an event, not just a document.²²

¹⁹ Henry Alline, "Letter from Henry Alline to his brother and sister," MHS Collections Online, July 19, 1776, https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=1748&mode=large&img_step=1&&pid=3&ft=Object+of+the+Month&nodec=1.

²⁰ Thomas Jefferson, "Copy of Declaration of Independence" (Manuscript, 1776), <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib000159/>.

²¹ George Washington, "General Orders 9 July 1776," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-05-02-0176>.

²² Fliegelman, 25.

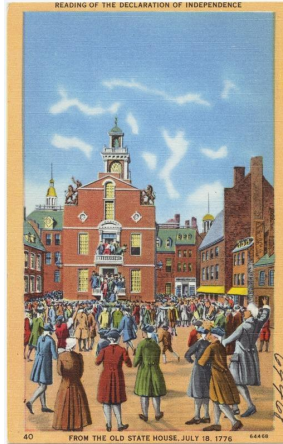


Figure 1. Postcard from 1776, depicting the reading of the Declaration of Independence from the Old State House in Boston. Courtesy of Digital Commonwealth.²³

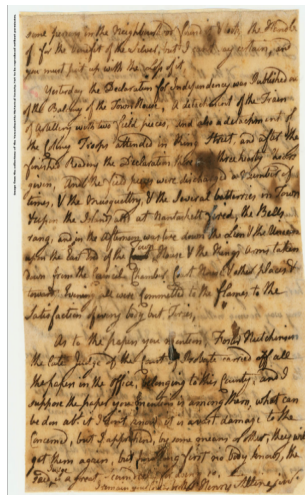


Figure 2. A letter from Henry Alline, Jr., to his brother and sister in July 1776. Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.²⁴

²³ “Reading of the Declaration of Independence from the Old State House, July 18, 1776,” Digital Commonwealth, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:wh246s47c>, no copyright restrictions.

²⁴ Alline, “Letter from Henry Alline to his brother and sister.”

Public speaking leveled classes and society; no longer could the literate be the only informed populace. In a democratic republic, every citizen needed to be informed, and oration was a means of disseminating information to the masses. Oration remained an essential aspect of colonial society in the following decades. In the *Gazette of the United States*, a Philadelphia newspaper, a 1789 article read:

The Fourth of July hitherto been celebrated in a manner but little honorable to the United States...he proposes that the dinner should always be introduced by an oration, sermon, or an appeal to heaven, in order to inform the rising generation of the deliverances which has been wrought on our country. In the oration, or sermon, the names of the principal persons who have been instrumental in the establishment of our liberties, should be mentioned. After this the Declaration of Independence should be read.²⁵

Oration was an important part of keeping people informed of current events and keeping citizens informed of the past that had been so important to shaping their future. It was a way to commemorate the most important event in the young nation's history, and it continues to be an essential part of America's political culture today.

Theater in the American Colonies

Conversely, the theater in the American colonies was considered, by some, to be an uncivil entity. Theatergoing was a privilege for those who had the money and free time to enjoy it. Therefore, it was not seen as a necessity or a valuable leisure activity as money should have been spent elsewhere. There was a religious influence

²⁵ "Gazette of the United-States," August 1, 1789.

against the theater in the northern colonies; Puritans saw plays as corrupting and blasphemous.²⁶ Additionally, there were economic and patriotic factors in the criticism of American theater; money spent at the theater could have been spent on American goods. Furthermore, the plays were English productions, and the actors were British citizens, so when a call was made to boycott British goods and services, the theater fell into this category.²⁷

Although plays were outlawed, the British troops stationed in Boston in 1775, missed the joys of the theater back home and illegally put on their own performances. These plays were intended for those who supported the British cause. Many British generals were unhappy being stationed in America. They missed the comforts of home and tried to establish some semblance of normalcy for themselves and their soldiers. During the cold winter months in the colonies, fighting was halted, and the soldiers hunkered down to await warmer weather. These downtimes were perfect for leisure activities like theater productions. In New York, in the winter of 1777, there were approximately ten thousand civilians and fifteen thousand British soldiers.²⁸ They were commanded by General Sir William Howe (1729–1814), a lover of luxury. His army immediately took over the John Street Theater and renamed it the Theatre Royal.²⁹ They performed their first play, *Tom Thumb*, on January 25, 1777, and nineteen more productions until May 29, 1777. At this point, General Howe was ordered to attack the Americans in Philadelphia, capturing the city in September. In December 1777, the twenty-three thousand troops

²⁶ Jared Brown, *The Theatre in America During the Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-2

²⁷ The 1750 Massachusetts Act told colonists to prevent and avoid “publick stage plays, interludes, and other theatrical entertainments.” In 1774 the Continental Congress called on Americans to support only American commercial interests. “We will encourage frugality, economy, and industry...and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially exhibitions of shews, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments.” Brown, 5, 6.

²⁸ Brown, 29-33.

²⁹ Brown, 30.

settled in for the winter, and the first theatrical performance in Philadelphia was held on January 19, 1778.³⁰ There was a civilian population numbering approximately twenty-two thousand, many of whom enjoyed the jovial atmosphere brought by the troops. The theater season lasted until May 19, 1778, and included thirteen performances.³¹

However, the Americans, who were trying to establish a republican government based on good morals and values, could not abide by such events. The Continental Convention (1774) outlawed plays in 1774 and again in 1778. While plays were not allowed by law, scholars know that the American soldiers held some performances. Many shows were put on as benefits for war widows and orphans to get around the moral argument.³² Even though he signed the Continental Resolutions (1774) against plays, Washington's troops held a theatrical performance in Valley Forge in 1778.³³ In celebration of the French alliance with the Revolutionaries, he called for a grand celebration, including a performance of his favorite play, *Cato*.³⁴

Due to religious authority, the northern colonies were more likely to outlaw the theater than those in the South. Maryland ignored the Continental Congress's resolution and gave an American professional theater company permission to perform in 1781.³⁵ Maryland and Virginia were the only colonies that did not

³⁰ Brown, 45-46.

³¹ For a list of all the British military theater productions in America during the war see: Brown, *The Theatre in America during the Revolution*.

³² Brown, 91.

³³ There is no record of the first play performed by Washington's troops however, soon after they performed *Cato* which was very popular at that time. In Philadelphia, American troops performed plays right under the noses of the Continental Congress who were also meeting there at the same time. They were none too pleased and issued two resolutions four days apart ordering the performance of plays and those who attend them to cease. Brown, 57-63.

³⁴ Brown, 57-59.

³⁵ Performances were held in Annapolis and Baltimore. Brown, 147.

pass legislation outlawing the theater.³⁶ Southern society valued social gatherings and saw them as necessary to the human condition and not as an unpatriotic activity. Charleston, South Carolina, became the South's theatrical center beginning in 1735 with Thomas Otway's (1652–1685), *The Orphan*.³⁷ Following the revolution, American-born playwrights and their dramas emerged. In *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Charles Watson (1873–1961) comments, "From 1793 in Charleston, for example, there were strong resident companies, managers who encouraged native playwrights, newspaper critics, and the Federalist-Republican controversy, which often turned the stage into a political platform."³⁸

However, on October 16, 1778, the Continental Congress issued the following statement:

Whereas frequenting Playhouses and theatrical entertainments, has a fatal tendency to divert the minds of the people from a due attention to the means necessary for the defence [sic] of their country and preservation of their liberties: *Resolved*, that any person holding an office under the United States, who shall act, promote, encourage, or attend plays, shall be deemed unworthy to hold such an office, and shall be accordingly dismissed. *Ordered*, that this resolve be published.³⁹

³⁶ Charles Watson and Charles R. Wilson, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (University of North Carolina Press), 151.

³⁷ Watson and Wilson, 151.

³⁸ Watson and Wilson, 152.

³⁹ "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875," *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Vol. 12 (1778), <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=012/lljc012.db&recNum=159&itemLink=r%3Fammem%2Fhlaw%3A%40field%28DOCID%2B%40lit%28jc0121%29%29%230120001&linkText=1>.

With only five colonies voting *nay*, the resolution was ordered.⁴⁰ Washington, understanding the severity of the consequences, halted all productions during the length of the war. There is no record of American troops performing in plays between 1778 and 1781.

As democracy began to replace republicanism, in which the need for equality for man replaced the aspiration of being morally high, the theater became more accepted in America. In New York, theatrical performances continued to be held by the British soldiers until their evacuation. While it was still illegal to stage plays, “lectures” that included the performance of selected scenes were held instead. In 1785, full-scale productions resumed without any legal ramifications, and the American Theater Company was reestablished.⁴¹

Americans loved Shakespearean plays. Between 1750 and 1778, up to fifteen Shakespearean plays were performed hundreds of times, and the public became familiar with Shakespearean characters, themes, and lines.⁴² So much so that by the nineteenth century, other writers began parodying Shakespeare. In *Huckleberry Finn*, written by Mark Twain (1835–1910) and published in 1884, Twain presents a soliloquy from Shakespeare’s 1603 tragedy, *Hamlet*, in which some words are wrong and includes lines from other Shakespearean plays.⁴³ American audiences, familiar with Shakespeare, found the mistakes humorous and entertaining. Shakespeare was an American

⁴⁰ New York, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia voted no on the resolution; however, it was still able to pass the congress with seven colonies voting for the resolution.

⁴¹ Brown, 167.

⁴² Lawrence W. Levine, “William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation,” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 89, no. 1 (1984): 34–66.

⁴³ Twain’s play also includes lines from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1623) and *Richard III* (1597). For a line-by-line analysis of Twain’s version of *Hamlet’s soliloquy*, see: E. Bruce Kirkham, “Huck and ‘Hamlet’: An Examination of Twain’s Use of Shakespeare,” *Mark Twain Journal*, Vol. 14, no. 4 (1969): 17–19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41640866>.

favorite, and his plays found their way into every frontier town as the country grew and expanded westward.⁴⁴

The American theater utilized its platform to promote the republican ideals of the new government and to protest corruption and intolerance. In 1805, Dramatist William Ioor (1780–1850) wrote the play *Independence* which promoted an agrarian lifestyle, and his play *Battle of Eutaw Springs* commemorates a turning point battle of the Revolution, Eutaw Springs, in South Carolina in 1781. Playwright Robert Munford (1737–1783) wrote *The Candidates* in 1798, criticizing corruption in elections, and *The Patriots* in 1798, which was critical of Tories and Whigs.⁴⁵

In the eighteenth century, theater became a political tool in content and existence. The role of the actor was also important in mobilizing soldier morale and giving the citizens of the particular city a means of supporting their cause. So why was the actor looked down on while the orator was esteemed?

Oration versus Acting

Acting in the American colonies during the Revolution was an illegal activity. Many Puritan religious followers saw the theater as corrupting moral values and actors as blasphemous heathens. Therefore, the view of actors as having an important role in motivating citizens to join the revolution is controversial. Orators, on the other hand, were seen as important members of society as they effectively disseminated essential information whereas actors were only “playing the part.” In reality, actors were performing plays that held valuable messages about the current conflict and used their platform to promote the ideas of liberty and throwing off tyranny. They used examples from classical Roman times to promote the ideas of republicanism in their new experiment. Characters such as Cato, Caesar, and Brutus were a way for

⁴⁴ Levine, 38-39.

⁴⁵ Whigs were a political party that formed in England and were antimonarchists. The party took hold in the United States in the 1830s in reaction to Jacksonian Democrats. Watson and Wilson, 152.

playwrights to relate a story to current events. Many plays involved Romans throwing off their oppressors and earning their freedom.⁴⁶

The art of acting has its basis in the rules for rhetoric laid out by the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is based on their understanding of the human body and which parts have control over emotional expression.⁴⁷ As Fliegelman argues, “the oratorical manuals of the period were often indistinguishable from acting manuals.”⁴⁸ The style of acting was shifting during this time, as well. The “declamatory” style of predictable arm movements and intoned words gave little distinction to different characters. However, during the 1740s in Britain, a more realistic form of acting was taking hold in which actors studied their characters and their personalities, giving their characters individuality.⁴⁹ This more realistic acting may have made its way to the colonies with the British soldiers. These soldiers brought the new style of acting with them to the colonies and were able to perform it during the winter theater season.

Conclusion

Since religious authorities looked down on acting and the fledgling American government outlawed it, theatergoing became an outlet

⁴⁶ For more information on plays involving tyranny and freedom see: Mercy Warren, “The Sack of Rome,” in *Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous* (I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews: Newbury Street, 1790); Mercy Warren, *The Adulateur. A tragedy, as it is now acted in Upper Servia: [Six lines from Cato]* (Boston, 1772); and Joseph Addison, “Cato,” in *Cato: A Tragedy and Selected Essays*, ed. Christine Dunn Henderson, Mark E. Yellin, and Forrest McDonald (Liberty Fund, 2004). Brown, 9.

⁴⁷ For more information on the declamatory and realistic acting styles see: Joseph R. Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993); and Joseph R. Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age* (Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁴⁸ Fliegelman, 81.

⁴⁹ Brown, 38.

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for political opinions that appealed to those on the outskirts of society. Just as speakeasies during prohibition in the twentieth century and house parties during quarantine in the twenty-first century appealed to those in society who felt rebellious toward a strong government, theatergoers in the eighteenth century were perfectly suited to watching plays involving the act of overthrowing a tyrannical government. While those who listened to orators were from the upper echelons of society, those on the lower side got their motivation from the theater. Both means of disseminating information were effective and valid. The act of public speaking and theater performances were crucial in motivating the colonists to fight for their independence. Both roles mobilized an entire society to action as radicals starting an entirely new government system and fighting the world's biggest imperial power. While listening to an orator was seen as reputable, theatergoing was rebellious and crude. However, both methods were based on the same rhetorical teaching of ancient Greeks and Romans. Both methods disseminated information that was important to boost soldiers' morale during the long, cold winter months of a ceasefire and foster the optimism of citizens who attended illegal theater productions for entertainment. The ideas of equality, revolution, and tyranny were dispersed to the population through serious discourse in taverns and the content and prologues of theater productions. The acts of public speaking and acting were influential and necessary to the outcome of the American Revolution and the society that formed thereafter.

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The Development of Synthetic Rubber and its Significance in World War II

By Nyla Provost

Abstract: Rubber has been one of humanity's most vital resources for hundreds of years. World War II was a pivotal event in the history of rubber that permanently altered the industry forever. Prior to World War II, the majority of the rubber in the United States came from foreign rubber plantations. The United States' reliance on foreign rubber led to a crisis in the early twentieth century. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japanese forces in Southeast Asia captured ninety percent of the United States' natural rubber supply. This was a monumental event as rubber was not only needed by the booming United States' automobile industry to make tires, but also by the military to produce gas masks, bombers, and tanks. This historic event effectively cut the United States and its allies off from a vital commodity that was essential in order for the Allied Powers (United Kingdom, United States, Soviet Union, and China, among others) to win the war. In unprecedented times, the United States developed a synthetic alternative to natural rubber that was far more efficient. The United States' response to the World War II rubber crisis would ultimately determine the fate of World War II and the Allies' victory over the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). Furthermore, World War II led to the development of synthetic rubber, which is still widely used today. This article will examine the history of synthetic rubber, a war-born material, and its significance in World War II.

One of the most elite fellowship groups in Washington, D.C., the Alfalfa Club, had never seen anything like it. It was an unfamiliar sight for the 250 members, largely composed of United States

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Senators, Supreme Court Justices, army generals, powerful attorneys, and Washington's elite members of society who were more acquainted with verbal duels rather than fistfights.¹ Nevertheless, on April 9, 1942, at the club's annual meeting, Eugene Meyer (1875–1959) and Jesse Jones (n.d.), two of the club's wealthiest and most distinguished members, came to blows over undoubtedly one of the most controversial topics in the capital during America's first year as a combatant in World War II (1939–1945): synthetic rubber.

Meyer, who published *The Washington Post* from 1933 to 1946, wrote an article earlier that day criticizing Jones's leadership of the country's still-developing synthetic rubber sector. Jones was one of Washington's busiest public figures, acting as Secretary of Commerce and heading many of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's wartime subsidiary organizations. He conducted not only the pre-World War II stockpiling of natural rubber, but also the funding of plant development for the new industrial rubber industry as the chief executive of the Rubber Reserve Company, and the Federal Loan Agency board chairperson of the Defense Plant Corporation. In the spring of 1942, with the United States still trying to strengthen its economic force in preparation for war following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Jones was the target of blame and condemnation that even a modest person could not bear.²

Tensions ran high throughout the country in 1942. Above all, 1942 was a war year. Not only did the Japanese military bomb Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, but they also discovered the most fragile sector in the American economy: rubber. These were dark times for the United States. Before World War II, the United

¹ William M. Tuttle, "The Birth of an Industry: The Synthetic Rubber 'Mess' in World War II," *Technology and Culture* Vol. 22, No. 1 (1981): 35-67, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3104292.pdf>.

² Bascom Nolly Timmons, *Jesse H. Jones, the Man and the Statesman* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), 6.

States was the world's largest importer of rubber, all of it natural.³ A majority of the United States' rubber supply came from rubber plantations in Southeast Asia, which was sufficient up until the beginning of World War II.



Figure 1. Natural rubber being drained from a tree in a process called "tapping." Courtesy of Wiki Commons.⁴

Then, in the first few months of 1942, Japan seized ninety percent of the world's natural rubber supply and ninety-seven percent of the American supply in Southeast Asia during Japan's invasion of the South Pacific territory.⁵ Without the creation of a new rubber alternative, the Rubber Survey Committee, created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) in August 1942, anticipated that "military and other crucial [rubber] demands"

³ Paul Wendt, "The Control of Rubber in World War II," *Southern Economic Journal* Vol. 13, No. 3 (1947): 203–27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1053336?seq=2>.

⁴ "Koh Chang, Thailand, Rubber tree, Latex," Wikicommons, February 7, 2010, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Koh_Chang,_Thailand,_Rubber_tree,_Latex.jpg.

⁵ Brendan J. O'Callaghan, "Rubber in World War II: A History of the U.S. Government's Natural and Synthetic Rubber Programs in World War II" (unpublished manuscript, 1948), 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3104292.pdf>.

would exceed the available supply by 211,000 tons by January 1, 1944.⁶ The Rubber Survey Committee's estimate did not account for the cost of maintaining tires on the millions of civilian vehicles on the road. In an unprecedented effort, the United States formed an alliance with private businesses and organizations in a span of five years, overcoming significant challenges to develop its own synthetic rubber industry within its territorial borders, which ultimately aided in its triumphant efforts in World War II. The industry that arose as a result of this endeavor continues to play a significant role in American economics.

Without these incredible triumphs in the acquisition and development of rubber, the United States could have ultimately lost the war. This was the fear that spread throughout the nation in 1942. The head of the Army and Navy Munitions Board, Ferdinand Eberstadt (1890–1969), was even more concerned. In May 1942, Eberstadt wrote to banker and powerful Democrat, Bernard Baruch (1870–1965): “Unless synthetic rubber is ready in quantity by the time the crude stockpile is gone, say, around July 1 next year, we would appear to have no option but to call the entire thing [World War II] off.”⁷

Automobiles had become ubiquitous by the turn of the twentieth century, with emerging economies relying on them heavily for the transportation of goods and people. Natural rubber demand expanded in tandem with the growth of vehicles. Automobile sales in the United States exploded in the 1910s; even farmers and factory employees were able to purchase a Ford Model T, the most popular automobile of its time.⁸ Throughout the interwar period, the United States built eighty-five percent of all automobiles in the world.⁹ The American rubber industry grew to be the world's largest and most technologically advanced. By the

⁶ Tuttle, 35-67.

⁷ Tuttle, 35-67.

⁸ “Automobile History,” *History*, last modified August 21, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/automobiles>.

⁹ Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1.

late 1930s, the United States used half of the world's natural rubber supply, most of which came from Southeast Asia.¹⁰



Figure 2. Postcard from a rubber plantation in South America (c. 1910). The illustration depicts harvesters at work; a French traveler introduced the word “caoutchouc,” meaning “weeping wood,” from a local language in the 1700s. Courtesy of BBC News.¹¹

As the demand for natural rubber in the United States expanded, other countries began developing alternatives for the organic material. Germany was the world's chemical powerhouse in the early twentieth century, supplying the majority of textile dyes, artificial fertilizer, and medications (such as Bayer aspirin) consumed in the United States and abroad.¹² German chemists succeeded in creating a synthetic rubber, but unfortunately, it was

¹⁰ “U.S. Synthetic Rubber Program – National Historic Chemical Landmark,” American Chemical Society, August 29, 1998, <https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/syntheticrubber.html>.

¹¹ Tim Harford, “The Horrific Consequences of Rubber’s Toxic Past,” BBC News, July 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-48533964>.

¹² Stephen L. Harp, *A World History of Rubber: Empire, Industry, and the Everyday* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 100.

too expensive to produce.¹³ IG Farben, Germany's massive chemical conglomerate, continued to do research throughout the 1920s. The colorless gas, butadiene, was eventually introduced into the process. Butadiene is produced through the treatment of petroleum and is mainly used in the production of synthetic rubber.¹⁴ It was combined with styrene, another known chemical used in the formula. In the late 1920s, IG Farben scientists developed buna, a more pliant synthetic rubber.¹⁵

When Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) took power in 1933, he immediately began making war plans. In contravention of the Treaty of Versailles (1919), Hitler began projects to support rearmament and expand the military soon after assuming office.¹⁶ He made military duty mandatory and expanded the army's size to 550,000 troops. Nazi Germany made rearmament a national economic priority, but the aim was difficult to achieve since German companies were highly reliant on imported raw materials. At the Nuremberg Party Conference in 1936, Hitler introduced the Four-Year Plan, a new economic policy. Hitler urged party delegates that "all raw materials that may be generated by German talents, by our chemistry, by our mechanical industries, and by our mines must be produced by German skills, by our chemistry, by our mechanical industries, and by our mines."¹⁷ This proclamation would become the foundation for Germany's new campaign for self-sufficiency.

¹³ Diarmuid Jeffreys, *Hell's Cartel: IG Farben and the Making of Hitler's War Machine* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), 203.

¹⁴ "1,3-Butadiene," *PubChem*, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, accessed April 13, 2022, https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/1_3-Butadiene.

¹⁵ Harp, 101.

¹⁶ Johannes Dalfinger and Dieter Pohl, eds., *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933-1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁷ Arthur Schweitzer, "Foreign Exchange Crisis of 1936," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* Vol. 118, no. 2 (1962): 243-77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40748563>.

To prevent a repeat of Germany's humiliating defeat in World War I (1914–1918), Hitler sought economic self-sufficiency, particularly in metals and rubber. To refine and improve buna for military use, Hitler approached IG Farben. IG Farben chemists cut the production time in half. They discovered that while still less elastic than natural rubber, synthetic rubber was superior at resisting the damaging effects of sunshine and petroleum compounds like gasoline, giving it a distinct edge on the battlefield. With government sponsorship, buna became a success story.

Before the German invasion in 1941, the Soviet Union continued to export natural rubber to Nazi Germany. Still, beyond that date, the Nazi war machine had almost no natural rubber other than scrap rubber. German occupying forces took natural rubber trees in France for the German war machine, but supplies were limited. By February 1943, roughly a mere eight percent of German tires were made of natural rubber. In 1939, IG Farben produced 70,000 tons of buna synthetic rubber and, in 1944, they produced 140,000 tons.¹⁸

Unlike Germany, the United States did not recognize the necessity for a synthetic rubber industry at the time because most of their rubber supply was imported from Southeast Asia. Germany and the United States had two different outlooks on the possibilities of a second world war at the beginning of the 1940s. While Germany was preparing for war, the United States was doing its best to stay neutral and as far away from war as possible. Nevertheless, by the late 1930s, the American rubber industry discovered how to create synthetic rubber. B.F Goodrich, one of the leading companies in the United States' rubber and automotive industry, founded by Benjamin Franklin Goodrich (1841–1888) in 1870, built a trial facility for generating butadiene-copolymer synthetic rubber in 1937. It employed synthetic rubber in several of its commercial goods within two years.¹⁹ Synthetic rubber,

¹⁸ Harp, 101.

¹⁹ American Chemical Society, "U. S. Synthetic Rubber Program."

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however, remained a costly option as long as natural rubber sources were cheap and plentiful. After ten years as the head of a British rubber manufacturer, John L. Collyer (n.d.) took over as Goodrich's president in 1939. Collyer returned to the United States and determined that synthetic rubber manufacturing must be developed before the country was pulled into another European conflict. In June 1940, under his leadership, Goodrich developed the first synthetic rubber passenger automobile tire in the United States.²⁰ This was a significant achievement for the United States; America now had the chance to establish a synthetic rubber industry in the United States, just like the Germans did in Germany.



*Figure 3. B.F. Goodrich scientist working on synthetic rubber experiment
Courtesy of the American Chemical Society.²¹*

²⁰ American Chemical Society, "U. S. Synthetic Rubber Program."

²¹ "United States Synthetic Rubber Program, 1939-1945," Akron, Ohio, August 29, 1998,

<https://www.acs.org/content/dam/acsorg/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/syntheticrubber/us-synthetic-rubber-program-historical-resource.pdf>.

Throughout the first part of the twentieth century, the B.F. Goodrich Company was a leader in the rubber sector. Vinyl was invented by a B.F. Goodrich scientist in 1926, while America’s version of synthetic rubber was created by B.F. Goodrich scientists in 1937. B.F. Goodrich began advertising synthetic rubber tires in 1940. *Figure 4* shows a B.F. Goodrich ad from 1940 that tells the story of the company’s new invention: synthetic rubber.



Figure 4. Synthetic rubber tire ad from B.F. Goodrich, dated 1940
 Courtesy of Philipp Lenssen, Vintage Ad Browser.²²

Many Americans were aware and fearful of the United States’ dependence on foreign rubber. The Rubber Reserve Company (RRC) was created in June 1940, by President Roosevelt to store rubber in case it became impossible to obtain, which

²² Philipp Lenssen, “Vintage Industry Ads of the 1940s,” Vintage Ad Browser, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://www.vintageadbrowser.com/industry-ads-1940s/37>.

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indeed was a smart move as the Axis Powers began to enter European territories in the early stages of World War II.²³ It became apparent that territories in Southeast Asia would be the next target. However, despite warnings that if the United States lost access to its natural rubber supply, the military would be left without the supplies necessary to produce automobiles, tanks, trucks, and planes, the country continued to rely primarily on Southeast Asia, specifically Malaya, for natural rubber.



*Figure 5. Rubber plantation in Malaya, circa 1920. Courtesy of Children in History.*²⁴

By 1941, the White House—along with much of the nation—began to realize the importance of finding an alternative

²³ Germany, Italy, and Japan were the three main members in the Axis alliance, which later came to be known as the Axis. German dictator Adolf Hitler, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (1883–1945), and Japanese Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989) commanded these countries. Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union headed the Allied Powers. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874–1965), United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) headed these countries.

²⁴ “World War II Economics: Raw Materials - Rubber,” *Children in History*, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://histclo.com/essay/war/ww2/eco/raw/rub/w2ern-rub.html>.

to natural rubber. Then-President Roosevelt classified rubber as a “strategic and crucial material” in 1940.²⁵ The President did this because German U-boats were blocking Atlantic commerce lines, and the Japanese were threatening to halt shipments from Asian rubber plantations. The Rubber Reserve Company also regulated the manufacturing of the raw ingredients needed to manufacture synthetic rubbers, as well as the rubber itself and the fabrication of rubber-based goods. The sale of new tires for vehicles was prohibited by the wartime administration in Washington in late 1941 and many citizens were asked to donate their tires to the government as seen in *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*.²⁶

As previously noted, at the beginning of World War II, the United States lost access to ninety percent of the natural rubber supply. The United States had a natural rubber stockpile of around one million tons, a consumption rate of roughly 600,000 tons per year, and no commercial technology for producing a general-purpose synthetic rubber at the time.²⁷ Rubber was regarded as one of the most vital material resources required to battle the Axis Powers. In addition, tires had become an absolute need for the millions of cars that Americans owned and adored by this point. Unfortunately, each of the tens of thousands of combat tanks required one ton of rubber to construct.²⁸

²⁵ Sophia Crabbe-Field, “What a Real Wartime President Does,” *Democracy Journal*, April 30, 2020, <https://democracyjournal.org/arguments/what-a-real-wartime-president-does/>.

²⁶ Jeff Davis, “The Last Time VMT Dropped This Sharply – WWII Gas Rationing,” The Eno Center for Transportation, accessed April 8, 2022, <https://www.enotrans.org/article/the-last-time-vmt-dropped-this-sharply-wwii-gas-rationing/>.

²⁷ American Chemical Society, “U. S. Synthetic Rubber Program.”

²⁸ “Tire Rationing during World War II,” *Antiques and Auction News*, June 22, 2018, <https://antiquesandauctionnews.net/articles/Tire-Rationing-During-World-War-II/>.

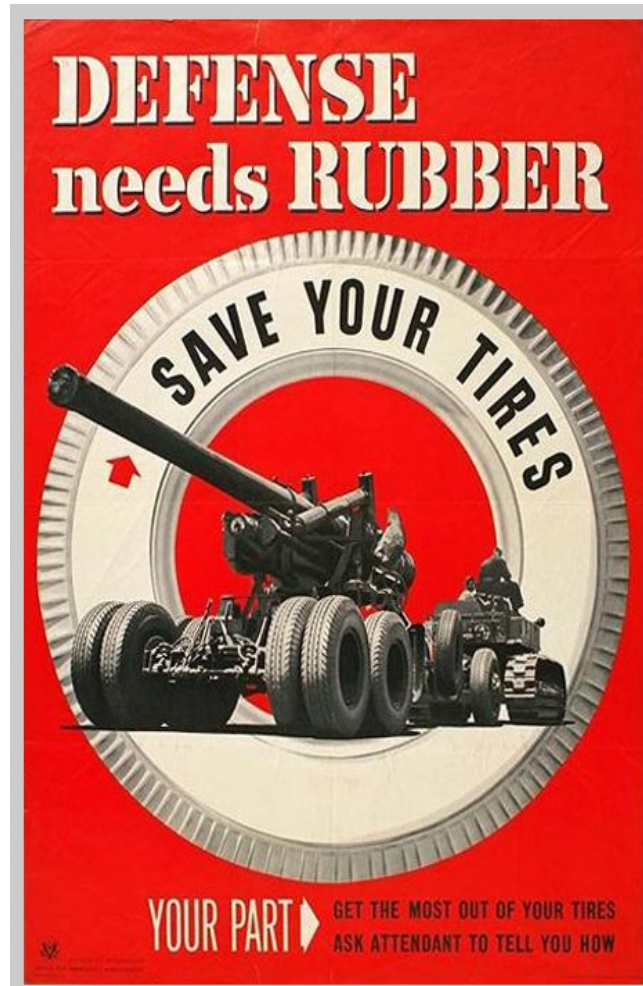


Figure 6. A rubber rationing poster from 1941. Beginning in 1940 the United States began asking American citizens to donate tires to the government. Courtesy of Northwest University.²⁹

²⁹ Government & Geographic Information Collection, Northwestern University Libraries. "Defense needs rubber : save your tires," World War II Poster Collection, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://dc.library.northwestern.edu/items/85826039-ea06-4dc4-b0d5-107bad7e4a08>.



Figure 7. A group of boys donating tires to the United States government at a scrap metal drive at Lincoln High School in Portland, Oregon (c. 1942). Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, OHS Research Library, Al Monner news negatives, Org. Lot 1284, box 18, 656-4.³⁰

Authorities devised a strategy to preserve the tires already on the rims of the nation's automobiles and ensure that they lasted until the conclusion of the war. To stop excessive driving and slow down wear and tear, then-President Roosevelt called for gasoline rationing and a forty-mile-per-hour speed restriction. He addressed the nation with the following message:

Rubber experts agree that fast driving wastes rubber and that tires run many more miles when driven at limited rates of speed. May I suggest that this waste could be curtailed to the advantage of the individual motorist, and likewise to the advantage of the country, if the speed of all motor vehicles were limited to a maximum of forty miles per hour and if

³⁰ Lindsey Benjamin, "From Sugar Rationing to Rubber Drives: A Glimpse at World War II through the Al Monner News Negatives," Oregon Historical Society, April 16, 2020, <https://www.ohs.org/blog/from-sugar-rationing-to-rubber-drives.cfm>.

regulations were promulgated requiring frequent checking of tires in order to insure their repair or, where possible, retreading at the proper time. I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in an effort to achieve these objectives throughout the country.³¹

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent mobilization of the United States military, Americans were already stunned by the rapidly unfolding chain of events. Gas rationing and other economic measures soon followed.³² The government started a nationwide campaign to gather support for its massive rationing program by telling residents that they were now home front warriors at the start of World War II. Nearly all meals, as well as gasoline, cigarettes, alcohol, heating oil, and clothes, were on the rationing list at one point or another. The government's new rationing initiative received much backlash from American citizens. In newspapers, comics criticized the rationing program through illustrations as seen in *Figure 8*.

³¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Appeal to Governors to Conserve Rubber by Reducing Speed Limits," *The American Presidency Project/Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley*, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/appeal-governors-conserve-rubber-reducing-speed-limits>.

³² Jeff Davis, "The Last Time VMT Dropped This Sharply."

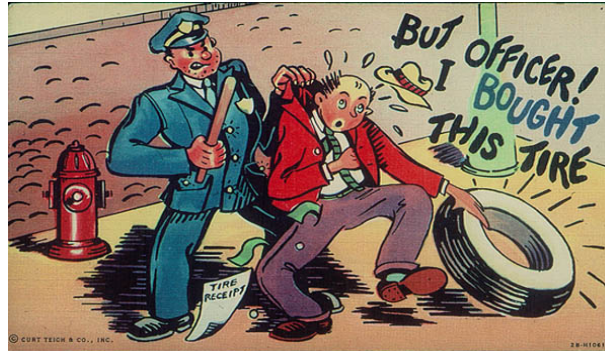


Figure 8. Newspaper comic from 1941. Courtesy of Antiques and Auction News.³³

President Roosevelt formed the RRC to evaluate the situation and give recommendations for resolving it. The committee produced two proposals to fix the rubber issue in less than a month. The first was to select a rubber director who would have total authority over the supply and usage of rubber, and the second was to build and operate fifty-one synthetic rubber factories right away.³⁴ Additionally, the RRC asked the four major rubber businesses (Jersey Standard, Firestone, Goodrich, Goodyear,) and the United States Rubber Company, to produce four hundred thousand tons of general-purpose synthetic rubber per year. Jersey Standard, Firestone, Goodrich, Goodyear, and the United States Rubber Company signed a patent and knowledge exchange agreement on December 19, 1941.³⁵ As a result, synthetic rubber facilities sprang up across the United States, and their combined scientific and technological knowledge aided in the development of synthetic rubber in the country. The United States had spent as

³³ Antiques and Auction News, "Tire Rationing during World War II."

³⁴ American Chemical Society, "U.S. Synthetic Rubber Program."

³⁵ American Chemical Society, "U.S. Synthetic Rubber Program."

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much money on its synthetic rubber effort as it had on the atomic bomb by the end of World War II.³⁶

While the Goodrich Tire Company was the largest synthetic rubber plant in the United States in the 1940s, they were not the first company to achieve success. On April 26, 1942, Firestone made the first synthetic rubber bundle for the U.S Synthetic Rubber Program, followed by Goodyear on May 18, 1942, United States Rubber Corporation on September 4, 1942, and Goodrich on November 27, 1942. These four factories produced 2,241 tons of synthetic rubber in 1942 alone. By 1945, the United States was manufacturing around 920,000 tons of synthetic rubber per year, with Government Rubber-Synthetic (GR-S) accounting for eighty-five percent of that total.



Figure 9. A group of scientists working together to create a general all-purpose synthetic rubber that could be produced on a commercial scale. Courtesy of American Chemical Society.³⁷

³⁶ “Technical Reports and Standards,” *Science Reference Services*, The Library of Congress, accessed March 22, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/trs/trschemical_rubber.html.

³⁷ American Chemical Society, “U. S. Synthetic Rubber Program.”



Figure 10. Goodrich Tire Company, the largest synthetic rubber plant in the United States in the 1940s Courtesy of Akron Postcards.³⁸

The four biggest companies (Jersey Standard, Firestone, Goodrich, Goodyear, and the United States Rubber Company) produced 547,500 tons per year on average.³⁹ The American synthetic rubber industry was a success. After the war ended, the United States continued to produce synthetic rubber as its main rubber source, as synthetic rubber was a better all-purpose alternative. While the four major tire companies had put aside their differences and worked together in solidarity during World War II in an effort to end the rubber crisis; after the war ended, the companies began to compete with each other once again.

³⁸ Thom Conte, “B. F. Goodrich Rubber Co.,” Akron Postcards, April 10, 2018, <https://akron.thomconte.com/b-f-goodrich-rubber-co/>.

³⁹ American Chemical Society, “U.S. Synthetic Rubber Program.”

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LOOK, OFFICER... I'VE BEEN RIDING ON B.F. GOODRICH TIRES MADE WITH SYNTHETIC RUBBER MORE THAN TWO YEARS

"In 1940 they sold thousands of Silvertowns made with more than half their rubber synthetic," said the Grand Union maintenance man to the WAAC. In fact, he's pointing to one of those tires, bought by his company to help get America's synthetic rubber program started. Grand Union reports wonderful results from these tires—in some cases they outwore natural rubber tires on the same vehicle. Two of them ran 7,000 miles more! Thus synthetic rubber passed its first great test.

The Army rides on synthetic rubber. Today, B. F. Goodrich is making tires for combat vehicles with *practically* synthetic. Already we are overcoming Germany's head start in synthetic rubber. But there still isn't enough for you. The Army and Navy need all the rubber they can get.

Delivery guaranteed in 1947. We can't say when your new car will be ready. But we can say that its tires will probably be made wholly, or partly, from synthetic rubber. So look for the best from B. F. Goodrich, the company that pioneered American synthetic rubber.

A few of the companies that bought Ameripal tires in 1940 and 1941
 Aetna Life Insurance Co. . . . American Airlines, Inc. . . .
 American Can Co. . . . Baltimore & Ohio Railroad . . . J. I. Case
 Co. . . . General Outdoor Advertising Co. . . . General Baking
 Co. . . . Gulf Oil Corporation . . . Geo. A. Harrel & Co. . . .
 Ingersoll-Rand Co. . . . Kellogg Company . . . New York
 Central System . . . New York Telephone Co. . . . Pat Mills
 Sales Corp. . . . Railway Express Agency . . . Secony-Vacuum
 Oil Co. . . . Standard Brands, Inc. . . . Swift &
 Company . . . The Texaco Co. . . . U. S. Gypsum
 Co. . . . Western Union Telegraph Co. . . . and
 many other important companies in commu-
 nities from coast to coast.

**In war or peace
 B.F. Goodrich
 FIRST IN RUBBER**

Figure 11. Pictured above is an ad that was created by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company stating that they offered the best synthetic tires on the market in an effort to promote their tires. Courtesy of Old Paper.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ "B. F. Goodrich Ad," Old Paper, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://paper.thomcont.com/b-f-goodrich/>.

The United States' development of its own synthetic rubber, a war-born material, evolved into one of humanity's most essential inventions at a time when much of the world was still reliant on the unstable natural rubber supply. While natural rubber is a sustainable source, because of its vulnerability, it wasn't always the most sustainable. Throughout the last century, natural rubber gradually lost prominence in favor of its synthetic equivalent, which is typically used in automotive tires. Synthetic rubber plays a large part in society, accounting for seventy percent of all rubber used in manufacturing and industry. GR-S accounts for a substantial amount of this rubber.⁴¹ Because the automobile industry is one of America's largest manufacturing sectors, synthetic rubber continues to play a critical role in the economy.

Ultimately, the United States suffered when it lost access to its natural rubber supply, as did its allies. However, a group of rubber research organizations worked diligently to overcome these obstacles by developing a general-purpose synthetic rubber that could be mass-produced on a large scale. These companies worked tirelessly across the United States, in partnership with government researchers and industrial laboratories, to develop and manufacture enough synthetic rubber to fulfill the demands of the United States and its allies during World War II, resulting in the Allied forces' triumph.

⁴¹ American Chemical Society, "U.S. Synthetic Rubber Program."

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The Recognition of the United States: How European Nations Recognized the Sovereignty of America

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The Recognition of the United States: How European Nations Recognized the Sovereignty of America

By Jesus Ruvalcaba

Abstract: The diplomacy between the United States and countries in Europe during the Revolutionary War (1775–1783) has been of note for historians throughout American history as one can see how the United States' foreign policy began to develop during the war due to international diplomacy. However, the specific discourse surrounding the diplomacy of American recognition has been lacking, in particular from the perspective of the European powers who formally recognized the United States as a sovereign country. The process of recognition is a vital part to the development of any country, both new and established. In addition to being vital, it is also beneficial. Yet how could recognition be beneficial for both countries, the recognized and the recognizee, at the same time? This article focuses on the perspective of three European countries (France, the United Provinces, and Great Britain) and key American diplomats to uncover the complex process of how the United States became a recognized country by major European powers. By examining the motives of each European country individually, one can see how the recognition of a new country is beneficial to established countries and how it falls within their desired foreign policy. Recognition and diplomacy also show the ambitions of certain political figures within the United States, as each individual had conflicting views on the development of the new American country.

The recognition of a country by those around the global community is an important step towards their development. Some of the requirements that are needed to be considered a sovereign

country are a permanent population, a defined territory, one government, and the ability to pursue the relations with other sovereign states, in addition to having the idea of being independent. The recognition of the state acknowledges the sovereignty of the newly formed entity, therefore making the country viable as a force to trade, create alliances, or even go to war with. Countries today continue to struggle to acquire that recognition from the global community.¹ However, what about the United States? Like all newly formed countries of today, the United States had to go through a similar process to be recognized by European powers in the eighteenth century. The United States declared independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776, however, the first official recognition of United States sovereignty by a European power did not come until years after following the American Revolution (1775–1783).

The first European power to recognize the United States was France, arguably the country's first European ally. A few years later, countries such as the United Provinces, and eventually Great Britain would also recognize the United States and its sovereignty. Even though the recognition of the United States was important for the Americans, the recognition of the new country allowed others (like France, the United Provinces, and Great Britain) to gain from American independence. The recognition gave the United States influence in decisions as a country, yet this would not have happened unless European countries gained from the recognition. This piece will concentrate on the French, Dutch, American, and British perspectives, as each of these offers a view of the war with the British and how American recognition related to that war. For the French, recognition meant the balancing of power. For the Dutch, recognition meant a revival of the once

¹ The recognition of a country is a subjective matter. While one country can recognize a new country, another can choose not to. Looking at the United Nations, since they are the global organizations in which a majority of all countries participate in global diplomacy, countries such as Palestine, Kosovo, Taiwan, and Western Sahara are a few of the countries that have not received recognition by the global organization, all for various reasons.

flourishing country whereas for the American revolutionaries, recognition meant liberty from the British empire. And for the British, recognition was a way for them to maintain their international status. By focusing on the process of American recognition, one can find an added layer to not just the diplomacy of the war, which primarily focuses on the American perspective, but to the status quo of the Western world, as it aids to understand why certain countries have not achieved recognition by already established countries.

The diplomacy of the United States has been well covered by various historians. One of these historians, Jonathan Dull, provides a detailed coverage of this diplomacy, putting it within the European context in order to understand how alliances and decisions were made during the American Revolution, as the previous history of American diplomacy was outdated.² However, historians do not focus on the recognition of the United States, let alone the process behind it. Instead, historians focus more on the broad events of diplomacy during the American Revolution or choose to focus on the diplomatic aspects that are required for their personal research. Thus, by focusing on the recognition of the United States, this paper will add to the existing discourse of diplomacy during the Revolutionary War, concentrating on the recognition of the United States, a part of history that is not discussed as much.

French Perspective

As previously mentioned, the process of recognition for the United States has not been an area of focus for historians. For the Franco-American alliance (1778–1783), however, the diplomacy between the two countries has been better discussed. For example, a large part of Jonathan Dull's book, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, published in 1985, focuses on the French

² Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (Yale University Press, 1985).

view of diplomacy in relation to the Revolutionary War. Historian Ronald Hoffman's 1981 book, *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778*, discusses the relationship of France and the United States leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Alliance in 1778, which recognized the United States as a country from the French side.³ For the French, there were three figures that dictated the recognition of the United States: the Count of Vergennes Charles Gravier (1719–1787), the Ambassador of France to the United States Conrad-Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval (1729–1790), and King Louis XVI (1754–1793). Between these three, the recognition of the United States occurred in a way that benefited the French and King Louis XVI's foreign policy. For the French, the recognition of the United States was not about recognizing the sovereignty of the new country, but rather, was a way to create a balance of power that weakened the influence and strength that the British empire held in both Europe and the North American colonies.

During the reign of King Louis XVI (r. 1774–1792), one of the aspects of French foreign policy was to maintain a balance of power within the European continent.⁴ However, as the eighteenth century progressed, British power expanded, creating an imbalance of powers within the European powers. The rise of revolutionary sentiment in the American Colonies provided the opportunity for King Louis XVI and France to exploit and decrease the influence the British had in North America and Europe. In a verbal response from King Louis XVI in early 1777, he expressed his support towards the revolutionary effort by his willingness to provide eight ships to defend the shores of the United States from the incoming British attacks along with allowing American sailors to use the ports within France, Spain, and the United Provinces.⁵ The intent

³ Ronald Hoffman, *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778* (University of Virginia Press,

⁴ Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, 33-40.

⁵ Charles Gravier, "The King's Answer to the American Commissioners, 13 January, 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, January 13, 1777, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-23-02-0097>.

of the French monarch was to weaken British power by removing a large portion of the British colonies in the Americas from their possession, while at the same time creating an informal alliance between the French, Spanish, and Dutch against the British in Europe.⁶

However, within this verbal response there is also hesitation from the French monarch to provide full support to the Americans for their war against the British. King Louis XVI recognized the strength of the British Navy, which was considerably larger than the French fleet. By outwardly supporting the American revolutionaries, the French placed themselves in a position to go to war directly with the British, a war which the country was not ready to take on considering they were still recovering from the high number of casualties during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763).⁷ The Americans noticed this skepticism from both the French monarch and the Count of Vergennes, Charles Gravier, in which, rather than it being a certain promise, French aid appeared to be superficial at least in regard to sending French ships to the American coast.⁸ For a majority of the French monarchy and governing body, helping the American cause—let alone recognizing the sovereignty of the newly formed country—was a large risk that would drive the French into a war that could potentially not provide any benefit.⁹

One of the supporters of the American cause was Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, the French ambassador to the United States. From the early stages of the Franco-American diplomatic

⁶ Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, 33–40

⁷ Gravier, “The King’s Answer to the American Commissioners, 13 January, 1777.”

⁸ American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, “The American Commissioners to Gérard, 14 January 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, January 14, 1777,

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⁹ American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, “The American Commissioners to Gérard, 14 January 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, January 14, 1777,

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-23-02-0102>.

relationship, Gérard became an advocate of the American cause, even providing funds to the American revolutionaries when the French monarchy did not.¹⁰ In order to attain more support from the French, the Americans needed to demonstrate their ability to support the French similarly to how the Americans were receiving help from the French and their allies. Whether it as through financial support (which was difficult considering the United States was a new country) or a strong defensive alliance (which was against the foreign policy the United States wanted to pursue), the United States had to demonstrate their ability to support the French in a way that aided France's foreign policy of balancing the powers in Europe by weakening the British.

Between September 19 and October 17, 1777, the Battle of Saratoga occurred between the Americans and the British. This battle was decisive in the process of attaining recognition from France. The United States defeated the British at Saratoga, showing all of Europe, in particular the French, that the United States had the ability to compete with the already established European powers. After this battle, there was an even greater urgency from the French to create an alliance with the United States, as the new country showed that it could defend its independence from the British. In his letter to the American Commissioners, Gérard opened by stating, "M. Gérard désirant d'avoir l'honneur de voir Messieurs Franklin, Deane et Lee demain matin [Mr. Gérard wishes to have the honor of seeing gentlemen. Franklin, Deane and Lee tomorrow morning]," in order to begin the process of creating a treaty between the United States and France that recognized the United States as a new country.¹¹ In addition to the ability to defend itself, the victory showed that the United States could be a worthy ally for the French against the

¹⁰ American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, "The American Commissioners to Gérard, 14 January 1777."

¹¹ Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, "Conrad-Alexandre Gérard to the American Commissioners 5 December, 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, December 5, 1777, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0176>.

British, thereby creating a balance of powers through alliances, which was a primary goal for French diplomacy at the time¹². In response, the Americans immediately dispatched diplomats to France to discuss the recognition of their sovereignty. Attaining the recognition of the United States as a sovereign nation showed other European powers that the United States was on the same level as them.¹³ And thus, the negotiations began over what would become the Treaty of Alliance (1778) between the French and Americans.

Within the Treaty of Alliance, the French managed to create a treaty that benefited them profoundly for recognizing the United States. For the Americans, the Treaty of Alliance had the French recognize the sovereignty of the United States while at the same time to receive more direct aid from the French.¹⁴ Even though the main purpose of the treaty was to recognize the United States as a country, for the French it was quite different. France took the opportunity to make the Treaty of Alliance a proper defense alliance in their favor against the British to create their version of the balance of powers. The first article within the treaty does not recognize the sovereignty of the United States, but rather it states that “the said United States, shall make a common cause and aid [to its allies] mutually.”¹⁵ This refers to the fact that if Great Britain was to go to war with France, then the United States had to support the French. The first acknowledgement that the treaty makes for the recognition of the United States is not

¹² Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, 34

¹³ The American Commissioners, “The American Commissioner to [Gérard] 20 December, 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, December 20, 1777, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0240>.

¹⁴ American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, Arthur Lee, John Adams, “The American Commissioners to [Gérard] 30 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, January 30, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0423>.

¹⁵ Gérard, Conrad-Alexandre, American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, “The Franco-American Treaty of Alliance, Article 1, 6 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, February 6, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0476>.

mentioned until Article 2, which is when the treaty directly states “the essential and direct End of the present defensive alliance is to maintain effectually the liberty, Sovereignty, and independence absolute and unlimited of the said United States.”¹⁶ Likewise, the treaty made it so that the United States could not end their war with Great Britain unless the French agreed to sue for peace as well.

Article 8 of the Treaty of Alliance states that “neither of the two parties shall conclude truce or peace with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the other first obtained,” creating a relationship between the French and Americans that made those of the new country somewhat reliant on the decisions of those in Europe, specifically France.¹⁷ This article is important regarding the sovereignty of the United States. Even though the French recognized the United States as an independent country, it is clear that the French were now attempting to have the United States as a satellite state (a formally independent country that remains under the political, economic, and military influence or control of another country), in which they had to rely on the French for decisions. This marked a change within the Franco-American diplomatic relationship, as the United States was no longer looking for recognition from the French as a sovereign country, but rather a self-reliant independent country.

¹⁶ Gérard, Franklin, Deane, Lee, Adams, “Treaty of Alliance with France (1778): Article 2,” National Archives, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-alliance-with-france>.

¹⁷ Gérard, Franklin, Deane, Lee, Adams, “Treaty of Alliance with France (1778): Article 8,” National Archives, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-alliance-with-france>.

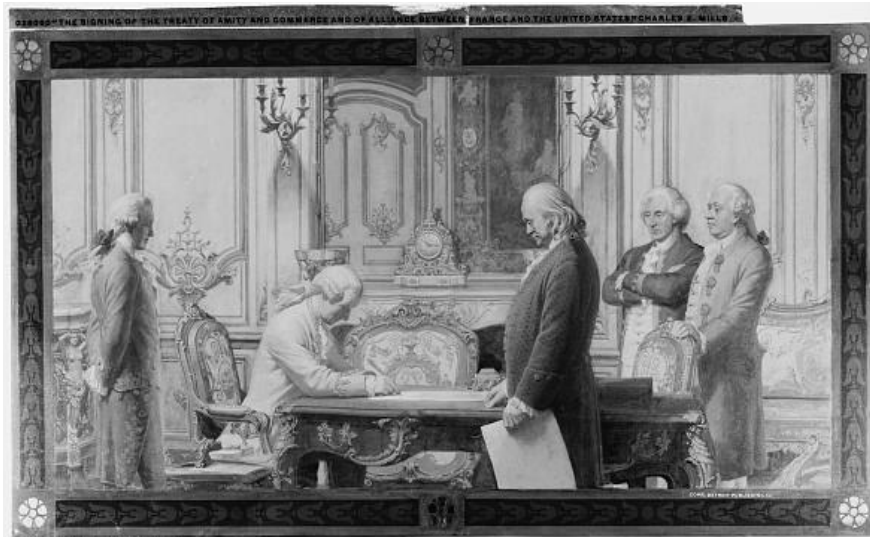


Figure 1. Signing of the Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.¹⁸

Once the Treaty of Alliance was ratified and signed, the Revolutionary War came to include the French. Yet, because of the language within the treaty, it made American independence more of a partial recognition of sovereignty rather than an acknowledgement of the United States as a country capable of making its own decisions. In a letter from John Adams (1735–1826) to Henry Laurens (1724–1792), then-President of the Continental Congress, Adams discusses how the King of Britain, George III (1738–1820), made another attempt to achieve peace without the involvement of the French.¹⁹ In the end, the Americans did not attempt to make peace with Britain due to the treaty that the Americans signed with the French. The alliance created a

¹⁸ Charles E. Mills, “The Signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce and of Alliance between France and the United States,” Library of Congress, January 1, 1970, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/det.4a26451/>.

¹⁹ John Adams, “From John Adams to Henry Laurens, 27 July 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, July 27, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-06-02-0249>.

situation between the French and Americans that made the United States reliant on France for major decisions regarding the Revolutionary War, therefore showing how France's foreign policy regarding the balance of power within Europe was being achieved. If the American revolutionaries could not make peace with Great Britain on their own without French consent, then the Americans would be forced to align with the French, regardless of any conflict that arose, creating a supposed balance of power in Europe between the French and the British.

It was not until a few years later, when the recognition of the United States by the Dutch began to seem feasible, that the United States and its diplomats were considered independent in making decisions. The United States needed more loans for the war, and Adams thought it best to approach the Dutch for that money in order to "render us less dependent on France."²⁰ Gravier and the French court feared that any acceptance of a loan by the United States from the Dutch would lead to an Anglo-Dutch war, a war between Great Britain and the Dutch, thereby denying the French from receiving aid from the Dutch for the Revolutionary War. With the Dutch at war with the British, the Dutch could not be able to financially aid France in their war against the British. In addition to this, France lost its grip on the United States and was not in charge of the decisions that the United States made in regard to its foreign policy. By allowing Adams to travel to the Hague, the capital of political and economic issues in the United Provinces, to negotiate with the Dutch for loans, the French were recognizing the United States' ability to make its own decisions, thus giving the new country a second form of recognition. For the French, the whole process of recognizing the United States as a country was part of their initial plan for balancing the power in Europe, which ultimately shifted to an attempt to make the United States a satellite country, but ended with France giving full power to the United States once the Americans looked at the Dutch for

²⁰ John Ferling, "John Adams, Diplomat," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 5, no. 2 (April 1994): 245.

economic help, allowing them to make their own decisions in foreign diplomacy.

Dutch Perspective

Unlike France, the United Province's foreign policy varied in many aspects, as the Dutch found themselves in a different position compared to the French. Even though the French were in a position of debt and struggling to keep up with the British during the Revolutionary War, the French monarchy was still able to compete with the British and create a balance of power in Europe. The Dutch, however, were on a decline from the Golden Age (1588–1672) of the previous century as their economic and political strength slowly diminished throughout Europe and their overseas colonies. The United Provinces found themselves in a position in which the country wanted to restore its once glorious self. Recognizing the United States as a country was a risky action for the Dutch compared to the French because of the risk of war with Great Britain that threatened the Dutch, which stalled their recognition of the United States as a sovereign country.

The main strength of the United Provinces lied in their economic superiority against the European countries, such as Great Britain, France, and Spain, who colonized the Americas, Africa, and Asia. As time passed, this economic power slowly diminished. By the eve of the Revolutionary War in the late eighteenth century, the Dutch economy was faltering compared to its golden age. Thus, for the Dutch, protecting their economy became the main priority and was crucial to the decision of recognizing the United States. In fact, recognizing the United States was a large risk due to two factors. For one, the recognition of the United States meant war with Great Britain, meaning Dutch trading ships were to be intercepted and trade decreased. The second reason was more dangerous to the preservation of the Dutch economy. By recognizing the United States as a sovereign country, the Dutch were inviting a new competitor into the global market, one with a vast abundance of resources and the ability to trade with many

European countries. In other words, the recognition of the United States as a sovereign country could have long-term repercussions for the Dutch.

The Dutch primarily feared the direct influence that a war could have on their economy. Dutch Ambassador to the United States, Charles William Frederick Dumas (1721–1796), better known as C. W. F. Dumas, made this clear in communications with the various representatives of the United States. In a letter to Benjamin Franklin on October 2, 1778, Dumas requested a declaration from the Americans that trade be secured between the two countries to “calm the Dutch fear that the British might succeed in having them excluded.”²¹ In order to safeguard the economy of their country, the Dutch needed assurances that their trade with the new country (the United States) would not only maintain steady, but also potentially increase. A treaty of commerce, similar to the one the United States made with the French, needed to be signed for the Dutch to recognize the United States as it “calm the Dutch fear that the British might succeed in having them excluded—in a whole or in part, directly or indirectly—from trade with the United States.”²²

Why was this treaty needed to ensure the stability of trade between the Dutch and the United States? During the Revolutionary War, the United States and the United Provinces maintained a healthy trade relationship despite the war between the United States and Great Britain, as the United States was using Dutch ports to trade and store their ships overseas.²³ However, the relationship between the Dutch and British deteriorated as the Revolutionary War progressed, for the Dutch were leaning towards

²¹ C. W. F. Dumas, “C. W. F. Dumas to Benjamin Franklin: A Translation, 2 October 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, October 2, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-07-02-0073-0002>.

²² Dumas, “C. W. F. Dumas to Benjamin Franklin: A Translation, 2 October 1778.”

²³ The American Commissioners, “The American Commissioners to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, 30 November 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, November 30, 1777, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0150>.

supporting the Americans and French rather than remaining neutral.²⁴ The primary factor that restricted Dutch actions was the threat of war with the British. In the letter that Dumas sent to Franklin, the British intention of weakening the Americans with the restriction of trade was anticipated.²⁵

In 1780, however, war broke out between the Dutch and British. This war was separate from the Revolutionary War that the Americans and French were fighting. This war was also a crucial point. Since this war was separate from the War of Independence that the Americans and French were fighting, the Dutch could sue for peace in their war with the British at any point because they were not part of the Treaty of Alliance that the French and Americans created requiring the consent of both countries who signed the treaty. The effect that peace between the Dutch and the British would mean the British could once more focus on the war in North America, rather than having to split their resources between two wars. This was harmful for both the United States and France as they both had stakes in the outcome of the Revolutionary War.

Yet, there was still the long-term effect that the recognition of the United States had on the Dutch, leading to the United Provinces hesitation of recognition. With the United States being a sovereign country, they would be able to trade with whomever they pleased and not rely on the British, potentially leading to the Dutch losing that part of the trade due to the United States' ability to trade its natural resources, directly competing with the Dutch in many aspects of the trade market. In a letter from Adams to the President of Congress, Samuel Huntington (1786–1796), Adams claims the Dutch will “find a powerful rivalry from that maritime

²⁴ Though this source is closer to the time period in which the Dutch Republic recognized the United States as a country, it still reflects the sentiment the Dutch felt the years prior to this development. John Adams, “From John Adams to John Jay, 26 November 1781,” Founders Online, National Archives, November 26, 1781, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-12-02-0054>.

²⁵ Dumas, “C. W. F. Dumas to Benjamin Franklin: A Translation, 2 October 1778.”

people, the Americans.”²⁶ This competition led to the United Provinces’ hesitation in recognizing the United States, as this competition would lead to a loss instead of a gain. Within this same letter, Adams questioned the right of the Dutch to own the Spice Islands (the Maluku Islands, an archipelago east of Indonesia), which were a large part of the Dutch economy for centuries (1620–1810).²⁷ Even though it was not intentional, Adams tried to establish that the main goal of the country was to be an economic participant. Adams directly challenged the Dutch Republic’s trade, which made the Dutch question whether or not the recognition of the United States truly was beneficial to them. In a letter written in 1782, Adams notes that “hopes have never been strong in anybody, of inducing the Republick [sic] to a sudden Alliance with France and America.”²⁸

It was not until the Dutch-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce, signed on September 6, 1782, that the United Provinces’ secured economic security with the United States. The treaty established that ships from each country would be protected by both countries, in addition to allowing merchants from each respective country to trade freely within the other’s borders.²⁹ The Dutch gained the economic security it wished from the new country, while the United States achieved recognition from a second European country. Even though the United Provinces decline continued after the Anglo-Dutch and Revolutionary Wars, this treaty ensured the continual commercial relationship between the Dutch and the United States. In a completely separate effort

²⁶ John Adams, “I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780,” Founders Online, National Archives, April 19, 1780, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-09-02-0115-0002>.

²⁷ Adams, “I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780.”

²⁸ John Adams, “From John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, 21 February 1782,” Founders Online, National Archives, February 21, 1782, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-12-02-0162>.

²⁹ John Adams, States General of the Netherlands, “VIII. Final Text of the Dutch-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce: A Translation, 6 September 1782,” Founders Online, National Archives, September 6, 1782, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-13-02-0162-0011-0002>.

from the Americans, the French used the United Province's recognition of the United States as a way to prevent peace between the Dutch and British, but also as a way to not make France reliant on the Dutch via the creation of a treaty.³⁰ As both wars progressed, the Dutch started to both fear and rely on the French, as the French were increasingly more involved in Dutch affairs.

American Perspectives

Regardless, even though the recognition of the United States eventually became important for both the French and the Dutch in their own views, the recognition of the new country was arguably not as important as for the Americans themselves. The Americans were the ones constantly pushing for this recognition as it was important for them to be thought of as an actual country that could make their own decisions, independent from the British.

In respect to the two cases of the French and the Dutch, there were two figures in American history that spearheaded the process of recognition: Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. Both Franklin and Adams were vital to securing the recognition of the United States by the French and Dutch. Franklin was the leading figure of the American Commissioners who negotiated with the French and eventually became the leading diplomat of the United States to France. Adams, on the other hand, became the American diplomat for the Dutch after Adams began to question the intentions of the French with the United States.³¹ Each was an ideal diplomat for the respective countries they were representing, and they allowed the United States to establish its own influence in international affairs within the first few years of the country's independence.

³⁰ James Hutson, *John Adams and the Diplomacy of the American Revolution*, (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1980).

³¹ Ferling, 241.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

The diplomatic life of Benjamin Franklin has been subject to much discussion. Historian and author, Jonathan Dull, provides a discussion on how Franklin became a diplomat and explores his actions while acting as the diplomat of the United States to France.³² Historian Maurice Couve de Murville even makes the claim that “no one today would seriously question... one the greatest diplomats of all time.”³³ Even though the statement by de Murville could be heavily debated, there is no denying that Franklin was a vital player in securing the French recognition of the United States as a country. Franklin led the negotiations between the French and Americans for the American side, constantly attempting to place the United States in the best possible position in any given situation. Whether it was following French orders or pushing for American demands, Franklin was the man leading the American Commissioners, gaining the respect from those high up in the French socioeconomic hierarchy, such as Gravier.

One of the larger aspects that allowed Franklin to be such an influence in the diplomacy between the United States and France was the recognition of Franklin’s position within the United States. Being highly thought of throughout the United States by his peers, Franklin was well versed in the state the country was in. This sentiment of Franklin’s knowledge was shown by his friend Jacques Barbeu-Dubourg (1709–1779), French physician, botanist, writer, translator and publisher. In a letter Barbeu-Dubourg wrote to Franklin, he questioned why he, Barbeu-Dubourg, should be the one to bring up the American cause to the French court:

³² Jonathan R. Dull, “Franklin the Diplomat: The French Mission,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 72, no. 1 (1982): 1-76.

³³ Maurice Couve de Murville, “Benjamin Franklin: The Diplomat and Journalist,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 100, no. 4 (1956): 316-325.

Comment m'ingerer dans une suite
d'affaires majeures et de negociations
importantes sur la simple parole d'un
inconnu, soi disant porteur de lettres qu'il ne
saurait représenter? Comment m'annoncer
moi même à quantité de gens en place,
connus et inconnus, pour traiter avec eux des
affaires d'un peuple étranger sans la
moindre lettre de croyance de sa part?³⁴

[How can I be part of major important
affairs and negotiations of the word of a
stranger, who sends letters of those who he
can't represent? How can I announce myself
to so many people, known or unknown, to
try and deal with affairs of unknown people
without a single belief for themselves?]

By doing this, Barbeau-Dubourg gave Franklin the impression that he had to be one to go to France to represent the United States, as he, as a Frenchman, could not represent well the people of a nation unknown. The Frenchmen recognized that Franklin was knowledgeable in the affairs of the soon to be new country.

Before Franklin left to represent the United States in France, he was already leading diplomatic relations for the United States. Right after the United States declared itself independent from Great Britain, Franklin instructed American Founding Father, merchant, politician, and diplomat, and a supporter of American independence, Silas Deane (1737–1789), to tell the courts of Europe, with more emphasis on the French court, that the colonies

³⁴ Jacques Barbeau-Dubourg, "To Benjamin Franklin from Jacques Barbeau-Dubourg, June 10–July 2, 1776," Founders Online, National Archives, June 10–July 2, 1776, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-22-02-0274>.

were separated from the British.³⁵ This letter, intended for Deane, demonstrates Franklin's ability to delegate tasks for the recognition of the United States, such as him ordering Deane to "immediately communicate the piece (Declaration of the Congress for a final separation of Great Britain) to the Court of France, and send copies of it to the other Courts of Europe," as he was immediately attempting to gain support from European courts. Eventually, Congress sent Franklin, alongside American diplomat Arthur Lee (1740–1792), to France to join Deane who had been in France since July 1776, to discuss how the French could help the war effort. Together, the three came to be known as the American Commissioners, a group of diplomats who represented the United States when discussing foreign policy with other countries, though Deane would be forced to leave under a veil of suspicion that he was aiding the British. The American Commissioners, led by Franklin, were the ones in France negotiating the Treaty of Alliance of 1778, making the French recognition of the United States official.

As previously mentioned, the Battle of Saratoga was a crucial turning point of the Revolutionary War, as this battle demonstrated to the French the United States' ability to be a worthy ally against the British. Following the battle, Conrad Alexandre-Gérard immediately sent a letter to the American Commissioners to discuss the creation of an alliance between the French and the Americans. Franklin saw this as the perfect opportunity to receive recognition from the French. The American Commissioners quickly responded to the letter stating that they were "desirous of a conference with you [Alexandre-Gérard] on a subject, that appears to us of importance."³⁶ For the Americans,

³⁵ Committee of Secret Correspondence, "The Committee of Secret Correspondence to [Silas Deane], 8 July 1776," Founders Online, National Archives, July 8, 1776, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-22-02-0298>.

³⁶ The American Commissioners, "The American Commissioners to Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, 4 March 1778," Founders Online, National Archives, March 4, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-26-02-0026>.

this conference was for the recognition of a sovereign country that can make its own decisions without approval of any power. However, within this letter, there is a tone of desperation. In sending this letter, the Americans are portraying an image that they need the recognition of the French over any other aspect of an alliance, such as defense or economic support. This desperation for recognition allowed the French to create a treaty, the Treaty of Alliance, that benefited them more than the Americans. Additionally, this desperation appeared once more when the Americans began discussing the details within the Treaty of Alliance and were ultimately accepting of the terms. They did, however, require that “Sovereignty...be inserted in the two places propos’d [sic].”³⁷ The Americans once more were focused on the recognition aspect instead of creating a treaty that portrayed an image of the new country as an equal to established countries. Eventually, this led to a split within the American dignitaries as to how diplomacy should be done. In particular, it created disagreements between Franklin and Adams.

While Adams wanted more activity to be done so that the United States would not be so reliant on France, Franklin, in the eyes of Adams, was only attempting to please the French court. Adams stated that Franklin “loves his Ease, hates to offend, and seldom gives any Opinion until obliged to do it.”³⁸ Adams did not enjoy Franklin’s method of diplomacy, as he felt the tactic of pleasing people was making the United States more of a colony to France rather than an independent country. Eventually, Franklin’s image, in the eyes of Adams, deteriorated leading him to insult and question Franklin’s ability. In a letter to American lawyer, politician, and Founding Father, Thomas McKean (1734–1817), Adams described Franklin as a “Wit, and a Humourist... he is not a sufficient Statesman, he knows too little of American Affairs or

³⁷ The American Commissioners, “The American Commissioners to Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, 4 March 1778.”

³⁸ John Adams, “From John Adams to Samuel Adams, 7 December 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, December 7, 1778, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-07-02-0175>.

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the Politicks [sic] of Europe, and takes too little Pains to inform himself of Either.”³⁹ At this point, Adams held the belief that Franklin was doing nothing to help the American cause. Instead, according to Adams, Franklin was protecting French interests which were to keep the United States in a position of dependency on the French. As soon as Adams got the opportunity to do so, he looked for other ways to raise money so the United States could be a sovereign country that did not economically rely on a European power.

John Adams (1735–1826)

John Adams, one the original founding fathers, became a diplomat for the United States to European countries to secure alliances and financial aid. Although he is an important factor as to why the United States managed to secure recognition from both the French and the Dutch, his ability as a diplomat has been under heavy scrutiny. Historian James Hutson even goes as far to say that Adams was not crucial at all, claiming that Adams was not important in securing the recognition of the United States by the Dutch.⁴⁰ However, historian John Ferling and his depiction of how Adams should be represented as a diplomat is a more accurate method to understanding Adams and his viewpoints on recognition because of the bias Hutson exhibits against Adams.⁴¹ Though the

³⁹ John Adams, “From John Adams to Thomas McKean, 20 September 1779,” Founders Online, National Archives, september 20, 1779, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-08-02-0112>.

⁴⁰ Hutson claims that Adams had nothing to do in the recognition of the Dutch, even comparing Adams to a “man on a raft, being borne towards his objective by powerful but imperceptible currents.” Hutson focuses more on the unreliable behavior of Adams, such as him being “presumptuous and arrogant,” rather than the goals that Adams wanted to achieve (even though those goals were acknowledged). James Hutson, *Letters of a Distinguished American: Twelve Essays by John Adams on American Foreign Policy, 1780*, (Library of Congress, Washington, 1978), 108-109.

⁴¹ Ferling’s portrayal of Adams was a reexamination of how Adams was shown in historiography. Hutson’s view of Adams, for example, was one of the

recognition of the United States was important for Adams, he was more concerned with the overall well-being of the country and its ability to be recognized as a sovereign country.

For Adams, the most important goal for the new country was economic prosperity. When discussing with the President of Congress, Adams stated that the American Revolution would have a large effect on Europe: “None of the Powers of Europe, and few of the most knowing Politicians, have considered, what Effect this Revolution will have on the general [economic] system of Europe.”⁴² With this statement, the economic system of Europe was included in what the American Revolution influenced. In the same letter, Adams went into detail about how the recognition of the United States would influence the developing world system. By claiming that “in this branch of commerce, the Dutch would find a powerful Rivalry, from that maritime people the Americans,” Adams directly states that one way the new country would influence European economies is through competition.⁴³ By having the United States as a recognized country, then other countries would trade with them. Automatically, the United States, by becoming its own independent country was not only weakening the British economy to an extent, but it also allowed other European countries to find new trade options.

In addition to this, Adams acknowledged that the recognition of the United States meant that the United States would have control over the natural resources that are available within their country. One of the reasons as to why the United States were a competitor to the established European nations is due to the plethora of natural resources. The United States, for example, could control trade within the Americas, as the influence of

perspectives Ferling attempted to change, demonstrating that Adams beforehand was viewed unfairly. The purpose of this article was to “reconsider Adams by exploring his motives and behavior during the War of Independence through the prism of his comprehension of how to serve America’s national interests.” Ferling, “John Adams, Diplomat,” 227-252.

⁴² Adams, “I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780.”

⁴³ Adams, “I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780.”

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European countries was waning.⁴⁴ Furthermore, all of the British possessions in the colonies that aided in building up the British economy would belong to the United States as soon as they conceded the war. According to Adams:

With the Independence of America, we must give up our fisheries 'on the banks of Newfoundland in the American seas.' Supposing this true, which it is not at the present, but our infatuation in continuing the war may make it so, what follows? If Britain lose them, who will gain them? France and America. Have not France and America then as urgent a motive to contend for the gain, as we prevent the loss?⁴⁵

With this letter, Adams made it clear that the former possessions belong to the United States and, to a certain extent, France as well. This transfer of possessions that would occur once the British lost the war and recognized the United States as a sovereign nation made the United States a prosperous commercial nation. However, in the view of Adams, as we will see, this was in danger because of the French.

As previously mentioned, there were two parts in the process of gaining France's recognition of the United States. There was the actual recognition during the Treaty of Alliance in 1778, in which France recognized the United States on paper, and the second came in the form of the recognition of the sovereignty of the United States and its ability to make its own decisions without consulting other countries. The second form of recognition came to be because Adams recognized how the French were treating the Americans in regard to foreign policy. Adams acknowledged that the relationship and alliance between the United States and France

⁴⁴ Adams, "I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780."

⁴⁵ Hutson, 10.

“naturally coincide with their several views and interests, as soon as American Independence shall be acknowledged by the power of Europe.”⁴⁶ However, in Adams perspective, this relationship between the two countries was one sided. He realized that the United States was developing as a nation reliant on France instead of growing as a self-sufficient country: “America will naturally wish, while she is rising from her infant state into opulence and power, to cover her dominions under the protection of France.”⁴⁷ In the area of commerce, if the United States were to be reliant on the protection of their ships by the French navy, then, by proxy, American trade is reliant on the French rather than being an independent network. The goal that was set by the United States early on was to be a country that did not participate in European wars, but rather a country that traded with whomever wished to do so, as stated by Adams when he said “but it will not be the interest of America to go to war with any power of Europe, it will certainly be her interest to trade with every power of Europe.”⁴⁸ The alliance that was created between the French and the Americans prevented this goal from occurring. If the French did not want to protect the American ships from trading with a country, then the original policy regarding trade that the United States wanted to implement was at risk. Thus, this arising situation led Adams to look at other countries for financial aid, rather than completely relying on the French.

The opportunity came for Adams when he left France for the United Provinces on July 27, 1780. Though it was against the wishes of Gravier and Franklin, Adams thought it crucial to seek a loan from the Dutch, while at the same time establishing diplomatic relations with other countries. In a letter to the President of Congress, Adams wrote, “I am sure, that a Loan might

⁴⁶ Adams, “I. To the President of Congress, No. 49, 19 April 1780.”

⁴⁷ Hutson, 3.

⁴⁸ Hutson, 6.

be obtained, by any one, with Power of Congress.”⁴⁹ This statement from Adams is important for two reasons. First, it established that the loan the United States needed could be obtained. Second, and arguably more important, is Adams’ claim that the United States ultimately had the power to decide who it traded with. By using the phrase “with Power of Congress,” Adams clarified that the ultimate power over national decisions rested with the government of the United States without the consultation of the French. Here, Adams began to separate the United States from France.

Even though Adams pushed for the loan to establish the recognition of the United States, the loan fell through. The capture of Henry Laurens (1723–1792), an American political leader involved in negotiating Dutch support for the Revolutionary War, by the British in 1780 made tensions rise between the Dutch and the English. This meant that if the United Provinces did give the loans to the United States, then the Dutch were going directly against the British crown and war would break out between the two.⁵⁰ Even though the Dutch public was in favor of the Americans because, according to Adams, there was a “Spirit of Resentment against the English,” the Dutch were not interested in going to war against the English.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Adams had accomplished his goal of attaining recognition by the Dutch, showing that Americans were not reliant on France but an independent country. Instead of having to entrust France to take action, the United States could be self-reliant with its decisions, such as looking for loans and creating alliances with other countries. The involvement of Adams in the diplomacy of the United States aided them in being recognized as a sovereign and independent country, rather than a sovereign but dependent one.

⁴⁹ John Adams, “From John Adams to the President of Congress Vol. 1, no 14 August 1780,” Founders Online, National Archives, August 1780, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-10-02-0033>.

⁵⁰ Hutson, 79-80.

⁵¹ Adams, “From John Adams to the President of Congress 14 January, 1781.”

British Recognition

Regardless of how important the recognition of the United States by the French and Dutch were, the ultimate form of recognition came from Great Britain. Although France was the first major European power to recognize the United States and Dutch recognition established the United States as its own independent country that was not reliant on France, the British recognition of the United States finalized the Revolutionary War and made US sovereignty official to the rest of Europe. The language of the treaty between Great Britain, the United States, and France is something of note. The Treaty of Paris (1783) was in a way how the British asserted its continued dominance over the Americans, even if the treaty granted what the United States wanted: sovereignty and independence.

Within the preamble of the Treaty of Paris, the recognition of sovereignty of the United States still coincides with the idea that the United States was reliant on France. Great Britain notes that a treaty, the Treaty of Peace, with the United States was agreed upon beforehand, but the Treaty of Paris was not finalized until peace between the British and French was agreed upon. The Treaty of Paris stated,

To constitute the treaty of peace proposed to be concluded between the crown of Great Britain and the United States, *but which treaty was not to be concluded until terms of peace should be agreed upon between Great Britain and France*, and his Britannic Majesty should be ready to conclude such treaty accordingly.⁵²

⁵² "Treaty Of Paris," A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875, Library of Congress. Accessed December 10, 2021, <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=008%2Fllsl008.db&recNum=93>, emphasis added.

The Recognition of the United States

This statement affirmed the previously mentioned Article 8 of the Treaty of Alliance.⁵³ With the inclusion of the provision that the Treaty of Paris could not be finalized until the French agreed to its terms, Great Britain made the United States appear to the rest of the European powers that they were not at a point in which they could be self-reliant, but rather were still in need of the presence of a European power. Although the purpose of the Treaty of Paris was to recognize the United States as a country, the treaty itself still questioned whether the new country had complete sovereignty or not.



Figure 3. Signing of the Treaty of Paris. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.⁵⁴

This was not the only location within the Treaty of Paris where the sovereignty of the United States was questioned. Within

⁵³ Gérard, Franklin, Deane, Lee, Adams, “Treaty of Alliance with France (1778): Article 8.”

⁵⁴ C. Seiler, “Signing the Preliminary Treaty of Peace at Paris, November 30, 1782,” Library of Congress, accessed May 6, 2022, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002722861/>.

Article 1 of the treaty, where Great Britain recognized the United States, there was doubt created regarding the recognition of the United States by other countries. As the wording of the article states,

His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States... to be free, sovereign, independent States; that he treats with them as such; and for himself, his heirs and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof.⁵⁵

This statement within the treaty establishes the idea that the United States were property of the British crown up until the Treaty of Paris was signed. This had various effects in regard to the recognition of the United States. For one, the image of the United States as an independent country could be debated. There was a perception that what the United States had attained (sovereignty) was only achieved because the King of Great Britain relinquished his control of the American colonies, instead of the image in which the United States earned its independence. Likewise, this statement created an idea that all of the previous treaties and negotiations that the Americans had with countries (such as France and the United Provinces) were void. If Great Britain was claiming that the United States were not independent until the King said they were in 1783, then recognition by the French and Dutch in the years prior were invalidated. Once more, the British were attempting to devalue the recognition of the United States by diminishing the importance of having them as an ally within those treaties. For the British, this was an effort to limit the effects of losing their colonies. By portraying American independence as an act of benevolence on behalf of the British crown, the British were maintaining their

⁵⁵ "Treaty Of Paris," A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875.

reputation around the world and elevating their negotiation power with other countries.

Conclusion

The recognition of the United States was not only beneficial for the new country itself and its reputation, but also for the countries that recognized it. There was an interactivity in place that influenced at what point and how the United States achieved recognition from each country. By examining the French, Dutch, and British perspectives in recognizing the United States, one can see various factors that influenced each country's decision in recognizing the United States. For the French, the value of a worthy ally to maintain a balance of power in Europe was sufficient for recognition. Though they recognized the United States in a treaty in 1778, the French considered the new country more as an independent French colony. This was the situation up until 1780, when the United States looked to negotiate with other countries for loans instead of just being reliant on the French. In the case of the United Provinces, the main worry of the country was the economic influence that the recognition of the United States would cause on their own trade market. By recognizing the new country, the Dutch not only gained a new trade competitor, but also started a war with Great Britain, one of their largest trade partners. Eventually, war broke out between the Dutch and British in 1781, making the recognition of the United States appear more favorable to the public of the United Provinces as a whole as it allowed them to have another trade partner and preserve their economic empire for slightly longer.

With the British, the process of recognition was difficult. If the British crown recognized the thirteen colonies as an independent country, they would lose possession of what was arguably their most valuable colony. However, the Revolutionary War reached a point in which continuing the war effort was not wise, leading the British to formally recognize the United States with the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Within the treaty, the British

attempted to reduce the importance of recognition by positing that the British allowed the United States to be an independent country, rather than recognizing that the Americans fought and defeated the British in a war for independence.

Though the recognition of the United States was a priority for all Americans, there were conflicts within the American camp between some of the leading figures. Benjamin Franklin, for example, was an individual who advocated primarily for the recognition of the United States via treaty, regardless of the position the country found itself in. John Adams, on the other hand, supported the idea of establishing a solid foundation among European countries during the process of recognition, rather than being reliant on any one European country. Even with the infighting, the main goal for all Americans was recognition. The process of recognition is difficult not only within the country attempting to be independent, but also within the countries who debate whether or not the proposed country is legitimate. By examining the process and difficulties surrounding the recognition of the United States, one can better understand why countries today still have not been recognized by the global community.

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Uprooted: Doorway Gardens and African Plant Cultivation in the Colonial Atlantic World

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Uprooted: Doorway Gardens and African Plant Cultivation in the Colonial Atlantic World

By Brittany Mondragon

Abstract: Approximately twelve million enslaved African people were uprooted from their homes and sent to the New World to work as free forced labor on plantation fields. Meanwhile, African plants also made their own triangular voyage across the Atlantic as slave ship captains gathered provisions for the seafaring journey or Africans stowed away food as they embarked on an unknown and horrifying journey. While attention on the transatlantic trade nexus often focuses on food and cash crops traveling between Europe and the Americas, several different produce of African origins were transplanted in America and often found in enslaved people's provision gardens. These provision gardens provided enslaved men and women a mild form of independence as they cultivated their own food, often consisting of produce from Africa, and sold the surplus locally to the community. Examining the history of enslaved people's provision gardens is an overlooked but significant aspect of slavery as it adds to the discourse on the Columbian Exchange, enslaved Black culture, and the botanical knowledge of enslaved African men and women.

*SUFFICE not this; to every slave assign
Some mountain-ground: or, if waste broken land
To thee belong, that broken land divide.
This let them cultivate, one day, each week.¹
- The Sugar-Cane (1764)*

Between 1525 and 1866, over twelve million African people were forced onto slave ships to work on plantation fields across the Atlantic. In the following years, hundreds of thousands more New World-born Black people were internally trafficked in the Americas.² Most performed hard manual labor in the fields, cultivating food and cash crops for the colonies and their motherlands. The traditional historical narrative of the colonial triangle trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas stresses the importance of certain crops, such as tobacco and sugar from the Americas, while neglecting to consider the ecological impact of others. Moreover, many contemporary scholars recognize that many Europeans intentionally and unintentionally crossed European and American plants over the ocean on their voyages to the New World and back to Europe.³ Recently, scholars have reconsidered the traditional triangle trade narrative; however, it continues to persist in the popular consciousness and suggests that the abundance of crops and other materials was produced and exchanged between Europe and the Americas while Africa primarily provided exploited gold and commodified humans. This narrative dismisses Africa's contribution to the ecological and botanical trade that occurred in the colonies starting as early as the

¹ James Grainger, "The Sugar-Cane," Digital Grainger: An Online Edition of The Sugar-Cane, 1764, lines 445 - 448, <https://digital-grainger.github.io/grainger/texts/full-text.html>.

² Slave Voyages is the largest public database to date archiving slave and ship records of the transatlantic slave trade. "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Estimates," Slave Voyages, accessed January 3, 2022, https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates?selected_tab=timeline.

³ Referring to the works of Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* and *The Columbian Exchange*, later discussed in this work, and the more recent scholarship of Judith Carney and Londa Schiebinger.

sixteenth century. Just as millions of enslaved people were uprooted from their homes in Africa and transplanted to the Americas, African plants also made their own triangular voyage across the Atlantic.



Figure 1. *Hortus Cliffortianus Frontispiece* by Jan Wandelaar (1690–1759) (left) in *Hortus Cliffortianus* by Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) published in 1738. On the right is a close-up of the image showing the personification of Africa holding an aloe plant and Asia in Turkish dress carrying a coffee tree. Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks Museum.⁴

Unfortunately, Africa continues to be a “Dark Continent,” though not in the way European colonists used the term which was

⁴ Jan Wandelaar, *Hortus Cliffortianus Frontispiece*, in *Hortus Cliffortianus* by Carl Linnaeus, 1738, accessed January 26, 2022, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/botany-of-empire/subscriptions-dedications-and-patrons/hortus-cliffortianus>.

to denote what they perceived as an elusive and untamed landscape.⁵ Rather, Africa continues to be relegated to the shadows of world history. Scholarship on Africa resides on the periphery of global history with the presumption that African peoples hardly accomplished anything notable before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1471 or the establishment of the slave trade at the end of the fifteenth century. Recent discourse on African agriculture suggests, however, that Africans accomplished independent domestication of animals and food crops thousands of years before Muslim caravans headed to the Sub-Sahara in the fifth century and before the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.⁶ In reality, though often unrecognized, Africa produces over a hundred species of global food crops, including watermelon, plantains, okra, groundnuts, rice, palm oil, coffee, black-eyed peas, millet, and yams.⁷

⁵ Often referred to as the “Dark Continent” by European colonists, Africa represented many negative tropes in early modern Europe and became a rhetorical ground for the binary depiction between civility and savagery, progress and backwardness, and Europe versus the Other. However, this depiction was only one of several that archeologists Jean and John Comaroff have identified. Other depictions included “Mother Africa,” which depicted Africa as a bountiful landscape needing to be cultivated and whose resources could be extracted. Another allegory was the “Noble Savage,” and the belief that Christian missionaries’ need to save African peoples through religious conversion to bring them closer to civility and modern progress. Comaroff, Jean., and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol 1 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 87.

⁶ Judith Ann Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 6.

⁷ Carney and Rosomoff, 20-21.



Figure 2. Map showing the natural vegetation of Africa. Courtesy of A North Carolina History Online Resource.⁸

⁸ *Natural Vegetation of Africa*, A North Carolina History Online Resource (ANCHOR), accessed April 21, 2022, public domain, <https://www.ncpedia.org/media/map/map-africa-showing>.

Africa and its peoples are often depicted monolithically when, in actuality, the landscapes are as diverse as the population. Situated in the middle of the Equator, Africa extends beyond both the Tropic of Cancer in the northern hemisphere and the Tropic of Capricorn in the southern hemisphere (*Figure 2*). The changes in latitude manifest a wide range of climates and ecosystems from subtropical Mediterranean zones in the most northern and southern points, vast deserts and grasslands across the Tropic latitudes, and dense rainforests at the Equator. The broad range of climates promotes diverse flora and fauna across the continent, many of which African people learned to cultivate and domesticate over thousands of years. In fact, historical geographer Judith Carney identified over sixty food crops of African origin, such as yams, okra, watermelon, and groundnuts in her 2011 work, *In the Shadow of Slavery*. Moreover, she notes various non-African origin crops were successfully established and nativized in Africa, such as coffee and the plantain, long before the Portuguese landed in present-day Ghana on the West Coast of Africa in 1471.⁹

The cultivation of crops not native to Africa before the arrival of Europeans forces scholars to reckon with the prospect that African people significantly influenced cross-culture world trade before Europeans set sail in the fifteenth century. It also exposes Western hegemony over food production and refutes the fallacy of Africa as a “backward” continent dependent on others for food, previously suggested by environmental historian Alfred Crosby (1931–2018).¹⁰ Historian Philip Curtin expressed this when discussing the general trade that occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa. Though he notes Sub-Saharan Africa was more isolated from Afro-Eurasia commerce due to the vast arid desert, long-distance trade continued to exist. In his work, Curtin challenges the assumption of Africa as progressively dormant:

⁹ Carney and Rosomoff, 20-21.

¹⁰ Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, 30th anniversary edition (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 2003), 185.

One of the myths of African history is the old view that commerce in Africa was largely pioneered by outsiders who penetrated a stagnant continent... When the European ‘explorers’ of the nineteenth century *did* [sic] travel from the coast into the interior, they did so with the help and guidance of established African merchants who were already in the business of long-distance trade.¹¹

The Anglocentric myth that Europeans initiated trading in Africa strips African people of their long-held history of trade and commercialism.

The belief that Europeans also taught African nations proper agrarian techniques also remains prominent despite the more recent rise of scholarly attention on Africa’s agricultural development and botanical influences in the transatlantic nexus. As Curtin argues though, African merchants established routes all across Africa and through the Sahara that eventually connected to roads in Afro-Eurasia several centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese. Among these trade commodities were food and produce items such as dates, manioc, palm oil and wine, watermelon, gourds, wheat, sorghum, and cowpeas.¹²

Native-African crops—carried across knowingly or unknowingly by Europeans, enslaved Africans, or livestock—sailed across the Atlantic and prospered in the new soil of enslaved Africans’ provision gardens, Maroon communities, and sometimes in the plantation fields themselves.¹³ The need to observe Africa as an element of the intercontinental botanical exchange is dire as it

¹¹ Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 15-16.

¹² Curtin, 20; Nehemia Levtzion and Jay Spaulding, *Medieval West Africa: Views from Arab Scholars and Merchants* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 7, 11, 31.

¹³ A Maroon was a term given to a self-liberated enslaved person of the West Indies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who escaped from slavery and lived in communities found hidden in the jungles and mountains. A Maroon could also be a descendent from a self-liberated enslaved person.

challenges the predominant narrative of Atlantic world crop cultivation. On the plantations, enslaved Africans endured the drudgery of the plantation work regime while also producing a rich culture all their own that is embodied in the food they produced and prepared for themselves. Exploring the movement of the African plant diaspora is to glimpse, through a new lens of understanding, the slave trade, plantation societies, and enslaved people's fortitude and constitution to survive on unknown soil. In addition to analyzing the recent studies on this topic, this research hopes to expand on the current work on enslaved Africans' contributions to the botanical legacy of the New World by taking a closer look at provision gardens and the food they prepared in the greater colonial Caribbean and South America.¹⁴

Rethinking the Columbian Exchange

Over the course of fifty years, scholars have continued to enhance our understanding of the botanical exchange of the Colonial Era from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century by unearthing the impact of foreign plants and animals once they landed in the Americas. The most significant shift in environmental history and its consideration of nature's impact on human history was Alfred W. Crosby's influential 1972 work, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, succeeded by his other notable work, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900*, published in 1986. Crosby recognized that many European plants and animals were intentionally brought to the New World for cultivation, but he also made the important argument that some aspects were unintentional and also contributed to empire building in the New World. Crosby's sequential work, *Ecological Imperialism*, for instance, elaborated further on the unintentional transfer of diseases, weeds, vermin, and insects from Europe to the Americas, which had

¹⁴ The term "Greater Caribbean" refers to the islands located in what is known as the Caribbean plus tropical parts of South and Central America that border the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean.

detrimental consequences for the landscape and Native peoples of the New World.

Taking an Anglocentric approach, Crosby's work is a bit linear and progressivist in his analysis of Europe's achievement in world hegemony, often ignoring or peripheralizing other regions' contributions to the movement of plants, animals, and pathogens via trade and conquest. Specifically, Crosby neglected to see the impact native African plants had on the New World and how they too were part of the ecological imperialism process. In *The Columbian Exchange*, he expresses his views of Africa's dependency on other nations for food:

The importance of American food in Africa is more obvious than in any other continent of the Old World, for in no other continent, except the Americas themselves, is so great a proportion of the population so dependent on American foods. Very few of man's cultivated plants originated in Africa... and so Africa has had to import its chief food plants from Asia and America.¹⁵

Nevertheless, Crosby's seminal work opened a new sector of historical scholarship, and since then, many scholars practice a similar methodology, viewing history from an interdisciplinary geographical and environmental perspective. However, just as enslaved people carved out a new home and culture for themselves amidst the violence and abhorrence brought by enslavement, so too did the plants root themselves in the Americas and Caribbean. Only recently have historians begun to observe the impact of African plants in plantation societies in the Americas.

One of the leading scholars dedicated to rectifying this imbalance is historical geographer Judith Carney, who has written extensively on the botanical exchange and legacy of African food diasporas in the Americas. She is best known for her work on the

¹⁵ Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, 185.

development of African rice cultivation in her 2001 work, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*. Since the publication of the groundbreaking work, she has continued to expand the scant literature on the transatlantic network from an Afrocentric perspective. Assisted by independent researcher Richard Nicholas Rosomoff, Carney's 2009 work, *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World*, examined how enslaved Africans contributed to botanical knowledge, as well as the exchange of flora and fauna, and agrarian practices in the Atlantic world. Criticizing *The Columbian Exchange* and the scholarship that followed, she recognized that research often focuses on the interaction and exchange of Amerindian and European crops and "unintentionally occludes the African components of intercontinental crop exchanges and the role of Africans in pioneering them elsewhere."¹⁶ Her many books and articles directly address this silence in the literature and have been influential for this specific piece of research.

In *Black Rice*, Carney examines the cultivation of two of the most widely produced rice species, red-hue rice from Africa, *Oryza glaberrima*, and the more durable white rice from Asia, *Oryza sativa*, that generated the highest yields of exported crops in South Carolina in the eighteenth century.¹⁷ In addition to yams and sugarcane, rice became one of the first crops in the sixteenth century to journey across the Atlantic. Carney contends that only through the technological and agricultural knowledge of West Africans was rice able to thrive in the Americas. According to Carney, the need to adapt rice to the New World:

Required the presence of human beings already familiar with rice culture, the knowledge to grow the crop in wetland environments and the means to mill the rice once it had been harvested. The only people in South Carolina possessing this familiarity

¹⁶ Carney and Rosomoff, 121.

¹⁷ Judith Ann Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 38.

were Carolina slaves who originated in the rice region of West Africa.”¹⁸

Her other inspirational work, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, extends beyond rice cultivation to explore how other African-derived plants and animals came to be in the Americas. Rice and other African native produce symbolized some degree of agency whether it grew in the plantation fields, provision gardens, or in Maroon settlements scattered across the Americas and Caribbean.

Contributing to agricultural history, *Black Rice* and *In the Shadow of Slavery* expand the literature regarding the Columbian Exchange by provincializing Western-derived agricultural knowledge and their singular movement of crops and seeds across the Atlantic. Both represent a vital expansion of the literature of the Columbian Exchange, which, following Crosby’s influential book published in 1972, examines the range of environmental transformations wrought by the movement of biological organisms (germs, seeds, livestock) back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean beginning in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, this literature tends to privilege Western-derived knowledge of the movement of individual seeds across the Atlantic and is more concerned with the plantation crops that created boom economies than with the subsistence crops that sustained generations of displaced and enslaved Africans. Nevertheless, Carney’s work vitally diverts attention from well-studied cash crops and the economics of the Columbian Exchange that profited plantation owners and redirects that attention to the humbler staple crops that sustained generations of enslaved people.

What became known as the “black rice thesis,” however, did not go without challenge by historians studying the colonial Atlantic world. Together, Atlantic historians David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson argue that while enslaved Africans worked in the fields producing rice, it was not only enslaved

¹⁸ Carney, *Black Rice*, 81.

people who accounted for the success of rice cultivation. They propose rice cultivation succeeded due to a myriad of factors:

There is no doubt that African slaves were the primary cultivators of rice and that some introduced Old World customs of sowing, threshing, and winnowing the crop into the New World. However, there is no compelling evidence that African slaves transferred whole agricultural systems to the New World; nor were they the primary players in creating and maintaining rice regimes in the Americas.¹⁹

At the heart of their argument, plantation owners and businessmen also helped establish a rice-growing empire in South Carolina. While not suggesting a return to the traditional narrative that grossly exaggerates European agricultural and cultural knowledge, they argue for the necessity to examine evidence consistently and “employ sophisticated models of cultural migration.”²⁰ Specifically, they openly object to the “black rice” thesis by dismissing the oral story of a female captive hiding rice in her hair while boarding a slave ship, stating the story was all that was needed to propel the hypothesis forward.²¹ Few oral stories exist of Black women playing a central role in the procurement of rice in the Americas and Maroon societies.²² Rejecting these oral stories is

¹⁹ David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, “Problems with the ‘Black Rice’ Thesis,” *The Atlantic Slave Trade Problems in World History*, edited by David Northrup (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 129.

²⁰ Eltis, Morgan, and Richardson, 126.

²¹ Eltis, Morgan, and Richardson, 131.

²² One Maroon oral history told in French Guiana as well as Maranhao and Para in Brazil tells of an unknown enslaved African woman who hid rice in her and her children’s hair as they were sent aboard slave ships. When a plantation owner purchased one of the children, he ran his hands through the children’s hair and found the seeds. When he demanded what the seeds were, the child responded that the rice seeds were from Africa. Another Maroon oral story is of the self-liberated woman named Paanza from Suriname who also hid rice in her

problematic as they are the only accounts of their own history, continued through generations by enslaved Africans and their descendants. Historians of subaltern studies understand all too well that colonialism relinquished the subaltern from global history and that relying solely on written texts by European colonists perpetuates these narratives while silencing other histories.²³

Inspired by Carney's and Rosomoff's, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, Londa Schiebinger adopts a similar framework and methodological approach to argue for Africa's contribution to the science of botanical and herbal medicine in *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-century Atlantic World*. Throughout the book, published in 2017, Schiebinger discusses three nexuses of the history of medicine: first, the well-known colonial relationship between Europe and the Americas; second, the slave nexus connecting Africa and the Americas; and lastly, the conquest nexus that shifted Amerindian medicinal knowledge and practices to the plantation complex. Using Carney's and Rosomoff's research regarding the Africanization of Caribbean food systems, Schiebinger expands this framework to encompass medicinal herbs and plants and suggests that "seeds could be carried in the holds of ships and also in hair, fur, or soils. Enslaved Africans may have cultivated these familiar plants in their kitchen gardens."²⁴ She also hypothesizes that a combination

hair before fleeing slavery. Paanza is found in colonial historical records and was born in 1705 in Suriname. She escaped her enslavement between 1730 and 1740, and joined a Maroon community known as the Saramaka. Carney and Rosomoff, 76, 92-93.

²³ Rosalind C. Morris, and Gayatri Chakravorty. Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

²⁴ Africanization refers to the modification of geography, cultural, political and social structures to reflect African identity, practices, and culture. The Africanization of Caribbean food refers to Africans' contribution to the Creolization process, or the cultural fusion and hybridization of European (mostly British, French, and Spanish), Native, and African diasporas in the Caribbean, in regard to the culinary arts and food production. Londa L. Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the*

Uprooted

of botanical and medicinal knowledge from Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans created a crucible of herbal medicine in the Caribbean.

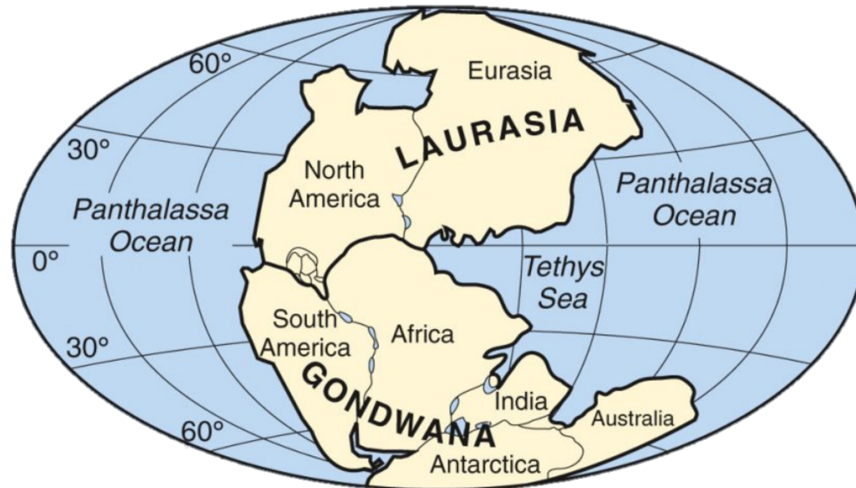


Figure 3. The supercontinent of Pangea 200 million years ago.
Courtesy of PNGHut.²⁵

Similar to Crosby, Schiebinger also suggests that the splitting of the supercontinent Pangea 200 million years ago may have contributed to enslaved Africans' understanding of South American plants since similar plant species also existed in Africa. Crosby broadly took into account Pangaea and its geographical factors as influencers of human development while Schiebinger more narrowly applied this to her study on Africans' botanical knowledge. Schiebinger suggests that plant species previously found on West Gondwana (the southern part of Pangea) evolved individually after the splitting of the present-day continents of

Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 46.

²⁵ *The Supercontinent of Pangea 200 Million Years Ago*, PNGHut, accessed April 21, 2022, public domain, <https://pnghut.com/png/Ls0MgNWzGw/panthalassa-laurasia-pangaea-gondwana-tethys-ocean-continent-earth-transparent-png>.

Africa and South America and that enslaved Africans found substitution plants similar to those found in West Africa (*Figure 3*).²⁶ According to Schiebinger, “both West Africa and the greater Caribbean are tropical, and some eighty-five floral families are common to both.”²⁷ Overall, *Secret Cures of Slaves* is another necessary addition to scholarly literature that breaks away from the traditional colonial trade narrative to examine how enslaved Africans contributed to modern medicine through the transfer of African plants, adaptation to New World flora, and their understanding of botanically-derived medicine.

Discussions about the transfer of plants across the Atlantic naturally suggest a study of the culinary history of the Americas. Historians have also shown interest in the transfer of African-native food crops and the development of American and Creole food. A perspective on the African diaspora and the origin of American cuisine beginning with slavery is the focus of culinary historian Jessica B. Harris’ 2012 book, *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*, which inspired the recently released Netflix historical documentary series in 2021. Closing an essential gap in culinary history, Harris discusses the culture, history, and identity of African Americans through the development of American cuisine. In an interview, she expresses:

Black hands have always been there. Africa is in so much American food that we do not really think about it. We are foundational to the cooking of this country [America]. If you look at the role we occupied through enslavement, we are growing the food, we are processing the food, we are preparing the food, we are serving the food.²⁸

²⁶ Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves*, 61.

²⁷ Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves*, 61.

²⁸ Netflix, “‘High on the Hog,’ Dr. Jessica B. Harris Interview, Netflix,” *Youtube*, June 4, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RbVMgh-d90>.

Beginning in West Africa and continuing through colonial enslavement into modern-day, Harris traces the history of African American and Black food cultivation from yams, rice, and okra to the culinary development of American “soul” cuisine. Though her work focuses specifically on America, she provides a basis for understanding how enslaved people from the Americas influenced cuisine culture throughout the entire New World.

Only in the past few decades, since the early 1970s, have scholars turned their attention to environmental history and the influence of plants on human development. As historians continue to reflect on the importance of flora, there have been strides to create a more inclusive picture of the role of botanicals from a global and less Anglocentric perspective. No longer is the focus solely on the trade nexus between European and American flora and the development of cash crops. Scholarship now includes the cultivation of African plants in the New World, which spurred an entire culture and identity for those who were enslaved. Rooted in provision gardens and mountain grounds, enslaved men and women gained some authority over the crops they grew in their gardens, the food they ate, and the herbal medicines they used.

Provision Gardens of the Enslaved

To supplement the minimal provisions granted by their enslavers, if any were given at all, most enslaved Africans cultivated their own food on small plots of land for communal consumption just outside the plantation fields. Land deemed unsuitable for commodity production on the plantation estates was often set aside by owners for enslaved Africans; they themselves were responsible for growing their own food and often providing their own medical care. These gardens, found on the periphery of the plantations, provided enslaved men and women with some minimal control over their lives by giving them more choices over what they grew for food or used for medical treatment. Carney contends that provision gardens, or as she calls them, the “botanical gardens of the dispossessed,” provided the enslaved with some autonomy

within the plantation system.²⁹ It is here that African and New World “seed and root crops, fruit trees, and medicinal plants were interplanted.”³⁰ The gardens could also provide further liberation either by allowing enslaved people to sell surplus food at “slave-run markets” or for self-liberated enslaved people (known as Maroons) to carry food, root cuttings, and seeds to the new areas they settled in the mountains.

Both enslaved women and men tended to these provision gardens either at nightfall after completing their daily work or during a day of rest (if their enslaver allowed it), which was usually a Saturday or Sunday.³¹ Scottish slavery abolitionist and statistician Zachary Macaulay (1768–1838) wrote that subsistence plots were the only means by which enslaved people received provision in Jamaica, stating, “if, therefore, they neglected to employ in their provision-grounds a sufficient portion of the Sunday, to secure to them an adequate supply of food, they might be reduced to absolute want.”³² Similarly, in the 1740s, St. Thomas plantation owner Johan L. Carstens (1705–1745) documented how “slaves receive nothing from their master in the way of food or clothing, expect only the small plot of land at the outermost extremity of his plantation land that he assigns to each slave.”³³

²⁹ For more information on provision gardens and subsistence plots, see *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 123. Judith Carney, “Subsistence in the Plantationocene: Dooryard Gardens, Agrobiodiversity, and the Subaltern Economies of Slavery,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 48, no. 5 (2021), 1080.

³⁰ Carney, “Subsistence in the Plantationocene,” 1080.

³¹ In his account of Suriname in 1660, George Warren (n.d.) wrote that slaves worked until Saturday afternoon and then were able to tend to their own gardens. In the 1700s, Charles-Francois Blondel de Jouvancour (n.d.) stated that some plantation owners allow their slaves to care for their gardens on Saturday. Carney and Rosomoff, 100, 109.

³² Zachary Macaulay, *Negro Slavery, or, A View of Some of the More Prominent Features of That State of Society: As It Exists in the United States of America and in the Colonies of the West Indies, Especially in Jamaica* (London: Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, 1824), 39.

³³ J.L. Carstens, quoted *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 109.

Provision gardens provide critical insight into the lived experiences of the enslaved and contribute to the botanical narrative of the Caribbean and the New World. Moreover, these gardens actively represent alternative food systems to that of the Western monoculture plantation.³⁴ They were commonly polyculture in design, containing various crops planted together in a complementary ecosystem, compared to the European monoculture practice that grew only a few single crops in expansive flat spaces.

Not all provision gardens were alike and some scholars contend there were at least three distinct types of land: common-ground, mountain-grounds, and doorway (or yardhouse) gardens.³⁵ Unlike the doorway gardens or ravine lands, common grounds reiterated Western approaches to agriculture and used European farming techniques. These grounds were part of the plantation farming acres, often flat and deforested, with designated rectangular spots to grow one or two specific types of crops. Some local legislation required by law to allocate common ground to the cultivation of provision fruits and vegetables. Often dependent on the amount of marginal or less fertile land, islands like St. Kitts and Nevis provided larger gardens than those in Antigua or Barbados. In 1798, colonial British legislation in St. Kitts and Nevis required plantation owners to allot a mere forty square feet per household. Many areas, however, granted one acre to every ten enslaved people, though laws allowed plantation owners to reduce other rations by half if they provided more than the required amount of provision land.³⁶

³⁴ Carney, "Subsistence in the Plantationocene," 1079.

³⁵ Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher, "They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves," *Expedition Magazine* 32.2 (1990), <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=3207>.

³⁶ B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (The Press University of the West Indies, 1995), 207-208.

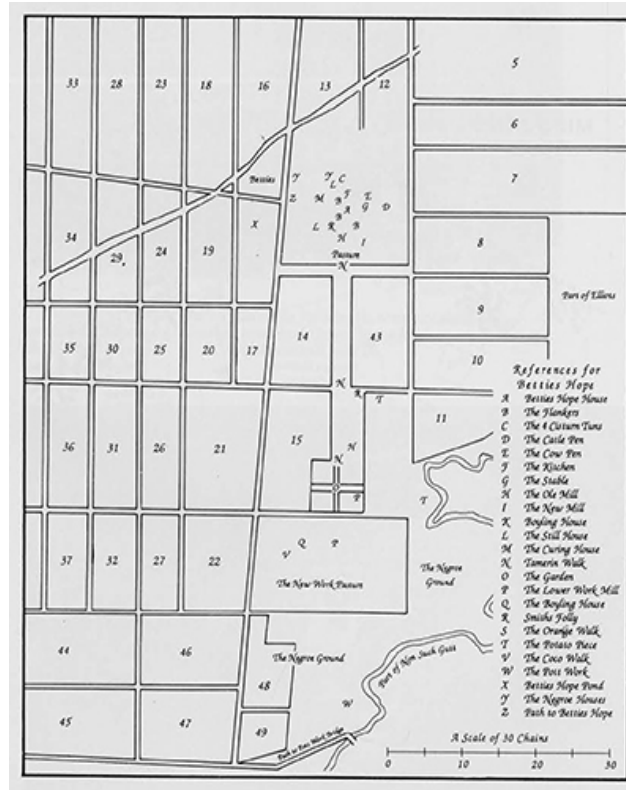


Figure 4. A portion of a map outlining the Betty's Hope estate in Antigua in 1710. Courtesy of PennMuseum.³⁷

Rarely were these crops of European origin, and instead were African or New World crops such as cassava, sweet pota-toes, bananas, and plantains. Over the decades, common grounds declined as enslaved Africans began to cultivate their own food near their quarters or by nearby grounds, and they completely disappeared after the abolishment of slavery and the Plantationoscene era (1700–1860) collapsed.³⁸ At the Betty's Hope plantation in Antigua, a map dated 1710 shows specific areas of

³⁷ *Betty's Hope Estate Map* in Pulsipher, "They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves," <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=3207>.

³⁸ Pulsipher, "They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves."

the plantation allocated for the systematic production of provisions under the title “negro ground” (*Figure 4*). These common grounds in the lower right corner are far from the “negro houses” that occupied the northern side of the plantation next to the Betty’s Hope mansion. It is possible additional food grew near the housing quarters of the enslaved in the form of yard-house gardens, which was a common practice as it provided additional space to cultivate more food.³⁹

It is most likely on these common provision grounds that European naturalists and colonial plantation owners searched for “green gold,” or fruits and vegetables that could be produced on a mass scale as profitable cash crops.⁴⁰ In 1794, physician and naturalist Henry Barham (c. 1670–1726) published *Hortus Americanus*, a botanical biomedical journal containing his observation of dozens of plants and vegetables produced in the Caribbean and tropical South America. Focusing primarily on Jamaican flora, he documents various plants found on the island and notes if they possess any culinary or medicinal value. In a few instances, he expresses his newfound awareness of these plants by finding them in provision gardens. Describing the groundnut, he writes:

The first I ever saw of these growing was in a negro’s plantation, who affirmed, that they are in great plenty on their country; and they now grow very well in Jamaica. Some call them gub-a-gubs; and others ground-nuts, because the nut of them, or fruit that is to be eaten, grows in the ground... masters of ships often feed negroes with them all

³⁹ Pulsipher, “They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves.”

⁴⁰ Londa L. Schiebinger, “Prospecting for Drugs: European Naturalists in the West Indies,” in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa L. Schiebinger, and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 119.

their voyage...They may be eaten raw, roasted, or boiled.⁴¹

This excerpt provides three crucial insights. First, there is the acknowledgment that groundnuts are native to Africa and were transferred across the Atlantic, illustrating Africa's contribution to the botanical exchange occurring in the colonial New World. It also provides much-needed documentation about the lived experiences of enslaved men and women and the food they cultivated and prepared for themselves to survive. Lastly, ship captains intentionally purchased groundnuts on the West African coast as provisions for their voyage across the Atlantic.

Barham also provides another account of how he found a new plant, which he calls Oily Pulse, in a provision garden. However, it is unclear if he is referring to a specific pulse such as chickpeas or cowpeas, or another type of lentil altogether:

[Oily Pulse] which is called zefamum, or Jefamum Africanum. The first time I saw this plant, it was growing in a negro's plantation, who told me, the ground the seed between two stones, and eat it as they do corn... The oil that is drawn from it is called cergulim oil. The seed is often mixed and ground with coco, to make chocolate. In Ethiopia and Egypt, they use the oil as we do oil-olive... A decoction of the plant is good for coughs, pleurifies, inflammations of the lungs, hard schirrous [sic.] tumours, and women use it for hardness of the womb.⁴²

⁴¹ Henry Barham, *Hortus Americanus: Containing an Account of the Trees, Shrubs, and Other Vegetable Productions, of South-America and the West-India Islands, and Particularly of the Island of Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Alexander Aikman, 1794), 145, www.biodiversitylibrary.org.

⁴² Barham, 121-122.

Barham further mentions the plant's use as a poultice for tumors and a stool softener. Though there is no evidence on exactly who told Barham about the plant, besides the high probability that it was presented by an enslaved person, its scientific name, *Jefamum africanum*, indicates the plant grows natively in Africa or was at least assumed so by naturalists. Oily Pulse was one of those plants possibly transferred from Africa to the New World in provision gardens and used by enslaved people for both nourishment and medicine.

Mountain grounds were an additional means for enslaved men and women to cultivate their own food. In the eighteenth century, plantation owners allowed enslaved Africans to cultivate on "remote upland zones" away from the plantation but still within a short distance.⁴³ The sloped and rocky soil required agricultural techniques not used in Western agrarian practices such as erosion control methods. However, the sloping provided naturally made rows for planting while also playing a crucial role in watering and protecting sprouts from sun and wind. During his time in Jamaica, travel writer William Beckford (1760–1844) wrote of these mountain grounds stating, "[the enslaved] generally make choice of such spots of land for their grounds as are encompassed by lofty mountains; and I think that they commonly prefer the sides of hills."⁴⁴ He also notes the usefulness of the cultivation techniques claiming "all kinds of provisions and corn are, as well as the plantain, successfully cultivated in the mountains; but as this is done by the negroes in their own rounds, and on those days which are given to them for this particular purpose."⁴⁵ Women were often in charge of tending to the provision gardens, at least according to Beckford's accounts. At one point in his work, he comments that "the women, to plant provisions upon the estates (their grounds in

⁴³ Pulsipher, "They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves."

⁴⁴ William Beckford, *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* (London: Printed for T. and J. Egerton, 1790), 151.

⁴⁵ Beckford, 129.

the mountains having been previously attended to)” for the rest of the day.⁴⁶

The question of provision gardens was not only a matter of economics and sustainability for the enslaved but also one that took up social discourse among Europeans and colonists regarding the commodification of human beings. This can best be seen in the poem of Scottish physician and poet James Grainger (1721–1766), *The Sugar-Cane*, published in London in 1764. *The Sugar-Cane* witnessed immediate success and underwent several reprints throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Organized over the course of four books, Grainger describes the Caribbean geography, natural disasters, the sugar-production process, and slavery. In the last book, he recounts his understanding of enslaved African culture found on the sugar plantations. He argues favorably for the enslavement of Africans but also implores plantation owners to provide those they enslaved with more provision grounds in hopes of increasing worker productivity:

SUFFICE not this; to every slave assign
Some mountain-ground: or, if waste broken land
To thee belong, that broken land divide.
This let them cultivate, one day, each week;
And there raise yams, and there cassada’s root:
From a good daemon’s staff cassada sprang,
Tradition says, and Caribbees believe;
Which into three the white-rob’d genius broke,
And bade them plant, their hunger to repel.
There let angola’s bloomy bush supply
For many a year, with wholesome pulse their board.
There let the bonavist, his fringed pods
Throw liberal o’er the prop; while ochra bears
Aloft his slimy pulp, and help disdains.
There let potatoes [sic.] mantle o’er the ground;

⁴⁶ Beckford, 140.

Sweet as the cane-juice is the root they bear.⁴⁷

In the poem, he asks plantation owners to let enslaved men and women use “broken land” and “mountain-ground,” unsuitable for Western agricultural practices for them to grow their own food. He then tells plantation owners to let them have one day a week to tend to their own garden to “repel” their hunger. There are a total of six crops mentioned in the stanzas (yams, cassava, angola, ochra, bonavist, and potatoes), providing some evidence as to what exactly grew in these mountain-ground gardens.

Enslaved Africans also utilized the land around their quarters to grow additional crops, known as doorway or yard-house gardens. Accounts of doorway gardens are vast, as are their portrayal in sketches and paintings. In 1830, Johann Moritz Rugendas (1802–1858) created *Slave Houses, Brazil, 1830s* providing a visual record of the life enslaved people lived in Brazil (*Figure 5*). The image shows a group of enslaved men, women, and children outside of a palm-thatched hut performing various activities while a White woman observes from the balcony of the estate house. Surrounding the hut are several fruit trees; three plantains grow next to the house, two other fruit trees, and a row of pineapple bushes. Chickens are also seen running around the area indicating they provided eggs and meat. Sketches like this one often romanticized the humbled quarters where enslaved Africans survived, ignoring the harsh reality of survival by depicting a simple and quiet agrarian lifestyle surrounded by a surplus of bountiful vegetables and exotic fruits.

⁴⁷ Grainger, “The Sugar-Cane,” lines 445-460.

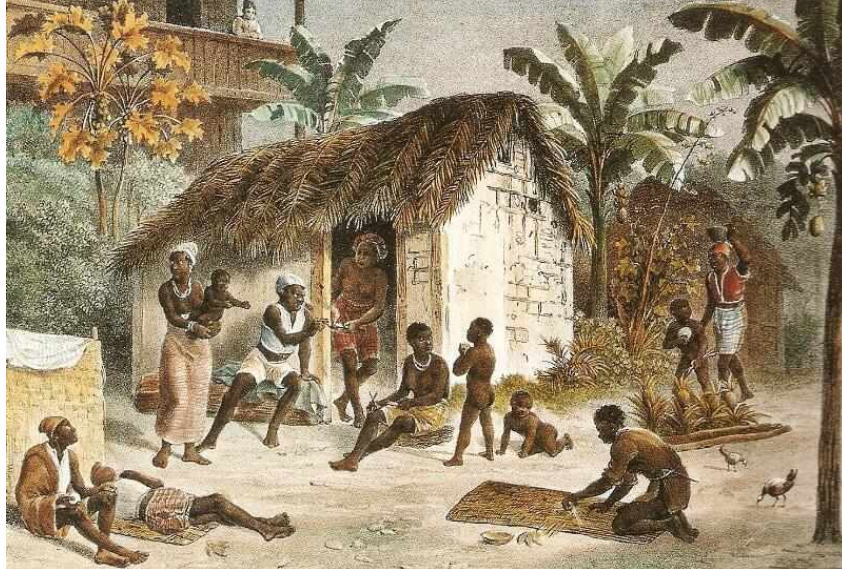


Figure 5. *Slave Houses, Brazil, 1830s* by Johann Moritz Rugendas (1802–1858). The image portrays an enslaved Black community engaging in various activities from weaving rugs, gathering food, caring for children, and smoking. Several trees and produce grow around the buildings. Courtesy of *Children in History*.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, doorway gardens continued to be invaluable spaces of subaltern sovereignty. Doorway gardens occupied smaller spaces than common grounds and mountain grounds. Due to their smaller size, maintaining the fertility of the soil was important to maximize crop cultivation. Maintaining the ground required slightly different farming techniques, such as crop rotation rather than full plot rotation to ensure soil nutrients did not deplete. Coconut and plantain palms were popular since they provided food, protection from the sun, and leaves that could be woven into various household items. They also included plants not often produced on a mass scale but still of daily importance, such as herbs, medicinal plants, leafy greens, tubers, cosmetic plants,

⁴⁸ Johann Moritz Rugenda, *Slave Houses, Brazil, 1830s*, c. 1830, Slavery in Brazil: Economic Sectors, <https://www.histclo.com/act/work/slave/am/cou/bra/sabs-sect.html>.

and cactus.⁴⁹ Doorway gardens and mountain gardens symbolized some form of independence for the enslaved, unlike common grounds, whose crops were often determined by the plantation owner. With provisions from plantation owners unreliable, these gardens came to represent some form of autonomy as men and women gained food security and could, in some way, choose what to consume to nourish their bodies since enslavers provided little to no rations.

Power to Harm and to Heal

Autonomy over the provision grounds generated paranoia among plantation owners. On the one hand, allowing enslaved men and women to tend to their own gardens removed the responsibility to feed and provide for people from plantation owners while also increasing the probability of finding new potentially-commercial produce. On the other hand, general anxiety manifested over what kind of plants could be grown in the garden, from the edible and medicinal to the poisonous. Concerns over Africans' plant knowledge and the possibility of being poisoned by enslaved Africans caused genuine concern among enslavers who feared liberation rebellions. While plantation owners placed caution on all enslaved people, women and Obeah practitioners were seen as the most suspicious.⁵⁰ Reverend William James Gardner (1825–1874) noted in his work, *A History of Jamaica*, that Obeah practitioners

⁴⁹ According to Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher, aloe vera and lemon grass were just two different plants used for medicinal purposes. Cactus provided nourishment while prickly pear cactus specifically could be utilized as a shampoo. Pulsipher, "They Have Saturdays and Sundays to Feed Themselves."

⁵⁰ Obeah has historically been referred to as African witchcraft that developed in the Caribbean, South America, Central America, and the lower parts of the United States. In a process to decolonize the term, Obeah is now defined as a spiritual healing and justice-making practice system that combines physical healing along with spiritual healing.

were “well versed in all the vegetable poisons of the island, and sometimes had them planted in his garden.”⁵¹

In the eyes of the enslavers, women tending to the needs of the plantation manor, especially as cooks, possessed a more likely threat of poisoning White families with the food the women cooked and served. The stereotypical “mammy figure,” a racist depiction of an old heavy-set Black woman performing most domestic work, caused the most alarm. Her cooking over a large pot while also being a go-to for medical needs harked back to the European depiction of witches. For example, Barham wrote about the case of an enslaved woman poisoning her enslaver with a plant known as the “Savana Flower”:

A practitioner of physic was poisoned with this plant [Savana Flower] by his negro woman, who had so ordered it that it did not dispatch him quickly, but he was seized with violent gripings, inclining to vomit, and loss of appetite; afterwards he has small convulsions... The whole plant is full of milk, it is always green, and no creature will meddle with it.⁵²

Whether this story is true or not, the account illustrates the enslavers’ real or imagined fear of being poisoned. For some colonists, the concern over the “Savana Flower” and other poisonous plants grown in doorway gardens or the mountains was a real threat in their minds.

A staple food known to grow in provision gardens was Cassava, a root vegetable, that requires careful preparation before serving. The fear over the plant can be seen in written accounts that caution about the poisonous properties of the plant if prepared incorrectly for consumption due to its high levels of cyanide.

⁵¹ William James Gardner, *A history of Jamaica from its discovery by Christopher Columbus to the present time* (London : Elliot Stock, 1873), 190, <https://archive.org/details/ahistoryjamaica01gardgoog/page/n6/mode/2up>.

⁵² Barham, 168.

Uprooted

Native to the Caribbean and tropical Americas, enslaved Africans most likely learned how to cook Cassava from Indigenous people.⁵³ Barham's account bolsters this idea as he discusses the Cassava as both a plant that can be used to nourish and harm the body:

The expressed juice of the root is very sweet to the palate, but soon purifies and breeds worms, called topuea, which are a violent poison, and which Indians too well know the use of: They dry these worms or maggots, and powder them which powder, in a little quantity, they put under their thumb-nail, and after they drink to those they intend to poison, they put their thumb upon the bowl, and so cunningly convey the poison, wherefore when we see a negro with a long thumb-nail, he is to be mistrusted.⁵⁴

Naturalists and botanist Maria Riddell (1772–1808) also mentions the Cassava root in her book, *Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward Caribbean Isles: With Sketches of the Natural History of these Islands*, published in 1792. Though her description is different from Barham's in that there is no mention of worms, she also notes how enslaved Africans use the plant for food and the dangers of the root. In her journal she writes, "the root is a deadly poison; yet, when the milky liquor it contains is expressed from it, it is converted into a bread called cassava; The Negroes make it their chief diet, and prepare it themselves."⁵⁵ The raw consumption of Cassava can cause vertigo, vomiting, and death within one to four hours due to its high toxicity levels of cyanide, but with proper

⁵³ Carney and Rosomoff, 107-108.

⁵⁴ Barham, 34.

⁵⁵ Maria Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Jamaica: Institute of Jamaica, 1907), 93.

preparation, the root provides starchy nutrients.⁵⁶ The fact that such a plant grew commonly in provision gardens undoubtedly caused fear among plantation owners who were anxious about being poisoned by those seeking liberation and revenge for their enslaved status.

Several native New World and African plants have been documented as poisonous or containing toxic properties. Another common plant was the poppy, still known and used today for its medical and drug use. In her botanical book, *Illustrations of the Natural orders of Plants*, published between 1849 and 1855, Elizabeth Twining (1805–1889) described the poppy known as *Argemone mexicana* as the “common weed of the West Indies” as it could be found growing in the wild and on cultivated land.⁵⁷ Barham notes the same poppy stating, “we have a plant that grows like the English common prickly thistle, but its flower is yellow in the shape of the field poppy.”⁵⁸ In his description of the plant, he tells the story of an unnamed old enslaved man, deemed an “obeah practitioner,” who “bewitched” a fellow enslaved man by having him smoke the poppy.⁵⁹ Later, Barham notes he saw a bull drop dead in the field and foam at the mouth. After an autopsy, Barham “found several handfuls” of the poppy plant that killed him.⁶⁰ The abundance of the poppy meant that enslaved Africans could easily find the flower, but in the colonists’ imagination, the plant’s association as a drug or poison meant that enslaved peoples had the potential to use the plant as a form of revenge.

⁵⁶ “Chapter 7: Toxic Substances and Antinutritional Factors,” in *Roots, Tubers, Plantains, and Bananas in Human Nutrition*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States, 1990, <https://www.fao.org/3/t0207e/T0207E08.htm#Cassava%20toxicity>.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Twining, *Illustrations of the Natural Orders of Plants*, Vol 1 (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1868), 57, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.102751909&view=1up&seq=57&skin=2021&q1=West%20Indies>.

⁵⁸ Barham, 151.

⁵⁹ Barham, 152.

⁶⁰ Barham, 152.

Despite the fear of poisoning and African witchcraft, colonists continued to glean information about plant and ethnobotanical medicine from enslaved people. African usage of plants as medicine differed significantly from colonialists and plantation owners who resorted to traditional Western practices.⁶¹ With the Caribbean establishing itself as a place of medical experimentation, Western practitioners struggled to find cures for unfamiliar “tropical diseases” and sought rigorously for tropical medicines needed to keep colonists and enslaved laborers alive. Unlike in Europe, where medical experimentalists were frequently professors writing in medical journals, medical experimentalists in the Caribbean were primarily independent physicians traveling from plantation to plantation aiming to secure a private practice.⁶² The introduction of unfamiliar diseases, such as Yaws or Yellow Fever, added to the lack of medical infrastructures, such as teaching hospitals and medical journals, in the early colonial period, required physicians to learn on the job and be innovative in their techniques.⁶³

As Amerindian populations decreased, non-Western medicine became unexpectedly crucial as Africans were more familiar with tropical diseases than European colonists. Colonial physicians adopted African cures due to their effectiveness.⁶⁴ European colonial physicians eagerly turned to them for medicinal practices, often taking credit for the so-called discovery in their works, such as Barham who notes the medical use of the Oily Pulse, which he first came to discover in a provision garden.⁶⁵ African herbal medicine relied on fresh herbs and plants, unlike Western treatments that used dried herbs or other forms of supposed healing such as bloodletting. Enslaved women’s and

⁶¹ Carney, “African Traditional Plant Knowledge in the Circum-Caribbean Region,” 171.

⁶² Schiebinger, 21-20.

⁶³ Jamaica only began publishing medical journals in 1830. Schiebinger, 21-20.

⁶⁴ Schiebinger, 5, 24.

⁶⁵ Barham, 121-122.

men's use of bush baths or teas using fresh herbs as medicine were undoubtedly a tradition coming from the African diaspora.⁶⁶

Enslaved Africans grew various crops on provision gardens in plantations and the mountains of the tropical islands. Most, if not all, of these plants provided substance to enslaved communities, but many colonists were wary of enslaved Africans' botanical knowledge. While European naturalists and botanists scientifically documented different plants of African origin found in provision gardens, a general fear also spread among colonists about being poisoned by unknown plants by those they enslaved. Cases of enslaved men and women poisoning those who enslaved them do exist, but the extent to which these events happened is more likely a result of colonists' imagined fear than actual cases. Overall, the plants growing in the provision garden provided enslaved Africans with nourishment, and they used what they produced to create meals for everyone in the community. Those who found themselves with some surplus could often sell what they cultivated at local markets.

From the Market to the Table

In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, enslaved people had the opportunity to sell any surplus crops grown in provision gardens at the "slave-run markets," not to be confused with the selling of humans at market auctions, but at markets where enslaved people gathered to trade, buy, and sell food and other goods. These markets existed with the approval of most enslavers and were places where enslaved and free Black men and women could mingle and escape from the drudgery of everyday life. They often took place on a Sunday or Saturday when enslaved laborers were given time to tend to their own provisions. These markets contained food more suited to African tastes found growing in provision gardens such as okra, watermelon, yams,

⁶⁶ Carney, "African Traditional Plant Knowledge in the Circum-Caribbean Region," 171.

plantains, and leafy greens. In addition to selling surplus, some also sold and bartered goods like woven rugs and brooms.⁶⁷

Culinary historian Jessica Harris discusses the importance of these markets in the southern United States during the enslavement and highlights the well-known market run by enslaved African Americans in Alexandria, Virginia. It is at these markets, Harris argues, enslaved people could give “a few coins to pay for additional food or a bit of tobacco...it was also a place where folks could smile and court and even listen to music if someone brought a fiddle.”⁶⁸ These independently run markets could be found scattered across the Americas and Caribbean. For some Caribbean islands, the revenue generated from these markets generated up to twenty percent of the local economy.⁶⁹ Though seldom, enslaved men and women who earned enough money at the markets used the money to purchase their freedom.⁷⁰ The sketch, *Negroes Sunday-Market at Antigua*, by Gaetano Testolini (1793–1822) provides a visual depiction of one of these markets (*Figure 6*). Created in 1806, the image depicts free White and Black people browsing through the goods offered by the enslaved laborers sitting on the ground as they display eggs, chickens, gourds, and melons.

⁶⁷ Harris, 84.

⁶⁸ Harris, 85.

⁶⁹ “*Negroes Sunday-Market Antigua* Description,” Royal Museum Greenwich, accessed January 26, 2022, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-254729>.

⁷⁰ “*Negroes Sunday-Market Antigua*,” Royal Museum Greenwich, accessed January 26, 2022, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-254729>.



Figure 6. *Negroes Sunday-Market at Antigua* by Gaetano Testolini created in 1806. Courtesy of The Royal Museum Greenwich.⁷¹

The Governess of Jamaica's, Lady Maria Nugent (1771–1834, r. 1801–1806), personal journal provides detailed accounts of the markets operated by enslaved Africans and the foods they ate while she resided at the Governor's estate in Jamaica. In her first mention of attending one of these markets, she writes that the market held “innumerable parties of negroes, laughing, dancing, and signing, and dressing their food on the roadside, and all hurrying to get to Kingston for alas! Sunday is the great market day. It is a sad custom, but I fear difficult to reform or alter in any way.”⁷² She does not detail why she is saddened or disapproves of

⁷¹ Gaetano Testolino, *Negroes Sunday-Market at Antigua*, 1806, accessed January 26, 2022, provided by The Royal Museum Greenwich, Image in the public domain, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-254729>.

⁷² Nugent, 89.

the marketplace, but some enslavers opposed enslaved men and women from gathering in numbers in fear of revolts.⁷³ Lady Nugent's later accounts discuss the market in even further detail:

Leave Arcadia about twelve, and arrived at Falmouth to dinner. The streets crowded with people, and a negro market held in front of General Bell's house. The negroes seemed very happy, selling their yams, cocoa-nuts, plantains, &c. And salt fish. When we showed ourselves in the piazza, they laughed, danced, bowed, curtsied, and grinned, and used every possible grimace to express their happiness in seeing us. I took a fancy to an immense water-melon, which my maid secured for me, and I devoured it all, while I was dressing for dinner.⁷⁴

While she appears to romanticize the event with enslaved people happily serving her, the account provides a great deal of insight into the role these markets had in the lives of both colonialists and those bound in servitude. First, she expresses her joy over finding a watermelon and mentions various other foods often found in the provision gardens of the enslaved rather than on the plantation fields themselves, which were often given to cash crops like sugar and tobacco. Second, she makes note of the enslaved people enjoying their time away from the fields by dancing and laughing

⁷³ Approximately forty years prior to Lady Nugent's arrival, the infamous Tacky's Rebellion or Tacky's War of 1760 in Jamaica was the largest slavery liberation revolt on record till the Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint Louverture from 1791 to 1804. Lady Nugent expresses her husband's concerns over Louverture frequently throughout the text. Passed that same year as the Tacky Rebellion, Jamaican colonists drew up "An Act to Remedy the Evils arising from Irregular Assemblies of Slaves." The law forbade the practice of Obeah and also attacked enslaved people's movements by restricting gatherings and preventing those with the status of "slave" from leaving plantations without consent.

⁷⁴ Nugent, 187.

with each other. Lastly, she remarks on how her maid obtained the watermelon for her even though it is unclear whether the transaction was bought or bartered. Regardless of whether it was bought or traded, Lady Nugent's documented account shows enslaved men and women gaining some moment of autonomy by generating some wealth or goods for themselves rather than for their enslavers.

All food eventually found its way into the kitchen and onto the table. Throughout the year, the enslaved community was also allowed to celebrate Christian holidays like Easter and Christmas by arranging feasts or barbecues. In her journal, Lady Nugent tells of a time when those who were enslaved by her and her husband gathered in the yard for an Easter celebration; here, Lady Nugent discussed the food served:

A long table was spread on the green, with all their most favourite dishes, of barbecued hog, jerked hog, pepper-pot, yams, plantation, &c. There were tubs of punch, and each of them had three glasses of Madeira, to drink three toasts – 'Massa Gubernor, and Missis, and little Massa [Lady Nugent's husband, Lady Nugent herself, and their newborn son].'⁷⁵

Thereafter, the festive group begins to dance, and Lady Nugent joins them to the dismay of the White maids. On an average day, most enslaved men and women ate while working in the field except for dinner after tending to their own provision gardens. They then gathered together at nightfall and ate dinner as a community in their living quarters to enjoy the little free time to socialize and rest. During the cooler winter months, the lit hearth provided warmth in the small quarters where they slept, while outdoor fire pits were more popular in the humid summers.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Nugent, 187

⁷⁶ Harris, 99.

According to Harris, archeologists only began to take an interest in the living quarters of the enslaved in the 1960s, and the results of the excavations indicate that enslaved Africans used a wide range of utensils from “Chinese porcelain to Rhenish stoneware.”⁷⁷ In addition, pottery once thought to be Native American was also found to be created by enslaved people with pottery skills. These findings have also shown that enslaved Africans continued to utilize traditional African cooking methods of the “one-pot meals” that used produce from the provision gardens and any meat they could catch like possums, rabbits, and raccoons.⁷⁸



Figure 7. *A Southern Barbecue* by Horace Bradley (1862–1896), published in *Harper's Weekly* in July 1887. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Harris, 100.

⁷⁸ Harris, 100.

⁷⁹ Horace Bradley, *A Southern Barbecue*, *Harper's Weekly*, July 1887, Wikimedia Commons, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Southern_Barbecue.jpg.

The sketch by Horace Bradley (1862–1896) titled, *A Southern Barbecue*, published in *Harper's Weekly* in July 1887, provides some insight into what celebratory feasts may have looked like for enslaved people in the Americas as these culinary traditions have been passed on for generations (*Figure 7*). One man is watching over the traditional one-pot meal while others are gathered around watching the “high on the hog” barbecue and spit roasting the meat. Much like Lady Nugent’s account, several gather around a long table in the grass under the shade of a tree waiting for their meal. Today, lighting the barbecue may be symbolic of freedom and independence, but the history of the barbecue is infused with the treacherous story of those who could not enjoy freedom in the New World for several centuries.

While White colonists, free Black people, and the enslaved ate and enjoyed many similar foods, many colonists stigmatized non-European cuisine and exotic fruits and vegetables by referring to them as “Negro’s food.”⁸⁰ For instance, when Barham describes several types of yams, he specifically points out a yam from Africa stating there is “another sort, of a coarse sulphur-colour or yellowish yam, called negro-yams.”⁸¹ The plantain tree, specifically, is frequently drawn in sketches and paintings of the living quarters of the enslaved as colonists associated the banana with enslaved Africans and the topics (*Figure 5*). Barham mentions the plantain in *Hortus Americanus* writing, “the fruit of this tree is the best of all Indian food for negroes,” ignoring that several white colonists also relied on the tree for food.⁸² Though the plantain or banana originated in Southern Asia and made its way to Africa through the Monsoon Exchange, the fruit tree was well-established in West Africa hundreds of years before the arrival of Europeans.⁸³ The plantain then made its way across the Atlantic as a provision

⁸⁰ Julien-Joseph Virey, *Natural History of the Negro Race* (Charleston, South Carolina: D.J. Dowling, 1837), 80

⁸¹ Barham, 211-212.

⁸² Barham, 148.

⁸³ Carney and Rosomoff, 14

food and dates back to sixteenth-century plantation societies in the Caribbean.⁸⁴

Historian John Soluri wrote a book, published in 2005, exclusively devoted to the history of the banana. According to Soluri, the banana in Western society came to symbolize backwardness, laziness, and otherwise primitive and unsophisticated people. The association of the banana with these attributes did not change in the nineteenth century despite the economic boom of the banana industry, and some may argue the stigma continues to this day.⁸⁵ The racialization of food, like the banana, subjectifies enslaved Africans. Illustrations of banana trees did not solely document what enslaved Africans ate but also perpetuated stereotypes colonists placed on Black men and women.

While enslaved men and women occasionally ate pork, chicken, and fish, they also supplemented their diets by trapping and cooking lizards, turtles, possums, and other animals depending on where they lived in the Americas. During her time in Antigua, Maria Riddle (1772–1808) wrote, “Indeed it is a well-known fact in the West Indies, that, when the Negroes want to catch lizards, (which are a wholesome and favorite food with them) the art they employ to allure them into their hands is whistling.”⁸⁶ She also refers to turtles as a “one of the greatest delicacies in the West Indies,” a food that both free colonists and the enslaved dined on when possible.⁸⁷ Lady Nugent also mentions Creoles considering iguana lizards as a “great delicacy,” but in the context of her journal, iguana is served in replacement of chicken as a “joke”

⁸⁴ Carney and Rosomoff, 113

⁸⁵ John Soluri, *Banana Cultures Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 35-36.

⁸⁶ Maria Riddle, *Voyages to the Madeira, and Leeward Caribbean isles: with sketches of the natural history of these islands* (Edinburgh: printed for Peter Hill, and T. Cadell, 1792), 66, https://archive.org/details/voyagestomadeira00ridd_0/page/66/mode/2up?q=lizards.

⁸⁷ Riddle, 63.

which made “the party very merry.”⁸⁸ In her research, Harris even provides a few recipes handed down from generations, one of which includes the use of roasted possum cooked with yams.⁸⁹ Since enslaved Blacks only could hunt and trap in the evenings after tending to their day-long plantation labor, nocturnal animals like possums, raccoons, and rabbits became easy targets.⁹⁰

For those who managed to grow extra food in provision gardens, they could often sell their surplus and other homemade wares at local slave-run markets held on Saturdays or Sundays. These markets offered some independence to enslaved men and women as they gathered outside of the fields to enjoy what free time they had as well as earn some money and buy extra items if they could manage. Food grown in provision gardens and bought at markets made its way into cooking pots and tables of enslaved communities as well as any trapped animals or livestock provided by their enslavers. While enslaved men, women, and children found nourishment in whatever was available, which often required innovation on their part, wealthy plantation owners and colonists often scoffed at unconventional cuisine and racialized certain produce. Nevertheless, food became a crucial aspect of cultural identity among the enslaved community that brought them together in times of hardship.

Conclusion: Race, Identity, and Culinary Memory

The food and plants growing in provision gardens cultivated a strong, shared identity and culture among African and Afro-Caribbean peoples born or forced into slavery. Provision gardens granted enslaved men and women some form of independence as they chose which crops and medicinal plants to grow on the land they were given. They also denormalize Western monoculture agricultural processes and the need to establish dominance over the landscape as subaltern agrarian practices worked around natural

⁸⁸ Nugent, 261.

⁸⁹ Harris, 100, 253.

⁹⁰ Harris, 100.

landscapes like mountain-ground gardens. The gardens also provided incentives for further liberation since enslaved people could sell surplus at markets operated by enslaved people or provide enough provisions for enslaved men and women to escape from bondage and live in Maroon communities.

Moreover, the legacy of African botanicals and cuisine continues to shape dishes across the Americas and serve as a tangible object of collective memory. Traditional African crops like yams, okra, and plantains transferred to the New World and became intertwined with native plants like Cassava. Recipes using these foods were handed down from generation to generation, creating a common identity in the food that was shared at the table. Medicinal knowledge also made its way across the Atlantic. The various herbs growing inside these gardens provided medicine for enslaved communities, as well as colonists trying to survive on the islands. However, the autonomy gained from the provision grounds generated paranoia among enslavers who feared the superior botanical knowledge of those they enslaved. The possibility of being poisoned by a person they considered human property heightened colonialists' anxiety over potential revolts.

Overall, the story of the provision garden is an overlooked but critical aspect of slavery in the colonial New World. Growing on these plots of land were symbols of freedom, identity, and survival. Even after being uprooted from their homes, both people and plants grounded themselves against all odds and shared a history of strength and resilience.

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Author Bio

Brittany Mondragon graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in May 2022 with a master of arts degree in history. Backed with a master of science degree in geographic information systems from the University of Redlands, Brittany concentrates on issues revolving around environmental history, the history of science (specifically ethnobotany), colonialism, and trade. Her thesis explores the intersectionality of race, gender, and botany in the British colonial Atlantic during the eighteenth century by examining the appropriation and management of enslaved women, their uses of ethnobotanical medicines, and the power relations behind their depiction as witchcraft practitioners. She will start teaching at community colleges this year and possibly begin pursuing a doctoral degree in history. She currently works at Mt. San Jacinto Community College under the Professional Development department. Apart from scholarly pursuits, Brittany enjoys painting, hiking, gardening, playing board games, and learning the harp. She would like to thank Dr. Jeremy Murray and her editors for all of their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the editing process.



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In Memoriam

bell hooks (1952–2021)

By Cecelia Smith



Figure 1. bell hooks (1952-2021). Courtesy of Alex Lozupone, Wikimedia Commons.¹

bell hooks (birth name, Gloria Jean Watkins) purposely used lower-case lettering in her pseudonym, a name borrowed from her great-grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks (n.d.). The use of lower-case lettering was deliberate and significant. While this distinguished her from her ancestor, more importantly, she assigned a lessened degree of relevance to the name itself, proffering a focus on the power of her words and the intensity of her message. However, the

¹ Alex Lozupone, “bell hooks,” *Wikimedia Commons*, October 10, 2014, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lozu_mont_oct8_bellhooooooooooks.png.

small letters accomplished the exact opposite. They became the beacon that drove scholars and laymen to her voice. bell hooks offered a vision for academia that has male-dominated representation and narratives at its core. With her observations and analyses, she invited the world to join her in an effort to uplift Black women. As an author, professor, and activist, she used the lens of feminism to create a body of work that continues to be foundational for students, historians, teachers, children, and anyone who desires a lesson in inclusivity and diversity.

Before bell hooks, the Seeker

She arrived on September 25, 1952, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and was named Gloria Jean Watkins, one of six children born to Rosa Bell Oldham Watkins (1929–2012) and Veodis Watkins (1920–2008). Her father found work as a janitor, and her mother was employed as a maid.² The large working-class family resided in a rural section of Kentucky, a southern state with closer ties to the Midwest than the South. In the decade of her birth, the city saw its largest increase in population, from 12,526 in 1950, to 19,465 in 1960.³

During her young, formative years, segregation in her rural city and schools would have an effect on hooks' ultimate philosophical beliefs, but perhaps it fortified in her a measure of freedom that might have inhibited others' growth. In her book, *Appalachian Elegy: Poetry and Place*, published in 2012, she reflected on life growing up in Kentucky, calling herself "wild." She wrote,

² "Bell Hooks Biography," *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, accessed March 5, 2022, <https://www.notablebiographies.com/He-Ho/Hooks-Bell.html>.

³ Jennifer P. Brown, "Fewer than 200 people lived in Hopkinsville at the start of the 19th century," *Hoptown Chronicle*, April 9, 2020, <https://hoptownchronicle.org/fewer-than-200-people-lived-in-hopkinsville-at-the-start-of-the-19th-century/>.

I have no fear here, in this world of trees, weeds,
and growing things. This is the world I was born
into: a world of wild things. In it the wilderness in
me speaks. I am wild. ...Even as a child I knew that
to be raised in the country, to come from the
backwoods, left one without meaning or presence.
To be from the backwoods was to be part of the
wild.⁴

That wildness persisted as hooks sought to create her own identity and construct her own pathway.

In her 1996 memoir, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*, each chapter is a small vignette, offering memories of a colorful life, unhesitatingly open and raw; she exposed herself to the reader, inviting them on her journey toward self-discovery and self-determination, and it was clear from the beginning of her life, she displayed a defiant streak. Throughout the memoir, hooks referenced herself as “she,” and named herself and the other children “we.” This practice enabled the reader to appreciate a more intimate story. By not naming herself, the prose speaks, the experiences resonate, and the reader envisions themselves alongside her. Perhaps for some Black women, it echoes their own traditions. Storied feminist, Gloria Steinem (b. 1934), with whom hooks would later in life develop a friendship, praised the book stating, “With the emotion of poetry, the narrative of a novel, and the truth of experience, bell hooks weaves a girlhood memoir you won’t be able to put down—or forget. *Bone Black* takes us into the cave of self-creation.”⁵

In the introduction, hooks wrote, “It is the story of girlhood rebellion, of my struggle to create self and identity distinct from and yet inclusive of the world around me.”⁶ An avid reader, her

⁴ bell hooks, *Appalachian Elegy, Poetry and Place*, (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), Kindle edition.

⁵ bell hooks, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996).

⁶ hooks, *Bone Black*, 1.

In Memoriam

memoir praised the reading of books and the love of poetry. She wrote:

She finds another world in books. Escaping into the world of novels is one way she learns to enjoy life. But novels only ease the pain momentarily, as she holds the book in hand, as she reads. It is poetry that changes everything. When she discovers the Romantics it is like losing a part of herself and recovering it. ...she memorizes poems. She recites them ironing or washing dishes. Reading Emily Dickinson she senses that the spirit can grow in the solitary life.⁷

That love of reading remained with her throughout her life.

As she continued her education, hooks later moved through integrated schools in the 1960s, graduating from Hopkinsville High School.⁸ She accepted a scholarship to Stanford University and worked as a telephone operator. She credited her fellow Black women workers at the Berkeley Telephone Office, explaining that their belief in her voice was her sustainment.⁹ Watkins obtained a BA in English in 1973 at Stanford University, and an MA in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1976. She completed her doctorate in English in 1983 at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). Her dissertation examined the works of author Toni Morrison (1931–2019), including *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and *Sula* (1973).¹⁰ hooks worked in various positions at UCSC and taught African American studies at Yale University

⁷ hooks, *Bone Black*, 131.

⁸ “Bell Hooks Biography,” *Encyclopedia of World Biography*.

⁹ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1981).

¹⁰ Carol Brennan, “The Life and Work of bell hooks,” *Gale*, January 5, 2022, <https://blog.gale.com/the-life-and-work-of-bell-hooks/>; Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York: First Vintage International Edition, 2007); Toni Morrison, *Sula* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

in the early 1980s. In the late 1980s, she taught Women's Studies at Oberlin College in Ohio, and in the 1990s, she found herself in New York, teaching at a city college before moving on to the Henry Holt publishing company.¹¹

Becoming bell hooks, the Feminist

In the late 1960s through the early 1970s, at a time when feminism and the women's liberation movement gripped the nation, hooks' perspective would be one that provided a Black woman's voice and a new way of thinking. It was while she endeavored to complete her first book of poetry that she decided to take on the pseudonym of bell hooks, thus beginning a journey that propelled her into the annals of Black literary and theoretical feminist history. *And There We Wept: Poems* was her first publication in 1978.¹²

In an interview between Charlie Rose (b. 1942) and hooks in 1995, he described hooks as a cultural critic, a theorist, and a political activist, and recognized her as one of America's leading intellectuals. In the video, during which Rose welcomed her as a repeat guest, he offered that she took her name from her great-grandmother in recognition of female legacy, and that she used lower-case lettering to reflect her wariness of ego and fame.¹³ hooks conferred a short laugh at his description, smiled broadly at the acknowledgement of the pseudonym, and perhaps reluctantly recognized the enormity of her prominence. An *Essence* magazine article added that the stylization was to emphasize the substance of books, rather than who she was.¹⁴ The lower-case lettering was

¹¹ Ramiro Nikodemus Alexander-Duchesne, "bell hooks - Writer," *Daily Dose of History, We Buy Black*, August 11, 2018, <https://webuyblack.com/blog/daily-dose-history-bell-hooks-writer/>.

¹² bell hooks, *And There We Wept: Poems* (Golemics: Los Angeles, 1978).

¹³ "Bell Hooks interview (1995)," Manufacturing Intellect, YouTube Video, 10:38, May 28, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ShWJf8BIqI>.

¹⁴ Bry'onna Mention, "bell hooks, Author, Activist, and Queer Black Feminist Icon, Dies at 69," *Essence*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.essence.com/news/bell-hooks-obituary>.

effective, but not as a deflection away from her. In fact, the lettering would draw in readers to her. The lower-case lettering would be a temporary disguise from Gloria Jean Watkins, but her voice, her words, and her ideas would identify and distinguish the woman to whom the world would come to know as the feminist, bell hooks.

During the decade of the 1970s, African American women and feminism, or the women's liberation movement, maintained a tenuous relationship. As had always been the occasion, it was the face of White women, like Steinem, who pushed the narrative. Writers Alix Kates Shulman (b. 1932) and Honor Moore (b. 1945) wrote of the history of the women's liberation movement. They described the movement as follows:

During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, feminist activism – richly diverse both in the women involved and in its aims, tone, and strategies – exploded in the United States and around the world, forever changing society by expanding the rights, opportunities, and identities available to women. And at the center of everything that the women's liberation movement achieved was the writing that both forged and propelled it, writing that continues to inspire, challenge, educate, and even offend.¹⁵

Black women, however, frequently found themselves in the background of social movements. Morrison in an article written in 1971 surmised that Black women distrusted the women's liberation movement. She wrote:

It is white, therefore suspect. In spite of the fact that liberating movements in the black world have been catalysts for white feminism, too many movements

¹⁵ Alix Kates Shulman and Honor Moore, "A Brief History of Women's Liberation Movements in America," *Literary Hub*, February 19, 2021, <https://lithub.com/a-brief-history-of-womens-liberation-movements-in-america/>.

and organizations have made deliberate overtures to enroll blacks and have ended up by rolling them. They look at white women and see them as the enemy – for they know that racism is not confined to white men, and that there are more white women than men in this country, and that fifty-three per cent of the population sustained an eloquent silence during times of greatest stress.¹⁶

It seemed to be among this abundance of distrust, struggles, successes and failures that hooks brought forth her voice and wisdom in championing Black women. She began her book, *Ain't I A Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981), when she was nineteen-years-old and finally published it in 1981. The work was inspired by African-American abolitionist Sojourner Truth's (1797–1883) 1851 speech of the same title.¹⁷ Author Maria Quintana, of the online reference center, *Black Past: Remembered & Reclaimed*, called it hooks' most significant scholarly work which established her as a formidable critic and intellect.¹⁸ The book highlighted the lives and experiences of African American women from enslavement beginning in the seventeenth-century through the twentieth-century, and her influence has been felt around the globe. Reviewer Ahsas Sood, exploring the ideology of feminism in India, examined hooks' seminal work as it related to Black and White women in the United States. Sood concluded,

¹⁶ Toni Morrison, "What the Black Woman Thinks About Women's Lib," *The New York Times*, August 22, 1971, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/08/22/archives/what-the-black-woman-thinks-about-womens-lib-the-black-woman-and.html>.

¹⁷ "Sojourner Truth: Ain't I A Woman?" Women's Rights National Historical Park, National Park Service, accessed March 17, 2022. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm>.

¹⁸ Maria Quintana, "Bell Hooks/Gloria Jean Watkins (1952-2021)," *BLACKPAST: Remembered & Reclaimed*, January 11, 2010, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/hooks-bell-gloria-jean-watkins-1952>.

hooks brings out the clumsiness that not only accompanied the infantile stages of feminist ideology but also clung through two whole centuries of struggle. Almost till the end of its vigor (and more often than not, even today) it was only recognized as a White women's movement.¹⁹

hooks not only addressed feminism and the experiences of the Black woman in this work, but also considered oppression and its relationship to the emasculation of Black men. These ideas would inform later works on Black men, specifically the books, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004), as well as *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (2003).²⁰ In her view of feminism, she understood that in order to address the dehumanization of the Black woman, one must also confront Black men and their relationships to their own masculinity. In the same Rose interview, the issue of Black men and patriarchy surfaced as hooks expressed her opposition to a much-touted event known as the "Million Man March." The march, which took place in Washington, D.C., on the National Mall on October 16, 1995, was organized by Louis Farrakhan (b. 1933) of the Nation of Islam, and various leading groups of civil rights activists, in order to bring attention to the interests of African Americans and to combat negative stereotypes of Black men.²¹ Rose questioned if her opposition was based on the message being promulgated by the controversial Farrakhan. hooks responded that first and foremost, the pervasiveness of patriarchy was problematic. She defended her

¹⁹ Ahsas Sood, "Book Review/*Ain't I A Woman: Black Women & Feminism* by bell hooks," *Feminism in India*, September 22, 2021, <https://feminisminindia.com/2021/09/22/book-review-aint-i-a-woman-black-women-feminism-by-bell-hooks/>.

²⁰ bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (Atria Books: New York, 2004); bell hooks, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group: New York, 2004).

²¹ "This Day in History, October 16, 1995: Million Man March," *History*, September 21, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/million-man-march-1995>.

view by offering a correlation between racism, feminism, and patriarchy. hooks promptly answered:

The situation of race in America right now is like war. ...and the men are going to Washington. That to me is a real gendered dialogue that conventional masculinity, which denies a history of race relations where the engagement of Black women in the resistance struggle has been so meaningful and so crucial...Patriarchy has been deadly for the planet and for Black men.²²

It is considerable that she spoke to the ideology of patriarchy, as her words clearly related her connection of feminism and Black masculinity. It was also clear in this interview that her view of the patriarchy necessarily connected to the women's liberation movement itself.

Steinem had become the face of the feminist movement, but Steinem recognized hooks and her role and influence. In a nearly two-hour dialogue at Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, the two women sat on a stage and discussed how feminism encouraged transgression. The event recognized the twentieth anniversary of hooks' book on educational practices, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom* (1994), and allowed for the school's community to engage with the author, and the feminist icon. The moderator, Ann Snitow, first introduced the celebrated Steinem, addressed her importance in the movement, talked about how she sought inclusion, and the relevance of community and diversity. Snitow praised Steinem's service and relentless commitment to feminism. But it was her introduction of hooks that received a rousing chorus of applause and cheers, underscoring her connection to and popularity within the school. Snitow spoke for the audience by saying, "Now I'd like to go on and talk about bell. Yes, we adore her. We learn from her; her

²² "Bell Hooks interview (1995)," *Manufacturing Intellect*.

passion and her clarity and her brilliance as a feminist theorist and activist is well-known to us all.”²³ As she followed in her praise for hooks, Snitow spoke about the importance and ultimate influence of her work. She stated:

One-hundred years from now, the books that bell has written and will write are going to be classics of the feminist movement. ...they are dialogic in a way that very few books of feminist theory in or outside of academia ever are. She asks the questions that we want to hear asked. ...she’s listening ...and discovers things that we crave to know that we don’t know we crave to know yet.²⁴

Snitow and the audience recognized and praised the brilliance and intellect of hooks. Her appearance on this stage, and multiple subsequent dialogues with Steinem demonstrated her importance and relevance as a Black woman’s voice inside the feminist movement.

Befitting bell hooks, the Intellectual

In 1989, civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw (b. 1959) coined the term intersectionality, developing her theory to describe how race, class, and gender intersect and overlap with one another, creating problems such as discrimination in employment.²⁵ Before Crenshaw, however, hooks demonstrated that same ideological framework in her own work. While she did not use the term intersectionality, what she sought to do was show how feminism

²³ “bell hooks & Gloria Steinem at Eugene Lang College,” The New School, YouTube Video, 1:45:29, October 8, 2014,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkzOFvWRn4>.

²⁴ “bell hooks & Gloria Steinem at Eugene Lang College,” The New School.

²⁵ Jane Coaston, “The Intersectionality Wars,” *Vox, The Highlight*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>.

and Blackness merged by describing the lived experiences of Black women.

However, hooks not only addressed feminism and Blackness. She identified as a queer-pas-gay woman and brought forth the added element of sexuality as a factor in her work. An article by writer Elyssa Goodman on intersectional feminism quoted Soyica Colbert, a professor of African American Studies, who noted that hooks' canonical book, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984), called for revised goals to the feminist movement to incorporate women beyond the educated, White upper- and middle-class demographic to which it had mostly been geared.²⁶ According to Colbert, hooks believed that expanding the framework could be useful to the queer community, the queer community of color in particular, in understanding how gender and sexuality are historized. Colbert added, "One of the things that bell hooks provides for us is this history lesson in thinking about how these categories are not permanent."²⁷ It demonstrated hooks' ability to liberate an idea from the confines that are purposefully dismissive. Because of her own experiences, she educated the reader on the many forms of oppression, based on not only race and gender, but sexuality as well.

In her quest to define feminism and bring disparate ideas to the forefront, hooks revealed a friendship with Laverne Cox (b. 1972), an actor and the first transgender woman of color to appear in a leading role in the critically acclaimed Netflix series, *Orange is the New Black*. Their hour and a half conversation sought to

²⁶ Intersectional feminism, or intersectionality, was a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. The theory was developed to describe how race, class, and gender intersect and overlap with one another, creating such problems as discrimination in employment. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43, no. 6 (1991): 1242-1243, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents.

²⁷ Jekatyerina Dunajeva, "Book Review: Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black by bell hooks," *Critical Romani Studies* Vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 129, <https://crs.ceu.edu/index.php/crs/article/download/18/11>.

examine what contemporary feminism looked like.²⁸ The importance of the conversation between hooks and Cox demonstrated hooks' own efforts to thwart the idea of traditional femininity. Her willingness to engage in dialogue with Cox endorsed her efforts to redefine what it meant to be a woman, as well as confirmed her solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.

Braving bell hooks, the Complex

hooks never relented in her stance on feminism, but she would face controversy. She was criticized for the position she took against musical icon Beyoncé (b. 1981) upon the release of the singer's visual album, *Lemonade* (2016).²⁹ hooks had previously criticized the singer in remarks that began a debate. She stated,

Then you are saying, from my deconstructive point of view, that she is colluding in the construction of herself as a slave. I see a part of Beyoncé that is in fact anti-feminist—that is a terrorist, especially in terms of the impact on young girls.³⁰

Many took aim at her labeling world-renowned, much-beloved Beyoncé as a “terrorist,” but hooks did not relent. Throughout her career, Beyoncé has been characterized as a modern feminist, using her voice and music to uplift young girls and women, appealing to a different generation that had not been exposed to the original feminist movement. Her work used music, poetry, and

²⁸ “bell hooks and Laverne Cox in a Public Dialogue at The New School,” The New School, YouTube Video, 1:36:08, October 13, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oMmZIJjgY>.

²⁹ Beyoncé, “Beyoncé – Hold Up (Video),” *Lemonade*, YouTube Video, 5:16, September 4, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeonBmcFR8o>.

³⁰ Jamilah King, “Is Beyoncé a Terrorist? Black Feminist Scholars Debate bell hooks,” *COLORLINES*, May 9, 2014, <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/beyonce-terrorist-black-feminist-scholars-debate-bell-hooks>.

visuals to narrate a variety of themes, while attempting to vocalize the plight of Black women and their struggles.

In a commentary published in *The Guardian*, hooks took exception to that work by Beyoncé. She wrote,

Viewers who like to suggest *Lemonade* was created solely or primarily for black female audiences are missing the point. Commodities, irrespective of their subject matter, are made, produced and marketed to entice any and all consumers. Beyoncé's audience is the world, and that world of business and money-making has no color.³¹

She argued that “[f]rom slavery to the present, black female bodies have been bought and sold. What makes this commodification different in *Lemonade* is intent—its purpose is to seduce, celebrate and delight—to challenge the ongoing present-day devaluation and dehumanization of the black female body.”³² While it seemed hooks was offering praise for the supposed celebration of the Black female body in the singer's work, it was clear in hooks' opinion that even though Beyoncé and her collaborators attempted to offer a different image of Black female womanhood, the work merely stayed within a repeated framework, one that displayed the Black woman as a victim. hooks argued that *Lemonade* did nothing to change the conventional attitude and sexist attributions applied to Black women. In a sense, the old stereotypical imagery of Jezebel and the angry Black woman remained; while Beyoncé chose to showcase a variety of Black bodies, it did nothing to discourage the negative narratives, still very prominently used today.³³

³¹ bell hooks, “Beyoncé's *Lemonade* is capitalist money-making at its best,” *The Guardian*, May 11, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/may/11/capitalism-of-beyonce-lemonade-album>.

³² bell hooks, “Beyoncé's *Lemonade*.”

³³ The term “Jezebel” remains a prominent stereotype historically attributed to Black women. The imagery associated with this characterization is that of a

A compilation of criticism directed at hooks ranged from Melissa Harris-Perry (b. 1973), a writer, professor, and television host, and Jamilah Lemieux (b. 1984), a writer and cultural critic, to panel discussions and other prominent voices in the media. *Ebony* magazine writer Lemieux cited hypocrisy arguing,

If all commercial art is commodity, does that really mean that creating a work that centers Black women in a beautiful way and speaks directly to and about us is rendered valueless because it's available to be consumed by all? And what does this say about the dozens of books she's published, presumably none of them available for free?³⁴

Black Youth Project managing editor, Jenn Jackson, questioned hooks' lack of acknowledgement of diversity in Black feminism. She said that her issue with hook's critique as that "while many of her concerns [were] valid, they [did] not make room for the particular feminisms of a star like Beyoncé. That is to say, hooks' expectations of Beyoncé outstrip[ped] the space the artist [was] herself attempting to make with this work."³⁵

hooks remained steadfast in her criticism of Beyoncé even as several prominent Black women in media and academia weighed in on the debate, sparking a public conversation on feminism, marginalization, and empowerment. Whether the argument had a measure of validity or not, it demonstrated the

sexually seductive, promiscuous and lewd woman who "desired" sexual relations with White and Black men, and therefore could not be victimized by rape.

³⁴ Sameer Rao, "What You Need to Know About the Reaction to bell hooks' Critique of 'Lemonade,'" *IMDiversity*, May 12, 2016, <https://imdiversity.com/diversity-news/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-reaction-to-bell-hooks-critique-of-lemonade/>.

³⁵ Rao, "What You Need to Know About the Reaction to bell hooks' Critique of 'Lemonade.'"

strength of hooks' convictions, and her unwavering efforts to uplift rather than weaken Black women.

Befitting bell hooks, the Icon

bell hooks passed away on December 15, 2021, from kidney failure at her home in Berea, Kentucky. She was sixty-nine years old. According to an article announcing her death in *The Guardian*, her niece, Ebony Motley, tweeted: "The family of @bellhooks is sad to announce the passing of our sister, aunt, great-aunt and great-great-aunt."³⁶ The article included a second statement from the family which recognized her as Gloria Jean Watkins which stated, "The family of Gloria Jean Watkins is deeply saddened at the passing of our beloved sister on December 15, 2021. The family honored her request to transition at home with family and friends by her side."³⁷ In conjunction, both statements were poignant and essential, as well as a message to academia, her legion of readers, followers and fans. It was an acknowledgement of her work and who she was as both bell hooks and Gloria Jean Watkins. But it was also a not-so-subtle reminder that stemmed from Gloria Jean Watkins herself, a woman who published her work under a pseudonym in lower-case lettering, to ensure that her message was the focus.

Her impact was heralded in the media. Such offerings from *TIME* magazine, which had included her in part of its list of the most influential women of the past century, reupped their article in 2020, before her death. They wrote,

If hooks had believed in behaving, she would have stayed in academia. Instead, she became that rare rock star of a public intellectual who reaches wide

³⁶ Lucy Knight, "bell hooks, Author and Activist, Dies Age 69," *The Guardian*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/dec/15/bell-hooks-author-and-activist-dies-aged-69>.

³⁷ Knight, "bell hooks, Author and Activist."

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by being accessible. For generations of Black girls, hooks has been a rite of passage.³⁸

As news of her death reached academia and the public, many praised her legacy, her voice, and her intellect in wide-reaching obituaries which punctuated her influence. Many included enticing snippets and quotes from her work, which no doubt sent readers in search of more. Hopkinsville, Kentucky offered its own celebration of her status as a native Kentuckian. On the town's "Visit Hopkinsville" website, a section displays directions for various guided tours. Advertisements for the "Hopkinsville African American History Cell Phone Tour," include a young, pensive hooks. Her face peers from among the posted photographs on the site with, perhaps ironically, mostly influential male Black Kentuckians.

bell hooks' relationship with Berea College developed in 2004 as a result of the college's efforts and commitment to gender and racial equality. Starting in 1866, Berea College was the first interracial and coeducation college in the South, primarily admitting Black and White students from Kentucky and the Appalachia region.³⁹ Her status as Distinguished Professor in Residence in Appalachian Studies, and the endowment of her papers to the school ensure that her legacy and focus will be an influential factor for future generations. In their statement on the death of bell hooks, they expressed their gratitude for her contributions to the campus community, and celebrated her life and legacy through the bell hooks center that opened on the campus in the fall of 2021. The mission statement of the bell hooks center speaks to hooks' influence, stating,

³⁸ dream hampton, "100 Women of the Year, 1984: bell hooks," *TIME*, March 5, 2020, <https://time.com/5793676/bell-hooks-100-women-of-the-year>.

³⁹ Berea College, "Statement on the death of bell hooks from Berea College," *Berea College*, December 15, 2021, <https://www.berea.edu/news/statement-on-the-death-of-bell-hooks/>.

The bell hooks center is an inclusive space where historically underrepresented students can come to be as they are, outside of the social scripts that circumscribe their living...Our work is motivated by bell hooks' famous insights that 'patriarchy has no gender' and that, therefore, 'feminism is for everybody.'⁴⁰

What hooks recognized as necessary components—hope, passion, and love—became the principles that helped formulate the basis for much of her work. She leaves behind a compendium of books, articles, scholarly works, interviews, and appearances in films, all of which created a legacy that cements her vision, and promotes inspiration as well as self-awareness. She published nearly forty books that ranged from collections of essays to poetry to children's books. Titles such as *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (2003), *Rock My Soul: Black People and Self-Esteem* (2002), *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (2002), and *All About Love: New Visions* (1999) are demonstrative of her vision.⁴¹ She won multiple awards and acclamations. Her picture book for children, *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999), was nominated for an NAACP Image Award; it celebrates and affirms Black hair culture and promotes self-esteem for young Black children.⁴²

The name bell hooks will forever be associated with a brilliant, outspoken woman, who distinguished herself as a champion of feminism, in addition to gender and race, in her commitment to uplift the Black woman. The lower-case stylized name bell hooks, for whom Gloria Jean Watkins sought to use as

⁴⁰ "The bell hooks center," *Berea College*, September 22, 2021, <https://www.berea.edu/bhc/>.

⁴¹ bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); bell hooks, *Rock My Soul: Black People and Self-Esteem* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2003); bell hooks, *Communion: The Female Search for Love*. (New York: Perennial, 2003); bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow, 2001).

⁴² bell hooks and Chis Raschka (illustrator), *Happy to Be Nappy* (New York, New York: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2017).

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homage to her ancestors, accomplished such, and though contradictory to her desires, ultimately became the transparent barrier that helped to draw us to her and her work, allowing us for a few moments in time to envision her greatness.

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Cecelia M. Smith was born and raised in Los Angeles County and attended Howard University after high school. She transplanted to San Bernardino County as an adult and resumed her pursuit for higher education at Chaffey College and California State University, San Bernardino. She graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in 2013, with a bachelor of arts in history. She retired from her position as a 911 police operator/dispatcher for the city of Los Angeles in 2017, with over thirty-five years of service. In 2020, she began studies in the inaugural class of the master of arts in history program at California State University, San Bernardino, with a focus on African American history. Her thesis explores factors involved in the lynching of women. She graduated with her master's degree in May 2022. Cecelia is currently an adjunct professor at La Sierra University in Riverside. She enjoys writing and art and wishes to focus on completing a fictional novel or screenplay based on her current research. She would eventually like to return to school to further her education, perhaps pursuing a second master's degree. She currently resides in Fontana with her family.



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2022

Betty White (1922–2021), Ms. Television

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Betty White (1922–2021), Ms. Television

By George “Matt” Patino



Figure 1. Betty White (1922–2021). Courtesy of Alan Light, Wikimedia Commons¹

Time is relative, especially when examining a life. While ninety-nine years is inarguably a long time to inhabit this earth, the end still came too quickly for many of Betty White’s fans.² For more than eighty years as a television mainstay, she helped shape the medium that became synonymous with her life. As such, Betty White deserves the title of “Ms. Television” for her contributions to the medium as a talk-show host, actress, creator, producer, and

¹ Alan Light, “Betty White,” *Wikimedia Commons*, January 2, 2022, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betty_White_1988_Emy Awards \(cropped_2\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betty_White_1988_Emy Awards_(cropped_2).jpg).

² During her time in the public eye, Betty White created a level of familiarity even among people that might not consider themselves fans. Therefore, Betty White will be referred to by her first name as homage to her legacy.

game-show contestant.³ Beginning her career in 1939, only twelve years after the first demonstration of Philo Farnsworth's (1906–1971) television, Betty logged several “firsts”: she was the first woman to appear on television, produce a nationally televised show, star in a sitcom, and receive an Emmy nomination.⁴ Betty's active role behind the scenes challenged the traditional roles of women and marginalized groups in the entertainment industry. She became television's first gender and racial equality advocate as well as a loveable antagonist, whether by intention or coincidence.

On December 31, 2021, Betty Marion White (1922–2021) died at her home in Los Angeles, California just shy of her one-hundredth birthday.⁵ She was born to Horace White (1899–1963) and Christine (Tess) White (1899–1985) on January 17, 1922, in Oak Park, Illinois precisely eleven months after their wedding. Betty's family moved from Oak Park to the Beverly Hills section of Los Angeles while she was still a toddler.⁶ Although she was an only child, she described herself as never “lonely in the forlorn sense.”⁷ She had many friends, but she was incredibly close to her

³ Milton Berle (1908–2002)—the broadcast form's first star—was known as “Mr. Television” due to his strong presence during the first Golden Age of television in the 1940s and 1950s. Brynna Johnson, “Milton Berle: Mr. Television and Uncle Miltie,” The American Vaudeville Museum, accessed March 17, 2022, <https://vaudeville.sites.arizona.edu/node/84>.

⁴ In 1927, Philo Farnsworth invented the first working version of the electronic television. Mitchell Stephens, “History of Television,” Grolier Encyclopedia, accessed March 17, 2022,

<https://stephens.hosting.nyu.edu/History%20of%20Television%20page.html>; “Pioneers of Television: Betty White – First Lady of Television,” PBS International, accessed March 17, 2022, <https://pbsinternational.org/programs/pioneers-of-television-betty-white/>.

⁵ Richard Severo and Peter Keepnews, “Betty White, a Television Golden Girl From the Start, Is Dead at 99,” *New York Times*, December 31, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/31/arts/television/betty-white-dead.html?searchResultPosition=3>.

⁶ “Betty White,” IMDb (IMDb.com), accessed March 17, 2022, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0924508/bio?ref =nm_ov_bio_sm.

⁷ Betty White, *Here We Go Again: My Life in Television* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 13.

parents and referred to them as the friends she liked best.⁸ Betty's well-documented love of animals came from Horace and Tess. As avid campers, the family would often return home with a new pet, and, in an unconventional turn, when most children would try to convince their parents to keep an animal, Horace and Tess would convince Betty.⁹ Betty hoped to turn her love of the outdoors and animals into a career as a forest ranger, but in the 1930s, women could not become rangers due to discriminatory hiring practices rooted in gender-based discrimination.¹⁰ While she was a Horace Mann Grammar School student, her aspirations shifted to writing. However, the performing bug bit her around 1935 after she wrote herself into the lead role in the school's graduation play.¹¹ Betty hoped to continue performing as an opera singer but, self-admittedly, her voice did not cooperate, although she did get to sing at her graduation ceremony from Beverly Hills High School in 1939. Her high school graduation performance proved to be fortuitous as an early television investor was in the audience and invited Betty and her classmate Harry Bennett (n.d.) to participate in a signal test.¹² The duo performed a version of *The Merry Widow* on the sixth floor of the Packard Automobile Building in Los Angeles broadcasting to a small screen located on the ground floor.¹³

Betty's dreams of following the new medium were interrupted by the United States' entry into World War II (1939–1945) in 1941. Betty joined the American Women's Voluntary

⁸ White, 13.

⁹ White, 13.

¹⁰ California's first official female State park ranger, Paula Peterson, was hired in 1972. "Inside the Actors Studio (S16 E6) - Betty White," YouTube, December 31, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GP_nYq_UR0.

¹¹ White, 13.

¹² Valerie Ettenhofer, "How Betty White Got Her Start in One of the First TV Broadcasts Ever," SlashFilm.com, January 1, 2022, <https://www.slashfilm.com/722253/how-betty-white-got-her-start-in-one-of-the-first-tv-broadcasts-ever/>.

¹³ White, 14.

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Services (AWVS) who delivered supplies to gun encampments located in the hills above Hollywood and Santa Monica. She also spent time in the local recreation halls with nearby service members.¹⁴ In 1945, she met and married a pilot, Dick Barker (b. 1914), and the two moved to his chicken farm in Ohio. Betty soon discovered that it was not the life she wanted; within six months the marriage was over, and she returned to Los Angeles.¹⁵ Upon her return, Betty joined the Bliss-Hayden Little Theater in Beverly Hills where she landed lead roles in *Spring Dance* and *Dear Ruth*.¹⁶

Her time at the theater enhanced her acting skills and led to her second marriage. Albert Wooten (1914–1995), known professionally as Lane Allan, an actor and an agent from National Concert Artists Corporation (NCAC), was in the audience on the closing night of *Dear Ruth* and, following Betty's performance, Allan asked her for a date. During their courtship, Allan guided Betty toward radio which led to an audition for the radio comedy, *The Great Gildersleeve*.¹⁷ It was an excellent opportunity for Betty, but it also presented a "real catch-22" because the union representing radio performers, the American Federation of Radio Artists (AFRA), required anyone working in radio to be a union member. However, to apply for membership, a performer needed to be working in radio. While leaving the audition, she ran into the show's producer, Fran Van Hartesveldt (1912–1970), in an elevator. After speaking on the ride, Van Hartesveldt agreed to let Betty say one word, "Parkay" (the margarine company that sponsored the show), during the show's commercial breaks thus qualifying her for AFRA membership.¹⁸ Betty's role on *The Great*

¹⁴ White, 16.

¹⁵ Tom Gliatto, "Forever Betty," PEOPLE.com, December 6, 1999, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140201174853/http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20129972,00.html>.

¹⁶ White, 18-19.

¹⁷ White, 21.

¹⁸ Fran Van Hartesveldt later became a writer on Betty White's show *Date with the Angels*. White, 21-23.

Gildersleeve led to roles in other commercials, including a commercial for American Airlines (1946–1947).¹⁹

Betty's relationship with Allan progressed to the point where she sensed he might propose. Worried about the prospect of a second failed marriage, Betty decided to break up with Allan.²⁰ She used an "out of the blue" movie offer from Ansco Film to end the relationship because the role required a six-week shoot in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. As it turned out, her part was relatively small and because of the remote location, Betty was called upon to be the animal wrangler and script girl, in addition to her acting duties. The extra responsibilities that would help her later in her career did little to keep her mind off Allan, and, after her return to Los Angeles in 1947, they reconciled and married.²¹

By 1949, Betty's radio career was flourishing. At the same time, television evolved from an experiment to a commercial endeavor and Los Angeles stations needed on-air talent. The burgeoning stations recruited well-known local radio personalities to the new medium, including Al Jarvis (1909–1970).²² Lacking an established format for television, Jarvis created *Hollywood on Television* as a visual edition of his radio broadcast for KLAC, and he wanted a co-host. Betty's stage, radio, and movie experience, as well as her eagerness to work, led to a phone call from Jarvis offering her the co-hosting duties on *Hollywood on Television*.²³ They played records from an on-set turntable and chatted between songs. Since programming content for television stations was limited, *Hollywood on Television* aired live for five hours a day, six days a week, without a script or writers.²⁴ *Hollywood on Television* became a popular show, and as Betty's professional life improved, her home life declined. Despite his early support for

¹⁹ White, 23.

²⁰ White, 24.

²¹ White, 25-26.

²² White, 34.

²³ White, 34.

²⁴ Without writers, Betty White and Al Jarvis spent the entire show "ad-libbing" their live on-air conversations. White, 32-38.

Betty's career, Allan ultimately admitted to wanting a more "traditional" marriage, and in 1949 the union ended in divorce.²⁵

During World War II many women took jobs formerly held by men who were off fighting in Europe or the Pacific. Employers appealed to women's patriotism and encouraged their participation in the workforce, but only until the war's end. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the women who took wartime jobs returned to their "traditional" roles as wives and mothers. Gender expectations were reinforced in books, films, and television where women were portrayed as "stay-at-home moms" in charge of the household and child rearing, while their "masculine" husband worked outside the home.²⁶ The post-war economy afforded many households the freedom to live comfortably on one income and the concurrent "baby boom" further entrenched a woman's role.²⁷ However, Betty demonstrated an unwillingness to accommodate societal norms, especially if it meant abandoning her career. In 1951, Al Jarvis decided to leave *Hollywood on Television*; he was replaced by the actor Eddie Albert (1906–2005), who left after six months to film *Roman Holiday* (1953).²⁸ In 1952, Betty became the sole presenter of *Hollywood on Television*, making her the first woman to host a television talk show.²⁹ During the show, Betty introduced sketches entitled "Life with Elizabeth." Their popularity prompted KLAC to spin them into their own show, also titled *Life with Elizabeth*, a move that made Betty the first woman to star in a situation comedy (sitcom). Betty agreed to the spin-off, and she, along with her creative partner George Tibbles (1913–1987), formed a production

²⁵ Gliatto, "Forever Betty."

²⁶ "Women and Work After World War II," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), accessed May

26, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/tupperware-work/>.

²⁷ "Women and Work."

²⁸ White, 70.

²⁹ Toni Fitzgerald, "Betty White's Early Years: How She Became One of TV's First Superstars," *Forbes*, January 3, 2022,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tonifitzgerald/2021/12/31/betty-whites-early-years-how-she-became-one-of-tvs-first-superstars/?sh=12d9a6041826>.

company, Bandy Productions, to oversee the project.³⁰ The business arrangement made Betty one of the few women—and among the first—to produce a television show.³¹

In addition to producing and starring in the weekly live broadcast of *Life with Elizabeth*, Betty continued hosting *Hollywood on Television*. However, *Life with Elizabeth* began receiving attention beyond the Los Angeles broadcast market. In 1953, Bandy Productions entered a creative agreement with Don Fedderson (1913–1994) to pre-record the show for nationally syndicated distribution.³² The show's success enabled Bandy Productions and Fedderson to pitch *Hollywood on Television* as a national show. Then, in 1954, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) agreed and rebranded the program as *The Betty White Show*.³³ In addition to hosting and producing the eponymous show (which made Betty the first woman to produce a national television show), Betty was given complete creative control—a responsibility very few women in 1950s television held. As a child of the Great Depression (1929–1939), the work ethic and tenacity that Betty displayed getting into show business served her well as she transitioned from on-air talent to showrunner.

Very few women worked in television in the 1950s and, considering that only thirty percent of the overall workforce was female, Betty's achievement was even more remarkable.³⁴ Having complete control of the show allowed Betty to hire Betty Turbiville (n.d.), one of television's first female directors.³⁵ Betty also hired an African American tap dancer, Arthur Duncan (b. 1933), as a

³⁰ White, 73.

³¹ Lucille Ball also partnered in a production company with her husband, Desi Arnaz. Fitzgerald, "Betty White's Early Years."

³² White, 72-83.

³³ White, 87-89.

³⁴ Mitra Toossi, "Monthly Labor Review," 2002, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/05/art2full.pdf>.

³⁵ Bill Keveney, "Betty White: PBS Salutes Happy Homemaker, Golden Girl, TV Pioneer," USA Today, August 22, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2018/08/20/betty-white-gets-pbs-tribute-first-lady-television/1026883002/>.

series regular. In the mid-1950s, much of the United States observed segregation laws and was characterized by overt anti-blackness, so Duncan's appearances on *Hollywood on Television*—which made him the first African American series regular on a talk show—were not universally welcomed. NBC received complaints about the interracial interactions on the show; most came from viewers in the segregated South. In a 2018 interview, Duncan recalled, “I was on the show, and they had some letters out of Mississippi and elsewhere that some of the stations would not carry the show if I was permitted to stay on there.”³⁶ Betty responded by using Duncan whenever possible and said, “I’m sorry but he stays...Live with it!”³⁷ At the time of the controversy, Duncan was unaware of Betty’s position; when learning about it years later, he responded by saying, “She just stood up for her beliefs. That solved everything at the time.”³⁸ In her second autobiography released in 2010, *Here We Go Again*, Betty stated that she was “livid—[it] was 1954, for heaven’s sake!”³⁹ Fearing a boycott in the South, sponsors distanced themselves from the show but, according to Betty, NBC chose to defend the show and Duncan remained.⁴⁰ Betty welcomed other African American performers on her show, notably the rhythm and blues group The Four Jokers.⁴¹

The Betty White Show, which aired weekdays at noon, was a rating success but the variety show that followed at 3 p.m., *The Kate Smith Hour*, could not match the rating numbers. NBC decided to move *The Betty White Show* to 4:30 p.m. to boost Kate Smith’s (1907–1986) ratings, but viewers did not follow the time

³⁶ Tai Saint-Louis, “Betty White Made History with Arthur Duncan, He Did It Twice More,” *Black Enterprise*, January 2, 2022, <https://www.blackenterprise.com/betty-whites-controversial-hire-of-tap-dancer-arthur-duncan-made-history-in-more-ways-than-one/>.

³⁷ Saint-Louis, “Betty White Made History.”

³⁸ Keveney, “Betty White: PBS.”

³⁹ White, 94.

⁴⁰ White, 94.

⁴¹ “The Betty White Show,” IMDb (IMDb.com), accessed April 29, 2022, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0211781/fullcredits/?ref=tt_cl_sm.

change. The loss of viewership prompted NBC to move *The Betty White Show* to 12:30 p.m., and once again, viewers did not follow. Citing the rating decline, NBC canceled *The Betty White Show* on December 31, 1954, after only one year on the air.⁴²

During the early 1960s, Betty met her third husband, actor and game show host Allen Ludden (1917–1981).⁴³ Ludden hosted the game show, *Password*, and Betty was a frequent guest contestant; they also worked together in a summer stock play in Cape Cod.⁴⁴ In 1963, Betty married Ludden and spent most of the decade as a game show guest, hostess of NBC's annual Rose Parade coverage, and stepmother to Ludden's children.⁴⁵

In 1973, she was approached by Allan Burns (1935–2021), a co-creator of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970), to audition for the role of Sue Ann Nivens. Described as a “cloyingly sweet...dragon...with a tinge of nymphomania,” Sue Ann would serve as a frequent foil to Mary Tyler Moore's main character.⁴⁶ In a 1987 interview with Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air*, Betty said that the writers came up with an idea for a “yucky, icky, sweet Betty White-type.”⁴⁷ Although not necessarily cultivated as such, Betty's television persona was noted for being wholesome, “bland [and] sweet.”⁴⁸ Betty relished the idea of playing against type: “I don't think anybody who knew me could've missed the fact that I had a sense of humor about that because I never was being the sweet type. I had—I've always had a rather bawdy sense of

⁴² White, 98-99.

⁴³ White, 137-52.

⁴⁴ Pioneers of Television, “Betty White - the Complete Pioneers of Television Interview,” YouTube, January 22, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPyddnF8jgQ>.

⁴⁵ White, 149-54.

⁴⁶ White, 192.

⁴⁷ David Bianculli and Terry Gross, “‘Fresh Air’ Celebrates Legendary TV Actor Betty White,” NPR, January 7, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/07/1071242706/fresh-air-celebrates-legendary-tv-actor-betty-white>.

⁴⁸ Bianculli and Gross, “‘Fresh Air’ Celebrates.”

humor.”⁴⁹ Betty was also excited about the “one-shot” nature of her appearance.⁵⁰ However, the performance was so well received that Betty’s character was immediately elevated to recurring status.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, television roles mirrored the traditional American family with the father as the breadwinner and the mother as a homemaker.⁵¹ It was not until the 1970s, as more women entered the workforce, that television roles reflected the changes in gender roles by focusing on working women.⁵² Television sitcoms, like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, showed women living independently while pursuing a career. Other comedies centered around divorced, single mothers finding a place in society, while female oriented action shows (*Bionic Woman*, *Wonder Woman*, or *Charlie’s Angels*) challenged gender expectations.⁵³ Women’s characters were strong, assertive, and free-thinking and even though the depiction of women changed, the “cutting, sexually voracious schemer” of Sue Ann Nivens was virtually unheard of in the early 1970s.⁵⁴ Betty remained with the show until its end in 1977, and the role earned her two Emmy Awards for Best Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series.⁵⁵

For over seventy years, Betty remained a constant on television. She helped create and define the medium, blazing a trail for all who followed. Her work ethic made her an unignorable force, from hosting *Hollywood on Television* six days a week to producing and starring in *Life with Elizabeth* each Saturday night.

⁴⁹ Bianculli and Gross, “‘Fresh Air’ Celebrates.”

⁵⁰ Bianculli and Gross, “‘Fresh Air’ Celebrates.”

⁵¹ Elizabeth L. Maurer, “Tuning in to Women in Television,” National Women’s History Museum, September 21, 2016, <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/tuning-women-television#:~:text=In%20general%2C%20women%E2%80%99s%20roles%20in%20development%20of%20empowered%20women%20characters.>

⁵² Maurer, “Tuning in to Women.”

⁵³ Morganne Mallon, “Women in Television: 1970s,” Morgannes Civic Issues Blog, 2014, [https://sites.psu.edu/civicissuesmallon/2014/03/06/women-in-television-1970s/.](https://sites.psu.edu/civicissuesmallon/2014/03/06/women-in-television-1970s/)

⁵⁴ Keveney, “Betty White: PBS.”

⁵⁵ White, 199-201.

By exercising complete creative control over *The Betty White Show*, Betty championed feminism and racial equality, whether knowingly or not. By creating the character of Sue Ann Nivens on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Betty showed her ability to adapt to a changing society and television landscape. Betty's genuineness came through in her work, regardless of the character or show, and garnered a loyal fan base. Betty White's accomplishments in front of and behind the camera led to her 1995 Television Academy Hall of Fame induction and deserved the title of First Lady of Television, or more accurately, Ms. Television.

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Desmond Tutu (1931–2021)

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Desmond Tutu (1931–2021)

By Gary Crethers



Figure 1. Desmond Mpilo Tutu (1931–2021) delivering a speech at the first International Ethics Conference at the University of Botswana in 2009. Courtesy of Wikicommons.¹

Desmond Mpilo Tutu (1931–2021), Archbishop Emeritus of the South African Anglican Church, had a saying: “A person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed.”² As journalist John Allen wrote in his biography,

¹ Cmdr. J.A. Surette, United States Navy, “South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu,” December 7, 2009, Wikicommons, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_African_Anglican_Archbishop_Desmond_Tutu.jpg.

² Tutu was the Archbishop Emeritus from 1986 to 1996. He was succeeded by Njongonkulu Winston Hugh Ndungane (b. 1941) later in 1996. Desmond Tutu, *The Essential Desmond Tutu*, ed. John Allen (Claremont, SA: David Phillip Publishers, 1997), 5-6.

Rabble-Rouser for Peace (2006), Archbishop Tutu was central to the anti-apartheid movement (1912–1992) in South Africa. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, he used his notoriety to address injustices of an apartheid system that the South African government established to segregate people based on race. Former Bishop of Lesotho from 197 to 1978, and General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) 1978 to 1985, Tutu said, “One day no one was listening. The next I was an oracle.”³ Archbishop Tutu passed away on December 26, 2021, at the age of ninety. As the first Black Anglican Bishop in South Africa, Tutu rose from poverty in the poor Black village of Makoeteng near Klerksdorp in the Northwest Province, South Africa to prominence as a leader in the movement to end the apartheid system in South Africa.⁴

Tutu lost no time in using his influence. Meeting Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (b. 1939) in December 1984, Tutu, as representative of the United Democratic Front (UDF), toured capitals of several countries, attempting to influence them to support the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.⁵ The movement was an international effort to convince corporations and nations to oppose the system of apartheid established in South Africa by the National Party government soon after its election to office in 1948.⁶ Apartheid (apartness) was a system of regulations

³ John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 245.

⁴ Allen, 9.

⁵ The United Democratic Front was created in 1983. It was a coalition of South African civic society organizations with African National Congress veterans as leaders. Desmond Tutu was a leading patron. Allen, 206.

⁶ The National Party ran on a policy of Apartheid, strict separation of the races. The electorate of 1948 had been reduced to whites, some colored and Indian South Africans, with black South Africans banned. The policies of Apartheid were gradually introduced between the election of 1948 and the eventual ending of membership in the British Commonwealth in 1961. Albert Grundlingh, “Book Four: Industrialization, Rural Change and Nationalism - Chapter Three - Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930’s and 1940’s,” South African History Online, accessed June 2, 2022, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/book-4->

used to separate people based on a division into four basic races: White, Coloured, Indian, and Black.⁷ Tutu was able to influence the Canadian Prime Minister's perspective toward apartheid after they met. Mulroney then proceeded to convince the Canadian Parliament to pressure the British government to "invoke political and economic sanctions and take the lead in the Commonwealth and at the UN on the issue."⁸ The next year, in 1985, Tutu, then-Bishop of Johannesburg, had an effect on political figures in France. Meeting the then-French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius (b.1946), the two went for a walk and, without mentioning sanctions against South Africa, Fabius recalled Tutu impressing him. Fabius stated, "A white minister, walking with a black bishop without police protection—that's freedom."⁹ The next day, the French government declared sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa.¹⁰ The astute use of his position to gain attention and sympathy for the cause of the Black majority seeking an end to the apartheid system in South Africa was an example of the moral force that Bishop Tutu was able to wield as a spiritual leader.

Desmond Tutu Early Life

Born October 7, 1931, Desmond Mpilo Tutu's parents belonged to the two main linguistic groups of South Africa. His mother was Motswana from the Sotho-Tswana group, and his father was Xhosa. His father, Zachariah Zelilo Tutu (1901–1971), was a teacher; his mother, Aletta Dorothea Mavoertsek Mathlare (c.

[industrialisation-rural-change-and-nationalism-chapter-3-afrikaner-nationalism-1930s.](#)

⁷ Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon, "Introduction," in *The South African Reader: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. Clifton, Crais and Thomas V. McClendon (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 2-6; Allen, 55-61.

⁸ Allen, 245.

⁹ Allen, 245.

¹⁰ Allen, 245.

1905–1984), was the strongest influence in his life. Tutu was quoted as saying of his father, “He thought the Xhosa’s were God’s gift to the world.”¹¹ Tutu was not attracted to the priesthood as a child but grew up around the church; his paternal grandfather, Solomon Tutu (n.d.), was a minister in the Black Methodist Church.¹² Desmond Tutu went to a progressive Black high school but suffered from a bout of tuberculosis and missed months of school. Tutu managed to graduate and ultimately attended the Pretoria Bantu National College in 1951. The buildings of the teaching college were constructed in the style of a round hut. According to John Allen, Tutu joked, “Rectangular buildings were probably not good for our Bantu psyche.”¹³ The government was trying to use architecture to indoctrinate Black people into accepting the government’s idea of appropriate housing.

Initially, Tutu was not politically active. He continued to pursue a teaching career and married one of his father’s star students, Nomalizo Leah Shenxane (b.1933) in 1955. The implementation of the South African Nationalist Party’s education plan for Black people led to discriminatory pay scales. As Hendrik Verwoerd (1901–1966) chief architect of the apartheid system stated, “The Bantu teacher must be integrated as an active agent in the...development of the Bantu community. He must not feel above his community, with a consequent desire to become integrated into the life of the European community.”¹⁴ It was at this point, as a young teacher, that Tutu decided to apply to become a priest in the Anglican Church in 1955. He decided that he would do better as a religious figure, not for idealistic reasons, but because he could not afford to go to medical school.¹⁵ This decision would lead Tutu out of his Transvaal home to St Peter’s Theological College in Rosettenville, Johannesburg where he

¹¹ Allen, 10-11.

¹² Allen, 33.

¹³ Alen, 34, 46, 48.

¹⁴ Allen, 61.

¹⁵ Allen, 61.

finished his studies. Tutu was ordained on December 11, 1960.¹⁶ In 1962, he was given a scholarship to attend King's College in London, United Kingdom, ultimately earning a master's degree in theology.¹⁷

Tutu had four children: a son, Trevor Thamsanqa (b. 1966), and three daughters, Mpho Andrea (b. 1963), Naomi Nontombi (b. 1960), and Theresa Thandeka (b. 1957). While in London, Tutu's financial condition was inadequate for a family man, and his scholarship had to be increased after some negotiation with the Anglican Church and the World Council of Churches who funded his education.¹⁸ Tutu was noted for his sense of humor and infectious laughter, which served him well in situations as diverse as meetings with royalty to defusing street violence at home.¹⁹

Man of Action

Before the 1948 election of the Nationalist Party, South Africa had racist policies not unlike the United States or the British colonies. Upon achieving power, the new National Party's government began implementing strict racist legislation, known as the apartheid system, creating four basic categories as the basis of national cultural divisions: "White, Indian, Coloured, and Black."²⁰

¹⁶ St. Peter's Theological College was later consolidated as Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa as a response to the Group Areas Act limiting black attendance to schools in white areas, St Peter's was one of the schools relocated to the new campus in Alice, Transiki in 1963. Allen, 69-70; Philippe Denis, "Ecumenical Education and Social Change: The Case of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa," *The Ecumenical Review* Vol. 65, no. 2 (2013): 244-57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12039>.

¹⁷ Allen, 95.

¹⁸ Allen, 90.

¹⁹ Allen, 95.

²⁰ The racial divisions in South Africa created by the apartheid policies of the National Party government were based on color distinctions. Whites were of European descent, mainly from the United Kingdom, and Africaaners were the descendants of the original Dutch colonists. The Indians were descended from laborers and other immigrants from India. Coloureds (British spelling) were mixed race, White and Black. Blacks were the indigenous people who were to

Black people, who comprised sixty-eight percent of the population, were divided into ethnically based groups to be allocated poor and unwanted lands called Bantustans for so-called Home Rule on about thirteen percent of South African territory.²¹ In 1948, Nelson Mandela (1918–2013), then a member of the African National Congress Youth League, described the new apartheid system as follows: “The often-haphazard segregation of the past three hundred years was to be consolidated into a monolithic system that was diabolical in its detail, inescapable in its reach and overwhelming in its power.”²²

The African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), and similar groups routinely protested apartheid regulations. The Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960, occurred when members of the PAC protested the implementation of “Pass Laws,” which prohibited black South Africans from entering designated areas without a government-issued pass. At the protest, the police opened fire without notice, killing sixty-nine and wounding an estimated 185 to 190 persons. According to Allen, Tutu, then a student at St. Peter’s Theological College in Rosettenville, Johannesburg, said that “he was in a state of shock” upon learning of the massacre, but at that time did not consider joining the protests. Allen wrote, “The events of 1960, Tutu’s final year at college, were a watershed in the history of the country.”²³

be separated by tribal affiliation and regulated to citizenship in Bantustans, the undesirable territories in South Africa. Allen, 55-56.

²¹ Home Rule meant establishing tribal governments nominally independent but in reality totally dependent upon the South African government. It was a mechanism to rule the ten Bantustans established by the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act. Some three million persons, nearly a fifth of the population in 1960, were removed. Allen, 55-56; Crais and McClendon, “Introduction,” 4-5; Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon, “Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom,” in *The South African Reader: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 279-281.

²² Allen, 55-56.

²³ The Sharpeville massacre led to a declaration of a national state of emergency, banning of the ANC and PAC. The ANC response was to form an armed wing the Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation or MK) which set off bombs to

Tutu returned from the United Kingdom to teach at the Federal Seminary in Alice, Transkei, South Africa.²⁴ In 1968, after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, he preached a sermon “condemning oppression, drawing an analogy between South Africa and Eastern Europe.”²⁵ This was one of his earliest speeches that heralded the beginning of his political involvement. During student protests at that time, when the police surrounded protestors with snarling dogs, Tutu waded into the crowd and joined the students, a defining act that would become one of the hallmarks of his willingness to brave danger to stand up for the oppressed.²⁶ In 1972, Tutu was appointed to the position of African Director at the Theological Education Fund in London. He gained experience in his travels across Africa, assessing and recommending grants for the theological training of students.²⁷

June 1976, saw the beginning of national student rebellions against overcrowding and the mandatory use of the Afrikaans language in the Soweto region.²⁸ The protests spiraled into an indictment of the entire system of apartheid. Over 660 student youth were killed during the ten months of the rebellion.²⁹ One of the more widely-known members that emerged from the rebellions was Steve Biko (1946–1977), who was one of the leaders of the Black Consciousness movement which “espoused the inward transformation of people’s souls as a necessary

destroy power towers, but their leadership was captured in 1963 leading to Mandela’s arrest. Allen, 69-70; Crais and McClendon, “Apartheid and the Struggle for Freedom,” 283.

²⁴ Federal Seminary was created in Alice, Transkei in 1963. Philippe Denis, *The Ecumenical Review*, 244, 247.

²⁵ Allen, 110.

²⁶ Allen, 110-111.

²⁷ Allen, 123.

²⁸ Afrikaans is the language that evolved out of the original Dutch settlers language in Southern Africa starting in the seventeenth century. It became one of the official languages of South Africa. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, “Afrikaans language,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 3, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Afrikaans-language>.

²⁹ Allen, 154.

condition to fighting oppression.”³⁰ He was involved with the South African Students Organization, which was critical to the student rebellions. Biko was murdered in police custody in September 1977.³¹ Tutu, who had been sent to Lesotho as Bishop in 1976, returned to give a speech at Biko’s funeral during which he articulated his increasingly politicized vision:

Steve started something that is quite unstoppable. The powers of injustice, of oppression, of exploitation, have done their worst and they have lost. They have lost because they are immoral and wrong and our God, the God of Exodus, the liberator God, is a God of justice and liberation and goodness. Our cause, the cause of justice and liberation, must triumph because it is moral and just and right.³²

Later, in an article published in 2010, Tutu further explained his views on Christianity. He wrote, “In the face of injustice and oppression it is to disobey God not to stand up in opposition to the injustice and oppression.”³³ In March 1978, Tutu was appointed General Secretary of South African Council of Churches (SACC), a position which, according to historian Roni Mikel Arieli, “brought him to prominence in the context of the anti-apartheid struggle.”³⁴ Affiliated with the World Council of

³⁰ Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon, “From Soweto to Liberation,” in *The South African Reader: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 358.

³¹ Crais and McClendon, “From Soweto to Liberation,” 358.

³² Allen, 164.

³³ Desmond M. Tutu, “The First Word: To Be Human Is To Be Free,” *Journal of Law and Religion* Vol 30, No. 3 (2015): 388, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24739242>.

³⁴ Roni Mikel Arieli, “Between Apartheid, the Holocaust and the Nakba: Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s Pilgrimage to Israel-Palestine (1989) and the Emergence of an Analogical Lexicon,” *Journal of Genocide apartheid*

Churches (WCC), it became a base for revived mass action against the apartheid under Tutu's leadership.³⁵

Tutu increased his activism with his involvement in the SACC. In 1979, Tutu issued a statement protesting the Group Areas Act (1951), which redlined racial groups to segregated residential and business sections in urban locations. Historian Roni Mikel Arieli cites Tutu as saying the Group Areas Act was,

“The [South African] government's final solution to the African problem.” And [Tutu] argued that the policy of the P.W. Botha's administration “was deliberately designed to have Africans starve to death, not because there was no food, but because it was the policy the government had defined and was now pursuing.”³⁶

Tutu attempted to stay out of party politics claiming, “I'm not a thinker, I can't analyze things. I'm a feeling person, maybe I get inspirations.”³⁷ He was involved with the formation of a National Forum starting in 1983, as an attempt to bring the African National Congress (ANC) and its rival Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) together. The ANC was founded as an all-race party in 1912 and was originally called the South African Native National Congress. The group changed its name in 1923 to the ANC. The PAC was formed as a breakaway because of the involvement of Communists and Whites in the ANC.³⁸ Many of the leaders of these movements had been imprisoned or killed by the apartheid government, but

Research, Vol 22, No. 3, (2019) 337,

<https://doi:10.1080/14623528.2019.1673606>.

³⁵ Arieli, “Between Apartheid, the Holocaust and the Nakba,” 337.

³⁶ Botha was President of South Africa at the time. Arieli, “Between Apartheid, the Holocaust and the Nakba,” 338; Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon, “The Discarded People, Introduction,” in *The South African Reader: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 335.

³⁷ Allen, 206.

³⁸ Allen, 69.

Tutu's position as a religious leader afforded him the opportunity to rise up in the anti-apartheid movement. Tutu was one of the spiritual authorities in the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), formed in November 1983, which had some 575 affiliates from all political groups. The UDF was active in boycotting the 1984 national elections that gave limited rights to the Indian and Coloured racial groups in an attempt to divide the voting block of non-Whites. The apartheid South African government hoped to divide the Indian and Coloured votes from those of Black people to prop up the current government.³⁹ The UDF was active in boycotts and worker actions and was instrumental in pressuring the government for change.

In 1984, Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his unrelenting activism and fearless defense of the rights of all South Africans. Criticized in the South African press for the same reasons, Tutu doubled down in his acceptance speech stating, "Blacks are systematically being stripped of their South African citizenship and being turned into aliens in the land of their birth. This is apartheid's final solution, just as Nazism had its final solution for the Jews in Hitler's [1889–1945] Aryan madness."⁴⁰

As protests intensified in South Africa throughout the 1980s, Tutu defused crowds in confrontations with the police. On February 15, 1986, nineteen people were killed by police leading to three days of rioting in Alexandria township. In a meeting held at the local stadium, Tutu told protesters he would go to the government to have their demands met. The South African government leader, Pieter Willem Botha (1916–2006), refused to meet and Tutu had to tell a crowd of forty-thousand that he had nothing to offer. The people booed when he pleaded for them to not become "cannon fodder for the police."⁴¹ As he left, the youths in the crowd told him the police would attack and, at first, they

³⁹ Allen, 206, 207.

⁴⁰ Arieli, "Between Apartheid, the Holocaust and the Nakba," 341.

⁴¹ Allen, 229

refused to let him get to his car. Tutu said he had never felt threatened by an angry crowd like that before.⁴²

Across the world, an anti-apartheid movement grew after the Soweto uprising. Increasingly in the 1980s, the movement to pressure the South African government to end apartheid with economic sanctions and disinvestment in South African industries was an alternative to violent revolution.⁴³ Tutu, angered by the heartless policies of the South African government moving millions of Blacks to barren Bantustans, told Danish reporters in 1979 that Denmark should not buy South African coal, committing himself to sanctions and divestment.⁴⁴

ANC activists and supporters had debated the sanctions and divestment movement since the 1960s after the South African government banned the ANC from assembling. But it was only in the 1980s after Tutu began pressuring international leaders, and the global anti-apartheid campaign supported by the ANC, UDF, and Congress of South African Trade Unions grew, that real implementation of sanctions occurred. The divestment movement was meant to pressure institutions, corporations, pension plans of universities, etc., to end investment in South African companies and government institutions. An example of sanction was the United Nations Security Council resolution which called for an arms embargo against South Africa.⁴⁵ Another example was in 1986, the United States Senate passed the Lugar Bill, against the veto of President Ronald Reagan (1911–2004), approving sanctions against South Africa. United States Senator Richard Green Lugar (1932–2019) gave credit to Bishop Tutu for his impassioned efforts. Of Reagan, Tutu said in an interview with the US press that “he sits there like the great white chief of old [who] can tell us black people that we don’t know what is good for us, the white man knows.”⁴⁶

⁴² Allen, 229.

⁴³ Allen, 175-176, 178-179.

⁴⁴ Allen, 178-179.

⁴⁵ Allen, 167.

⁴⁶ Allen, 260-262.

Botha became ill in 1989 and had to step down as president of South Africa. He was replaced in office by Frederik Willem de Klerk (1936–2021).⁴⁷ In 1989, de Klerk attempted to visit then-newly elected President George H. W. Bush Sr. (1924–2018), however, de Klerk was discouraged by the State Department and the meeting never took place. Upon visiting Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013), Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, in 1989 she bluntly told de Klerk that apartheid must go.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, faced with intensifying protests around the country, sanctions, and the possible hunger strike deaths of detainees, the apartheid government agreed to meet with a delegation of ministers led by Tutu, and, in a move that surprised Tutu, agreed to release political prisoners. This was an indication of changes that the de Klerk administration was willing to undertake. In September 1989, days before the inauguration of de Klerk as State President (the position replacing the former title of Prime Minister), de Klerk decided to allow protest marches to occur for the first time without the authorization of police violence as in the past.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ F.W. de Klerk died just over a month before Tutu passed away. Allen, 299-300.

⁴⁸ Allen, 299-301.

⁴⁹ F.W. de Klerk (his first and middle name abbreviated), Nobel Peace Prize winner with Nelson Mandela in 1993, spent most of his speech advocating for the new South African Constitution, with Constitutional Courts that would guarantee the rights of all. He had a long family background in the Nationalist Party, with his father Jan de Klerk serving in Parliament and as a cabinet minister. He was raised in the smallest and most conservative branch of the three Dutch Reformed Churches. F. W. de Klerk was initiated into the Broederbond, while attending Potchefstroom University, “the secret society of the Afrikaner elite that reaches into every governmental, business, academic, and cultural group identified with the Afrikaner nation.” He earned a law degree, graduating with honors. De Klerk was Education Minister under the Botha administration from 1984 to 1989, and when he became acting president in 1989, had not previously given any indication as to what direction he would take the country. Yet in April 1990, government officials and the ANC as well as other parties “met to discuss the guidelines for negotiating a transitional government and ultimately a new constitution.” Secret talks between Mandela and de Klerk led to an agreement to have for five years a national unity government with proportional representation, and after that a simple majority rule. The agreement

Tutu had contacted leaders of several countries to pressure de Klerk into abolishing apartheid. Late in 1989, de Klerk met with Tutu and then visited Nelson Mandela in prison.⁵⁰ On February 2, 1990, de Klerk gave a speech to the South African parliament in which he declared political parties were to be unbanned, including the Communist Party, which caused an “audible gasp” from the audience.⁵¹ The Segregated Facilities law, passed under the Separate Amenities Act in 1953, would be repealed, and Mandela would be released on February 11, 1990, after twenty-seven years in prison.⁵² Upon learning of the speech, Tutu said, “It’s incredible... Give him credit. Give him credit, I do.”⁵³ The release of Mandela was an occasion of joy in South Africa; over 50,000 persons went to greet him in downtown Cape Town. As one journalist put it, “The reaction evoked by Mandela’s presence was

was announced on February 12, 1993. Elections were held in the spring of 1994 with Mandela winning the presidency and de Klerk becoming deputy president. Asked why he did what he did de Klerk was elusive, saying “There are certain crevasses in my mind which even my friends do not have the right to probe.” He did mention that when on a trip to the USA in 1976 he claims to have seen “more racial incidents in one month there than in South Africa in a year.” He was “noted for his ability to summarize accurately and succinctly the issues between his Afrikaans colleagues... and suggest compromises to their problems.” Known for his calm demeanor, there were still incidents when he and Mandela had conflicts. One example occurred after the transitional government election, when he and Mandela exchanged insults in a parking lot after de Klerk and the National Party were accused of being the cause of high crime rates in South Africa. As the chair of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee noted at the time de Klerk and Mandela received that award, “These are not saints. They are politicians in a complicated reality.” Darrell D. Irwin, “Awards for Suffering: The Nobel Peace Prize Recipients of South Africa,” *Contemporary Justice Review*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (2009): 157–70; Betty Glad and Robert Blanton, “F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela: A Study in Cooperative Transformational Leadership,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1997): 565–90.

⁵⁰ Tutu first met Mandela in college. Mandela had no recollection. Allen, 48-49.

⁵¹ Glad and Blanton, 567.

⁵² Glad and Blanton, 567.

⁵³ Glad and Blanton, 567.

‘something akin to Moses handing down the Ten Commandments.’”⁵⁴

In December 1989, Tutu made a controversial visit to Israel and Palestine. The Israeli government, according to Arieli, was conducting a “flourishing trade between the two countries [Israel and South Africa], especially in the defense sector.”⁵⁵ This was despite the 1987 agreement on sanctions against South Africa that Israel had signed. The United States was pressuring Israel to honor the arms embargo against South Africa, and the presence of Tutu, a known supporter of Palestinian rights, was not welcomed by the Israeli government.⁵⁶ While there, Tutu visited the Holocaust Museum and asked about forgiveness and the plight of the Palestinians. This was not taken well and graffiti, “Tutu is a black Nazi pig,” was spray-painted on the Anglican Church in Jerusalem. Upon arrival in New York in January 1990, Tutu was the target of a water-bomb thrown by Jewish protestors.⁵⁷ Controversy never seemed to hamper Tutu. He was used to the South African press’ opposition and was fearless when it came to presenting himself to the people, rich or poor.

Truth and Reconciliation

Tutu was Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of the Church of Southern Africa for the Anglican Church from 1986 until his retirement in 1996. South Africa held its first universal national elections in 1994 after intense negotiations between de Klerk and Mandela. Issues of justice remained and in 1996, as a well-known figure in the anti-apartheid movement, who had years of experience in negotiating sticky situations and working with world leaders, Archbishop Emeritus Tutu was selected as chairman of the

⁵⁴ Glad and Blanton, 568.

⁵⁵ Arieli, 345-346.

⁵⁶ Arieli, 345-346.

⁵⁷ Arieli, 349-350.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).⁵⁸ The TRC was the innovative approach used by South Africa to discover those responsible for crimes against the people, particularly by the state and third force allies of the state, as well as crimes committed by all sides of the conflict over apartheid. Allen says, “Tutu advocated for ‘restorative justice,’ which ‘seeks to rehabilitate both victim and perpetrator.’”⁵⁹

With a staff of five or six, the TRC was initially given eighteen months to complete its work. It was an impossible task.⁶⁰ For example, in the Province of the Transvaal alone the TRC documented some 112 massacres between 1990 and 1992.⁶¹ Initially, the TRC had difficulties getting anyone except victims of violence to come forward.⁶² The Commission allowed confessions in exchange for amnesty; otherwise, if the parties were found guilty at a later point, there would be prosecutions. Time was running out on the purview of the TRC when a group of officers from the security branch involved in “death squads” decided to send lawyers to discover if they could be granted amnesty.⁶³ The group killed so many people in the Black community before the 1994 elections, they apparently lost count of the number of victims. While many members of the TRC balked at allowing the men to come forward because of the extreme nature of their crimes, Bishop Tutu encouraged the commissioners to reconsider, emphasizing that this was the job of the TRC, and unless they were willing to face the perpetrators, the commission would fail.⁶⁴

The TRC extended the period of its existence not ending until 2003, originally only eighteen months, and increased its staff

⁵⁸ Emeritus position was created for Archbishop Tutu upon his retirement as a show of respect for his years of leadership in the church. Allen, 349-350.

⁵⁹ Allen, 347.

⁶⁰ Allen, 352.

⁶¹ Allen, 329.

⁶² Allen, 352-353.

⁶³ The most senior was brigadier Jan Hattingh Cronje, former commander at the death squad headquarters, a farm called Vlakplaas, and later head of Northern Transvaal Security Police. Allen, 353.

⁶⁴ Allen, 352-353.

to over three hundred from an original seventeen recommended. There were three committees, of which Desmond Tutu served on the committee to investigate violations of human rights.⁶⁵ Some 293 members of the former government made applications, 229 of which came from security police. As one officer explained, the cases showed “how the police typically took detainees into the bush, murdered them and disposed of the bodies.”⁶⁶ The TRC thus served as a means for secret state operatives to come forward about the crimes they committed. As Tutu declared,

Perpetrators were given the chance to come to terms with what they had done, to make a full disclosure and then obtain amnesty in an example of restorative justice, which was more about healing than about punishment, more about forgiveness and reconciliation than about retribution and revenge.⁶⁷

Writing in 2004, Tutu put a gentler face on the struggle against apartheid. He stated,

We celebrate a decade of freedom and democracy in South Africa by commemorating the wholly unexpected and quite spectacular victory over one of the world’s most vicious political systems and the relatively peaceful transition from repression to freedom in 1994.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ The other two committees were one for amnesty decisions, and another for reparations for victims Tutu was not involved with the other committees. Allen, 346-352.

⁶⁶ Allen, 354.

⁶⁷ Desmond Tutu, “The Struggle for Social Justice in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *Peace Research* Vol. 37, no. 1 (2005): 109, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24469689>.

⁶⁸ Tutu, “The Struggle for Social Justice,” 109.

The victory of the freedom struggle stunned the world as a bloodbath had been anticipated. Instead of retribution, there was reconciliation. But the road to this reconciliation between Black and White was paved with the blood of thousands of victims. Tutu wrote that the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa gave basic rights to all South Africans, a home, healthcare, and education, regardless of skin color.⁶⁹ Ever willing to speak truth to power, Archbishop Emeritus Tutu did not mince words about where priorities in the world were, and where he thought they should be.

Tutu International Ministry

One of the most controversial issues in which Tutu was involved was the issue of gay and lesbian rights. Speaking from Southwark Cathedral, London, in 2004, Tutu denounced the forced withdrawal of a candidate for Bishop because he was homosexual, stating, “The Jesus I worship is not likely to collaborate with those who vilify and persecute an already oppressed minority.”⁷⁰ In a statement in 2010, Tutu said, “No one should be excluded from our love, our compassion or our concern because of race or gender, faith or ethnicity-or because of their sexual orientation.”⁷¹

Internationally, Tutu was invited to speak and offer counsel in many places because of his respected authority as a negotiator and counselor for peace. For example, in 1993, soon after Bill Clinton (b. 1946) was elected as President of the United States, Tutu was invited to visit the White House. At that time, the Clinton administration decided to use his visit as cover for announcing the

⁶⁹ Tutu, “The Struggle for Social Justice,” 111-112.

⁷⁰ Allen, 372-373.

⁷¹ Beyrer, Chris, Pascale Allotey, Joseph J Amon, Stefan D Baral, Mary T Bassett, Harriet Deacon, et al. “Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Universality of Health and Human Rights,” *The Lancet* (British Edition) 399, (2022): 503-4, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(22\)00121-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)00121-0).

recognition of Angola.⁷² According to the National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake (b. 1939), because of the controversy this recognition would arouse, “Tutu was probably the least controversial of any foreign figure at the time in Washington.”⁷³ Tutu was, by the time of the Clinton administration, an international figure known as an advocate for peace and reconciliation.

In other matters, Tutu was not afraid to enter dangerous territory, such as when he visited Liberia in 1994 during the Liberian Civil War (1989–1997) to meet with politician and warlord, Charles Taylor (b. 1948). Taylor, at the time a warlord, would later become President of Liberia (r. 1997–2003) and eventually become a convicted war criminal for crimes against the people. Tutu attempted to broker a truce and Taylor promised a cease-fire. Tutu’s assessment of Taylor, as a delegation member recalled, was “as a highly unstable person whose word was not to be trusted.”⁷⁴

In the lead up to the United States’ invasion of Iraq and its coalition allies in 2003, Tutu spoke out against the operation. He called Condoleezza Rice (b. 1954), former National Security Advisor to then-President George W. Bush (r. 2001–2009), asking her not to invade without the United Nations’ authorization. He joined the worldwide protests against the invasion of Iraq on February 15 and 16, 2003, in New York City, leading with call and response style oratory: “Now I ask you what do we say to war? (‘No!’) I can’t hear you! (Laughter.) What do you say to war

⁷² Angola had upon independence in 1975 been divided between the Soviet Union and Cuban supported government the MPLA, and South African and the United States supported opposition UNITA. By recognizing the MPLA government the Clinton administration was admitting defeat in attempting to overthrow the government of the MPLA. Republicans in Congress would find it problematic. Steven Holmes, “Washington Recognizes Angola Government,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/20/world/washington-recognizes-angola-government.html?smid=url-share>. Accessed June 2, 2022.

⁷³ Allen, 376.

⁷⁴ Allen, 377.

(‘NO!’)⁷⁵ Tutu’s authority was compared to Gandhi’s “truth force” by former Vice President of the United States Al Gore (r. 1993–2001) in an interview.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Tutu was involved in many diverse roles and occupations throughout the course of his life. However, he is perhaps most known for his critical work in the anti-apartheid movement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He raised a family and ascended in the Anglican Church, becoming the first Black Archbishop in South Africa. Only in later years as a public speaker was he able to earn a lucrative income signing up with an American agency.⁷⁷ He wrote a book about spirituality with the Dalai Lama (b. 1935) but was very private about his own spiritual practices and when told that the Dalai Lama meditated for five hours every day, Tutu replied “that’s too much.”⁷⁸ He was known to retreat for an hour or so a day to meditate as an important part of his practice. Tutu had no fear of approaching both the poor and the powerful to promote the values he fiercely believed in. Desmond Tutu, in whatever role he played, stood up against injustice and will be remembered as a vociferous advocate for the downtrodden.

⁷⁵ This author also was involved in organizing the anti-Iraq war protests in Los Angeles at the same time. Allen, 389.

⁷⁶ Allen, 394.

⁷⁷ Allen, 371.

⁷⁸ Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho (Dalai Lama), Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Carlton Abrams, *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* (Toronto, Ontario: Viking, 2016), 19-20.

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In Memoriam

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2022

Donald Rumsfeld (1932–2021)

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Donald Rumsfeld (1932–2021)

By Devin Gillen and Levi Gonzalez



Figure 1. Donald Rumsfeld (1932–2021) shaking hands with Saddam Hussein (1937–2006) in Baghdad on December 20, 1983. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.¹

“War Criminal Found Dead at 88: The Human and Economic Costs of Donald Rumsfeld’s Wars are Staggering.”

- Phyllis Bennis, *The Nation*, July 1, 2021.²

On June 29, 2021, Donald Henry Rumsfeld (1932–2021), a monumental American statesman, died at the age of 88 in Taos,

¹ Iraqi State Television, “Shaking Hands: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein greets Donald Rumsfeld, then special envoy of President Ronald Reagan, in Baghdad on December 20, 1983,” Wikimedia Commons, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saddam_rumsfeld.jpg.

² Phyllis Bennis, “War Criminal Found Dead at 88,” *The Nation*, July 1, 2021, <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/donald-rumsfeld-obit/>.

New Mexico.³ Throughout his life, Rumsfeld played a role in some of the most significant episodes of the last half-century of American political history, including, but not limited to, the Vietnam War (1955–1975), the Watergate scandal (1972–1974), ratcheting up relations with the Soviet Union, United States relations with Iraq and Saddam Hussein (1936–2006), the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the United States-led War on Terror (2001–present), and the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandals (2003–2004), to name a few. Throughout his long life—stretching from the Great Depression (1929–1939) to the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–present)—Rumsfeld served as an agent of neoliberalism, neoconservatism, and as an embodiment of the arrogance of American exceptionalism. First serving as a flight instructor in the Navy (1954–1957), then as an Illinois Congressman from 1963 to 1969, Rumsfeld filled various positions throughout the Richard Nixon administration (1969–1974), Gerald Ford administration (1974–1977), Ronald Reagan administration (1981–1989), and the George W. Bush administration (2001–2009), culminating in his role as the Secretary of Defense (for the second time). As Secretary of Defense, from 2001 to 2006, Rumsfeld was responsible for oversight of The War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan until his resignation in 2006.

By examining Rumsfeld’s life and role in transforming American foreign relations and economic policy, as well as the ideological movements and developments he aligned himself with, the dark realities of a long history of American exceptionalism are laid bare. Rumsfeld’s early identification with the business community eventually syncretized with the burgeoning school of economic principles later codified as neoliberalism around the 1980s. By the end of Rumsfeld’s tenure in office in 2006, neoliberal deregulation and privatization were the norms of the day, entailing financial enrichment for himself and the Military-

³ Stephen Collinson & Paul LeBlanc, “Donald Rumsfeld, former secretary of defense, dies at 88,” CNN, June 30, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/30/politics/donald-rumsfeld-dead/index.html>.

Industrial Complex (MIC). The widespread and indiscriminate use of torture, approved by Rumsfeld himself (later to be denied, then praised by Rumsfeld), also became the norm, along with the mass murder, maiming, and displacement of millions in the disastrous War on Terror throughout the Middle East and Africa.⁴ These disasters were the culmination of a lengthy career of bellicose fear-mongering and media and information manipulation by Rumsfeld and his neoconservative allies. Rumsfeld played a leading role in the political trickery, subterfuge, and manipulation of information throughout his career. In the latter post-war years, neoconservatism was rebranded as an aggressive and manipulative United States foreign policy that worked in service of United States business interests that existed before Rumsfeld, but he took up its reigns as a leading supporter of the neoconservative cause.⁵ Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives were not aberrations in the realm of United States foreign policy, rather, they were leading figures of a new expression and justification for a continued United States military presence across the globe and further intervention in foreign nations.

By the time Rumsfeld left office permanently in 2006, a bipartisan consensus formed on the grander schemes set forth by neoliberal advocates (like Rumsfeld and Milton Friedman [1912–2006], American economist and statistician) and the hyper-aggressive role of the United States in the world, as proposed by the neoconservatives like Rumsfeld. The War on Terror that Rumsfeld helped orchestrate continued to spill across the surrounding region after his resignation and continues to take lives and hemorrhage money today.⁶ It is worth examining the life of

⁴ Medea Benjamin and Nicolas J.S. Davies, “The staggering death toll in Iraq,” *Salon*, March 19, 2018, https://www.salon.com/2018/03/19/the-staggering-death-toll-in-iraq_partner/.

⁵ Allen Dulles (1893–1969) and John Foster Dulles (1888–1959) and their policies were at the helm of United States foreign policy formulation during the Eisenhower administration (1953–1961) which laid the groundwork for the later neoconservatives and neoliberals like Rumsfeld.

⁶ The Cost of War Project at Brown University estimated that by the twentieth anniversary of 9/11, the War on Terror claimed roughly 900,000 deaths (not

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Rumsfeld and his allies who orchestrated their suffering to remember the thousands of innocent victims (past, present, and future) who, unlike Rumsfeld, did not get to die peacefully in their homes. Until his final days, Rumsfeld was able to falsely claim that all of these episodes of militaristic adventurism were purely motivated by innocent desires to promote democracy and freedom around the world.⁷ By analyzing Rumsfeld's life, political ideology, and role in the United States government, the authors aim to demonstrate that the innocent claims regarding the goals of the United States' foreign and economic policies are examples of cognitive dissonance at best.

including those killed by disease, displacement, or loss of access to food or clean drinking water), cost \$8 trillion dollars, and continues in over eighty countries. As the authors will discuss in detail, differing methodologies and terminologies produce figures (or death tolls) that drastically decrease the death toll. For example, studies such as those by *The Lancet Medical Journal* place the death toll at 600,000 in Iraq alone by 2006, with an additional 54,000 non-violent war-related deaths. In 2015, United Kingdom government officials later admitted that this was "likely to be right" and a report by Physicians for Social Responsibility found it to be "more reliable than other mortality studies conducted in Iraq. Just Foreign Policy's "Iraqi Death Estimator" compiled data from Iraq Body Count and adjusted it to the ratio of the discrepancy found in the 2006 Lancet study which brought the figure to 1.45 million before the project was discontinued in September 2011. In 2018, *Salon* published a study by Medea Benjamin (the co-founder of CODEPINK for Peace) using the 2006 *Lancet* study ratios, a variation on Just Foreign Policy's 2007 methodology, and contemporary data to bring the potential death total to 1.5 to 3.4 million by 2018. Benjamin and Davies, "The staggering death toll in Iraq;" "Costs of the 20-year war on terror: \$8 trillion and 900,000 deaths," Brown University, September 1, 2021, <https://www.brown.edu/news/2021-09-01/costsofwar>.

⁷ "Donald Rumsfeld talks to Al Jazeera," *Al Jazeera English*, October 5, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xosu94rPSmw>.

Origins of Rumsfeld and the Nuclear Age (1945–Present)

“I could feel that something terrible has happened. I saw it in my parents’ faces and heard it in the tense voices reporting the news of [Pearl Harbor].”

- Donald Rumsfeld.⁸

“The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender.”

- Admiral William Leahy (1875–1959).⁹

Donald Henry Rumsfeld was born on July 9, 1932, in Chicago, Illinois, amid the Great Depression. According to Rumsfeld, this day also happened to symbolize the depths of the Depression:

The *Chicago Tribune* noted grimly that the Dow Jones Industrial Average had closed the day before at 41.22—the lowest point recorded during the Great Depression. This was the day I was born—on what may well have been the bleakest day of the cruelest year of the worst economic catastrophe in American history.¹⁰

⁸ Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 38.

⁹ “The Key Reason Why America Refused Japan’s First Offer To Surrender,” World War Wings, accessed May 21, 2022, <https://worldwarwings.com/key-reason-america-refused-japans-first-offer-surrender/#:~:text=The%20key%20reason%20why%20the%20Allied%20Forces%20refused,the%20Emperor%20could%20be%20prosecuted%20for%20war%20crimes.>

¹⁰ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 40.

Despite these conditions, Rumsfeld's family managed to avoid the worst economic consequences. His father, George Rumsfeld (1904–1974), was a real estate broker and moved the family out of Chicago into the suburbs to gain access to better schooling facilities tied to higher property values.

Rumsfeld was nine years old when the United States entered World War II (1939–1945) following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. At this early age, Rumsfeld claimed he had a vague idea of where Hawaii was but “didn’t know anything about Pearl Harbor or what it meant to the United States Navy. But [he] could feel that something terrible had happened. [He] saw it in [his] parents’ faces and heard it in the tense voices reporting the news of the attack.”¹¹ Rumsfeld’s father decided to enlist in the Navy after the attack on Pearl Harbor. As a result, the family moved around the country staying where he was stationed. The family made stops in North Carolina, Washington, Oregon, and California. In his memoir, Rumsfeld reminisced fondly of this time as he noted the “special bonds” he shared with other kids who also had fathers serving in the war: “Everyone I knew in [California] supported the war effort with a sense of common purpose...there was a sense we were all in it together.”¹² During this time, Rumsfeld also began to have the “aspiration” of following in his father’s footsteps by becoming a “flying naval officer.”¹³ Throughout the early years of Rumsfeld’s life, it is quite apparent that he had tremendous pride in his father’s service and also in what he perceived as his *country’s* service to the world as he notes, “the fate of democracy now hung on America’s success.”¹⁴

By August 1945, Rumsfeld just turned thirteen and, in a massive show of force, the United States dropped two nuclear bombs on an already defeated and inert Japan.¹⁵ It is traditionally

¹¹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 38.

¹² Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 44.

¹³ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 45.

¹⁴ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 39.

¹⁵ “The Key Reason Why America Refused Japan’s First Offer To Surrender.”

argued that the use of nuclear weapons was a necessary evil to force the Japanese to surrender, yet Japan already attempted to conditionally surrender to the United States, however, the United States refused.¹⁶ Despite this, the myth that an unreasonable Japan constituted an ever-looming threat that forced the United States to use nuclear weapons took hold in the American conscience. Rumsfeld himself furthered this narrative in his memoir.¹⁷ This narrative, however, ignores the aforementioned attempted surrender and the fact that the Japanese war machine, and economy, had ground to a near-complete halt severely limiting their combat capabilities and the threat they posed.¹⁸ If the Soviets invaded, then “this Soviet ‘D-Day’ in Hokkaido would’ve been a walkover—the Japanese army was in shambles, and Emperor Hirohito [1901–1989] had recently proclaimed defeat.”¹⁹

Scholars such as Sergey Radchenko (b. 1950), a fellow at the Wilson Center and Professor of International Politics at Cardiff University, suppose the nuclear liquidation of 110,000 to 210,000 Japanese was a veiled threat directed toward the Soviet Union in one of the opening salvos of the Cold War (1947–1991), during which Rumsfeld became a crucial player.²⁰ As Radchenko states,

Although the bomb did not make Stalin [1878–1953] back off in Hokkaido [Japan], its implicit threat made superpower cooperation an increasingly

¹⁶ “The Key Reason Why America Refused Japan’s First Offer To Surrender.”

¹⁷ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 46.

¹⁸ The Japanese were oil deficient and this greatly hindered their war effort and planning throughout the war. In fact, Pearl Harbor was originally enacted in the hopes that a crippled United States Navy would not be able to respond to Japan, taking vital oil reserves in the East Indies to make up their already existing oil deficit. Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990).

¹⁹ Sergey Radchenko, “Did Hiroshima Save Japan From Soviet Occupation?,” Wilson Center, August 5, 2015,

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/did-hiroshima-save-japan-soviet-occupation>.

²⁰ Radchenko, “Did Hiroshima Save Japan From Soviet Occupation?”

remote prospect. Hiroshima, then, made the Cold War practically inevitable... Although just months earlier, the United States War Department had considered letting the Soviets occupy Hokkaido and even part of Honshu, Japan's largest island, Hiroshima had clearly changed things for [Harry S.] Truman [1884–1972]. Possession of a mighty new weapon gave Truman the confidence to set the terms of his relationship with Stalin. On August 18, Truman bluntly turned Uncle Joe down [on his proposal to occupy Hokkaido].²¹

Whether the Soviet presence was a determining factor or not, the United States supposedly refused the initial Japanese surrender because it called for the Japanese emperor, Showa Hirohito, to remain in power following the war, exempt from any form of war crime tribunal. The United States later decided that Emperor Hirohito could remain and that it would have been counterproductive to remove him in the reconstruction process. This rendered the motivating factor in the decision to nuke Japan twice (to avoid accepting a conditional surrender that hinged on retaining the emperor) completely unfounded, as was the other mythical justification of a threatening Japanese presence.

Despite refusing to accept a conditional surrender from Japan on the basis that it would infringe on the policy of non-conditional surrender and supposedly forcing the United States to drop the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, preliminary negotiations over a conditional surrender of a contingent of Nazi troops in Italy was conducted.²² When examining the United States' policies toward Nazi Germany, the cynical nature of the excuse given to reject any conditional

²¹ Radchenko, "Did Hiroshima Save Japan From Soviet Occupation?"

²² The Allied forces consisted primarily of the United States, The United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union, amongst others such as Canada and Australia. The Axis forces consisted primarily of Nazi Germany and their occupied territories, Japan, and Italy.

surrender by Japan is in full display. On March 8, 1945, Allen Dulles (1893–1969), as an Office of Strategic Services (OSS) operator, negotiated a potential early conditional surrender of Nazi troops in Italy with ranking SS leader Karl Wolff (1900–1984).²³ These discussions of a potential conditional Nazi surrender that never came to fruition, named Operation Sunrise (1945), and the later cooperation with Nazi scientists in Operation Paperclip (1945–1949), demonstrate the United States’ lack of interest in upholding the Allied policy of unconditional surrender that supposedly prevented acceptance of the Japanese surrender. When news of these discussions broke out amongst the Allied Powers, the Soviet Union was enraged that the United States negotiated in secret with the genocidal Nazi Germany that ultimately killed some twenty-seven million Russians.²⁴ In 1942, Wolff, a cheerleader of the Holocaust and personal chief of staff for Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945), a main architect of the Holocaust, wrote of “his special joy that now five thousand of the Chosen People are going to Treblinka every day.”²⁵ Dulles later described Wolff as “distinctive” and “dynamic.”²⁶ This cooperation with a former evil enemy to eliminate the new evil is later mirrored by the

²³ The OSS was a precursor to the CIA. John Kenneth Galbraith, “Allen Dulles Under the Harsh Light of History Operation Sunrise: The Secret Surrender. By Bradley F. Smith and Elena Agarossi. Basic Books. 234 pages. \$11.95,” *The Washington Post*, September 9, 1979, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1979/09/09/allen-dulles-under-the-harsh-light-of-history-operation-sunrise-the-secret-surrender-by-bradley-f-smith-and-elena-agarossi-basic-books-234-pages-1195/385b6bff-080c-4ba2-8e3d-dd554c13ef59/>.

²⁴ Compare this figure to the roughly three thousand killed in the September 11, 2001, attacks that Rumsfeld and then-President W. Bush (2001–2009) later used to declare every nation was either with them (the United States) in the War on Terror or against them and with the terrorists. The United States government also used this figure as a justification for breaking international law by launching legally dubious wars.

²⁵ Galbraith, “Allen Dulles Under the Harsh Light of History Operation Sunrise.”

²⁶ Galbraith, “Allen Dulles Under the Harsh Light of History Operation Sunrise.”

neoconservatives, including Rumsfeld, in their later support for the Mujahideen and Saddam Hussein, and then opposition to both Saddam's Iraq, and the offshoots of the original Mujahideen holy warriors.

At the time, Rumsfeld thought little of the impact the nuclear weapons had on the Japanese cities, let alone global politics; he was just glad that it seemingly meant his father was coming home.²⁷ Coming of age through these world-shaking events likely left a lasting impact on Rumsfeld's psyche and developing political ideology, as it did for most Americans entering the Cold War. Rumsfeld's career kept him continually preoccupied with nuclear weaponry in his adult life.

Throughout his teenage years, Rumsfeld lived in and attended schools in the affluent neighborhoods of Winnetka, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago.²⁸ By this point, Rumsfeld's distaste for market intervention by the state was already apparent. As a young adult, he attended the elite Ivy League Princeton University, where he earned a degree in politics in 1954.²⁹ Rumsfeld's thesis argued in support of the recent Supreme Court decision that ruled against the Truman administration's (1945–1953) attempted seizure of the steel industry in 1952 during the Korean War (1950–1953).³⁰ He later commented that he wished he studied history instead of politics, citing his distaste for his left-wing professors who “littered the political science department.” Rumsfeld noted, “I was struck by the way one professor in particular seemed to disdain the private sector as rife with corruption and unethical behavior. The business world was an abstraction to him.”³¹ For Rumsfeld, this “business world” was tangible and influential. As a politician, Rumsfeld personified the corruption and unethical behavior of the private sector and the

²⁷ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 46.

²⁸ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld,” PBS, October 26, 2004, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/pentagon/etc/cronfeld.html>.

²⁹ PBS, “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

³⁰ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 50-51.

³¹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 50.

business world rebuked by Rumsfeld's professor and converged this corruption with the public sphere (government).

Start of Public Service

Shortly after his graduation, Rumsfeld enlisted in the United States Navy and served as a pilot and flight instructor from 1954 to 1957.³² Rumsfeld entered American politics as an assistant to the administrative staff of then-newly elected Congressman David S. Dennison Jr. (1918–2001) (R-OH), followed by a similar role with then-Congressman Robert P. Griffin (1923–2015) (R-MI) during the years of 1957 to 1960.³³ After a brief two-year stint at the investment firm A.G. Becker, Rumsfeld decided to pursue his own role in Congress and launched a campaign for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1962 to represent his hometown region of the northern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. In his first attempt in an electoral contest, Rumsfeld claimed victory. By age thirty, Rumsfeld began his rapid ascension in the American political system by first obtaining a seat in one of its most powerful institutions: the House of Representatives.

Given Rumsfeld's upper-middle-class status and his institutional cultivation at an elite university, the United States military, and then the United States Congress, it is perhaps no surprise that he identified with the conservative Republican Party. Rumsfeld's early Congressional voting record showed that although he did lean conservative regarding fiscal and economic policies, he also supported socially progressive issues such as enhanced civil and voting rights for African-Americans.³⁴ Support

³² Vivienne Heines, "Rumsfeld Revealed: Secretary's Navy career spanned 35 years," *Air Force Times*, March 3, 2003, <https://archive.ph/20120722191209/http://www.airforcetimes.com/legacy/new/0-AIRPAPER-1610997.php>.

³³ "Rumsfeld, Donald Henry," *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*, accessed April 9, 2022, <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/R000508>.

³⁴ James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 7.

for the latter was a position not commonly held by the established, rank-and-file Republican Party.

Rumsfeld's relations with Republican Congressman and then-Presidential nominee Barry Goldwater (1909–1998) exemplified this political ambiguity or, more appropriately, his opportunism. While Rumsfeld claimed that Goldwater's staunch opposition to the 1964 civil rights legislation made him feel "uncomfortable... [he] generally agreed with him, however, on economic issues and on national security."³⁵ As Goldwater's 1964 presidential run ran into the ground, Rumsfeld began to actively distance himself from Goldwater by attempting to avoid public appearances with him. Despite this, Rumsfeld notes, "though I didn't see eye to eye with him on civil rights, I certainly intended to vote for him."³⁶ Whether Rumsfeld's politics were motivated by an emerging political ideology or solely by political opportunism and self-interest, is difficult to tell. Rumsfeld himself acknowledged this seeming political ambiguity in his memoir when recounting the major influences on his political upbringing. Specifically, Rumsfeld recalls a speech given by the Democrat Adlai Stevenson (1900–1965): "It might seem strange considering my later career that the one who so strongly sparked the idea of public service for me was a liberal Democrat."³⁷

While in Congress from 1963 to 1968, Rumsfeld formed two friendships of great significance: Gerald Ford (1913–2006) and the aforementioned Milton Friedman. Examining these two relationships affords further insight into both Rumsfeld's role in Republican Party politics and his emerging political ideology. Rumsfeld's relationship with Ford began during their time in Congress when they both played roles in reshaping the Republican Party's leadership in the House. The Republicans had recently lost the 1964 elections, including then-presidential nominee Goldwater and a majority of their Congressional candidates. Consequently, an intra-party power struggle developed over who should lead the

³⁵ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 88.

³⁶ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 89.

³⁷ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 51

party in Congress going forward. Rumsfeld and his allies challenged the established leadership and rallied behind a new leader, Representative Gerald Ford of Michigan.³⁸ Rumsfeld and this faction eventually won out and established Ford as the new Republican Party leader in the House between 1965 and 1973, which paved the way for Ford's later ascent as then-President Nixon's Vice-President from 1973 to 1974 and then ultimately his role as President of the United States from 1974 to 1977. Rumsfeld actively participated in this transition and was described as "one of Ford's closest advisors" during and after this episode.³⁹ Given Ford's prominence in the then-near future, this was the formation of a critical relationship and political alliance that greatly rewarded Rumsfeld in his climb through the executive branch. Perhaps equally influential not just on Rumsfeld, but the future of the entire economic world order, was Milton Friedman.

Milton Friedman, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Neoliberal Terror State

I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit

³⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 8.

³⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 8.

companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested.

- *Smedley Butler (1881–940) demonstrating how American militarism works to secure blood money for financial interests.*⁴⁰

Throughout Rumsfeld's time as a Congressperson, he attended seminars and lectures at the prestigious University of Chicago led by the prominent economist Milton Friedman.⁴¹ Friedman advocated for a new school of economic theories that came to be known as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is, according to leading neoliberal critic and scholar David Harvey (b. 1935), "a theory of political and economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade."⁴² Neoliberalism posits that the role of the state is to "create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets."⁴³ While neoliberalism calls for the creation of markets where markets do not exist, "state intervention in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum"⁴⁴ In other words, neoliberalism's primary goal was the creation of the

⁴⁰ Smedley Butler, *War is a Racket: The Anti-War Classic by America's Most Decorated Soldier* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013), 16.

⁴¹ "Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld speaking at Tribute to Milton Friedman (transcript)," United States Department of Defense, May 9, 2002, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060824220033/http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=216>.

⁴² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 2.

⁴³ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

⁴⁴ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

“free market” in which individuals could freely participate. Along with the “free market,” the classical liberal ideals of individual rights, freedom, and democracy were promised as a natural consequence. The pursuit of this ‘free market’ required the reduction of state interference in the market, which included a reversal of the Keynesian economic principles that emerged from the Great Depression and World War II that advocated for increased public spending on social safety nets and welfare programs, along with national jobs programs, this reversal consisted primarily of deregulation, privatization, and cutbacks in public spending.⁴⁵

Before the 1960s, the Keynesian economic principles of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) (1882–1945) successfully tamed part of the post-war business cycle that had previously been so explosive before imploding into the Great Depression Rumsfeld was born into.⁴⁶ However, the established economic order was faltering by the end of the 1960s.⁴⁷ Neoliberalism gained popularity during this time; while Rumsfeld attended Friedman’s lectures, the breakdown of Keynesian economics polarized many into either the socialist/social democratic leaning state-control camp or the neoliberal deregulation camp.⁴⁸ Rumsfeld’s adoption of neoliberalism, and later emphatic praise of Friedman, demonstrates that Rumsfeld played a pivotal role in shaping the modern world that neoliberal policy now dominates. Rumsfeld summarized this in his eulogy for Friedman on May 9, 2002. Rumsfeld stated, “What a difference forty years makes. Today, many of those ideas that seemed outrageous and so unorthodox to some in the 1960s are now the law of the land.”⁴⁹ Rumsfeld,

⁴⁵ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007), 69.

⁴⁶ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 10, 11.

⁴⁷ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 10, 11.

⁴⁸ Those in the state control camp argued against deregulation and in favor of market intervention on varying levels on behalf of the state. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13.

⁴⁹ “Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld speaking at Tribute to Milton Friedman.”

saddened and somewhat afraid by FDR's death, remarked in his memoir, "In my young mind, FDR was tied to my father, his ship, our country, and the war. Now that monumental figure was gone. I cried."⁵⁰ Nonetheless, it did not take long for Rumsfeld to break with the political and economic conventions set by FDR; as noted, he already sided against state intervention in the market in his graduate thesis in 1954, approximately six years before the notable downfall of Keynesian economics.

It is worth noting here that in Rumsfeld's 2011 memoir, *Known and Unknown*, Rumsfeld does not mention that he attended Friedman's lectures at The University of Chicago as he did while speaking at a tribute to Friedman after his death in 2002. The first mention of Friedman in his memoir appears on page 101. In this account, Rumsfeld met Friedman when they served as advocates for an all-volunteer military system on a debate panel hosted by The University of Chicago. Rumsfeld admits he turned to Friedman,

...many times over the years for advice and guidance. Friedman's belief in the power of freedom was inspiring, and he felt the same way about giving people the choice to serve in the United States military as he did about giving them a choice about their education.⁵¹

The page ends, and the topic changes many times before Friedman is mentioned again, this time on page 125. Here, Friedman is not referred to as an economist but again as an advocate for education. It is strange that Rumsfeld either lied at his supposed friend's tribute to ingratiate himself or, did not find the room in his 800-plus page memoir to mention these lectures, seemingly attempting to obfuscate Friedman's role as an economist.

This inconsistency is worth extra scrutiny when further

⁵⁰ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 46.

⁵¹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 101.

examining other famous attendees of Friedman's lectures at The University of Chicago. Throughout the 1950s to 1970s, the Chilean "Chicago Boys" were acolytes of Friedman's, their attendance arranged by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and paid for with United States taxpayer dollars.⁵² Participants of this program returned to Chile (and other home countries) afterward to serve as ideological warriors against the growing tide of Third World developmentalism, nationalization of foreign industry, and import substitution (essentially, various levels of state intervention to subsidize or nationalize products or industries on varying scales).⁵³ The democratically elected Chilean government, under Marxist Salvador Allende (1909–1973), served as the vanguard in this growing wave of Latin American economic nationalism. After a CIA-backed coup toppled Allende in favor of a military dictatorship by Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006) on "the little September the 11" of 1973, the "Chicago Boys" assumed positions of power and quickly eliminated Allende's popular programs in favor of neoliberal deregulation and cuts to social spending.⁵⁴ Opposition figures and protestors or political activists were arrested, tortured, killed, or disappeared en masse by Pinochet's goons. Over 3,200 disappeared or were executed and at least 80,000 were arrested.⁵⁵ Allende is without mention entirely in Rumsfeld's 2011 book, Pinochet is only mentioned once in the footnotes of page 596 (in a strangely positive light), and Chile is regarded as a democracy. These omissions and discrepancies leave Rumsfeld an unreliable narrator at best and seem to indicate that he attempted to obfuscate Friedman's role in sponsoring state terror and torture, just as Rumsfeld would later obfuscate his role overseeing torture programs during the United States-led War on Terror.

Friedman's economic policies, first put into practice by Pinochet's Chilean police state, required the violent use of force

⁵² Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 8.

⁵³ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 8.

⁵⁴ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 8.

⁵⁵ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 94.

which was antithetical to the supposed freedoms and individual rights that neoliberal reforms promised to bring. Here, another definition, or set of definitions, for neoliberalism set out by Harvey is demonstrated. Neoliberalism is either a utopian project to realize a theoretical design for international capitalism (the neoliberal pipe dream that “free markets” automatically bring a freer society) or a political project to restore the class power of the economic elite.⁵⁶ The rhetoric surrounding the theoretical utopian project (i.e. human or individual rights and freedom) is used as a system of justification and legitimation for achieving the restoration of class power. When the two come into conflict, the utopian ideals are quickly discarded to further the consolidation of the select economic elite.⁵⁷

The United States-backed Chilean government’s abandonment of these “utopian ideals” to further unfettered capital was expressed in the state repression in Chile. However, this was by no means an isolated incident. A handful of Latin American countries participated in the wider effort to eliminate Third World developmentalism for neoliberalism. Operation Condor (1968–1989), for example, was a coordinated effort by police states to turn South America into a “game reserve for hunting down anyone these regimes thought objectionable.”⁵⁸ Operation Condor included Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, amongst others, who received massive amounts of United States taxpayer dollars. Money was shoveled through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs and into police departments who, along with the military received, United States training in the use of explosives and torture.⁵⁹

Given Rumsfeld’s later ascent and stature in the United States government, it is of immense importance to acknowledge

⁵⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 19.

⁵⁷ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 19.

⁵⁸ Jeffery Ryan, “Turning on Their Masters: State Terrorism and Unlearning Democracy in Uruguay,” in *When States Kill*, ed. Cecilia Menjivar & Nestor Rodriguez (University of Texas Press, 2005,) 298.

⁵⁹ Ryan, “Turning on Their Masters,” 282, 298

and evaluate the influence of Friedman's economic and political theories in Rumsfeld's decision-making and policies throughout his career. In her 2008 book, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, author Naomi Klein (b. 1970) detailed the relationship between these two figures: "[Rumsfeld] had developed a particularly close connection with Milton Friedman...helping [Rumsfeld] develop a bold free-market policy platform and tutoring him in economic theory."⁶⁰ Reflecting on his relationship with Friedman, Rumsfeld commented, "There is something about Milton that when I am around him, and talking to him, I feel smarter."⁶¹ Regardless of the potential discrepancy surrounding Rumsfeld's attendance of Friedman's lectures at The University of Chicago, which is suspicious in itself, the fact that a tome as lengthy as his 2011 memoir (again, 800-plus pages) devotes so little space to establishing background information to his supposedly "particularly close connection with Milton Friedman" is also suspicious. The fact that Friedman, who reportedly helped Rumsfeld develop his economic policies, is sparingly mentioned in Rumsfeld's memoir is suspicious. The fact that when he is mentioned, his role as an economist is initially obfuscated adds credence to the idea that Rumsfeld attempted to distance Friedman and himself from the consequences of neoliberal policies abroad. When Allende is not mentioned at all, while Pinochet is mentioned once, in a slightly positive manner in a footnote, it becomes clear that Rumsfeld purposefully obfuscated Friedman's complicity with state terror. Rumsfeld admired the deregulatory practices that functioned as a thin veil of corporate greed preached by Friedman. Once Rumsfeld left the lower echelons of representative politics for a series of on-again-off-again positions in the White House, he would ultimately find himself at a pinnacle of power capable of influencing drastic reform.

Rumsfeld Enters the White House

⁶⁰ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 364-65.

⁶¹ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 365.

In Memoriam

*“The Eastern world, it is exploding.
Violent flares and bullets loading
You’re old enough to kill, but not for voting
You don’t believe in war, but what’s that gun you’re toting?
And even the Jordan river has bodies floating,
and you tell me
Over and over and over again my friend
How you don’t believe we’re on the eve of destruction.”*

- Johnny Thunders, “Eve of Destruction.”⁶²

*“Don’t you understand what I’m trying to say
Can’t you feel the fears I’m feeling today
If the button is pushed there’s no running away
There’ll be no one to save with the world in a grave.”*

- Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction.”⁶³

The Nixon Years (1969–1974)

By 1968, Rumsfeld served multiple terms in Congress and aspired to climb further up the political hierarchy. Throughout the year, he became involved with Richard Nixon’s presidential campaign (1969–1974). The Nixon campaign tasked Rumsfeld with gathering political intelligence (“dirt”) on Nixon’s rivals.⁶⁴ This role culminated with Rumsfeld’s attendance at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) of 1968, where he later relayed all the information and insight he gathered to the Nixon campaign. These activities ultimately pleased the Nixon team and, after Nixon’s subsequent election that year, Rumsfeld looked to exchange his

⁶² Johnny Thunders, “Eve of Destruction,” by Barry McGuire, track 2 on *Hurt Me*, New Rose Records, 1983, CD.

⁶³ Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction,” track 1 on *Eve of Destruction*, Dunhill Records, 1965, CD.

⁶⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 8-9.

newly attained and valuable political capital for a role in the incoming administration. After just six years in Congress, Donald Rumsfeld had already set his sights on the next move: the White House.

The position Nixon initially offered Rumsfeld, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), was not accepted with great enthusiasm. Rumsfeld turned down the position twice, citing his voting record against anti-poverty programs and even the legislation that initially established the OEO in 1964, as reasons he did not want the position.⁶⁵ Then-President John F. Kennedy (1917–1953) created the nucleus of the OEO but Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration (1963–1969) overhauled the OEO to manage various programs for Johnson’s Great Society & War on Poverty which increased government spending on social safety nets and welfare programs.⁶⁶ The incoming Nixon administration not only had little interest in these offices and programs but actively opposed them and hoped Rumsfeld’s fiscally conservative neoliberal politics would sabotage the office’s capabilities.⁶⁷ According to Rumsfeld, it was a call from Nixon—and a nudge from his wife—that set up a face-to-face meeting between the two where Nixon ultimately convinced him to take the position.⁶⁸ These negotiations over a position in the administration marked the beginning of a complicated personal relationship between Nixon and Rumsfeld that facilitated Rumsfeld’s rise through the executive branch. After the two agreed that Rumsfeld would ultimately accept the OEO position, Rumsfeld gave Nixon unsolicited foreign policy advice. Rumsfeld warned against the continued secret bombing of Laos and Cambodia because of the

⁶⁵ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 118.

⁶⁶ Martha J. Bailey and Nicolas J. Duquette, “How Johnson Fought The War On Poverty: the Economics And Politics Of Funding At The Office Of Economic Opportunity,” National Bureau Of Economic Research, January 2014, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w19860/w19860.pdf.

⁶⁷ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 165.

⁶⁸ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 121.

potential media fallout if the information went public.⁶⁹ This interaction demonstrates Rumsfeld's personal interests in foreign policy and his preoccupation with the media as a political tool. Rumsfeld's interjections of his opinion became commonplace as Rumsfeld was grafted closer to the Nixon inner circle, even though he opposed heavyweights in the field like Henry Kissinger (b. 1923).⁷⁰

The Nixon administration supposedly brought Rumsfeld into the inner circle due to a potential legal hang-up and conflict of interest that kept him from taking the position at the OEO in a standard capacity.⁷¹ The legislation stipulated that any Congressperson could not collect the salary of an appointed position if that position's salary increased during the Congressperson's tenure. However, Rumsfeld could be employed as an aid to the President and filled the role at the OEO in that capacity. Initially, Rumsfeld followed the Nixon administration's fiscally conservative script and moved to cut back on the OEO's fiscally liberal programs. Yet, in an unforeseen development, Rumsfeld reversed course and became an advocate of the office and worked to see the programs thrive.⁷²

This turn by Rumsfeld was part of a political ploy to garner support for himself and the office amongst a traditionally hostile Republican Party.⁷³ Rumsfeld hoped that the image of a

⁶⁹ The bombings of Cambodia and Laos began in 1965 and continued periodically throughout the 1970s. The bombing campaigns were designed to cripple the Northern Vietnamese forces and their sympathizers that used the neighboring Cambodia and Laos to the West as covert logistical supply lines. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 122.

⁷⁰ Kissinger acted as Nixon's Secretary of State and National Security Advisor and spent more than a dozen years serving as a foreign policy consultant and expert. Kissinger directed the Harvard Defense Studies Program and also consulted the United States State Department, the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the RAND Corporation, to name a few. Given Kissinger's immense stature in the field of foreign policy, it is notable that a relatively inexperienced Rumsfeld chose to openly challenge these policies.

⁷¹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 123.

⁷² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 13.

⁷³ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 120.

Republican in control of the initially liberal OEO who managed to turn it around into a successful office would be a powerful political statement that united Americans behind the Nixon administration.⁷⁴ Rumsfeld's management proved to be particularly frustrating and disappointing to the Nixon administration and media outlets reported that Rumsfeld "was viewed with open hostility."⁷⁵ For Friedman, Rumsfeld's actions at the OEO were not only disappointing but, as Klein describes, an act of "betrayal."⁷⁶ As one of Friedman's acolytes, Rumsfeld was perfectly positioned to implement the economic policies Friedman preached (i.e., make steep cuts in government spending on social welfare programs), however, he instead did the exact opposite. This action was unacceptable for Friedman who "[a]t one point...called Rumsfeld at the White House and berated his former 'young pup.' According to Rumsfeld, Friedman instructed him, 'You have got to stop doing what you are doing.'"⁷⁷ Nevertheless, this episode of blatant disregard for the burgeoning neoliberal teachings of Friedman proved to be an anomaly in Rumsfeld's long and destructive political career.

However, this episode demonstrated that Rumsfeld was less of a committed ideologue and more of a political opportunist at this point in his career. It is also worth noting that neoliberalism was not yet the all-dominant ideology of the period, nor was it as politically popular as it became following the election of Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013) as the United Kingdom's prime minister in 1979 and Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) as the United States' president in 1981. In the economic turmoil of the 1970s, Keynesian economics had not yet been buried by market interests when Reagan declared that government was the problem and retained a base of support. In the early 1970s, Nixon even signed in a substantial new set of regulatory reforms passed by a Democratic

⁷⁴ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 120.

⁷⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 13.

⁷⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 166.

⁷⁷ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 166.

Congress, remarking, “We are all Keynesians now.”⁷⁸ However, through the 1970s multiple economic tribulations (such as the OPEC oil embargo in 1973 and the ensuing global recession in the 1980s) forced many to rethink their economic approach as Keynesian economics seemed to be failing across the globe.

After the implementation of neoliberalism in Chile and the suppression of the Pinochet regime’s violence, neoliberalism had a supposedly successful model that its advocates could point to by the Thatcher and Reagan era in the 1980s.⁷⁹ Despite this, neoliberalism’s harshest edges and austerity measures still had to be tempered. According to Thatcher,

The progression from Allende’s Socialism to the free enterprise capitalist economy of the 1980s is a striking example of economic reform from which we can learn many lessons. However...in Britain with our democratic institution and the need for a high degree of consent, some of the measures adopted in Chile are quite unacceptable.⁸⁰

Rumsfeld’s political instinct likely informed his decision to distance himself from his earlier fiscal conservatism while at the helm of the OEO much as Thatcher had to temper her own approach.

Although Rumsfeld rejected his marching orders at the OEO, he still garnered support from some of the highest figures in the Nixon administration which included not only senior staff but also Nixon himself.⁸¹ Some of the staff, such as Charles Colson (1931–2012) and John Mitchell (1913–1988), vouched for Rumsfeld because they believed him to be a valuable political operative that could ultimately help the public’s perception of the

⁷⁸ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13.

⁷⁹ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13.

⁸⁰ Corey Robin, “Margaret Thatcher’s Democracy Lessons,” *Jacobin*, June 16, 2013, <https://jacobin.com/2013/07/margaret-thatcher-democracy-lessons/>.

⁸¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 5.

Nixon administration.⁸² For example, Rumsfeld held a connection to the Gallup polling group, which Nixon thought of as helpful in shaping and manipulating public opinion.⁸³ Despite his frequent troubles, Rumsfeld knew how to exploit his political savvy to maintain his access to power, as he did when he first gained favor with the Nixon campaign in 1968 when he gathered intelligence at the DNC.

As previously mentioned, the relationship between Rumsfeld and Nixon was complicated. Frequently frustrated by Rumsfeld's actions, Nixon made derogatory comments about him. Comments such as, "He's a ruthless little bastard. You can be sure of that."⁸⁴ Yet, Nixon also had an appreciation for Rumsfeld, given their shared background as elected officials and politicians.⁸⁵ Rumsfeld saw Nixon as a political mentor and wanted to exploit this connection to advance his career, and thus they held numerous private conversations discussing Rumsfeld's path forward and future roles in the administration.⁸⁶ When Nixon and his staff determined that Rumsfeld was too much of a political liability at the OEO, he was given the new title of Counselor to the President, however, this position came with no tangible role and no office or department to lead or manage.⁸⁷

During this time, Rumsfeld continued to challenge other, more critical, components of the Nixon agenda, specifically their foreign policy in Vietnam, as he did in their first meeting regarding the OEO. Specifically, Rumsfeld criticized the Nixon-Kissinger strategy of escalation and privately advocated for the war's end.⁸⁸ When Rumsfeld first advised Nixon against the bombing of Cambodia and Laos, his primary concern was still the United

⁸² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 16-17.

⁸³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 17.

⁸⁴ Oliver Burkeman, "Rumsfeld's Progress," *The Guardian*, November 9, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/nov/10/midterms2006.iraq1>.

⁸⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 6.

⁸⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 5-6, 14-16.

⁸⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 18.

⁸⁸ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

States' image. Rumsfeld was not motivated to stop the bombing campaigns because they quickly turned Laos and Cambodia into two of the most bombed countries per capita and bomb tonnage in the world. Rather, Rumsfeld likely wanted Nixon to end the bombings for pragmatic reasons. As the 1960s progressed, the Vietnam War became less and less popular in the eyes of the American public. He called for an end to the bombings because it might look bad if the then-secret bombing campaigns went public.⁸⁹

However, this challenge on Vietnam led to more animosity towards Rumsfeld, especially from Secretary of State Kissinger who argued for his firing.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Rumsfeld evaded his ouster once again. This evasion was due in part to the internal support mentioned above, and also because Nixon and his advisers determined that Rumsfeld's criticism of the war effort in a public setting could prove more damaging should he be dismissed from the relatively private confines of the White House.⁹¹ Kissinger's worried comments regarding Rumsfeld demonstrates concern that Rumsfeld could potentially leak information. Kissinger stated, "He's just positioning himself to be close to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*."⁹² But were Rumsfeld's initial warnings to Nixon about the secret bombing campaigns going public actually a threat to gain political leverage? Kissinger had reason to worry as Rumsfeld, in private conversations with Nixon (unearthed as part of the release of the Nixon tapes during the Watergate scandal), had already issued a *warning* or veiled threat to Nixon about the potential consequences of his lack of a defined role; "There is a problem, potentially, with a guy floating around the

⁸⁹ Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan, "Making More Enemies than We Kill? Calculating U.S. Bomb Tonnages Dropped on Laos and Cambodia, and Weighing Their Implications," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol. 13, no. 3 (2015): 2, 6, <https://apjif.org/-Taylor-Owen--Ben-Kiernan/4313/article.pdf>

⁹⁰ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

⁹¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 19-20.

⁹² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 3.

White House.”⁹³ The implication was that without any defined purpose or role, Rumsfeld could find himself interacting with others the Nixon White House would not necessarily appreciate, i.e. the media.

Once again, Rumsfeld exploited his political savvy and trickery as his criticism and veiled threats afforded him future conversations with Nixon concerning United States foreign policy. Rumsfeld leveraged his inexperience in this realm to argue for a new position that would afford him more experience and prestige.⁹⁴ Although Nixon initially refused to offer Rumsfeld any position, Rumsfeld remained persistent in his request just as he did as a Congressman, angling to get a role in the White House.⁹⁵ Nixon, Kissinger, and other senior staff ultimately agreed it was in their best interest to give in to his demands and keep him away from the White House. They assigned Rumsfeld to the position of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Ambassador, a role that still lacked much prestige but enticed him due to his foreign policy experience. Furthermore, the role placed him in Europe and out of Nixon and Kissinger’s way, a win-win for all parties involved.⁹⁶

The Ford Administration (1974–1977) and Secretary of Defense

The move to NATO proved to be enormously consequential for Rumsfeld’s burgeoning career. First, the new position played a part in his evolving stances on foreign policy. According to PBS, the NATO role was,

An appointment that dramatically change[d] his political philosophy and the course of his career in politics. It [was] Rumsfeld’s first direct involvement in military and foreign policy, and the

⁹³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 18.

⁹⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 18-19.

⁹⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 8-10.

⁹⁶ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

formal and unproductive European style of diplomacy aggravates Rumsfeld, pushing him toward more hawkish, action-oriented methods.⁹⁷

Additionally, the role placed Rumsfeld across the Atlantic far removed from the explosive Watergate scandal that erupted shortly after and sank the Nixon White House. In one of the more infamous political scandals in American history, police apprehended individuals linked to the 1972 Nixon re-election campaign as they attempted to burglarize the DNC's office at the Watergate Hotel in Washington DC. This episode set off a chain reaction and investigations revealed further unsavory details about the Nixon administration, including their efforts to cover up Nixon's links to the attempted burglary.⁹⁸ As a consequence of this scandal, Nixon resigned in disgrace. Yet, in an ironic twist, Rumsfeld's career was about to take off. Rumsfeld evaded any links to Watergate, and his old congressional ally and friend, Gerald Ford, assumed the presidency.

Rumsfeld immediately took a leading role on the transition team and, shortly thereafter, Ford named him Chief of Staff.⁹⁹ Rumsfeld's rapid ascent in the political hierarchy saw him climb from a low-level Nixon administration official to one of the closest people to the new president in roughly five years. Riding Rumsfeld's coattails was one of his closest advisors and friend: Richard "Dick" Cheney (b. 1941). Cheney first met Rumsfeld as a congressional intern when he impressed Rumsfeld enough to be hired on as a staff member when Rumsfeld led the OEO.¹⁰⁰ Cheney eventually became Rumsfeld's right-hand man and assumed the position of Deputy Chief of Staff at the start of the Ford administration. As fast as Rumsfeld rose through the ranks, he took Cheney along at an even faster pace. The two continually reunited

⁹⁷ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

⁹⁸ Rick Perlstein, "Watergate Scandal," Britannica, accessed March 17, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Watergate-Scandal>.

⁹⁹ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

¹⁰⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 12-13.

in differing positions of political power over the coming decades, culminating in Cheney securing the position of Vice President and Rumsfeld's return to Secretary of Defense during the W. Bush administration from 2001 to 2009.

Despite Rumsfeld's meteoric rise, he remained unsatisfied and aspired to obtain a more distinguished role and influence inside the White House. Rumsfeld ultimately achieved this in the aftermath of one of the most significant White House and Cabinet shakeups. Deemed the 1975 Halloween Massacre, then-President Ford fired defense secretary James Schlesinger (1929–2014) and replaced him with Rumsfeld.¹⁰¹ Additionally, Kissinger lost his title of national security advisor but retained his position as Secretary of State.¹⁰² Other notable moves included replacing William Colby (1920–1996) as Director of CIA with H.W. Bush (b. 1924–2018) and replacing Rumsfeld as White House Chief of Staff with his protege Cheney.¹⁰³ In Rumsfeld's confirmation hearing for his new defense secretary title, he described the contemporary global security setting stating,

The hearing was dominated by the urgent national security issue of the day: the Cold War. Millions of Americans have since come of age without knowing the fear of a nuclear exchange between two superpowers. But as I went through the confirmation process, the Soviet Union posed what was widely considered, as then-President Kennedy had put it, a 'clear and present danger.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Gilbert King, "A Halloween Massacre at the White House," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 25, 2012, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-halloween-massacre-at-the-white-house-92668509/>.

¹⁰² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 65.

¹⁰³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 65.

¹⁰⁴ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 214.

Despite these comments, during his tenure as Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld played a significant role in bringing the two superpowers closer to a nuclear exchange. (as will be detailed shortly). It is telling that Rumsfeld relied on words from the Democratic Kennedy, dead for over a decade by the time of Rumsfeld's confirmation, to make his point about the danger posed by the Soviet Union. Contemporaries at the CIA soon disagreed with Rumsfeld's diagnosis of the danger posed by the Soviet Union.

His promotion to Secretary of Defense also signaled a victory in the power struggle Rumsfeld waged with Kissinger, a Nixon administration holdover who lost one of his two Cabinet titles (National Security Advisor) during the 1975 Halloween Massacre, for influence over Ford's foreign policy.¹⁰⁵ Rumsfeld, just as he did when he was in the Nixon administration, criticized and challenged Kissinger's policies. Rumsfeld—the flight instructor, Congressman, head of an economic office, and briefly ambassador to NATO—had little foreign policy experience compared to Kissinger. Kissinger was an expert in nuclear geopolitics and served in World War II, while Rumsfeld's thesis was on domestic trade, and his stint in the Navy kept him in the United States. This lack of genuine foreign policy experience, however, hardly kept Rumsfeld from asserting his opinion when he disagreed, as he did over the secret bombing of Laos and Cambodia. In that case, Rumsfeld appeared to be a 'dove' (someone who opposed military confrontation), if only to help the United States save face publicly in Rumsfeld's case. However, his positions in the Ford administration painted the picture of a 'hawk.' He opposed Detente, the easing of Cold War tensions with the Soviet Union via greater diplomatic coordination, and its accompanying arms control treaties, many of which Kissinger negotiated.¹⁰⁶ Rumsfeld argued for an increased defense budget to

¹⁰⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 62-67.

¹⁰⁶ Elaine Sciolino and Eric Schmitt, "Defense Choice Made a Name As an Infighter," *The New York Times*, January 8, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/08/us/defense-choice-made-a-name-as-an-infighter.html>

meet the perceived security threat that the Soviet Union supposedly imposed on the United States.¹⁰⁷ In 1976, Rumsfeld made his case before the press stating,

The Soviet Union has been busy. They've been busy in terms of their level of effort, they've been busy in terms of the actual weapons that they've been producing, they've been busy in terms of expanding production rates, they've been busy in terms of expanding their institutional capability to produce additional weapons at additional rates. They've been busy in terms of expanding their capability to increasingly improve the sophistication of those weapons. Year after year after year they've been demonstrating that they have steadiness of purpose, that they're purposeful about what they're doing.¹⁰⁸

According to Adam Curtis (b. 1955), an English documentary filmmaker, the CIA (amongst other organizations who constantly monitored the Soviet Union) considered this “complete fiction” as “there was no truth to Rumsfeld’s allegations.”¹⁰⁹

To counter the established intelligence community’s claims and bolster his own, Rumsfeld urged then-President and friend Ford to establish an independent commission to investigate Soviet nuclear capabilities.¹¹⁰ This commission, called “Team B,” consisted of non-intelligence agents. Nevertheless, they were given access to all relevant information available to the CIA and analogous groups. Amongst this group was Rumsfeld’s future

¹⁰⁷ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

¹⁰⁸ Adam Curtis, “The Power of Nightmares part 1- Baby It’s Cold Outside,” BBC, 2004, video, 26:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wmz_Ngdm1GY&t=2895s&ab_channel=AmInIslamov.

¹⁰⁹ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 26:51.

¹¹⁰ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 27:00.

second in command (and frequent collaborator) at the Pentagon during the W. Bush administration, Paul Wolfowitz (b.1943). According to Melvin Goodman, Head of Soviet Affairs in the CIA from 1976 to 1987, before Team B, “Rumsfeld and others, people such as Paul Wolfowitz, wanted to get into the CIA, and the mission was to create a much more severe view of the Soviet Union, Soviet intentions, Soviet views about fighting and winning a nuclear war.”¹¹¹

After failing to infiltrate the CIA (not for the last time), Rumsfeld and his hawkish allies used the Team B commission to cynically manipulate United States foreign policy (again, not for the last time) to fall in line with Rumsfeld’s view of the Soviet Union. The head of Team B, Richard Pipes (1923–2018), was not an expert on nuclear weapons or technology but supposedly a leading expert in Soviet wartime psychology. Pipes developed the idea of the “Soviet Hidden Mindset,” which claimed that despite any evidence or statements to the contrary, the Soviet Union was nevertheless preparing to attack America.¹¹² Given Rumsfeld’s earlier statements (which countered the prevailing intelligence available) and his and Wolfowitz’s failure to internally manipulate these very intelligence agencies, Team B must be understood as an attempt to purposefully manipulate intelligence in a way that would benefit Rumsfeld and his allies’ political ends. Assigning such a staunch anti-Soviet fearmongering alarmist as Pipes to head the team almost certainly ensured their findings would align with Rumsfeld’s bellicose claims.

With access to all of the evidence and information available to the CIA, Team B could not come up with any evidence of the weapons they claimed the Soviet Union produced. Instead of accepting that the weapons systems did not exist, they assumed that the systems were actually so sophisticated that they just could not be detected.¹¹³ Dr. Anne Cahn, who worked for the Arms

¹¹¹ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 27:19.

¹¹² Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 27:55.

¹¹³ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 29:02.

Control and Disarmament Agency from 1977 to 1980, described the situation as follows:

They couldn't say that the Soviets had acoustic means of picking up American submarines because they couldn't find them, so they said maybe they have non-acoustic means of making our submarine fleet vulnerable. But there was no evidence that they had a non-acoustic system.¹¹⁴

She continued stating, "I would say that all of it was fantasy... if you go through most of Team B's specific allegations about weapons systems, and you just examine them one by one, they were all wrong. All of them."¹¹⁵ The only evidence Team B produced to back their claims that a highly sophisticated Soviet missile system existed, which conflicted with the CIA's assessment of Soviet air defenses as dilapidated, was an official Soviet training manual that claimed their Soviet air defense systems functioned flawlessly.¹¹⁶

Despite the lack of evidence, the neoconservatives that Rumsfeld now allied with established a lobbying group, called The Committee on the Present Danger, to spread their findings; Ronald Reagan was among the number of influential politicians to join.¹¹⁷ Rumsfeld's alignment with this group of neoconservatives signaled a break in United States foreign policy that ultimately led the United States into what Curtis terms a "fantasyland of imagined [or greatly exaggerated] enemies."¹¹⁸ At this point, the neoconservatives were attempting to assert that the Soviet Union constituted a threat that most other analysts did not agree existed. Soon the Soviet Union would no longer exist, and Rumsfeld and company would be forced to find a new enemy to farmonger

¹¹⁴ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 29:47.

¹¹⁵ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 32:06.

¹¹⁶ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 31:08.

¹¹⁷ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 33:08.

¹¹⁸ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 35:10.

against.

The Rise and Origins of the Neoconservatives

“For us, there are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who are Christians and support free enterprise, and there are the others.”

- *John Foster Dulles, The New York Times.*¹¹⁹

“We’re closer to being revolutionaries than conservatives in the sense that we want to change some deeply entrenched notions about the proper role of American power in the world.”

- *Richard Perle, “Power of Nightmares Part 2.”*¹²⁰

As with some of the other political positions Rumsfeld took in his early days, it is difficult to separate actual ideology from political opportunism. Kissinger and his allies adopted the more cynical interpretation and determined Rumsfeld’s hawkish positioning as an act of political opportunism on Rumsfeld’s part to endear himself with the burgeoning neoconservative wing of the Republican Party, and therefore advance his political ambitions.¹²¹ Kissinger cared little for ideology, religion, or the lives or rights of people in the Third World and dealt in modern realpolitik. He considered the world a complicated, interconnected, and intricate balance of power, and only considered what must be done to

¹¹⁹ Adam LeBor, “Overt and Covert,” *The New York Times*, November 8, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/books/review/the-brothers-by-stephen-kinzer.html>.

¹²⁰ Adam Curtis, “The Power of Nightmares part 2- The Phantom Victory,” BBC, 2004, 5:49, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB7XbeZ0Xis&t=2s&ab_channel=OpenYourEyes.

¹²¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 68-9.

preserve that balance of power.¹²² In Kissinger's calculations, the intricate global balance of power was never far from being thrown into chaos, a preconception that lent itself to a consideration of global contexts. For example, Nixon's famous handshake with Mao Zedong in 1972 was only possible with such consideration, for the United States and a communist power to make amends during the Cold War required a pragmatic and non-moralistic approach.

Neoconservatives, on the other hand, saw the world in a simple dichotomy of good versus evil, with the United States as the premier force for good in the world destined to battle evil. The neoconservative movement always had at least one foot firmly planted in conservative Christian moralistic panic. The intellectual and political fathers of the neoconservative movement, Leo Strauss (1899–1973) and Irving Kristol (1920–2009), both emphasized the lack of moral clarity in modern liberal society as degenerative.¹²³ Kristol claimed in an interview that “the notion that a purely secular society can cope with all of the terrible pathologies that now affect our society, I think, has turned out to be false... I mean I really think religion has a role now to play in redeeming the country.”¹²⁴ This pandering to the Christian right-wing ultimately served the neoconservatives well, as it motivated masses of Evangelical Americans, however, it also complicated Rumsfeld's relationship with the movement.¹²⁵

Rumsfeld was a Presbyterian Christian, but was described as “normally tight-lipped around religion” and personally claimed to have “never been one to wear my faith on my sleeve.”¹²⁶ It is

¹²² Adam Curtis, “HyperNormalisation,” BBC, 2016, video, 14:43
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thLgkQBFPw&t=883s&ab_channel=SamJohnson.

¹²³ Curtis, “The Power of Nightmares part 2,” 5:07.

¹²⁴ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 47:55.

¹²⁵ Curtis, “Power of Nightmares Part 1,” 47:30.

¹²⁶ Nicolas G. Hahn III, “Donald Rumsfeld's Golden Rule,” RealClear Religion, August 5, 2013,
https://www.realclearreligion.org/articles/2013/08/05/donald_rumsfelds_golden_rule.html#.

somewhat strange then that Rumsfeld came to be so closely associated with the neoconservative movement. But Rumsfeld's associations with the neoconservatives proved unshakable throughout the decades. In 2004, in a BBC docuseries, "The Power of Nightmares," a smug Rumsfeld is on display when the narrator first introduces American neoconservatives. The series recounts the political ascension of neoconservatives, like Rumsfeld. According to the director Adam Curtis,

At the heart of this story are two groups, the American neoconservatives [here Rumsfeld is presented on screen as the embodiment of the movement] and the radical Islamists. Both were idealists who were born out of the failure of the liberal dream to build a better world. And both had a very similar explanation for what caused that failure... together they created today's nightmare vision.¹²⁷

The explanation given by neoconservatives for the failure to build a better world was the aforementioned lack of moral clarity emphasized by Strauss and Kristol. Neoconservatives restored moral clarity by trashing political complexity; the reconstruction of the world in a template of black and white, good versus evil, combined with righteous glory to form a delusional mix. Rumsfeld's public persona and media appearances over the coming decades characterized the self-assured and self-righteous smugness embodied by this worldview.

In foreign policy, this simplistic worldview expressed itself in the neoconservative trend toward greater and increasingly aggressive United States interventionism abroad. The neoconservatives, the same politicians that positioned themselves as the cleansing force of good in the world, did not consider regional political context in their grand calculations to do away

¹²⁷ Curtis, "Power of Nightmares Part 1," 1:37.

with evil. These efforts to purify the world included the use of the military, not just to destroy “evil empires” like the Soviet Union or dethrone dictators like Saddam, but to pursue American interests, i.e., overthrow adversary governments and establish free-market capitalism to benefit American companies. Thus, these efforts also served as the militarist wing of neoliberalism, not only establishing “free market” neoliberal capitalism through overt and covert aims regardless of the consent of the governed, but Rumsfeld ultimately turned the neoconservative’s wartime destruction, wrought to establish a “free market,” into a closed feedback loop of neoliberal profiteering during the W. Bush administration.¹²⁸ Ultimately, neoliberalism and neoconservatism served as two sides of the same coin, guided by American exceptionalism and the pursuit of American dominance of the world.

Proto-neoconservatives: The Dulles Brothers

Considering the neoconservative’s simplistic worldview and their willingness to use military force to expand the reaches of capitalism around the turn of the 1970s, they most resembled the earlier Cold War mentality enshrined by McCarthy-ist fearmongering and the power of the Dulles brothers during the Eisenhower-era (1953–1961). This period of the late 1940s through the late 1950s and into the early 1960s carried with a deep anxiety and fear of an ever-looming communist threat.¹²⁹ The fear of Communism was used to justify the continued United States’ military presence across the globe in the post-war world. The neoconservatives latched on to this same narrative and later used the threat of Islamic terrorism after 9/11 to justify their military adventurism. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s (1890–1969) election in 1953 ushered in Allen Dulles as the new head of the CIA and his brother John Foster Dulles as the Secretary of State.¹³⁰ Allen’s

¹²⁸ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 482.

¹²⁹ LeBor, “Overt and Covert.”

¹³⁰ Eisenhower was in office from 1953 to 1969. Galbraith, “Allen Dulles Under the Harsh Light of History Operation Sunrise.”

previous underhand dealings with the SS in Operation Sunrise as an OSS agent placed him as a “leading expert” in covert operations.

If Rumsfeld can be placed in the political lineage of any American political leader, it is with these two. The Dulles brothers held intimate connections with the upper class of the United States’ business elite, as the two previously worked as lawyers for the corporate firm Sullivan & Cromwell (amongst other similar institutions).¹³¹ Before their tenure in the Eisenhower administration, the Dulles’ (on their corporate client’s behalf) presented their case to powerful government officials. Once inside the government, appointed as two of the premier forces in the formulation and execution of United States foreign policy, they served as agents of their corporate friend’s interests.¹³² Like the later neoconservatives, the Dulles brothers, also inspired by their religious roots, saw the world in a simplistic good versus evil dichotomy. John once summarized his worldview: “For us, there are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who are Christians and support free enterprise, and there are the others.”¹³³ This quote aptly describes the neoconservatives’ view decades later. Once in office, the two brothers quickly went to work to further “free enterprise” against the “others” (those who opposed such free enterprise).

In under two years, Allen and John organized and executed successful regime change efforts in Iran and Guatemala on behalf of corporate interests which served as a direct historical precedent for the later neoconservatives and neoliberals.¹³⁴ In Iran, the CIA and MI6, The Secret Intelligence Service, fomented unrest against the democratically elected Mohammad Mossadegh (1882–1967) by sending money and operatives to foster his opposition in 1953

¹³¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 130.

¹³² LeBor, “Overt and Covert.”

¹³³ LeBor, “Overt and Covert.”

¹³⁴ LeBor, “Overt and Covert.”

as a part of Operation Ajax.¹³⁵ The Dulles' also purposefully mischaracterized Mossadegh as a communist to incite fear and justify his removal.¹³⁶ However, Mossadegh was no communist. Rather, he acted as the leading figure in the efforts to nationalize the British-dominated Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and redirect Iranian oil profits into the development of their own country.¹³⁷ The British insisted that they must have their oil back and aided in the propaganda campaign to convince the Americans that Mossadegh was a threatening Soviet pawn.¹³⁸ The Dulles' used their powerful connections with the American business elite to keep the *New York Times* from publishing contradictory statements or evidence of the United States' involvement in the coup provided by one of their correspondents on the ground in Iran, Kennet Love (1924–2014).¹³⁹ Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1919–1980) was restored to power as an autocratic dictator that marginalized Iran's infantile democratic systems and set up a repressive regime with its own secretive and inhumane torture program, the SAVAK.¹⁴⁰

In Guatemala, nationalist Jacobo Árbenz (1913–1971) threatened The United Fruit Company's massive agricultural holdings that they acquired through a series of corrupt deals with dictators. In total, this amounted to over 550,000 acres making up one-fifth of all arable land in the country, with nationalization.¹⁴¹ The state even offered to compensate the company for part of the land. Árbenz supposed that the Guatemalan state paid the company 1.185 million dollars for 234,00 acres of the 295,000-acre

¹³⁵ Yergin, *The Prize*, 452.

¹³⁶ Yergin, *The Prize*, 439.

¹³⁷ Yergin, *The Prize*, 439.

¹³⁸ Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (University of California Press, 1993), 118.

¹³⁹ William Dorman & Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 60.

¹⁴⁰ William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2016), 279.

¹⁴¹ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 133.

Tiquisate plantation, one of United Fruits dominions.¹⁴² United Fruit previously declared its holdings to be worth the offered 1.185 million dollars in legal documents, however, the company undervalued the land as part of a tax-dodging scheme.¹⁴³ This proposal was unacceptable and United Fruit called on the power that their association with Sullivan & Cromwell, and thus the Dulles brothers, afforded them. Árbenz's attempt to redirect Guatemala's resources to be used for and by Guatemalans, and away from United States corporations, was seen as Stalin's second coming, at least that is the picture United Fruit's public relations propagandist, Edward Bernays (1891–1995) painted on United Fruit's behalf.¹⁴⁴

Allen quickly joined in on the project to smear Árbenz as a communist as he could not stand idly by while the company he personally held a large stock in was threatened.¹⁴⁵ Allen Dulles once again applied pressure on the *New York Times*, which pulled their journalist Sydney Gruson (1916–1998) out of Guatemala after Gruson disputed United Fruit's fictitious vision of Arbenz as a Communist. Allen also orchestrated the creation of a propaganda radio station, "Voice of Liberation," that spread disinformation on the ground in Guatemala.¹⁴⁶ The CIA launched Operation Success—modeled after Operation Ajax—on December 3, 1953, to depose Árbenz.¹⁴⁷ Allen personally advocated for a more violent approach: to arm opposition groups, then bomb the country to sow the seeds of chaos that justified an overt United States-sponsored coup to "restore order" in the country.¹⁴⁸ Árbenz knew the Americans were coming for him like they did Mossadegh and implored the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to open an inquiry into the situation. The United States successfully shut

¹⁴² Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 133.

¹⁴³ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 133.

¹⁴⁴ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 134.

¹⁴⁵ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 130.

¹⁴⁶ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 141.

¹⁴⁷ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 136.

¹⁴⁸ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 136.

down the request on June 25, 1954.¹⁴⁹ Árbenz had previously turned to the Soviets to purchase arms in May of that year (the weapons were mostly unusable or inadequate and outdated, The United States previously supplied Guatemala with most of its arms, however when Guatemala turned to democracy the United States ceased its support).¹⁵⁰ This weapons deal ultimately triggered Allen and Eisenhower to begin a bombing campaign over Guatemala on June 18, 1954.¹⁵¹ A military junta coordinated by the United States removed Árbenz from power on June 27, 1954, but the United States did not like his replacement, Colonel Carlos Diaz (1915–2014), and they continued bombing until allies of CIA asset Carlos Castillo Armas (1914–1957) took control of the country briefly until Armas assumed direct power on July 5, 1954.¹⁵²

The Dulles brothers' foreign policy formulation was an early embodiment of neoliberal market practices, justified by a dogmatic religious worldview that wealthy politicians employed to garner support for United States intervention abroad. Their actions functioned as a blueprint for neoconservatives like Rumsfeld; Friedman certainly loved the blueprint's employment in Chile. In both Iran and Guatemala, the Dulles brothers manipulated information to fearmonger an exaggerated threat to further an aggressive foreign policy in service of Western business interests. Both times, market intervention by a government triggered a covert operation or the use of military force to protect the market's existence (profit) on behalf of the United States which is, as David Harvey notes, one of the only justified forms of state intervention in the market according to neoliberalism.¹⁵³ The Dulles' militarism also backfired in ways the neoconservatives would later contend with and then replicate throughout the Middle East in the form of blowback. Blowback is a concept in the intelligence community referencing unintended consequences from covert/secret operations

¹⁴⁹ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 143.

¹⁵⁰ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 140.

¹⁵¹ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 141.

¹⁵² Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 141.

¹⁵³ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

that may initiate a chain reaction of consequences for which the general public has no frame of reference to contextualize the events. By destroying Iran's democracy and propping up the Shah's police state to continue sapping Iran's resources, the United States started a chain reaction that led thousands of protestors to shout "Death to America" in the streets of Tehran and topple their CIA-backed dictator in 1979.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the Islamic Republic of Iran was born and one of the neoconservatives' great boogymen in the coming years emerged.

The Private Sector, PNAC, and Saddam Hussein

*"They bombed innocent people, trying to murder Saddam
When you gave him those chemical weapons to go to war
with Iran
And the world doesn't believe that you're fighting for
freedom
Cause you fucked the Middle East, and gave birth to a
demon."*

- *Immortal Technique "The 4th Branch."*¹⁵⁵

Rumsfeld in the Private Sector

Rumsfeld's tenure at the upper echelons of United States foreign policy did not last long as Ford lost the election to Democrat Jimmy Carter (b. 1924) in 1976 and a political transition in the White House forced Rumsfeld to the sidelines. From the time he left Congress for the Nixon administration in early 1969, Rumsfeld rose from the head of a marginalized domestic policy office to the distinguished office of Secretary of Defense. Despite his consistent challenges to the policies of Nixon and Kissinger, Rumsfeld exploited his political savvy to attain more prestigious titles and

¹⁵⁴ LeBor, "Overt and Covert."

¹⁵⁵ Immortal Technique, "The 4th Branch," track 10 on *Revolutionary Vol. 2*, Viper Records, 2003, CD.

greater political influence. Furthermore, Rumsfeld's hawkish foreign policy during the late Ford years from 1974 to 1977 served as a symbol or signal of the impending rise of the neoconservative movement. Rumsfeld and his new neoconservative political allies shepherded the next iteration of an aggressive, American exceptionalist foreign policy, a reincarnation of the Dulles brothers' policies at the start of the demonstrated by the examples of Iran and Guatemala). At this time, the burgeoning neoconservative movement had to compete for influence in the arenas of domestic American politics and United States foreign policy. Over the next several decades, however, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives would wield vast power and influence that would afford them dominance in these areas and ultimately surpass the destruction of their forerunners, the Dulles brothers.

With his party out of the White House following Carter's election in 1976, Rumsfeld was not out of work for long as he decided to assume a role in the private sector. Despite having no experience leading a company, Rumsfeld became President & CEO of G.D. Searle & Co. between 1977 and 1985. Rumsfeld held prior connections with the firm given its Chicago-based location and its financial support for his Congressional campaigns.¹⁵⁶ G.D. Searle & Co. was a large corporation in the pharmaceutical industry that is arguably most famous for developing artificial sweetener aspartame. Rumsfeld's tenure as CEO proved to be quite a lucrative venture for him and the corporation.¹⁵⁷ In particular, the aforementioned aspartame was afforded FDA approval under Rumsfeld's guidance and he also facilitated a deal that ultimately sold Searle to the agrochemical giant Monsanto, a deal that earned him twelve million dollars.¹⁵⁸ The approval of aspartame proved to be a controversial decision as allegations of the artificial

¹⁵⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 101.

¹⁵⁷ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

¹⁵⁸ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 365.

sweetener's potential toxicity continually arose (and continue to arise to this day).¹⁵⁹

Rumsfeld's self-enrichment through the private sector, specifically the pharmaceutical industry, became a noticeable pattern from this point on culminating in his position as Secretary of Defense during the W. Bush administration. Rumsfeld's tenure as CEO was indicative of the wider neoliberal trend toward blatant corruption CEO wealth skyrocketed compared to the median worker's compensation. In 1970, a CEO averaged a salary of thirty times the median worker, and by 2000, the CEO's figure was nearly five hundred times that of the worker's salary.¹⁶⁰

After Rumsfeld left his Special Envoy role in the Reagan administration which he occupied from 1983 to 1984 (covered in detail shortly), he continued to oscillate between interests in the private and public sector for the rest of this decade throughout the 1990s. After leaving Searle in 1985, Rumsfeld began preparing for candidacy in the 1988 presidential election. To many, this was an expected pursuit given Rumsfeld's rapid ascension within the political and governing hierarchies and his relentless efforts to attain more considerable experience and prestigious titles during his time in the Nixon and Ford administrations. Yet, his presidential aspirations came to a crashing halt in 1987, before the first primaries and caucuses were even held, due to a lack of funding or popular support.¹⁶¹ From 1990 to 1993, he returned to the helm of a large corporation as the CEO of General Instrument Corp. where he found similar financial success by facilitating its move to a publicly held company—again ballooning his personal wealth.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Arbind Kumar Choudhary and Ethersia Pretorius, "Revisiting the safety of aspartame," *Nutrition Reviews* Vol. 75, no. 9 (2017): 718-30, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Arbind-Choudhary/publication/319482917_Revisiting_the_safety_of_aspartame/links/5b4767370f7e9b4637cfe56a/Revisiting-the-safety-of-aspartame.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 16.

¹⁶¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 165-67.

¹⁶² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 231.

Rumsfeld then returned to the pharmaceutical industry, when he served as Chairman of the Board for Gilead Sciences between 1997 and 2000.¹⁶³ Both of these companies, General Instruments and Gilead, had business dealings with the Department of Defense, an explicit sign of the “revolving door” that is a feature in American politics and economics. As Klein notes, “[Rumsfeld’s] status as a former defense secretary, meanwhile, made him a score for any company that was part of...the ‘military-industrial complex.’”¹⁶⁴ His role at Gilead is noteworthy not only because of his business activities during those years but more so because of how these business links served to influence Rumsfeld’s blatant corruption in his return to government during the W. Bush administration (these decisions will be addressed in greater detail in the next section).¹⁶⁵

Rumsfeld and the Continuity of Government Exercises

Despite his financial success in private industry, Rumsfeld still held deep political aspirations and remained connected with his political networks. In the 1980 presidential election, Rumsfeld believed that he was a solid candidate to be Ronald Reagan’s vice president, given that his personal connections and friends were advising the Reagan campaign.¹⁶⁶ Although that decision did not go his way, he remained involved in the federal government’s executive branch throughout the Reagan years in a couple of diverse ways. First, Rumsfeld participated in the Continuity of Government exercises in the 1980s.¹⁶⁷ Continuity of Government (COG) was a Cold War-era classified program that strategized federal government contingency plans during a potential crisis or

¹⁶³ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 366.

¹⁶⁴ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 365.

¹⁶⁵ These decisions will be addressed in greater detail in the next section.

¹⁶⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 123.

¹⁶⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 138-145.

emergency.¹⁶⁸ COG was designed to prevent a complete severance of the governmental hierarchy, especially when tensions and the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union intensified (which Rumsfeld's earlier brinkmanship certainly did not help).¹⁶⁹ During the Reagan years, these exercises were held several times a year and involved various current and former political and government officials, including both Rumsfeld and Cheney who acted as "team leaders" to establish parallel government leadership hierarchies to avoid political decapitation from a nuclear strike.¹⁷⁰

Although the Reagan administration inherited pre-existing COG strategies and programs, the administration utilized executive orders (such as EO 12656) that marginalized the Congress's role in establishing presidential succession hierarchies and drastically revamped COG's functionality. As a report published by the *Miami Herald* described in 1987:

Reagan's top advisers have operated a virtual parallel government outside the traditional Cabinet departments and agencies almost from the day Reagan took office, congressional investigators and administration officials have concluded. Secret contacts throughout the government act on the advisers' behalf, but do not officially report to them. The group is reportedly involved in arming the Nicaraguan rebels, the leaking of information to news agencies for propaganda purposes, the drafting of martial law plans for national emergencies, and the monitoring of United States citizens considered potential security risks.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Tim Shorrock, "Exposing Bush's historic abuse of power," Salon, July 23, 2008,

https://www.salon.com/2008/07/23/new_churchcomm/.

¹⁶⁹ Shorrock, "Exposing Bush's historic abuse of power."

¹⁷⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 138-40.

¹⁷¹ "Profile: Jack Brooks," History Commons, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://archive.ph/gxdDt>.

The report concluded that “the secret parallel government” was “tied to the highly classified Continuity of Government (COG) program, originally designed to keep the government functioning in times of disaster.”¹⁷²

Critically, the Reagan administration’s version of COG went beyond merely rehearsals or exercises for government contingency and instead operated as a shadow government that facilitated some of the administration’s most infamous (and illegal) activities such as the Iran-Contra Affair (1981–1986). Iran-Contra, orchestrated and facilitated by figures in Reagan’s National Security Council and intelligence agencies, involved the covert sale of various weapons to Iranian entities.¹⁷³ The profits from the sales were used to covertly fund the Contras, an extremely violent “rebel” organization propped up by the Reagan administration in an attempt to overthrow the Socialist Sandinista government (1979–1990) in Nicaragua.¹⁷⁴ Reagan’s COG delivered an inherent challenge, by the Executive branch, to the established law and the Constitution regarding the process of presidential succession by sidestepping Congress entirely while also exploiting COG as a front in the Iran-Contra operation that actively broke the law—as Congress had already made the funding of the Contras by United States intelligence agencies illegal.¹⁷⁵ It is unclear to what extent Rumsfeld participated in these darker functions of the Reagan-era COG programs but it is noteworthy to mention his role here for a few reasons. The first reason is that Rumsfeld’s COG participation, as well as Iran-Contra, occur simultaneously with Rumsfeld’s brief role as Special Envoy to the Middle East (discussed in the next

¹⁷² “Profile: Jack Brooks,” History Commons, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://archive.ph/gxdDt>.

¹⁷³ Douglas Valentine, *The CIA as Organized Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America and the World*, (Atlanta: Clarity Press, Inc., 2017), 126.

¹⁷⁴ Valentine, *The CIA as Organized Crime*, 146.

¹⁷⁵ Doyle McManus, “Contras Amply Funded Despite Congress’ Ban: Reportedly Got \$88 Million From 1984 to ‘86, Half Coming From Private, Foreign Sources,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 1, 1987, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-02-01-mn-502-story.html>.

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section) which also happens to involve United States' covert foreign policy in Iran, specifically in the war between Iraq and Iran. Second, during the 9/11 attacks, COG went live with former Reagan-era COG team leaders Rumsfeld and Cheney now occupying prominent roles in the W. Bush administration as Secretary of Defense and Vice-President, respectively.¹⁷⁶

Rumsfeld as Special Envoy to the Middle East

Rumsfeld also held a brief yet significant role in the Reagan administration as a Special Envoy to the Middle East in parts of 1983 and 1984. The Reagan administration established the position immediately following the aftermath of the deadly 1983 attack on United States Marines in Beirut, Lebanon, in an attempt to retain American influence in the region. It was a product of a more extensive United States foreign policy operation to curtail and sabotage the rising influence and power of Iran—a burgeoning adversary to the United States' interests in the region.¹⁷⁷ With his new role, Rumsfeld returned to his roots of challenging the foreign policy consensus just as he did with Kissinger during his days in the Nixon and Ford administrations. This time, Rumsfeld's primary target was Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger (1917–2006), who Rumsfeld accused of not being tough enough with Iran and not effectively challenging its influence in the region, specifically in Lebanon.¹⁷⁸ In addition to causing immediate friction within the Reagan administration's foreign policy team, Rumsfeld was assigned a noteworthy task as Special Envoy: to meet with Iraq's Saddam Hussein.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Eric R. Daleo, "State Constitutions and Legislative Continuity in a 9/11 World: Surviving an "Enemy Attack," *DePaul Law Review* Vol. 58, no. 4 (2009): 919-70, <https://via.library.depaul.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1237&context=law-review>.

¹⁷⁷ "The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld."

¹⁷⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 125.

¹⁷⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 124.

During the infamous meetings between Saddam and Rumsfeld, the two supposedly met to reinvigorate the relations between the United States and Iraq within the greater context of checking Iran's power and influence.¹⁸⁰ Given that Iraq and Iran had been engaged in war since 1980, Iraq was considered the most formidable challenge or opponent to Iran in the region, and this, of course, served the United States' interests.¹⁸¹ According to the foreign correspondent Robert Fisk (1946–2020), throughout the conflict, the United States' security and intelligence agencies, along with Western European counterparts, actively supplied Iraq with "battlefield intelligence so that [Iraq] could prepare themselves for the mass Iranian attacks."¹⁸² The American government attempted to conceal this joint-military cooperation with Iraq against Iran from the public. Despite their efforts, the information became widely public following a joint *Newsweek* and *Nightline* investigation that called the United States' cooperation with Iraq against Iran a "Secret War."¹⁸³ The full scope of the United States' cooperation with Saddam came to light following an initial investigation into the downing of Iran Air 655 on July 3, 1988, which killed 290 civilians.¹⁸⁴ The USS Vincennes, a missile cruiser in service with the United States Navy, shot down this Iranian civilian airliner while the United States cruiser illegally occupied Iranian national waters as part of a broader scheme to provide naval support to Saddam's ground troops; this maneuver was known as Operation Praying Mantis in 1988.¹⁸⁵

It did not end there, though. Part of the "battlefield intelligence" the United States provided to Iraq to help them "prepare for the mass Iranian attacks" included target sites and

¹⁸⁰ Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: The Conquest of the Middle East*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 213.

¹⁸¹ Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 214.

¹⁸² Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 213.

¹⁸³ Ted Koppel, "Public War/Secret War," *Nightline/Newsweek*, 1 July 1992, video,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-EIU38kipk&ab_channel=Kalseborz.

¹⁸⁴ Koppel, "Public War/Secret War," 8:09.

¹⁸⁵ Koppel, "Public War/Secret War," 33:30.

logistics for strategic and offensive bombing against Iran. This collusion (ironic due to future circumstances) was ultimately born out of another irony. The United States and Iraqi cooperation began after Iraq bombed the USS Stark on May 17, 1987.¹⁸⁶ After this attack, which killed thirty-seven American military men, the United States came closer together with Iraq and began sharing intelligence and coordinating their bombing targets. Speaking in memorial of those killed in the attack, neoconservative ally and then-President Reagan singled out not Iraq but Iran.¹⁸⁷ In supposed honor of the men who died, the president did not scorn the attackers but used it as a ploy to further what Nightline/Newsweek called the “Secret War” in cooperation with Iraq, all while continuing to demonize the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the closure of the televised segment Ted Koppel (b. 1940) supposed that the highly publicized Iran-Contra scandal (running from 1985 to 1992) was, in part, a diversion from this support of the Iraqi war effort against Iran.¹⁸⁸

The meetings between Rumsfeld and Saddam were ostensibly held to establish a United States Embassy in Iraq. In late 1984, after Rumsfeld had already departed from his position as Special Envoy, the Reagan administration announced that it had “restored full diplomatic relations with Iraq” due in part to the groundwork Rumsfeld laid in his 1983 meetings with Saddam.¹⁸⁹ Yet, other reports on this position revealed a much darker component of these meetings wherein Rumsfeld was sent to personally reassure Saddam of the United States’ support, despite the United States’ widely known indiscriminate use of chemical weapons against Iran.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Koppel, “Public War/Secret War,” 24:03.

¹⁸⁷ Koppel, “Public War/Secret War,” 25:00.

¹⁸⁸ Koppel, “Public War/Secret War,” 38:23.

¹⁸⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 126.

¹⁹⁰ Dana Priest, “Rumsfeld’s ‘84 Visit was to Reassure Iraqis,” *The Washington Post*, December 19, 2003,

<https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/history/2003/1219rumsfeldvisit.htm>.

The depravity and sheer irony of this entire episode are utterly astonishing. For all the concern that would be later promulgated by people like Rumsfeld about Saddam's alleged possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), there was not a scintilla of concern for the *confirmed* use of chemical weapons when it served the interests of the United States foreign policy and its conductors like Rumsfeld. Furthermore, this support for Iraq and its blatant war crimes and crimes against humanity completely undermines the idea that United States foreign policy is governed by the pursuit of strengthening human rights. It is this mythology that drives neoliberalism and neoconservatism and positions the United States as the premier force for good in the world. The brief history of United States foreign policy over the better part of the twentieth and twenty-first century, through the analysis of Rumsfeld's life, ideology, and role in the United States government, demonstrates the fallacy of the myth of American exceptionalism and humanitarianism. And to top this all off, Rumsfeld, of all possible figures, acted in the role of lead facilitator in strengthening relations with Iraq when, in short order, he would be a lead saboteur in these same relations in the W. Bush administration.

Thus, Rumsfeld's role as a conductor of United States foreign policy lays bare the inconvenient truths and contradictions embedded in these policies. Overall, this episode between the United States and Iraq, mediated by Rumsfeld, reveals the actual intentions of the United States foreign policy elite: to pursue the geopolitical interests of the United States and to sabotage, by whatever means necessary, potential and actual rivals such as Iran and, later, Iraq. This would come to be enshrined as a set of principles called Dual Containment where the United States wished to limit both Iraqi and Iranian influence and hoped to pit them against each other by fueling the flames on both sides during the Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988. It was also enshrined in another set of principles in the early 1990s known as the Wolfowitz Doctrine. Named after Rumsfeld's close neoconservative ally, Wolfowitz, the Wolfowitz Doctrine is the

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informal name given to the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, a biannual evaluation of the United States foreign policy formulation. This was the first biannual reevaluation since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the turn of the decade and now the United States, directed by the neoconservatives, saw itself as the sole superpower in the world with no potential military adversary to counter their neoliberal and neocolonial designs backed up by military might.¹⁹¹

PNAC and the 1990s

During the 1996 presidential election, Rumsfeld shifted his attention back to partisan politics as a foreign policy advisor and then National Campaign Chair for the Republican Party candidate Bob Dole (1923–2021).¹⁹² Here, Rumsfeld’s actions as a foreign policy advisor show, once again, his preoccupation with geopolitics throughout the decades, even when he was technically out of government. Rumsfeld increased his participation and affiliation with the Republican Party and neoconservative political circles after his work on the Dole campaign. For example, between 1998 and 2000, Rumsfeld became a prominent figure in a series of meetings that included the most established leaders in the Republican Party.¹⁹³ These meetings intended to determine the policy platform of the Republican party in preparation for the presidential election in 2000.¹⁹⁴ Rumsfeld collaborated with leading figures in the neoconservative faction—such as Cheney, Wolfowitz, and Condoleezza Rice (b. 1954) on the foreign policy platform.¹⁹⁵

Additionally, Rumsfeld affiliated with a new think tank called Project for the New American Century (PNAC) which

¹⁹¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 209.

¹⁹² “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

¹⁹³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 238-42.

¹⁹⁴ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

¹⁹⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 238-42.

produced reports and analyses on United States foreign policy.¹⁹⁶ PNAC was founded and coordinated by many leading neoconservative figures and intellectuals such as Bill Kristol (b. 1952), son of neoconservatism founder Irving Kristol, and Robert (b. 1958) and Donald Kagan (1932–2021). The project promoted a worldview that portrayed a United States that embraced its role as a global hegemon, as supposed by the Wolfowitz Doctrine.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, many individuals who collaborated in PNAC went on to serve in the W. Bush administration. These collaborators included Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary, Dick Cheney as Vice President, Wolfowitz as Deputy Defense Secretary, John R. Bolton (b. 1948) as a State Department official, and the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Armitage (b. 1945) as Deputy Secretary of State, and Elliot Abrams (b. 1948) as Deputy National Security Advisor), among others.¹⁹⁸

PNAC strongly advocated for policies that increased military and national security spending, pursued and protected American interests around the globe, and used aggressive military force against states that threatened these interests.¹⁹⁹ Rumsfeld,

¹⁹⁶ Project for the New American Century home webpage, Internet Archive Wayback Machine, accessed April 8, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130615140450/http://newamericancentury.org/index.html>.

¹⁹⁷ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, “Toward a NeoReaganite Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1996. For more information, see also: “About PNAC.” Project for the New American Century. Accessed April 5, 2022. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130615131127/http://newamericancentury.org/aboutpnac.htm>; Gary G. Kohls, “A Think Tank Named PNAC (the Project for a New American Century),” Free Press, September 11, 2019, <https://freepress.org/article/think-tank-named-pnac-project-new-american-century>.

¹⁹⁸ George Packer, “PNAC and Iraq,” *The New Yorker*, March 29, 2009, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/george-packer/pnac-and-iraq>.

¹⁹⁹ Donald Abelson, “First Impressions, Second Thoughts: Reflections on the Changing Role of Think Tanks in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Critical Issues of Our Time* Vol. 8, (2011): 1-24, https://web.archive.org/web/20121130180152/http://cas.uwo.ca/_files/Critical%20issuesvol81.pdf.

along with many of those listed above, was a signatory to PNAC's original Statement of Principles and was also involved in a PNAC-led campaign that pushed for the removal of Hussein in Iraq in 1998.²⁰⁰ One of PNAC's most significant reports, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century*, published in 2000, called for a "transformation" of the United States military (which PNAC affiliate Rumsfeld would implement as incoming Defense Secretary) and detailed and analyzed numerous strategies and findings of reestablishing and maintaining the United States' military superiority to facilitate its global dominance. The goal of the report read as follows: "This report proceeds from the belief that America should seek to preserve and extend its position of global leadership by maintaining the preeminence of the United States' military forces."²⁰¹

Moreover, the report emphasized throughout that the "preeminence" of the United States, along with its interests, was threatened by adversary nations such as China, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Iraq was mentioned twenty-five times in the document, more frequently than any of the other countries listed above.²⁰² According to PNAC,

The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the

²⁰⁰ "Statement of Principles," Project for the New American Century, June 3, 1997, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130621044610/http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>; See also Abelson, "First Impressions, Second Thoughts: Reflections on the Changing Role of Think Tanks in U.S. Foreign Policy."

²⁰¹ Donald Kagan, Gary Schmitt, and Thomas Donnelly, "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century," Project for the New American Century, September 2000, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130817122719/http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>.

²⁰² PNAC, "Rebuilding America's Defenses."

immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.²⁰³

For PNAC and its contributors, Iraq was to be targeted by a revamped and aggressive United States foreign policy, expressed through the military. Iraq served as the model for how the United States should deal with adversaries that “threatened” United States interests around the globe.

During the same time as the rise of PNAC in the late 1990s, Rumsfeld also advocated for the installment of an increased quantity and advanced quality of missile defense systems as a policy to meet these supposed threats.²⁰⁴ In 1998, Rumsfeld led the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States.²⁰⁵ This congressional commission, informally called the Rumsfeld Commission, was fueled by the Congressional Republican leadership’s discontent with the intelligence community’s assertions that the United States was relatively secure from ballistic missile threats. Thus, an external evaluation was ordered.

Rumsfeld modeled the commission after the Ford-era Team B intelligence review, a review Rumsfeld knew well given his role as Defense Secretary at the time and because he personally urged Ford to establish it in the first place. Moreover, Wolfowitz, who also participated in the Team B review, served as a commissioner.²⁰⁶ Unsurprisingly, given the political figures involved, the Rumsfeld Commission followed the Team B precedent and also concluded that the United States was *more insecure* than the intelligence community’s assertions.²⁰⁷ The commission’s report specifically named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the greatest threats to United States national security. As

²⁰³ PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

²⁰⁴ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

²⁰⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 240-42.

²⁰⁶ “The Life & Times of Donald Rumsfeld.”

²⁰⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 240-42.

noted, PNAC came to the same conclusion in 2000, and eventual President W. Bush also grouped these three supposed adversaries again publicly in an upcoming, and rather infamous, “Axis of Evil” State of the Union speech on January 29, 2002.²⁰⁸ Overall, the commission’s findings were used by the Republicans in Congress not only to undermine then-President Bill Clinton’s administration (1993–2001) but to call for more spending on missile defense systems causing a boon for defense and weapons contractors.²⁰⁹

Several of the figures involved (such as Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rice, and Rumsfeld) went on to occupy the highest positions in the administration. They emphasized the neoconservative critique of then-President Clinton’s foreign policy as what they perceived as being too accommodating to geopolitical rivals and adversaries, such as China, Russia, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.²¹⁰ The Democratic Clinton administration did not publicly embrace the Wolfowitz Doctrine, yet it offered no alternative points of view and, ultimately, the rhetoric and actions of the Clinton administration hardly differed from the directives of the Wolfowitz Doctrine formulated under the H.W. Bush administration, despite Rumsfeld’s and his ally’s criticisms.²¹¹ The Clinton administration used their own spin on “liberal internationalism” which functions to justify military operations such as the spread of democratic values, economic liberalization

²⁰⁸ “Executive Summary of the Report of the Commission To Assess The Ballistic Missile Threat To The United States,” Federation of American Scientists, July 15, 1998, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090104044129/http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/bm-threat.htm>. See also: Rachel Bronson, “The American Surprise,” Council on Foreign Relations, March 1, 2002, <https://archive.ph/KLF8>.

²⁰⁹ The money pocketed by for-profit weapons manufacturers for this missile defense system was just one small sum in the massive pool of United States taxpayer dollars hemorrhaged out of the state into private companies in the neoliberal transformation of the Pentagon Rumsfeld ultimately oversaw as Secretary of Defense. This will be discussed further later in the article.

²¹⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 238-42.

²¹¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 214.

(neoliberalism), and humanitarian concerns.²¹² These actions by Clinton thus proved to launder these neoconservative views and shifted the Democratic foreign policy towards the neoconservative bent.²¹³ Overall, the meetings amongst neoconservative policymakers and thinkers, contributions with PNAC, and collaborative work in the Rumsfeld Commission in the late 1990s ultimately served as a staging ground for the foreign policy agenda of the future W. Bush administration.

Ultimately, the Democrats' inability or unwillingness to offer an alternative to the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance brought the parties together in a bipartisan consensus on the grand schemes of United States foreign policy, "the Republicans didn't oppose Clinton's economic vision of globalization [neoliberalization], and the Democrats did not challenge the Republican military vision of America as the sole superpower."²¹⁴ In the case of Iraq, Rumsfeld and his neoconservative PNAC colleagues already laid the intellectual groundwork for an aggressive United States military intervention to remove Saddam from power in Iraq and establish a United States presence in the country and region. The coming W. Bush administration, made up of these exact figures, ultimately continued to make aggressive and violent regime changes in Iraq, demonstrating the salience and influence of these neoconservative schemes.

For Rumsfeld, his leadership on the commission and his presence in the Republican Party's meetings and discussions on their foreign policy platform assisted in re-establishing Rumsfeld as a prominent leader in this arena, especially during W. Bush presidential campaign. Once W. Bush was named the President-elect, Rumsfeld was considered a prime candidate for one of the administration's top foreign policy posts. Initially, Rumsfeld was considered for Director of the CIA, but former CIA director and President, H.W. Bush, quashed this plan and advocated for

²¹² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 214.

²¹³ Decades later, the Obama administration would make a similar decision. This will be discussed in further detail later in the article.

²¹⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 215.

continuity in this position, as opposed to making it a purely political role.²¹⁵ In 2000, Rumsfeld continued to angle to get into the CIA, just as he was immediately before the Team B Commission. As Director of the CIA, Rumsfeld would have had massive and non-transparent influence over United States foreign policy and he would have been able to direct covert operations in service of neoliberal and neoconservative aims much like Allen Dulles was able to during his reign in the OSS and CIA.

After being rejected from the CIA for a second time, then-President-elect W. Bush and incoming Vice President Cheney selected Rumsfeld as the Secretary of Defense nominee.²¹⁶ Cheney made a strategic decision as he sought “to limit the authority of Colin Powell (1937–2021) [incoming Secretary of State and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] over the administration’s foreign policy.”²¹⁷ Before being appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Powell served in active duty in Vietnam and as a chief advisor to the prior Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger (1917–2006), who Rumsfeld criticized for being too soft on geopolitical adversaries. Under Weinberger, Powell began to develop a set of principles later known as the Powell Doctrine which set out a series of requirements to be met to guarantee a successful military operation and avoid another quagmire like the Vietnam War. The doctrine required a clearly identified threat to the United States’ national security, a predetermined goal and exit strategy, an overwhelming deployment of troops as an occupation force capable of quickly quelling insurrection, and popular support from the United States’ public and international community. Following these guidelines (or Powell’s leadership) would have likely prevented the launch of the global War on Terror. Moving Powell to Secretary of State where he was in charge of civilian affairs and moving Rumsfeld to the Pentagon as Secretary of Defense was a similar maneuver to the Halloween Massacre of 1975 where Rumsfeld was appointed to

²¹⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 262, 268-70.

²¹⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 264-70.

²¹⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 273.

Secretary of Defense for the first time to “limit the authority” of Kissinger. A quarter-century after Rumsfeld first served as Secretary of Defense during the Ford administration, he was now about to take over the same position in a move that would consolidate neoconservative influence over United States’ foreign policy for years to come.

The War on Terror

*“We gotta work to make the facts fit the false charges
Pull the wool over the eyes of the filthy masses
Stab the people in the back for the corporate choice
Roll the propaganda out using The People’s Voice...
The press scribble scribble every half-truth spoke
Then shoot it round the country like an April Fool’s joke
Hype the nation for a Desert Storm love affair
Wave the stars and stripes like you just don’t care...
And on the TV screen
Diversion and aversion is the flavor of the day
Was it WMD’s or democracy?”*
- Anti-Flag “The Press Corpse.”²¹⁸

*“Embedded correspondents don’t tell the source of the
tension
And they refuse to even mention European intervention
Or the massacres in Jenin, the innocent screams
U.S. manufactured missiles, and M-16’s
Weapon contracts and corrupted American dreams
Media censorship blocking out the video screens...
It’s like MK ULTRA controlling your brain*

²¹⁸ Anti-Flag, “The Press Corpse,” track 2 on *For Blood and Empire*, RCA Records, 2006, CD.

Suggestive thinking causing your perspective to change.”

- *Immortal Technique, “The 4th Branch.”*²¹⁹

Rumsfeld’s Neoliberal Transformation of the Pentagon and PNAC

Upon Rumsfeld’s return to the helm of the Pentagon under W. Bush, he prioritized the objective of transforming the military. The use of the word “transforming” or “transformation” is instructive as it is the same language used by PNAC (over one hundred times) in their 2000 report, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century*.²²⁰ Moreover, the PNAC report explicitly cited both the “Cheney Defense Department” and the 1992 Defense Policy Guidance (i.e. Wolfowitz Doctrine) as its influence on the transformation. The report stated,

In broad terms, we saw the project as building upon the defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the [W.] Bush Administration. The Defense Policy Guidance (DPG) drafted in the early months of 1992 provided a blueprint for maintaining United States preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests.²²¹

To reiterate, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Wolfowitz all participated and collaborated with PNAC and now occupied the appropriate positions of power in the W. Bush administration to implement the *exact* policies they and their PNAC affiliates promoted.

In one sense, this transformation meant bringing the institution up to a twenty-first-century standard concerning its

²¹⁹ Immortal Technique, “The 4th Branch,” track 10 on *Revolutionary Vol. 2*, Viper Records, 2003, CD.

²²⁰ PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

²²¹ PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

weaponry, technology, and strategy to effectively meet the supposed threats as PNAC routinely urged.²²² However, according to Klein, this transformation was as much about economics as it was about military capabilities.²²³ Influenced by his decades of experience running large corporations (G.D. Searle, General Instruments, Gilead Sciences), Rumsfeld brought many of the same tendencies to the Pentagon, some of which included: outsourcing, increased reliance on private contractors, cost-cutting on labor, and increased privatization of Department of Defense services and functions.²²⁴ This project of neoliberalism, obfuscated through the abstract language of a “transformation,” aimed to further entrench the interests of capital and profiteering at the heart of government and at the heart of waging war.

In a now widely forgotten speech delivered by Rumsfeld on September 10, 2001, he made the goals of this impending neoliberal transformation clear when he explicitly called for greater privatization efforts at the Pentagon to replace the “inefficient” services and functions of government. According to Klein, Rumsfeld “had already directed his senior staff to ‘scour the Department [of Defense] for functions that could be performed better and more cheaply through commercial outsourcing.’”²²⁵ Moreover, in reference to the Pentagon’s health services, Rumsfeld explained that “some of those needs, especially where they may involve general practice or specialties...might be more efficiently delivered by the private sector.”²²⁶ With this speech, Rumsfeld put the Pentagon on notice. In short order, the Pentagon was to be “transformed” into one giant public-private partnership wherein increased functions and operations—previously done in-house—were

²²² PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

²²³ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 361-64.

²²⁴ Paul C. Light, “Rumsfeld’s Revolution at Defense,” *Brookings*, July 1, 2005, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/rumsfelds-revolution-at-defense/>.

²²⁵ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 362. See also: “Donald Rumsfeld 9/10 FULL Context,” C-SPAN, September 10, 2001, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4976593/user-clip-donald-rumsfeld-910-full-context>.

²²⁶ “Donald Rumsfeld 9/10 FULL Context,” C-SPAN, 14:35 to 14:45; Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 362.

now outsourced to a network of for-profit private contractors. In 1992, the Cheney Defense Department laid the groundwork for this neoliberal-sided transformation when it contracted with Kellogg Brown & Root (KB&R), a subsidiary of Halliburton (an American multinational corporation responsible for most of the world's hydraulic fracturing operations), to produce a study on the efficacy of neoliberal privatization.²²⁷ The study found, unsurprisingly, that such privatization would be a win-win for the government and private corporations that key government officials such as Cheney and Rumsfeld held connections to and had financial interests in (such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin for Rumsfeld personally). The production of the B2 bomber is most emblematic of this neoliberal transformation's interconnected economic and political goals. By 2005, at least one part of the bomber was produced in each of the fifty states ensuring continued bipartisan support for privatization for the MIC, which created jobs in every jurisdiction.²²⁸

Rumsfeld functioned as a conductor of this neoliberal transformation, masquerading as a government official to supposedly "serve the public interest" while simultaneously advancing the profiteering interests of capital, as well as his own. Gone were the days of the Nixon administration when Rumsfeld advocated for increased social program spending at the OEO and showed disregard for the script of his mentor, Friedman. Now in his late sixties, with neoliberalism generally adopted as a globalized economic consensus since the Clinton administration, he fully embraced the economic theories of Friedman.²²⁹ Thirty years after his stint at the OEO, he came back around to actualizing Friedman's goals of marginalizing the role of government and giving more power and control to private enterprise and capital on a scale infinitely larger than his old department.

²²⁷ Cheney would lead as CEO of Halliburton after serving as Defense Secretary. *Why We Fight*, directed by Eugene Jarecki (BBC Storyville & CBC, 2005,) DVD, 42:45.

²²⁸ *Why We Fight*, 38:44.

²²⁹ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13.

Whether Rumsfeld truly subscribed to the neoliberal ideology espoused by Friedman or if those economic theories were solely a vehicle to achieve his self-interests, his actions under the W. Bush administration skirted the lines of blatant corruption. Throughout Rumsfeld's time as Secretary of Defense, there were numerous conflicts of interest and controversies related to the private contractors that did business with the Pentagon. One of the most noteworthy conflicts of interest related to Rumsfeld was the case of Gilead Sciences where he served as Chair of the Board from 1997 to 2000. As part of his compensation, he held a sizable amount of stock in the company, "[y]et despite his glaring conflict of interest, Rumsfeld failed to sell off his Gilead stocks for his entire term in office, holding on to somewhere between \$8 million and \$39 million worth of Gilead holdings."²³⁰ This move paid off mightily for Rumsfeld when, a few years later, an Avian Flu outbreak led the Department of Defense to purchase \$58 million worth of Tamiflu, a Gilead Sciences product, and the Department of Health and Human Services purchased nearly \$1 billion worth.²³¹ Between 2001 and the time Rumsfeld left his post as Secretary of Defense in 2006, the stock price for Gilead had increased by over eight hundred percent.²³² This Gilead Sciences affair demonstrates what Rumsfeld's position as an agent of neoliberalism entailed: the complete infiltration of private capital and enterprise into the public sector so that their interests merge into one, with extreme profiteering and self-enrichment as a result. Rumsfeld synthesized the power and authority of both government and capital. These Gilead contracts were one of the most blatant forms of corruption between Rumsfeld's Pentagon and private contractors, but it was by no means the only case.

In addition to the Gilead conflict of interest, Rumsfeld also held stocks in numerous defense industry firms, including MIC behemoths such as Lockheed Martin and Boeing, during the W.

²³⁰ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 394.

²³¹ Nelson Schwartz, "Rumsfeld's growing stake in Tamiflu," *Fortune*, October 31, 2005, http://911omissionreport.com/rumsfeld_tamiflu.html.

²³² Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 395.

Bush administration.²³³ Although he would elect to sell off the stocks he owned in those larger firms, for other contractors he put his holdings in a blind trust or asked for extensions to organize these assets.²³⁴ All of these various conflicts of interest with defense contractors imposed a direct impact on his functions as defense secretary, as he begrudgingly recused himself from decisions that involved companies in which he had a financial stake.²³⁵

By no means, however, were these episodes of corruption and war profiteering unique or only limited to the actions of a *rogue* Rumsfeld. At least seventy-one companies received contracts in the impending invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. All of the top ten corporate recipients of government funding had ties to former United States officials who worked in the Pentagon or other parts of government. The number one recipient was the aforementioned Halliburton (connected KB&R) which employed roughly sixty-five thousand people in various private roles assisting the troops.²³⁶ In roughly five years, Cheney's own wealth shot up from roughly one million or less to sixty or seventy million.²³⁷ On the topic of Halliburton's seemingly corrupt dealings, Republican Senator John McCain (1936–2018) commented, "It looks bad and apparently more than once [Halliburton] has overcharged the federal government. That's wrong. I would have a public investigation of what they've done."²³⁸ Although he was a critical facilitator, Rumsfeld served as merely a single node in a vast network of appointed and elected government officials, defense contractors, and others who would

²³³ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 393.

²³⁴ "Rumsfeld: Over \$20 Million In Stock Sold to Avoid Conflicts," *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2002, <https://archive.ph/ysnfr>.

²³⁵ Robert Burns, Burns, Robert. "Defense Chief Shuns Involvement in Weapons and Merger Decisions to Avoid Conflict of Interest," *Associated Press*, August 23, 2001.

²³⁶ *Why We Fight*, 40:21.

²³⁷ *Why We Fight*, 43:35.

²³⁸ *Why We Fight*, 44:22.

financially benefit from this neoliberal transformation towards a MIC-dominated foreign policy.

Despite the priority that Rumsfeld and the W. Bush administration placed on this neoliberal transformation, other leaders in the Pentagon and the military pushed back.²³⁹ In fact, in that same widely forgotten speech delivered by Rumsfeld on September 10, 2001, he declared the bureaucracy of the Pentagon to be an “adversary that poses a threat, a serious threat to the security of the United States of America...today we declare war on bureaucracy.”²⁴⁰ This provocative stance stemmed from Rumsfeld’s discontent with what he determined as obstacles to the neoliberal transformation. Rumsfeld, however, was not the first to complain about the barriers the contemporary Pentagon posed to a potential transformation. In September 2000 (a year before Rumsfeld’s speech), PNAC made a similar complaint about their own “transformation” in *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*.²⁴¹ In a section entitled, “Creating Tomorrow’s Dominant Force,” the report’s authors lament over a Pentagon “constrained” in its ability to carry out PNAC’s recommendations to improve the military’s capabilities due to its limited budget and resources.²⁴² The authors of the report go on to make a highly noteworthy prediction as to how their recommendations may be adopted and implemented in the future stating, “the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”²⁴³ It is worth noting again some of Rumsfeld’s earlier testimony surrounding his first-hand memories of Pearl Harbor, where he hardly understood its significance but still understood that the country must now go to war from a cursory understanding of media reports and the public hysteria. After a catastrophic and

²³⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 289-91.

²⁴⁰ “Donald Rumsfeld 9/10 FULL Context,” C-SPAN, 0:40 to 1:45, 24:10 to 24:23.

²⁴¹ PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

²⁴² PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

²⁴³ PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.”

catalyzing event, Rumsfeld didn't *need* to know the facts, the information was not important; the fever of war was infectious.

Only one year after the publication of *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, and mere hours after Rumsfeld's Pentagon speech, the United States was dealt this new Pearl Harbor when it experienced arguably the most catastrophic and catalyzing event in its history on September 11, 2001. Now, Rumsfeld and his other PNAC-affiliated colleagues in the W. Bush administration would see all of these obstacles brushed aside given the unprecedented national emergency ushered in by the 9/11 attacks. This unilateral power would be a transformation that went beyond the neoliberal scheme at the Pentagon and even United States foreign policy; it would engulf the entire political order of the world.

Rumsfeld's War: Afghanistan (2001–2021)

“And is it possible that what took place on September 11th...that maybe out of this tragedy comes opportunity. Maybe, just maybe, the world will sufficiently register the danger that exists on the globe and have this event cause the kind of sense of urgency and offer the kind of opportunities that World War II offered, to refashion much of the world.”

- *Donald Rumsfeld in an interview with The New York Times on October 12, 2001.*²⁴⁴

The 9/11 attacks marked a turning point in United States foreign policy which was now shaped in the image of the neoconservatives in the Bush administration who embodied the ideas of the Wolfowitz Doctrine and PNAC. Moreover, 9/11 allowed these neoconservatives to fast-track their agenda in a heightened environment of fear. Fear like the fear Rumsfeld drummed up

²⁴⁴ “News Transcript – Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with the New York Times,” United States Department of Defense, October 14, 2001, <http://www.aldeilis.net/terror/1192.pdf>.

under Team B, repeated in The Rumsfeld Commission, and used to sell the American public on a war in Iraq after 9/11, or even the fear he remembered from Pearl Harbor that justified the United States' entrance into a war that the United States government had been slowly trying to convince the public of. In other words, the neoconservatives knew how to take advantage of the crisis. They packaged their foreign policy under a catch-all term that exemplified this heightened environment of fear: the War on Terror. Afghanistan was to be the opening salvo of their war, as one commentator on CNN put it shortly after 9/11: "We're gonna attack somebody, we're gonna bomb some place, there's no question about that. The question is where are we gonna do it and why?"²⁴⁵

Afghanistan remained a focal point of the United States' foreign policy since at least the Carter administration (1977–1981) when National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928–2017) "was the driving force behind the Carter administration's strategy in Afghanistan" in a covert scheme called Operation Cyclone.²⁴⁶ This operation, coordinated by the CIA and Saudi and Pakistani intelligence agencies between 1979 and 1992, involved the funding, arming, training, and facilitating of fundamentalist Islamic extremists in Afghanistan and the surrounding region, called the *Mujahideen*; this included native Afghans and foreigners such as the Saudi-born Osama bin Laden (1957–2011).²⁴⁷ The first purpose of this operation was to support an armed rebellion by the Mujahideen against the communist Afghan government to draw a Soviet military response in aid of the Soviet-allied Afghan government. Next, the operation aimed to ultimately support and arm the Mujahideen in a guerrilla war with the Soviet Union itself.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ *Why We Fight*, 23:27.

²⁴⁶ Max Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery* (New York: Verso, 2019), 10-14.

²⁴⁷ Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery*, 10-14.

²⁴⁸ Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery*, 10-14.

In an interview given in 1998, Brzezinski, in no uncertain terms, explained what the goal of this operation was: “That secret operation [Operation Cyclone] was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into an Afghan trap...The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, essentially: ‘We now have the opportunity of giving to the Soviet Union its Vietnam War.’”²⁴⁹ This opportunity, seized by Brzezinski and the Carter administration, carried over into the incoming Reagan administration. The CIA-backed Mujahideen ultimately outlasted the Soviet Union in 1989, in large part due to the failing Soviet economy, which forced their withdrawal from the prolonged conflict. Both the neoconservatives and the Islamists falsely believed that their collaborative project in Afghanistan was *solely* responsible for the Soviet Union’s impending dissolution.²⁵⁰ Rather than consider the internal political contexts of the Soviet Union’s dissolution, both believed a simpler myth that their militaristic adventurism was directly responsible for the Soviet’s fall.

In the aftermath, the victorious and empowered Mujahideen factionalized and began to turn their inherited weapons against each other in the power vacuum that was Afghanistan which led to further bloodshed in a years-long violent civil war.²⁵¹ Of the various groups that formed as direct descendants of the Mujahideen, two deserve mention: the Taliban and al-Qaeda. These groups maintained fundamentalist Islamic extremist tendencies but had distinct political goals. The Taliban, composed of primarily ethnic Pashtuns, attained power in Afghanistan in 1996 after they gained control of the capital, Kabul. According to

²⁴⁹ Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery*, 11.

²⁵⁰ Steve Coll, “Anatomy of a Victory: CIA’s Covert Afghan War,” *The Washington Post*, July 19, 1992,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/07/19/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war/1bd10b14-a0cc-441c-99cc-d2b5d1ba6e2d/>.

²⁵¹ Katherine Harvey, “Afghanistan, The United States, and the Legacy of Afghanistan’s Civil War,” Stanford University, June 5, 2003, <https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297a/Afghanistan,%20the%20United%20States.htm>.

Fisk, “The Taliban had finally vanquished twelve of the fifteen venal Afghan mujahedin militias...and imposed their own stark legitimacy on its people. It was a purist, Sunni Wahhabi faith whose interpretation of sharia recalled the most draconian of early Christian prelates.”²⁵² The Taliban primarily concerned itself with establishing order via strict Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan *exclusively*. It is also worth noting that despite the bellicosity of the W. Bush administration towards the Taliban after 9/11, United States companies such as the Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) negotiated with the new Taliban government to secure pipeline rights in the country.²⁵³ Two of Unocal’s employees—Zalmay Khalilzad (b. 1951), future United States Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2004 to 2005, and Hamid Karzai (b. 1957), future President of Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014—would then be put in power by the W. Bush administration to facilitate Afghanistan’s new government after the United States invasion.²⁵⁴

The second faction of the Mujahideen, al-Qaeda, was largely created and led by Osama bin Laden. The faction devoted itself to expelling the presence of the United States military in the entire Middle East region.²⁵⁵ Bin Laden specifically protested the United States military presence in his birthplace of Saudi Arabia following the war in Iraq in 1991. Fisk argues that the “big mistake by the Saudi regime of inviting the American troops revealed [the Saudi regime’s] deception. They were giving their support to nations [the United States] which were fighting against Muslims.”²⁵⁶ The United States government began to blame al-Qaeda for violent terror tactics against United States government infrastructure in and outside the region in the years before 9/11, such as the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the

²⁵² Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 27.

²⁵³ Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 28.

²⁵⁴ Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 28.

²⁵⁵ Najwa bin Laden, Omar bin Laden, and Jean Sasson, *Growing Up bin Laden* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2009), 175; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 21, 31-32.

²⁵⁶ Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 21.

United States Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the USS Cole bombing in Yemen in 2000.²⁵⁷ Throughout the mid to late 1990s, bin Laden lived in Afghanistan with the permission of the Taliban.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the United States government accused bin Laden of operating al-Qaeda while he lived here. Critics of the United States' narrative pointed out the disconnection between the allegations and the reality. Fisk, who personally interviewed bin Laden multiple times, questioned,

Was [Osama's tent in the Afghan mountainsides] really...the centre of 'world terror'? Listening to the spokesman at the United States State Department, reading the editorials in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, I might have been forgiven for believing that bin Laden ran his 'terror network' from a state-of-the-art bunker of computers and digitalized battle plans, flicking a switch to instruct his followers to assault another Western target. But this man seemed divorced from the outside world.²⁵⁹

Nevertheless, in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the W. Bush administration began to confidently assert that al-Qaeda and bin Laden were primarily responsible, despite the absence of a thoroughly comprehensive investigation.²⁶⁰ In an interview in 2001, Condoleezza Rice—then-National Security Advisor—stated that “everybody assumed that it was al-Qaeda because the operation looked like al-Qaeda, quacked like al-Qaeda,

²⁵⁷ “TIMELINE - Major attacks by al Qaeda,” *Reuters*, May 2, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-56711920110502>.

²⁵⁸ Bin laden, et al., *Growing Up bin Laden*, 175.

²⁵⁹ Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization*, 30.

²⁶⁰ Kevin Robert Ryan, *Another Nineteen: Investigating Legitimate 9/11 Suspects* (Las Vegas: Microbloom, 2013), 6-8.

seemed like al-Qaeda.”²⁶¹ After the W. Bush administration assigned blame for the attacks to al-Qaeda, they decided to launch a war in Afghanistan to eliminate their presence and its Taliban sponsors. As Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld assumed his turn to manage United States foreign policy in Afghanistan, which effectively involved the destruction of the descendants of the Mujahideen. Yesterday’s holy warriors who had the unbridled support of United States foreign policy elites in both the Carter and Reagan administration (Rumsfeld included) were today’s terrorists.²⁶² Like the Soviets in 1979, the United States began a nightmarish invasion of Afghanistan and, on October 7, 2001, just twenty-six days after the 9/11 attacks, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom with a United States-led invasion and assault on Afghanistan.

By December of 2001, the war had begun to severely cripple the Taliban, and United States media reported that the Taliban leaders were offering terms of surrender to the United States-backed Northern Alliance and its leader Hamid Karzai (b. 1957).²⁶³ Rumsfeld, however, showed no interest in negotiating a surrender. According to New York Times writer, Brian Knowlton (n.d.),

Mr. Rumsfeld raised questions...about the agreement, saying that United States forces were continuing their attacks unabated in eastern and southern Afghanistan and saying that the war was far from being over... ‘I do not think there will be a

²⁶¹ “Bush’s War Transcript,” PBS, 2008,

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/////////bushswar/etc/script.html>.

²⁶² *Why We Fight*, 58:30.

²⁶³ Brian Knowlton, “Rumsfeld Rejects Plan To Allow Mullah Omar ‘To Live in Dignity’: Taliban Fighters Agree to Surrender Kandahar,” *The New York Times*, December 7, 2001,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/07/news/rumsfeld-rejects-planto-allow-mullah-omar-to-live-in-dignity-taliban.html>.

negotiated end to the situation that's unacceptable to the United States.'²⁶⁴

Consequently, the war continued while the W. Bush administration and Rumsfeld turned their attention away from Afghanistan and focused on the next stage of the War on Terror. Rumsfeld and other officials in the administration maintained their sights on Saddam and Iraq.²⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Afghanistan and its people were subject to a war that went on for almost twenty more years and extended into three subsequent presidential administrations: Obama (2009–2017), Trump (2017–2021), and Biden (2021–Present). By the time of the final withdrawal in 2021, over 200,000 people were killed in this war with a conservative estimate of over 70,000 civilians.²⁶⁶

In a war euphemistically named Operation Enduring Freedom (reportedly coined by Rumsfeld) after nearly twenty years of bloodshed and the United States' occupation, only violence and death have appeared to endure while freedom has not *existed* in any substantial form let alone *endured*.²⁶⁷ As former NATO commander Wesley Clark (b. 1944) testified in an interview with *Democracy Now!*, this invasion of Afghanistan represented only the beginning of a larger plot:

About ten days after 9/11, I went through the Pentagon and I saw Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz... and one of the generals called me in, he said, "Sir, you gotta come in, you've gotta come in and talk to me a second"...He says "We've made the decision we're going to war

²⁶⁴ This draws parallels to the United States' refusal to accept the Japanese surrender in World War II to justify United States militarism. Knowlton, "Rumsfeld Rejects Plan To Allow Mullah Omar 'To Live in Dignity.'"

²⁶⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 307-10.

²⁶⁶ "Costs of War: Afghan Civilians," Brown University, April 2021, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians/afghan>.

²⁶⁷ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster 2002), 134-35.

with Iraq”... I said “We’re going to war with Iraq? Why?” He said, “I don’t know.” He said, “I guess they don’t know what else to do.” So I said, “Well did they find some information connecting Saddam to al-Qaeda?” He said, “No, no... there’s nothing new that way they just made the decision to go to war with Iraq”... So I came back to see him a few weeks later, and by that time we were bombing in Afghanistan, I said, “Are we still going to war with Iraq?” And he said, “Oh it’s worse than that.” He reached over on his desk, he picked up a piece of paper and he said, “I just got this down from upstairs”—meaning the Secretary of Defense’s [Rumsfeld’s] office—he said, “This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and finishing off, Iran.”²⁶⁸

As of 2022, a bipartisan consensus effectively implemented this neoconservative policy. All of these countries have been targeted by the United States (such as Syria and Libya under Obama, or Biden’s redeployment to Somalia declared on May 16, 2022) or their allies (such as Israeli aggression against Lebanon) with direct military action or constant saber-rattling and intermittent conflict (such as then-President Trump’s assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani (1957–2020)).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ *Democracy Now!*, “1. Gen. Wesley Clark, Democracy Now! interview, 2007,” YouTube, 1:25-2:55, March 2, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSL3JqorkdU&t=48s&ab_channel=jerepah.

²⁶⁹ Natasha Bertrand, “Biden approves plan to redeploy US troops to Somalia,” CN, May 16, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/16/politics/somalia-troop-redeployment/index.htm>. See also: “Trump’s assassination of Soleimani: Five things to know,” Al Jazeera, January 3, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/1/3/trumps-assassination-of-soleimani-five-things-to-know>.

Rumsfeld's War: Iraq (2003–2011)

Iraq was in the crosshairs of United States foreign policy for years before the 2003 invasion. The United States had already launched a devastating war in Iraq during the H.W. Bush administration from 1990 to 1991 in reaction to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The United States-led coalition bombed large swaths of Iraqi infrastructure, including civilian infrastructures such as electricity grids and water treatment facilities.²⁷⁰ The bombing campaign was backed up by years of sanctions placed on Iraq that crippled their ability to rebuild the water treatment facilities which led to contaminated water supplies spreading disease like wildfire. Along with the initial bombings, these actions by the United States racked up a massive body count, likely into the millions. Then-President Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright (1937–2022), infamously justified this body count of roughly “half a million children... more than died in Hiroshima” as “worth it” in an interview with *60 Minutes*.²⁷¹ This was not enough blood spilled and the neoconservatives, particularly those affiliated with PNAC, clamored for the United States to finish the job and remove Saddam from power.²⁷² With many of those same PNAC affiliates and contributors now nestled in the W. Bush administration, it was only a matter of time before they pulled the trigger and American bombs flew over Iraq. Through these actions,

The United States deliberately targeted the civilian infrastructure of Iraq to make the war aims more easily attainable. But unlike in 1991, when it could

²⁷⁰ Sukumar Muralidharan, “Brutal Wars and a Malevolent Peace: Anatomy of US Policy in Iraq,” *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 38, no. 20 (2003), 1940.

²⁷¹ *60 Minutes*, “Madeleine Albright - 60 Minutes,” YouTube, 0:03, 1997, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbIX1CP9qr4&ab_channel=KevinGroenhaugen.

²⁷² Packer, “PNAC and Iraq.”

afford to just wreck a whole country and walk away from the mess, this time around it is committed to fostering a whole new political order in Iraq.²⁷³

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Rumsfeld and the W. Bush administration attempted to link Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, and the 9/11 attacks to Saddam Hussein's Iraq. A report from *CBS News* recounting these efforts stated that Rumsfeld "was telling his aides to come up with plans for striking Iraq—even though there was no evidence linking Saddam Hussein to the attacks."²⁷⁴ Another report from investigative journalist Bob Woodward (b. 1943) writes that in a meeting the night of 9/11, "Rumsfeld actually puts Iraq on the table and says 'part of our response maybe should be attacking Iraq. It's an opportunity.'"²⁷⁵ The W. Bush administration's conjecture about Saddam's role in the attacks quickly became public through the facilitation of the mass media. In fact, polls from that time showed that sizable majorities of respondents believed that Saddam was involved or responsible for these attacks.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the administration ultimately decided that more convincing intelligence and time were needed to make a case for going to war with Iraq, and Afghanistan was the first hit.

Rumsfeld led the effort in building the case for war with Iraq. He aimed to convince the public through his frequently televised press conferences held to boast of the now infamous

²⁷³ Muralidharan, "Brutal Wars and a Malevolent Peace: Anatomy of US Policy in Iraq," 1939.

²⁷⁴ Joel Roberts, "Plans For Iraq Attack Began On 9/11," *CBS News*, September 4, 2002, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090927043007/http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/04/september11/main520830.shtml>.

²⁷⁵ Patrice Taddonio, "A Look at Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's Legacy, Following His Death at 88," PBS, June 30, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/donald-rumsfeld-dies-88-documentaries-legacy/>.

²⁷⁶ "Bush administration on Iraq 9/11 link," *BBC News*, September 18, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3119676.stm>.

claims that Iraq, and specifically Saddam, possessed an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).²⁷⁷ In a press conference in February 2002, a full year before the invasion, he stated that “there are known knowns” regarding the existence of WMDs.²⁷⁸ This claim implies that Saddam’s Iraq posed a national security threat to the United States and could lead to another 9/11-like event if left unchecked. This episode harkens back to the Team B findings where a lack of evidence of Soviet weapons did not interfere with the neoconservative’s supposedly “known known” of a non-existent missile defense system. Rumsfeld’s efforts in this push for war went beyond simply *presenting* the “intelligence” for the public’s consumption; he also worked behind the scenes to *manufacture* the faulty “intelligence.”

According to the journalist Seymour Hersh (b. 1937) who reported on the W. Bush administration’s push for war with Iraq, Rumsfeld and his deputy, Wolfowitz, organized what was deemed a “cabal” of analysts in the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans (OSP) to “find evidence...that Saddam Hussein had close ties to Al Qaeda, and that Iraq had an enormous arsenal of chemical, biological, and possibly even nuclear weapons that threatened the region and, potentially, the United States.”²⁷⁹ Furthermore, Hersh also reported that this OSP cabal “rivalled both the CIA and the Pentagon’s own Defense Intelligence Agency, (DIA), as then-President [W.] Bush’s main source of intelligence regarding Iraq’s possible possession of weapons of mass destruction.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Christopher J. Coyne and Abigail R. Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism: U.S. Government Propaganda in the War on Terror* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021), 51-61.

²⁷⁸ “News Transcript – DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers,” United States Department of Defense, February 12, 2002, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160905184152/http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>.

²⁷⁹ Seymour Hersh, “Selective Intelligence: Donald Rumsfeld has his own special sources. Are they reliable?” *The New Yorker*, May 12, 2003, https://web.archive.org/web/20140717100914/http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/05/12/030512fa_fact.

²⁸⁰ Hersh, “Selective Intelligence.”

Rumsfeld's decades of experience manipulating intelligence and public opinion proved helpful in constructing this case, now in charge of a new Team B to sell a faulty war based on a greatly exaggerated threat. On the global front of the war's buildup, Rumsfeld publicly chastised European allies, such as Germany, France, and even the United Kingdom, if they showed even the slightest hesitation to join the United States in the war.²⁸¹ In nearly every way the war effort could be advanced, Rumsfeld functioned as the focal point and lead conductor. Under no circumstances was Iraq to be spared.

When the war with Iraq finally commenced in March 2003, Rumsfeld (in addition to still overseeing the war effort in Afghanistan) now helped orchestrate the Shock & Awe campaign the United States military unleashed on Iraq. Shock & Awe, referred to formally as the Doctrine of Rapid Dominance by its authors at the National Defense University, was an expression of raw American military might characterized by the use of "overwhelming force." The authors, Harlan K. Ullman (b. 1941) and James P. Wade (n.d.), spell this out explicitly:

Shutting [Iraq] down would entail both the physical destruction of appropriate infrastructure and the shutdown and control of the flow of all vital information and associated commerce so rapidly as to achieve a level of national shock akin to the effect that dropping nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had on the Japanese. Simultaneously, Iraq's armed forces would be paralyzed with the neutralization or destruction of its capabilities. Deception, disinformation, and misinformation would be applied massively.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 354-55.

²⁸² Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade, *Rapid Dominance: A Force for All Seasons* (London, UK: Royal United Services Institute in Defense Studies, 1998).

Seemingly overnight, Shock & Awe had completely crippled and destroyed not only Iraq's military but Iraqi society itself—the damage was especially severe in the capital Baghdad.²⁸³ According to former *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges (b. 1965), who covered the war and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2002 for his coverage of terrorism at the *New York Times*, “Shock and Awe saw the dropping of 3,000 bombs on civilian areas that killed over seven thousand noncombatants in the first two months of the war.”²⁸⁴ During the post-9/11 hysteria that Rumsfeld helped stir up, dissenting opinions were sidelined, as was Hedges. Even though Hedges spoke fluent Arabic and lived in Iraq and throughout the Middle East during his time as a journalist, the *New York Times* ultimately forced his resignation for his criticism of the Shock & Awe campaign.²⁸⁵

Shock & Awe was not confined solely to the overwhelming display of military might. Noting the inherent psychological aspect of this warfare, Klein stated, “Rumsfeld’s war would use everything short of a nuclear bomb to put on a show designed to bombard the senses, pull and play on emotion, and convey lasting messages.”²⁸⁶ Klein argues that this psychological aspect was a critical component of Shock & Awe as it became the “blueprint” for sending messages all around the world, especially to those who dared to challenge the authority of the United States.²⁸⁷ Designed to inflict mass fear and terror amongst the target population as well as for the global audience, Shock & Awe became the ultimate symbol of the transformation of the United States’ foreign policy; a transformation angled towards explicit offensive wars to bring perceived challengers and threats to the United States hegemony to

²⁸³ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 423-24.

²⁸⁴ Chris Hedges, “Chris Hedges: Worthy and Unworthy Victims,” MintPress News, March 7, 2022, <https://www.mintpressnews.com/chris-hedges-worthy-unworthy-victims/279884/>.

²⁸⁵ American Program Bureau Inc, “Speaker Chris Hedges: Foreign Correspondent & Author,” accessed June 12, 2022, <https://www.apbspeakers.com/speaker/chris-hedges/>.

²⁸⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 421.

²⁸⁷ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 420-21.

heel. This was the full realization of the neoconservatives' foreign policy goals. It began in the days of the Ford administration when a young Rumsfeld, acting as Secretary of Defense, challenged the perceived complacency of the foreign policy elite towards the Soviet Union. In a post-Soviet world with no equivalent challenger to the United States' hegemony, coupled with the neoconservative's dominance in the United States' foreign policy, the war of aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan were the first disastrous strikes in the War on Terror that only continued to expand in the region for decades.

The very nature of the Shock & Awe bombing campaigns almost necessarily created the circumstances that ensured that the War on Terror became an unending quagmire. Rumsfeld himself once personally asked, "Are we creating more terrorists than we're killing?"²⁸⁸ Genocide studies scholar at Yale University, Ben Kiernan, answers this question affirmatively. The mass killing of civilians and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure quickly turned public opinion against the United States in the populations affected, making many who lost loved ones, their homes, and livelihoods more receptive to extremist rhetoric. In 2012, former director of the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center, Robert Greiner (n.d.), reflected on drone strikes in Yemen:

One wonders how many Yemenis may be moved in the future to violent extremism in reaction to carelessly targeted missile strikes." That same month, a Yemeni lawyer Ibrahim Monthana (n.d.) wrote in an open letter to then-President Obama "when a United States drone missile kills a child in Yemen, the father will go to war with you, guaranteed. Nothing to do with Al Qaeda."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Kiernan, "Making More Enemies Than We Kill?" 1.

²⁸⁹ Kiernan, "Making More Enemies Than We Kill?" 1.

Despite a near-endless drip of media propaganda surrounding the use of “smart bombs” or “precision-guided munitions” (PMGs), the use of large explosives with high fragmentation and penetrating power in densely inhabited urban spaces necessarily entailed civilian casualties.²⁹⁰ Bruce Cronin (n.d.) at the Department of Political Science at the City College of New York calls this the “collateral damage exception to IHL [International Humanitarian Law].” The IHL resulted in,

Legally sanctioned warfighting strategies that result in significant numbers of civilian casualties. Such an exception allows military organizations to follow IHL while killing and injuring many civilians during their operations... They do so by employing overwhelming force under conditions that they know are likely to fatally affect the civilian population. Under these conditions, collateral damage may be incidental but it is also usually foreseeable and therefore preventable. Such calculations push the boundaries of legal behavior.²⁹¹

On July 22, 2022, Rumsfeld claimed that “we can take some comfort in the knowledge that this war has seen fewer tragic losses of civilian life than perhaps any war in modern history. We can also take pride in the fact that coalition forces have gone to extraordinary lengths not only to avoid civilian deaths but to save civilian lives.”²⁹² The arguments provided by Cronin contradict

²⁹⁰ Mark Herold, “‘Unworthy’ Afghan Bodies ‘Smarter’ U.S. Weapons Kill More Innocents,” in *Inventing Collateral Damage*, edited by Stephen J. Rockel and Rick Halpern, 303-327 (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2009), 303; Bruce Cronin, “Reckless endangerment warfare: Civilian casualties and the collateral damage exception in international humanitarian law,” *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 50, no. 2 (2013):176, <https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/stable/23441184?sid=primo&seq=1>.

²⁹¹ Cronin, “Reckless endangerment warfare,” 176.

²⁹² Herold, “‘Unworthy’ Afghan Bodies,” 308.

Rumsfeld's claims.

Neoliberal Torture Racket

There are a few aspects of the War on Terror that deserve deeper scrutiny throughout Rumsfeld's term as Secretary of Defense, which lasted until the end of 2006: the "reconstruction" efforts and the systemic corruption and abuse of prisoners of war (POWs). Reconstruction, a principal component of the war in Iraq, included extreme war-profiteering that remained at the heart of Rumsfeld's neoliberal transformation at the Pentagon. In this effort to rebuild a destroyed Iraq, the United States government handed out a seemingly limitless amount of money to private, for-profit contractors to facilitate these projects.²⁹³ This was not only a boon for the web of Department of Defense (DoD) contractors, but also for government officials and politicians who had links to these firms, for example, then-Vice President Cheney and his old firm Halliburton.²⁹⁴ Yet despite the endless flow of money used to help rebuild Iraq, the efforts mostly failed due to rampant corruption and the persistent security threat in Iraq, which United States policy exacerbated through aggressive bombing campaigns as detailed above.²⁹⁵

Although this furthered the Iraqi toil, it made no difference to the contractors who already had their cash in hand. To quote

²⁹³ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, Ch. 17-18.

²⁹⁴ Conor Friedersdorf, "Remembering Why Americans Loathe Dick Cheney," *The Atlantic*, August 30, 2011, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/08/remembering-why-americans-loathe-dick-cheney/244306/>.

²⁹⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq: A Retrospective Analysis of the Reconstruction," *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2006): 1-20, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kenneth-Pollack/publication/237113122_The_Seven_Deadly_Sins_of_Failure_in_Iraq_A_Retrospective_Analysis_of_the_Reconstruction/links/57025d0f08aefe5e2e95498f/The-Seven-Deadly-Sins-of-Failure-in-Iraq-A-Retrospective-Analysis-of-the-Reconstruction.pdf.

Klein, “This was the genius of Rumsfeld’s ‘transformation’ plan: since every possible aspect of both destruction and reconstruction has been outsourced and privatized, there’s an economic boom [for both]...a closed profit-loop of destruction and reconstruction.”²⁹⁶ To reiterate, in a Pentagon fully dominated by the interests of capital and led by corrupted agents of the MIC like Rumsfeld, every decision was heavily influenced by return on investment or profiteering. Whether it was the so-called reconstruction efforts or the waging of war itself, the economic benefits would be realized by this nexus of public-private actors, furthered by the W. Bush appointed head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (responsible for oversight of the reconstruction effort), Paul Bremer (b. 1941). Bremer instituted “the full privatization of public enterprises, full ownership rights by foreign firms of Iraqi businesses, full repatriation of foreign profits... the opening of Iraq’s banks to foreign control... and the elimination of nearly all trade barriers.”²⁹⁷ This pertained to every aspect of the economy, including “public services, the media, manufacturing, services, transportation, finance, and construction.”²⁹⁸ For Iraqis, their interests were marginalized (if not entirely ignored) and brushed aside. According to Harvey, “strikes were effectively forbidden in key sectors and the right to unionize restricted. A highly regressive ‘flat tax’ (an ambitious tax-reform plan long advocated for implementation by conservatives in the United States) was also imposed.”²⁹⁹ The supposed reconstruction became just another layer in the deep injustice that had been levied upon Iraqis that some critics argued violated the Geneva (1864–1949) and Hague (1899 and 1907) Conventions, “since an occupying power is

²⁹⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 482.

²⁹⁷ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 6.

²⁹⁸ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 6.

²⁹⁹ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 6.

mandated to guard the assets of an occupied country and not sell them off.”³⁰⁰

The systemic corruption and abuse of POWs is another aspect of Rumsfeld’s War on Terror policies that deserves more attention. Similar to the reconstruction efforts, the policies and schemes implemented by Rumsfeld and the W. Bush administration to purge both Afghanistan and Iraq of supposed terrorists via mass imprisonment were poisoned by the corruption and extreme profiteering of private interests. For example, in Afghanistan,

Once the prisoners arrive at the destination, they face interrogators, some of whom will not be employed by the CIA or the military but by private contractors. If these freelance interrogators are to keep landing lucrative contracts, they must extract from prisoners the kind of ‘actionable intelligence’ their employers in Washington are looking for. It’s a dynamic ripe for abuse...contractors have a powerful economic incentive to use whatever techniques are necessary to produce the sought-after information, regardless of its reliability.³⁰¹

At this point it is quite apparent how the neoliberal transformation Rumsfeld shepherded into the Pentagon, infused with outsourcing to private contractors and profiteering, thoroughly and systematically corrupted nearly every aspect of these wars. From the launching of the wars themselves, the so-called reconstruction, and even the detainment and mass imprisonment of *enemy combatants*, all were guided by schemes designed to enrich the contractors who performed the duties.

³⁰⁰ The Hague Conventions are focused on the actual conduct of war, while the Geneva Conventions are focused on the humanitarian aspects. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 6.

³⁰¹ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 384-85.

This culture of corruption was so intoxicating that it also ensnared the locals of these countries, especially in Afghanistan where CIA and private contractors offered bounties to the locals to provide intelligence or turn in suspected terrorists. These bounties paid roughly three thousand to twenty-five thousand dollars for al-Qaeda or Taliban fighters, Klein noted that “soon enough, the cells of Bagram and Guantanamo were overflowing with goatherds, cabdrivers, cooks and shopkeepers—all lethally dangerous according to the men who turned them over and collected the rewards.”³⁰² Consequently, the lure of the blood-soaked dollar not only fueled the destruction and death of the wars but also the mass imprisonment schemes of innocent locals, now labeled as dangerous terrorists. Unsurprisingly, this malevolence was only one feature of the systemic abuse of the prisoners. Inside the prisons, a whole other system of absolute horror took place.

Rumsfeld, along with other W. Bush administration officials, argued that the Geneva Conventions, the documents establishing the international legal standards for humanitarian treatment in war, did not protect POWs captured in Afghanistan and Iraq due to their newly assigned label of “enemy combatants.”³⁰³ Rumsfeld was a key player in this endeavor. According to Michael Ratner, “On January 19, 2002, defendant Rumsfeld [Ratner’s book, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, is presented as a court case] informed the chief of the United States military, Richard B. Myers [b. 1942], that those detained in the war against Afghanistan would not be granted prisoner of war status as would normally be required by the Geneva Conventions. They would not even be given hearings to determine if they were prisoners of war.”³⁰⁴ This ad hoc legal distinction served as the

³⁰² Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 385.

³⁰³ Leila Nadya Sadat, “A Presumption of Guilt: The Unlawful Enemy Combatant and the U.S. War on Terror,” *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy* 37, no. 4 (2009): 539-53, <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1241&context=djilp>.

³⁰⁴ Michael Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld: A Prosecution by Book* (New York: The New Press, 2008), 15.

legal basis for both “administrative detention” (imprisonment without trial) and “enhanced interrogation” (torture).

In Iraq, a policy of mass imprisonment of Iraqi troops who surrendered or were captured led to systemic abuse by United States troops, most emblematic in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal which publicized widespread torture and the abuse of prisoners.³⁰⁵ Ratner explains that as part of the torture programs “human beings were stripped, hung from ceilings, beaten, threatened and attacked by dogs, sexually abused, subjected to hot and cold temperatures, deprived of food and sleep, waterboarded, and held in isolation day after day, month after month. More than occasionally, they died from torture.”³⁰⁶

When the crimes against humanity at Abu Ghraib became known, Rumsfeld appeared to shoulder the blame after being subject to intense criticism and even offered his resignation.³⁰⁷ Then-President W. Bush, however, refused this offer and kept him on board. To be clear, although Rumsfeld publicly shouldered this blame, this should not be confused with him disapproving or being unaware of these detestable acts. As a *Frontline* documentary entitled “Rumsfeld’s War” explains, “Rumsfeld [had] already promulgated some harsher interrogation techniques of his own, including the use of dogs to intimidate, stripping, deprivation of food in combination with stress positions for a given amount of time.”³⁰⁸ Moreover, in a declassified memo dated December 2, 2002 (well before the publicization of the torture at Abu Ghraib) Rumsfeld bemoaned of the apparent gentleness of these “interrogation techniques” stating, “I stand for eight to ten hours a

³⁰⁵ Seymour M. Hersh, “Torture at Abu Ghraib,” *The New Yorker*, May 10, 2004,

<http://www.colonelby.com/teachers/krichardson/Grade%2012/Carleton%20-%20Int%20Law%20Course/Week%2011/TortureAtAbuGhraib.pdf>.

³⁰⁶ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 8.

³⁰⁷ Thom Shanker, “Rumsfeld Says He Offered to Quit,” *The New York Times*, February 4, 2005, <https://archive.ph/qMv89>.

³⁰⁸ “Transcript: Rumsfeld’s War,” PBS, 2004, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/pentagon/etc/script.html>.

day. Why is standing limited to four hours?”³⁰⁹ In this same memo, Rumsfeld personally signed off on the aforementioned use of “hooding, stripping, dogs, and sleep deprivation” on detainees.³¹⁰ Despite this, Rumsfeld later claimed in his memoir that,

None of the authorized interrogation methods—either those approved in December 2002 and used on one detainee until I rescinded them, or those that I later approved in April 2003—involved physical or mental pain. None were inhumane. None met any reasonable person’s definition of torture.³¹¹

Rumsfeld then goes on to also deny that waterboarding never occurred in Guantanamo Bay and defends torture as critical for getting key information out of al-Qaeda operatives.³¹² This is counter to what Ratner and The Center for Constitutional Rights claim which was that “tortured people say whatever they can to stop the torture, and often the information is false.”³¹³

Rumsfeld’s denial then appraisal of torture is also emblematic of the entire administration’s stance. Once again deferring to Ratner and The Center for Constitutional Rights,

The [W.] Bush administration has argued from both sides of its mouth in its efforts simultaneously to deny that it has engaged in a torture program and to justify the use of torture. On the one hand, it claims it does not torture and treats prisoners humanely. As you will see, it makes this claim because it has redefined torture and inhumane treatment so that the

³⁰⁹ Murray Waas, “Rumsfeld on Detainees: ‘I Stand for 8-10 Hours a Day. Why is Standing Limited to 4 Hours?’” *Huffington Post*, May 14, 2010, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rumsfeld-on-detainees-i-s_b_189833.

³¹⁰ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 14.

³¹¹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 582.

³¹² Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 585, 586.

³¹³ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 10.

coercive interrogations it employs do not come within what courts, treaties, and lawyers always found constituted torture. At the same time it denies employing torture, the [W.] Bush administration insists that it needs harsh interrogation tactics to get information, and that the president, in the name of national security and self-defense, may employ torture. In fact, his lawyers argue that there are no limits on the cruelties he can impose on others if he thinks he needs to do so to make us safer.³¹⁴

The Abu Ghraib scandal was not a phenomenon but merely one node in a global infrastructure of systematic imprisonment and torture—anchored by CIA black sites and the Guantanamo Bay detention facilities—erected by the United States Military in the War on Terror and under the watch of Rumsfeld, along with other officials in the W. Bush administration.³¹⁵ The global torture infrastructure did not wither away after the ignominious exit of the administration but instead remained very much intact and a feature of the United States’ so-called “rules-based order,” an Orwellian term used to obfuscate that the United States does not obey actual international law. As Ratner notes,

Did Rumsfeld authorize conduct that constituted war crimes? Absolutely...According to the report of the government’s Schlesinger investigation, the entire military chain of command was involved... up to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld... None of the defendants fulfilled their legally mandated roles to prohibit torture; all were complicit in the propagation of torture.³¹⁶

Media and Information Manipulation

³¹⁴ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 9.

³¹⁵ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 384-86.

³¹⁶ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 18-19.

Throughout the War on Terror, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives in the W. Bush administration directly and purposefully manipulated information and evidence to the media and inside the government. This manipulation aimed to both manufacture the public's consent for the wars and to obfuscate and obscure the crimes (discussed above) associated with the wars. Information manipulation as a means to promote aggressive policy represented a continuation of Rumsfeld's standard operating procedure a la the Team B Commission. Furthermore, it was in line with the even longer history of manipulation by the likes of the Dulles brothers. According to Tom Rosenstiel (n.d.), former executive director of the American Press Institute and founder and former director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism,

We now know that you had people on the vice president's [Cheney] staff talking to Judy Miller [*New York Times* reporter], who was one of the key reporters doing these stories for the Times, leaking that material to her or helping her with her stories. Those stories would appear, and then they would reference the very material that they'd given her and say, 'See, this is coming from *The New York Times*, not just us,' when, in fact, it was coming from the administration.³¹⁷

This trickery is emblematic of the advancements of the political and economic elites' ability to control information and thus public opinion. The Dulles brothers used their connections to pressure *The New York Times* to suppress information from their reporters on the ground in Guatemala and Iran. While these simple methods were still employed, as in the aforementioned Hedges case of censorship (also at the hands of *The New York Times*), the

³¹⁷ "Interview Tom Rosenstiel," PBS, October 16, 2006, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/newswar/interviews/rosenstiel.html>.

infiltration of the media by the W. Bush administration was comprehensive:

Officials offered various new pieces of pro-occupation information to particular news outlets who would subsequently relay these new ‘leads’ or ‘facts’ to the public. In later discussions, officials would cite the press pieces as the source of their information, although officials generated and provided materials to the news outlets in the first place.³¹⁸

Rumsfeld himself played an active role in this manipulation. The subterfuge included the manipulation of internal government information through the Office of Special Plans (OSP) that Rumsfeld created. The OSP concocted half-truths about Iraq to create talking points that justified the war, such as Saddam’s supposed WMD programs which Rumsfeld propagated with outdated and out-of-context evidence from the 1980s.³¹⁹ Moreover, Rumsfeld’s OSP not only manufactured false information for the wars but also filtered and distributed false information from the web of private intelligence contractors who, as discussed above, had an economic incentive to manipulate information to keep their DoD contracts. According to Klein,

Part of the reason the W. Bush administration has relied so heavily on private intelligence contractors working in new structures like Rumsfeld’s secretive [OSP] is that they have proven far more willing than their counterparts in governments to massage and manipulate information to meet its political goals of the administration—after all, their next contract depends on it.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Coyne & Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism*, 63.

³¹⁹ *Why We Fight*, 1:06:40 & 1:08:05.

³²⁰ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 384-85.

Yet another example of how the corruptive force of profiteering fueled seemingly every consequence of the wars.

Rumsfeld's active manipulation did not begin and end with the OSP, however. Wesley Clark's testimony (presented above) about a memo (originating from Rumsfeld's office) planning to take out seven countries in five years just days after 9/11 is also indicative of this manipulation of information and policy from the inside. Externally, Rumsfeld made many media appearances to tow the official talking points, such as his December 2, 2001, appearance on *Meet the Press* where he asserted, without providing any substantive evidence, the existence of elaborate multi-story underground bunkers used by bin Laden and al-Qaeda, complete with electricity and ventilation.³²¹

Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives had already decided on going to war with Iraq before 9/11, however, they needed to garner public support for the war. Throughout his tenure as Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld held frequent televised press briefings on the wars which helped in the administration's domination over the supposedly "free" media.³²² The perception of the media as completely independent, when it was heavily manipulated, proved instrumental in selling the war. As put by Charles Lewis (b. 1953) at the Center for Public Integrity, "We have this idea that we have lots of information available. There is so much that's not available and so much of the 'truth' is obscured by political actors who don't want the world to see what they're doing."³²³ Rumsfeld's dismissive comments during his televised press briefings characterized the whole ordeal: "Needless to say that the President is correct" and "I'm working my way to figure out how I'm not

³²¹ "Bin Ladens Cave according to Rumsfeld," *Meet the Press*, March 5, 2007, 0:25, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGhGHxw0mSo&ab_channel=TheSpacedog.

³²² *Why We Fight*, 1:10:59.

³²³ *Why We Fight*, 1:11:00.

going to answer that.”³²⁴ Dan Rather (b. 1931) of *CBS News* explained the situation expertly when he stated, “What’s going on, I’m sorry to say, is a belief that the public doesn’t need to know.”³²⁵ As a twenty-year war veteran who quit after seeing the manipulation of intelligence in the OSP firsthand put it, “If you join the military now, you are not defending the United States of America. You are helping certain policy makers pursue an imperial agenda.”³²⁶ To sell this imperial agenda, language and the media were manipulated thoroughly.

The Orwellian language draped around aggressive military operations (i.e. Operation Enduring Freedom), a feature of W. Bush-era neoconservative propaganda, proved to be influential as the Obama administration adopted this same technique. For example, when the Obama administration went to war with Libya in 2011, the NATO operation was christened “Operation Unified Protector.” As will be shown in the closing segment, the operation only further endangered the civilians it was ostensibly created to protect. Other Orwellian constructions of language included the obfuscation of statistics by labeling many killed as “military-aged males” or “unlawful enemy combatants” or simply “abstract collateral damage.”³²⁷ By using these labels, the military/government could avoid including these deaths in the civilian casualties and the media could glance over the pile of Iraqi, Afghan, and other brown bodies to fixate on much smaller losses incurred by the United States and its allies.³²⁸ Additionally, the dozens of combat zones the War on Terror spread to are often labeled “conflicts” or “engagements” or, in the case of Libya, a “humanitarian mission,” and not “wars.” This manipulation of language serves to avoid the hot topic of “war” by simply denying it exists by omitting the word. It also gives the executive branch more breathing room from Congressional oversight supposedly

³²⁴ *Why We Fight*, 1:11:31.

³²⁵ *Why We Fight*, 1:11:25.

³²⁶ *Why We Fight*, 1:16:35.

³²⁷ Herold, “Unworthy Afghan Bodies,” 304, 309.

³²⁸ Herold, “Unworthy Afghan Bodies,” 303, 304.

required to conduct a “war.”

The obfuscation of individuals’ status as “unlawful enemy combatants” complicates the process of totaling the number of innocent lives taken by the War on Terror which varies widely depending on the particular methodology. Some outlets claim the War on Terror took hundreds of thousands of lives while others claim it took millions.³²⁹ This issue is complicated further in the case of Iraq when trying to estimate the total killed. Does it start in 2003 or the 1990 bombing and sanction campaigns? Are the deaths resulting from sanction and disease to be counted in either case? These discrepancies created plausible deniability for the United States government to always assert the lowest estimates possible for the damage they wrought, though Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives did not invent this trickery. Calculating lives lost in war has always been difficult for a multitude of reasons. From the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the firebombing that burnt down almost every other Japanese city including Tokyo to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the margin of error for deaths is massive and the exact figures are contentious.³³⁰ In Cambodia, for example, it is estimated that the bombing campaigns during the Johnson and Nixon administrations (the bombings that Rumsfeld “warned” Nixon against) killed between 50,000 to 150,000 innocent people in a country the United States was not at war with.³³¹ The estimated losses in Laos reach as high as 750,000 civilians.³³² During the Vietnam War, the United States lost roughly 58,000 men. Even based on the conservative estimates for just Cambodian deaths, it becomes apparent that the United States killed more Cambodians than Americans died in Vietnam between 1964 and 1973. Under Johnson, the Cambodian and Laotian bombing campaigns were named Operation Menu; under

³²⁹ Benjamin and Davies, “The staggering death toll in Iraq.”

³³⁰ Alex Wallerstein, “Counting the dead at Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” *The Bulletin.org*, August 4, 2020, <https://thebulletin.org/2020/08/counting-the-dead-at-hiroshima-and-nagasaki/>.

³³¹ Kiernan, “Making More Enemies Than We Kill?” 13.

³³² Herold, “‘Unworthy’ Afghan Bodies,” 315.

Nixon (perhaps with Rumsfeld's influence), the bombing campaigns earned the euphemism Operation Freedom Deal, a precursor to the misleading names of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The information about the Cambodian bombing campaigns that the Clinton administration released to the public in 2000 shook the established consensus on the estimated damage wrought by the bombs dropped on Cambodia (and Laos). Before Clinton declassified available data, the generally accepted bomb tonnage dropped over Cambodia was only a quarter of what was actually dropped which was around 2,756,941 tons, and that is only from the incomplete Pentagon datasets that list over 10,000 instances of indiscriminate bombing.³³³ It is likely that in the coming years, it will also be easier to calculate the damage of Rumsfeld's wars through currently classified information. However, it is already a documented fact that Rumsfeld and other officials blatantly lied about many aspects of the war efforts and its consequences, whether it was Saddam's WMDs or their knowledge of torture programs during the War on Terror. Furthermore, when they did not lie outright about the legality of their designs, they used more manipulative language to rhetorically dance around legal loopholes, such as Rumsfeld's reclassification of POWs to skirt the Geneva conventions. All of the blatant lies and manipulation were a constant in the W. Bush administration and eventually outlasted Rumsfeld who, by late 2006, saw his time at the helm of the Pentagon come to a premature end.

By the time of Rumsfeld's departure in late 2006, the War on Terror proved to be a full-fledged disaster. United States steel and depleted uranium continued to rain over Afghanistan and Iraq with no end in sight.³³⁴ The reconstruction and counterinsurgency

³³³ Kiernan, "Making More Enemies than We Kill?" 6; Ben Kiernan, Taylor Owen, "Bombs Over Cambodia: New Light on US Air War," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* (2007): 2, <https://apjpf.org/-Ben-Kiernan--Taylor-Owen/2420/article.pdf>.

³³⁴ Herold, "'Unworthy' Afghan Bodies," 306-307.

efforts in both countries were failing.³³⁵ Fueled by the United States' occupation and sustained terror at the hand of the occupying American force, the threat of violence by the region's inhabitants had only metastasized.³³⁶ By all accounts, the wars were complete catastrophes and politically unpopular amongst the vast majority of the American population.³³⁷ By the time W. Bush left office, his approval rating was down to just twenty-four percent.³³⁸ For Rumsfeld, his prospects did not look any better. He faced widespread calls to resign, led by a group of retired generals and admirals who had decided to speak out against his strategic failures.³³⁹ General Hugh Shelton (b. 1942), chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1997 to 2001, later claimed that "it was the worst style of leadership [he] witnessed in 38 years of service...based on deception, deceit, working political agendas, and trying to get the Joint Chiefs to support an action that might not be the right thing to do for the country but would work well for the President from a political standpoint."³⁴⁰

In November of 2006, Rumsfeld—despite then-President W. Bush's public support—formally resigned as Secretary of Defense. This resignation marked the end of Rumsfeld's time in government and his position of power over United States foreign

³³⁵ Pollack, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq."

³³⁶ "The Iraq Effect: New Study Finds 600% Rise in Terrorism Since U.S. Invasion of Iraq," *Democracy Now!*, February 22, 2007, https://www.democracynow.org/2007/2/22/the_iraq_effect_new_study_finds.

³³⁷ "Public Attitudes Toward the War in Iraq: 2003-2008," *Pew Research Center*, March 19, 2008, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2008/03/19/public-attitudes-toward-the-war-in-iraq-20032008/>.

³³⁸ "Bush and Public Opinion," *Pew Research Center*, December 18, 2008, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2008/12/18/bush-and-public-opinion/>.

³³⁹ David S. Cloud and Eric Schmitt, "More Retired Generals Call for Rumsfeld's Resignation," *The New York Times*, April 14, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121109133044/http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/14/washington/14military.html?pagewanted=all>.

³⁴⁰ Thomas E. Ricks, "General Shelton: Rumsfeld was the devil in the form of a defense secretary," *Foreign Policy*, August 2, 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/02/general-shelton-rumsfeld-was-the-devil-in-the-form-of-a-defense-secretary/>.

policy. Although he was forced to retire in shame, he would be able to retire in the comfort of his home, a privilege that hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, Afghans, and other victims in the War on Terror, along with thousands of United States troops, did not have.³⁴¹ As of 2022, millions of people are forcibly displaced due to the ever-growing maelstrom of violence unleashed by the seemingly never-ending consequences spreading across the region afflicted by the War on Terror that Rumsfeld spat upon the world.³⁴²

Rumsfeld Out of Office and the War Continues

*“The haze got me thinking why
We killed Osama and plenty of innocent people died
We should see the signs, but we still be blind
No disrespect to the man or the legend but
I’m sick and tired of asking my brethren if
It all ends in 2011
Would God come through or would he actually forget us?
Cause apocalypse is getting closer
But they’re more focused on our ‘lil youth sippin’ soda
Fuck the sugar act, ***** out pushing crack
And I lost my father figure because of that.”*

- Capital Steez, “Free the Robots.”³⁴³

“Rumsfeld was the worst secretary of defense in American history. Being newly dead shouldn’t spare him this distinction.”

³⁴¹ “Costs of War: Human Costs,” Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University, November 2021, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human>.

³⁴² Benjamin and Davies, “The staggering death toll in Iraq.”

³⁴³ Capital STEEZ, “Free the Robots,” track 3 on *AmeriKKKan Korruption*. 2012, Soundcloud.

- George Packer, *The Atlantic*.³⁴⁴

Despite Rumsfeld's seemingly ignominious exit from the W. Bush administration, he lived the last chapter of his life quite comfortably. In fact, in the years immediately after his resignation Rumsfeld still received honors and distinctions from ideologically aligned institutions such as the Claremont Institute Statesmanship Award in 2007, the Victory of Freedom Award from the Richard Nixon Foundation in 2010, and the "Defender of the Constitution Award" from the Conservative Political Action Conference in 2011.³⁴⁵ Of course, this is not necessarily an anomaly as some of the most prestigious awards in the world, like the Nobel Peace Prize, have been given to American "statesmen" such as Kissinger and Obama, despite their explicitly contradictory records to what the awards are *supposed* to represent; i.e. Kissinger's support for extreme bombing campaigns in South East Asia, and Obama's disastrous surge in Afghanistan and expansion of drone warfare into several countries with a record so dismal one would guess it was designed to hunt civilians.³⁴⁶ The point is that, as a member of the American political elite, Rumsfeld was ultimately protected from any real consequences for his decisions and policies

³⁴⁴ George Packer was a journalist who covered the Iraq War for *The New Yorker* and wrote several books on the topic. George Packer, "How Rumsfeld Deserves to Be Remembered," *The Atlantic*, June 30, 2021, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/opinion/how-rumsfeld-deserves-to-be-remembered/ar-AALDCd0>.

³⁴⁵ Steven Greenhut, "Rumsfeld honored as a statesman," *The Orange County Register*, October 30, 2007, <https://www.ocregister.com/2007/10/30/rumsfeld-honored-as-a-statesman/>; Michael Mello, "Rumsfeld accepts award at Nixon library," *The Orange County Register*, December 6, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20101210075035/http://www.ocregister.com/news/rumsfeld-279081-nixon-library.html>; "Donald Rumsfeld Remarks," CSPAN, February 10, 2011, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?297952-14/donald-rumsfeld-remarks>.

³⁴⁶ Andrew Blake, "Obama-led drone strikes kill innocents 90% of the time: report," *The Washington Times*, October 15, 2015, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/oct/15/90-of-people-killed-by-us-drone-strikes-in-afghani/>.

regardless of how destructive they were for the people caught in the maelstrom of violence. Rumsfeld garnered praise for his actions not only through ideological political institutions but also by gaining perverse accolades such as *People* magazine's "sexiest man alive" in 2002, "CNN called him a 'virtual rock star,' FOX dubbed him a beltway 'babe magnet,' [a]nd *The Wall Street Journal* hailed 'the new hunk of home-front airtime.'"³⁴⁷

Rumsfeld did not hold any government titles or lead any corporations in his later years. However, that is not to say he was rarely seen or heard from as he periodically gave interviews and speeches. He was particularly active in the media circuit during 2011 to promote his new memoir entitled, *Known and Unknown*, a play on one of his most notable quips during his routine press conferences as the Secretary of Defense in the W. Bush administration. In many of these interviews, Rumsfeld was asked to reflect on his decisions and policies regarding the War on Terror. He was even asked for his supposedly "expert" opinion on current foreign policy issues. For example, in an ABC News interview in 2011, he offered criticism of the Obama administration's handling of the Libya crisis and urged that the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi (1942–2011) must be removed from power because it would negatively affect the "prestige" of the United States if Gaddafi remained.³⁴⁸ Even in exile, Rumsfeld still advocated for the United States' military intervention in the political affairs of nations in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Bipartisan Consensus

³⁴⁷ Carly Tennes, "'People' Magazine Once Named Donald Rumsfeld in their 'Sexiest Man Alive' Issue," *Cracked*, July 1, 2021, https://www.cracked.com/article_30643_people-magazine-named-donald-rumsfeld-in-their-2002-sexiest-man-alive-issue.html.

³⁴⁸ Joshua Miller, "Rumsfeld: If Gadhafi Stays, U.S. Reputation Damaged, American Enemies Emboldened," *ABC News*, March 27, 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200706103245/https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/rumsfeld-gadhafi-stays-us-reputation-damaged-american-enemies/story?id=13232616>.

The Obama administration's stance on Libya ultimately fell in line with Rumsfeld's prescriptions, and Gaddafi was removed from power and murdered in the street by NATO-backed and al-Qaeda-affiliated rebels on October 20, 2011.³⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter, many of these rebels, refugees, and radical extremists (now armed with military-grade weaponry and millions of dollars of gold pillaged from the corpse of the Libyan state) poured across the borders into neighboring states and Syria, further destabilizing the region.³⁵⁰ These known al-Qaeda-linked extremists were then given the euphemism "moderate rebels" in Syria to obfuscate the fact the United States was now collaborating with elements of the faction that served as the initial enemy in The War on Terror (see Jake Sullivan's (b. 1976) 2011 email to then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (b. 1947) titled "AQ [al-Qaeda] is on our side").³⁵¹ This framing of "moderate rebels" was a continuation of the Orwellian language manipulation. This aggressive and violent regime change is emblematic of the neoconservative shift in American foreign policy for which Rumsfeld laid the groundwork. As a presidential candidate, Obama was highly critical of the W. Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. However, once in office, then-President Obama's critique softened and he refused to investigate and prosecute key W. Bush administration officials for their connection to possible war crimes, including Rumsfeld, as Ratner and The Center for Constitutional Human Rights predicted would be the case in 2008.³⁵²

Here, Obama's criticisms of the United States war machine ultimately worked to launch a continuation of W. Bush-era neoconservative foreign policy, following the model set by the Clinton administration. In fact, in 2003, Clinton's United Nations

³⁴⁹ Oyeniyi A. Bukola. *The History of Libya* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2019), 203.

³⁵⁰ Burkola, *The History of Libya*, 206.

³⁵¹ Jake Sullivan, email message to Hillary Clinton February 12, 2011, <https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/emailid/23225#efmAGIAHu>.

³⁵² Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 3.

ambassador Richard Holbrooke (1941–2010) consulted with the W. Bush administration and claimed that the precedent set by the Clinton administration’s unilateral invasion of Kosovo demonstrated no need to bring the Iraqi case before the United Nations.³⁵³ By 2011, Obama picked up where W. Bush-era neoconservatives left off and the United States’ military operations in the region expanded. Hedges summarized the phenomenon as follows:

The dark reasoning of George W. Bush’s administration was that the threat of terrorism and national security gave the executive branch the right to ignore all legal restraints. The Obama administration has made this disregard for law bipartisan. Obama assured us when [the operations in Libya] started that it was not about “regime change.” But this promise proved as empty as the ones he made during his presidential campaign. He has ruthlessly prosecuted the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where military planners speak of a continued United States presence for the next couple of decades. He has greatly expanded our proxy wars, which rely heavily on drone and missile attacks, as well as clandestine operations, in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Libya. Add a few more countries and we will set the entire region alight.³⁵⁴

This policy had little to do with Rumsfeld’s critiques. By the time Rumsfeld’s pro-regime stance was published, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and critical NATO allies had already decided on removing Gaddafi from power. The United States and NATO’s claims that Operation Unified Protector was a humanitarian effort to “protect civilians in Libya” was a farce. Instead, the NATO alliance was motivated by political prestige, as well as economic

³⁵³ Ratner, *The Trial of Donald Rumsfeld*, 3.

³⁵⁴ Chris Hedges, “Libya: Here We Go Again,” Truthdig, September 5, 2011, <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/libya-here-we-go-again/>.

motives laid bare in since-leaked or released emails from ranking politicians in the Hilary Clinton circle.³⁵⁵

Furthermore, the United States and NATO coalition ignored the commanding initiative to “protect civilians” entirely when the civilians happened to be pro-Gaddafi.³⁵⁶ Just as the Democrats adopted Orwellian doublespeak to name aggressive military operations, they also took cues from the neoconservatives on media manipulation. They propagated unverified “evidence” that “Hitlerized” Gaddafi as Rumsfeld had done with Saddam and H.W. Bush did directly to Saddam a decade before Rumsfeld’s attempts. Hysterical news blurbs painted the picture of a Viagra-riddled mass-raping genocidal force (later proven to be almost entirely without merit) that fired on its people with advanced aircraft.³⁵⁷ In an ultimate twist of bloody and depressing irony, United States officials were later forced to admit that all reports of pro-Gaddafi forces firing on unarmed civilians from aircraft could not be proven.³⁵⁸ At the same time, multiple human rights organizations documented evidence that NATO aircraft not only killed scores of civilians in airstrikes but that at least two of these strikes constituted a war crime.³⁵⁹ NATO craft fired and then targeted the same spot again shortly after in an illegal maneuver called a “double-tap” designed to kill civilian first responders showcased in the widely publicized “Collateral Murder” video.³⁶⁰ This video published by Wikileaks, amongst other inconvenient information is likely a major contributing factor to its founder’s, Julian Assange (b. 1971), continued legally dubious detention that

³⁵⁵ Christopher M. Davidson, “Why Was Muammar Qadhafi Really Removed?” *Middle East Policy* Vol. 24, no. 4 (2017), 100.

³⁵⁶ Maximilian Forte, *Slouching Toward Sirte: NATO’s War on Libya and Africa* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2012), 108.

³⁵⁷ Davidson, “Why Was Muammar Qadhafi Really Removed?” 105.

³⁵⁸ Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte*, 242.

³⁵⁹ Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte*, 100.

³⁶⁰ The double-tap maneuver was first made infamous by the neoconservatives during the war in Iraq. “Wikileaks: Collateral Murder (Iraq 2007),” *Wikileaks*, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfvFpT-iypw>.

some, including the United Nations, consider torture itself.³⁶¹

The Obama-era foreign policy, which hardly differed from the previous administration, represented the systematic product of the neoconservative shift away from the political realism of the Kissinger-era (that still racked up its own body count across the globe). Nonetheless, the rightward shift did not start with Obama. The Clinton administration used their own spin on liberal internationalism to justify military operations such as the spread of democratic values, economic liberalization, and humanitarian concern.³⁶² This so-called liberal internationalism served as the blueprint for the Obama administration and their NATO allies for the justification of the regime-change operation in Libya and the immediate expansion of The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) into the Central African Republic, Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, announced just days after Gaddafi's death.³⁶³ The expose on Clinton and her inner circle's emails exposed the fact this was part of a neoliberal scheme from the beginning. By Saturday, February 26, 2011, just over ten days after the first stirrings began on February 15, 2011, William J. Burns (b. 1956) emailed Sullivan, Alice Wells (b. 1963), and a redacted email address about a meeting he had with French diplomat Jean-David Levitte (b. 1946).³⁶⁴ The email emphasized the need for the United States to play a role in "supporting pol [political] and econ [economic] change in the

³⁶¹ "Julian Assange subjected to psychological torture, UN expert says," BBC, May 31, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-48473898>.

³⁶² Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans*, 215.

³⁶³ AFRICOM is an organized United States military command that oversees American military operations throughout the continent of Africa (except Egypt which falls under the U.S. Central Command). AFRICOM was established by the Bush administration in 2007 and its stated purpose is to enhance security cooperation with African allies and partners. Forte, *Slouching Towards Sirte*, 139.

³⁶⁴ Burns is the current CIA director as of 2022. William Burns, email message to Jacob Sullivan, February 26, 2011, https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton_Email_December_Release/C05791905.pdf.

region” and that the United States and the European Union “should coordinate ambitious approach to Maghreb, Egypt and perhaps others on *liberalized trade*.”³⁶⁵

Rumsfeld and other neoconservatives advocated for increased military and political intervention in the Middle East long before it became a centerpiece of American policymaking. As mentioned, the consequences of the destabilization of Libya only brought more violence to the region, including Libya, which is still teetering on the edge of crisis as of 2022.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, the deception of the NATO allies at the United Nations included: an explicit promise the purpose of the operation was not to institute a regime change; used Qatari influence and propaganda machines to manipulate the African Union and The League of Arab Nations; violated the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 which greenlit Operation Unified Protector and denied “a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory” further alienating China and Russia.³⁶⁷ As permanent members of the UNSC, either Russia or China could have vetoed the resolution, however, both countries abstained or voted in favor because they believed the NATO allies.³⁶⁸ China began to condemn the operation shortly after it began and long before Gaddafi was removed.³⁶⁹ Russia, which previously signaled some willingness to work within the confines of international law and

³⁶⁵ William Burns, email message to Jacob Sullivan, emphasis added.

³⁶⁶ Hamza Mekouar, “Libya Capital rocked by battle as rival PM vies for power,” *Digital Journal*, May 17, 2022, <https://www.digitaljournal.com/world/libya-capital-rocked-by-battle-as-rival-pm-vies-for-power/article>.

³⁶⁷ United Nations Security Council, United Nations Security Resolution 1973 (March 17, 2011), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>.

³⁶⁸ Łukasz, Jureńczyk, “Position of the People’s Republic of China Towards the Crisis in Libya in 2011,” *Historia i Polityka* Vol. 28, no. 35 (2019): 52, <https://doi.org/10.12775/HiP.2019.014/>.

³⁶⁹ Jureńczyk. “Position of the People’s Republic of China Towards the Crisis in Libya in 2011.”

assisted the United States in the aftermath of 9/11, only became more hostile on the world stage since 2011.

Scholars Geir Ulfstein (n.d.) and Hege Fosund (n.d.) claim, at the very least, that the NATO operation in Libya severely damaged the credibility of NATO in future crises.³⁷⁰ The continued violence in the region and the damaged credibility of the United States and NATO before the world stage are just some of the continuing consequences of the neoconservative foreign policy shift orchestrated by Rumsfeld and his allies over decades of bellicose fearmongering and myth-building. The only winners in the world they orchestrated are weapons contractors. In fact, as defense company Palantir Technologies predicts, the Russian-Ukrainian War will boost profit margins for defense companies, Jim Taiclet (the CEO of Lockheed Martin) was praised in interviews on *Face the Nation* on May 8, 2022, for the weapons Lockheed Martin produces.³⁷¹

Defiant to the End

When Rumsfeld was not promoting his memoir or being asked for his “expert” opinion on current United States foreign policy, Rumsfeld was occasionally asked to defend his decisions in the W. Bush administration. In one particularly confrontational interview with *Al-Jazeera* in 2011, he revealed his staunch opposition to taking any sort of accountability for the disastrous outcomes of the wars in the Middle East and North Africa. First and foremost, he

³⁷⁰ Geir Ulfstein and Hege Fosund, “The Legality of the NATO bombing in Libya,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* Vol. 62, no. 1 (2013): 159-171, https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/stable/43302692?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_content.

³⁷¹ “Transcript: Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet on ‘Face the Nation,’” CBS News, May 8, 2022, https://news.yahoo.com/transcript-lockheed-martin-ceo-jim-153712487.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall. For more information, see: Chavi Mehta, “Palantir Q2 revenue forecast below estimates; expects Ukraine war to boost growth,” NASDAQ, May 9, 2022, <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/palantir-q2-revenue-forecast-below-estimates-expects-ukraine-war-to-boost-growth>.

justified the war in Iraq because, in his view, it removed the “brutal regime” of Saddam Hussein which ultimately made the world a “better place.”³⁷² When pressed by the reporter about how the war and its aftermath improved the lives of Iraqis, Rumsfeld could only resort to the knee-jerk response that Saddam was responsible for more deaths than the United States was, as if this was to bring any sort of solace to the many thousands of families who lost loved ones at the hands of the United States-led war against their country. Incredibly, Rumsfeld even cited Saddam’s use of chemical weapons in the years before the United States invasion to bolster his point of Saddam’s ruthlessness and brutality.³⁷³ Of course, Rumsfeld played an integral role in establishing United States relations with Iraq when Saddam used these weapons against not only Iranians but also Iraqis. The reporter, privy to this knowledge, challenged Rumsfeld on this point. Rumsfeld simultaneously denied his involvement, as well as the United States’ involvement, in the facilitation of Iraq’s chemical weapons, yet he also claimed he was without knowledge and not in a position to deny or validate the claim.³⁷⁴ Thus, Rumsfeld gave an inherently contradictory and unbelievable response, given his intimate involvement in relations with Iraq during this time. Finally, when asked by the *Al-Jazeera* reporter if he would “apologize to Iraqis” for his role in their devastation, Rumsfeld became visibly agitated and responded with “of course not” and said it was “the right decision” to invade claiming that the “people of Iraq today are vastly better off.”³⁷⁵ It is in this interview that one can see the essence of American exceptionalism, embodied by Rumsfeld, who remained steadfast and defiant in the face of criticism and accountability for his own, as well as his government’s, calamitous actions around the world.

³⁷² “Donald Rumsfeld talks to Al Jazeera,” *Al Jazeera English*, October 5, 2011, 5:25 to 6:26,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xosu94rPSmw>.

³⁷³ “Donald Rumsfeld talks to Al Jazeera,” 7:00 to 7:15 and 8:50 to 9:05.

³⁷⁴ “Donald Rumsfeld talks to Al Jazeera,” 9:05 to 11:00.

³⁷⁵ “Donald Rumsfeld talks to Al Jazeera,” 15:41 to 16:00.

In a final reflection on his life, Donald Rumsfeld proved to be a significant and influential figure in American politics, economics, and foreign policy over several decades. His rapid ascent into the echelons of power during the Nixon and Ford years served as an expression of the rise of neoconservatism—a political ideology that Rumsfeld would become intimately tethered to throughout his political life. Simultaneously, Rumsfeld’s frequent shuffling between roles in both the private and public sector in the decades after similarly served as an expression of the rise of neoliberal capitalism, the ideology pioneered by Milton Friedman who mentored Rumsfeld since his earliest days in politics. Then, in his final act in government as the W. Bush administration’s Secretary of Defense, he used his position to empower both neoconservative foreign policy and neoliberal capitalist profiteering in the spectacularly disastrous conflicts in the War on Terror. Rumsfeld was not unique in his promotion of destructive wars and unfettered capital, nor was his manipulation of the media to sell the aggressive foreign policy. Yet, his life traces a definitive history of the United States’ reliance on neoconservative foreign policy and neoliberal capitalist profiteering as a means to maintain its global dominance, to the extreme detriment of all those who are caught in the crosshairs or continue to be born in the dust of depleted uranium (*Figure 2*).³⁷⁶ Meanwhile, known war criminal Donald Rumsfeld lived out the remainder of his days in peace, able to falsely claim to his dying breath that all of these episodes of military adventurism were purely motivated by innocent desires to promote democracy and freedom around the world. And so, he was simply allowed to live out the rest of his life in dignity and with distinction regardless of the absolute terror his decisions wrought.

³⁷⁶ Herold, “‘Unworthy’ Afghan Bodies,” 306-307.



Figure 2. Newborn with anencephaly, one of the leading birth defects that rapidly increased following the United States' use of depleted uranium in Iraq.³⁷⁷ Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.³⁷⁸

“Donald Rumsfeld, killer of 400,000 people [some estimate it to be 600,000 in Iraq alone by 2006, and 1,033,000 by 2007], dies peacefully.”

- Spencer Ackerman, Daily Beast.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Herold, “‘Unworthy’ Afghan Bodies,” 306-307.

³⁷⁸ CostaPPPR, “Anencefalia,” 1986, Wikimedia Commons, public domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anencefalia.jpg>.

³⁷⁹ Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has reported on American foreign policy and national security stories for various media outlets throughout his career. Spencer Ackerman, “Donald Rumsfeld, Killer of 400,000 People, Dies Peacefully,” *The Daily Beast*, June 30, 2021, <https://news.yahoo.com/donald-rumsfeld-killer-400-000-224008965.html>; Benjamin, “The staggering death toll in Iraq.”

*“We died for oil, we died for borders
Killed for democracy, still believed every platform
Can you handle the death
Accept what we create together?
I still know every politician is a fucking monster...
History said we died for freedom
But today no justice was served...
Two world wars later
Countless military interventions
We erect monuments to history
And give apologies to the dead
All that was fought for the living is quickly forgotten
We don't remember the dates
We don't remember the reasons
We have no idea what's going on
Building the histories of western corporations.”*

- *Against Me! “Y'all Don't Wanna Step to Dis.”*³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ *Against Me!*, “Ya’ll Don’t Wanna Step to Dis,” track 3 on *Crime. Plan-It-X* Records, 2001, CD.

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Devin Gillen is currently at California State University, San Bernardino scheduled to graduate with his bachelor of arts in history Fall 2022. He is returning to CSUSB to work on a master's degree in history and ultimately hopes to teach at the university level and publish future works. Devin is interested in history, philosophy, political science, and art history. He is also interested in pursuing artistic endeavors, from multi-media work, painting, screen printing, and playing multiple instruments, which he hopes to make a career of in tandem with academic work. Prior to working as an author and editor on *History in the Making*, Devin planned to compile and print a zine of independent art and essays on global politics and history to be handed out at local concerts to educate the “underground.”



Author Bio

Levi Gonzalez is a researcher, investigator, and critical analyst of various topics related to politics and history, some of which include: United States foreign policy, criminal justice, mass media, and public policy. Levi earned a bachelor of arts degree in political science in 2018 and a master's degree in public policy in 2020, both from the University of California, Riverside. His most recent research analyzed the effects of automated surveillance technology employed by police departments on systemically marginalized communities. Levi's research investigates how these surveillance tools reinforce poverty, inequality, mass imprisonment, and the prison-industrial complex. In addition to writing, Levi is an avid reader (with a current focus on 'deep politics' and 'deep political events'), frequent hiker, and devoted fan of the National Basketball Association (NBA) as well as the Los Angeles Dodgers. Levi has lived the entirety of his life in the Inland Empire region and currently resides in Rancho Cucamonga.



Reviews

2022

Book Review: Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy

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Reviews

Book Review: *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*

By Jose Castro

Historian George Sanchez' recent 2021 publication, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, examines the Boyle Heights neighborhood and offers insight into how this small enclave became a place of revolutionary inspiration.¹ The author provides a comprehensive study that explores how minorities have survived oppression and inequality over the decades. Sanchez analyzes the coexistence of people in this multiethnic neighborhood throughout its history, and the influence of those involved in revolutionary and social movements throughout Southern California. Published by the University of California Press, *Boyle Heights* offers an addition to the scholarly literature analyzing California's history.

Sanchez is one of the most prolific historians in Los Angeles. He is currently a professor at the University of Southern California (USC) and has published numerous journals and articles addressing the complexities of the Mexican community. His current work adds to the historiography of California by providing a point of view that represents the diversity in which the city of Los Angeles was founded in 1781. Other historians have tackled

¹ George Sanchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021).

the history of this area of Los Angeles as well. In 1983, Richard Romo published *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio*. In his book, Romo discussed the establishment of Los Angeles by a group of people from different ethnicities, including Spaniards, Mestizos, Mulatos, and Indians from Mexico.² Although Romo focuses on East Los Angeles, it should be highlighted that both neighborhoods are located adjacent to each other in what was the Belvedere region at the south end of Boyle Heights.

Located on the east side of the Los Angeles River, Boyle Heights was founded by William H. Workman (1839–1918) in 1876. To introduce the reader, Sanchez establishes the Tongva-Gabrielino Indian village of Yang-ga as living alongside the river in order to describe the geographical settlement that would become Boyle Heights. According to Sanchez, “the division between the west and the east sides of the river was substantial and reflected ‘markers of race-ethnicity, class, status and prospect.’”³ In the first two chapters of *Boyle Heights*, Sanchez details the origins of this neighborhood. He uses these chapters to discuss the transition from the old ranch system to the birth of a metropolis. The Irish immigrant, Andrew A. Boyle (1818–1971), was a successful merchant who had a vision to grow grapes and commercially produce wine. Although there was a shortage of water, he managed to maintain a vineyard due to a ditch that carried water from the nearby Los Angeles River. His partner was his son-in-law, William Workman, who became a prominent politician and businessman and served as Los Angeles’ mayor from 1886 to 1888. Before being designated Boyle Heights, the area was a ranch by the name of El Parédon Blanco, meaning “the white bluff.” Workman renamed the area Boyle Heights when his father-in-law, Andrew Boyle (d. 1871), passed away in 1871.⁴

² Richard Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

³ Sanchez, 19.

⁴ Sanchez, 23.



Figure 1. Map of the Workman Orchard Tract Los Angeles City, California, surveyed by J. A. Bernal in September 1888. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.⁵

By the 1880s, the expansion of the nation’s railroad system to the west brought immigrants from Midwest and Southern states. The old ranch owners of Southern California decided to divide their property to sell to the Anglo-American settlers. Boyle Heights was planned to be “a suburb of ‘refined whiteness’ for the Anglo-American settlers from the East.”⁶ Sanchez denotes that what was intended to be a community only for White settlers from the East and Midwest sections of the United States became a community of immigrants. He writes, “William H. Workman initially attempted

⁵ J. A. Bernal, “Map of the Workman Orchard Tract Los Angeles City, Cal.; surveyed in Sept. 1888 / by J. A. Bernal, 1888-09,” Collection: Maps, Huntington Library, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://calisphere.org/item/a22e022741dbc4385f2a0f5bb76008f3/>.

⁶ Sanchez, 29.

to build homes for the growing elite of the town.”⁷ Anglo-American newcomers eventually settled on the West side of the metropolis, and Boyle Heights would establish itself as a neighborhood with a much more racially diverse population.⁸ Boyle Heights became a multiethnic community starting with Russian and Italian immigrants, as well as Japanese and Jewish refugees. Sanchez writes,

This is how a neighborhood that was neglected by city leaders and intentionally marginalized became a multicultural ecosystem of coexistence and collaboration. For residents of the neighborhood, Boyle Heights became a microcosm of America.⁹

It began to lay the foundations of a racially diverse community.

From chapters three through five, Sanchez discusses how different political ideologies that were repressed in other countries came to establish themselves in this neighborhood. From Russian Jews and Molokans, who fled from tsarist persecution in Moscow, to the anarchists who took refuge from Mexico, the author explains the social and cultural encounters of these immigrant communities, and how they lived apart from members of the Anglo-Saxon community who resided on the west side of the city of Los Angeles. According to Sanchez, Boyle Heights became an urban apartheid. He notes, “Migrants to Boyle Heights would share radical traditions from their various homelands, even while the rise of nationalist sentiments and segregated enclaves in the period led them to strengthen their own ethnic sense of self.”¹⁰ He suggests that immigrants “found in Boyle Heights a complex world of conflict, coalition, coalescence, comfort, and contestation shaped by racial and class segregation from the rest of Los Angeles.”¹¹

⁷ Sanchez, 30.

⁸ Sanchez, 38.

⁹ Sanchez, 65.

¹⁰ Sanchez 66.

¹¹ Sanchez 65.

Noteworthy in chapters four and five are the revelations of the dark history of Los Angeles. It is within these chapters that the author decides to include two shameful episodes in the history of the United States. The first episode occurred with the massive deportation of Mexicans in the 1930s. The second circumstance involved the Japanese concentration camps during World War II (1939–1945). Sanchez relates the testimony of Mexican-Americans who the United States repatriated to a country they did not know. The statement of one girl, Emilia Castaneda (n.d.), provides insight into the suffering of children and their families. Emilia spent ten years of her childhood and adolescence living in towns, villages and small cities of Durango, Mexico. According to Sanchez, “Emilia returned in 1944 during World War II to Boyle Heights, where she had to relearn English and restart as a young adult.”¹² Sanchez also includes narratives of incarcerated Japanese-American families during the war. All of these accounts are from residents of Boyle Heights. These residents were victims of a racial rhetoric that preceded the twentieth-century and marked the systemic racism which developed in society.¹³

At present, the majority of residents in Boyle Heights are Mexican and Latino with over 87,000 people living in 6.52 square miles inside the city of Los Angeles.¹⁴ However, over the decades the demographics of this community have changed. In chapter six, Sanchez discusses the exodus of Jewish immigrants out of Boyle Heights, many who had arrived in the early 1900s. Jewish immigrants moved to the San Fernando Valley primarily because their economic situation improved.¹⁵ During World War II, the Jewish migration to the San Fernando Valley began to produce a change in the demographics of Boyle Heights for both the Jewish and Mexican communities. Sanchez concludes, “The Jewish

¹² Sanchez, 95.

¹³ Sanchez, 124.

¹⁴ “Boyle Heights,” *Los Angeles Times*, accessed May 2, 2022. <https://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/boyle-heights/index.html>.

¹⁵ Sanchez, 136.

community of Los Angeles as a whole was converted by this demographic shift, clearly becoming white in the racial hierarchy of the region, both geographically and politically.”¹⁶ Boyle Heights became a predominantly Mexican community with a Jewish minority that accepted social multiculturalism in a neighborhood tied to the left-wing working class.

In chapters eight and nine, Sanchez discusses the political and social struggle of minorities in this neighborhood. He delves into the Civil Rights Era (1954–1968) and discusses the efforts of minorities to achieve equality. The author begins by recounting the case of Edward R. Roybal (1916–2005), who was the first Mexican-American to serve on the Los Angeles City Council in the twentieth-century. Sanchez highlights Roybal’s social and political activities and places him at the center of social activism.



*Figure 2. Edward Ross Roybal, (1916–2005) portrait, 1950. Courtesy of the Roybal (Edward R.) Papers UCLA, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.*¹⁷

¹⁶ Sanchez, 156.

¹⁷ “Edward Ross Roybal, Portrait, 1950,” Roybal, (Edward R.) Papers, UCLA, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb4s2009f1/>.

According to Sanchez, “The legacy of Edward Roybal’s time in the Los Angeles City Council is a blueprint for building a multiracial political coalition anchored by principled political practice.”¹⁸ The constant struggle of minorities from the streets of Boyle Heights included both African-Americans and Mexican-Americans, who together sought social justice. Social organizations emerged that were influenced by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Sanchez notes, “Roybal’s constituency was diverse ethnically and economically. It included Mexican-American veterans and Mexican-American labor leaders, who also enlisted leftist organizers dedicated to interracial cooperation, African American, and Jewish Angelinos.”¹⁹

A determining factor in Roybal’s political campaign was the Catholic Labor Institute and the support of Monsignor Thomas O’Dwyer (1896–1966), Reverend of St. Mary’s Church. Sanchez neglected to mention this prominent priest who spoke out in favor of better housing, health care and labor rights. Reverend O’Dwyer noted,

It is our duty to sponsor and support, in every way possible, legislation that will secure for the workman his fundamental right to a living wage, adequate protection against industrial hazards, and an income that will provide properly for old age.²⁰

O’Dwyer endorsed Roybal and mobilized Mexican voters from Boyle Heights to support Roybal’s political campaign.²¹

¹⁸ Sanchez, 183.

¹⁹ Sanchez, 184.

²⁰ Mike Nelson, “Msgr. O’Dwyer: Nationally-known advocate for economic justice,” *Angelus News*, August 7, 2014, <https://angelusnews.com/local/california/msgr-odwyer-nationally-known-advocate-for-economic-justice/>.

²¹ Kenneth Burt, “Catholic Labor Institute in Los Angeles,” July 12, 2010, <http://kennethburt.com/blog/?p=729>.

Sanchez summarizes what has come to define Boyle Heights in chapters nine and ten. The neighborhood of Boyle Heights became the image of the constant struggle for social justice. One important point that emerges is the story of Father Gregory Boyle (b. 1954) and the Homeboy Industries. Father Boyle, a Jesuit priest, observed the violence committed by the gangs in Boyle Heights. He began a mission to facilitate the rehabilitation of those gang members. According to Sanchez, Boyle learned that the gang problem was rooted in poverty and a lack of opportunities for the youth. Sanchez writes, “Homeboy Industries would grow into being one of the leading and best-known gang intervention programs in the world.”²² Father Boyle’s work for the community was important at the end of the twentieth-century. However, one hundred years before Father Boyle, a woman from the Boyle Family would carry out similar social work. The only difference between the two is that Mary Julia Workman (Boyle) (1871–1963) performed her social work as a lay Catholic. Very similar to the Homeboy Industries, the Brownson Settlement House was established by Workman to provide education, employment, and public health to mostly Mexican immigrant families between 1901 and 1920. It is noteworthy that Sanchez ignores the social work done by this Boyle Heights native who lived her entire life for social justice and civic activism in the city of Los Angeles.²³

The essence of Boyle Heights remains in the hands of the young people, of which the majority are Mexican and Latino, who are educated in community colleges and universities, and who return to their place of origin providing a multicultural sense of what Boyle Heights has always been. Sanchez concludes, “The multiracial history of Boyle Heights must continue to play a role in the development of the neighborhood, connecting those who currently live east of the river with the offspring of former

²² Sanchez, 236.

²³ Jose Castro, “Mary Julia Workman: Catholic Progressivism 1900-1920,” MA. Thesis in History, (California State University, San Bernardino, 2022), 71.

residents who left long ago.”²⁴ Sanchez’ examination of Boyle Heights offers readers insight into a neighborhood that is the epitome of a nation which boasts of diversity. Boyle Heights is a neighborhood that is identified with a racial minority and has been an example of how immigrants have managed to overcome the ravages caused by social injustice and a lack of civil rights. Sanchez presents Boyle Heights as a small neighborhood where people of different minority groups have managed to live together and overcome their barriers, all while defending their rights. It is in this neighborhood where they seek to address their own problems such as crime, oppression, and poverty. For example, the 1968 student walkouts were the result of a multiracial effort to bring equity in the school system in Los Angeles.²⁵ In 2020, the effects of gentrification caused an increase in rent and a continued social displacement in the neighborhood.²⁶ Sanchez explains that at the beginning of the twenty-first-century there has been a constant fight for fair, decent, and safe housing.

In his work, Sanchez depicts the birth of this community and the neighborhood’s demographic evolution during the twentieth-century. He ends by highlighting current problems such as gentrification and housing deficiencies. The takeaway from the book is an understanding of the social circumstances of Boyle Heights, which consists of mostly immigrants and Mexican descendants. and their plight for social justice and recognition. Strong cultural and social ties unite the community. Sanchez praises the neighbors who have “demonstrated resilience against gentrification,” noting, “the key will be whether Boyle Heights remains a place that low-income Latinos, particularly recent

²⁴ Sanchez, 263.

²⁵ Sanchez, 112.

²⁶ Gentrification is a general term for the arrival of wealthier people in an existing urban district, a related increase in rents and property values, and changes in the district’s character and culture. Benjamin Grant, “Flag Wars”, POV, June 17, 2013, <http://archive.pov.org/flagwars/what-is-gentrification/>.

immigrants of all legal statuses, can find a shelter and establish their families.”²⁷



Figure 3. Plea for more police protection, 1986. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection.²⁸

Boyle Heights is a small neighborhood in Los Angeles, but it represents the multiculturalism of a nation. A great source for students and researchers alike, Sanchez’ work reflects upon the inequality and segregation that its people suffered and demonstrates its importance in the history of California and the United States. The book offers deep insight into the history of Boyle Heights, creating additional layers to the narrative that is the history of California. Unlike the Romo’s *East Los Angeles*, Sanchez presents a story that stresses the social and economic problems of a multicultural society. Whereas Romo related the history of Mexicans and their legacy in the city of Los Angeles, Sanchez identifies the diversity and resilience of the neighborhood.

²⁷ Sanchez, 262.

²⁸ “Plea for more police protection, 1986,” Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, accessed, May 18, 2022, <https://calisphere.org/item/f24109f0ef6457836c657f36480e8c1c/>.

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Jose was born and raised in Mexico City. He obtained his first bachelor of arts in communication studies in Mexico in 2006, and a second bachelor of arts in history at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 2018. He entered the inaugural class of the master of arts in history program at California State University, San Bernardino in 2020 where he found a wonderful cohort and a professional faculty. He will pursue a doctoral degree in history in the future. Jose is currently a docent at the Workman-Homestead Museum in the City of Industry. He is working on research about Mary Julia Workman, Catholic Progressivism, and Liberal Theology. He is interested in the history of California, history of Mexico, religious studies, and the history of Christianity in North America.



2022

Book Review: Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic

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Book Review: *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*

By Brittany Mondragon

In 1441, Portuguese raiders attacked the native Idzagen community located on the Rio de Oro in Senegambia, Africa. The raiders captured an unnamed woman during the invasion by luring her onto the ship after kidnapping her children. This unknown woman marks the first human enslaved from Sub-Saharan Africa by European captors who eventually sold her to European traders as a commodity.¹ In a way, she is emblematic of the estimated 4 million women forced aboard slave ships and shipped mostly to the Americas from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, and whose lives were forever changed.

Already a reputable historian for her renowned 2004 book, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, Jennifer Morgan has further contributed and strengthened the discourse on slavery in the early Atlantic with her most recent 2021 publication, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*. Placing women at the center of the conversation, Morgan innovatively paves the way for original and critical groundwork by examining the creation of Western notions of race and capitalistic value. Morgan conveys several new interpositions on a subject that has attracted extensive historical interest, but unlike most works of the early Atlantic, she places African women and their role in developing modern Western capitalism at the forefront of the discussion.

¹ Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 141.

Reckoning with Slavery unveils gaps in the extant scholarly research on the history of slavery and its simultaneous emergence with capitalism by combining economic demographics of the slave trade with the social ideology behind enslavement. Morgan demonstrates that Western ideas of race and value were intricately linked to racial hereditary slavery and capitalism by stripping the enslaved from their families and affectionate ties by portraying them as numerical commodities rather than human beings.² While enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants were denied kinship, however, capitalism simultaneously relied on women's reproduction capabilities and familiar kinship to enforce racial hereditary slavery. Morgan contends that historians often diverge onto one side of this methodological binary, looking either at the social context of slavery or the economic aspect, and her work distinctly intertwines the two avenues of scholarship.³ At the crux, Morgan's interdisciplinary and feminist methodology weaves together gender, race, and ideas of kinship with the rise of Western capitalism and human commoditization. Overall, she takes her readers through a series of questions including how enslaved women interpreted economic practices unfamiliar to them, what kinship came to mean in the early Atlantic between the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, and how the Black female body became a commercial instrument in the slave economy.

The past couple of decades have witnessed renewed attention to Eric Williams's book, *Capitalism and Slavery*, published in 1944 and Cedric Robinson's book, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, published in 1983. Drawing from Black Radical Tradition and Black Feminist theories, Morgan further adds to this critical conversation by examining the "alchemy of commerce, race, and slavery in

² Racial hereditary slavery refers to the Western colonial presumption that a child should follow the condition of slavery based on the mother's race and enslavement status not the father's race. Therefore, enslaved women's children inherited the status of slave once born and became part of the chattel slavery system.

³ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 12.

women's lives" through a Black Feminist lens.⁴ In the introduction, Morgan cites Robinson's argument that "capitalism and racism emerged, simultaneously, from European feudal order" which she builds on by investigating the categories of race, labor, and social hierarchy.⁵ Morgan supports the notion that slavery was not a consequence of the emergence of capitalism, but rather racial slavery was central to the development of capitalistic economies, which relied on free forced-labor centering on women's reproduction.⁶ Nevertheless, she challenges Robinson's implicit centering of Black masculinity by examining women's roles in resistance and rebellion. Morgan contends that just because there are few documents recounting women in resistance, that does not mean they failed to contribute to revolts or smaller acts of rebellion. Instead, their erasure may provide more insight into the anxieties and societal norms of Western colonies than the women themselves.

She also complicates historical debates on whether racism or slavery developed first and challenges the "savage to slave to black" narrative by showing how the commodification of African women, capitalism, and the Western concept of kinship rose simultaneously.⁷ While Morgan focuses solely on enslaved women, the text itself is broad in scope. The beginning discusses the demographics of the Atlantic slave trade, which at times can read quiet densely. Examining the over 36,000 slave ship logs found on the most comprehensive transatlantic slave trade database (Slave Voyages), Morgan found that a mere 3,426 logs recorded sex ratios between 1514 to 1866. Even more surprising is the dramatic increase in sex ratio recordings after 1700. Only 366 voyage logs recorded the ratio between men and women between 1514 and 1700, however, after 1700, a total of 3,060 were recorded. Morgan suggests this indicates White colonists' shifting perceptions of enslaved women as producers to *reproducers*. She

⁴ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 20.

⁵ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 16.

⁶ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 16.

⁷ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 108.

proposes this is because of the newfound importance on women's reproductive properties and the development of hereditary racialized slavery, which coincided with the rise of early modern capitalism. According to Morgan, "enslaved women provided crucial labor in American colonies but were also key in the emergent rationale for hereditary racial slavery, a rationale attached to the idea of kinless populations."⁸ Throughout her work, she discusses the commodification process of human beings and how modern Western capitalism came into being in part due to the development of hereditary racialized slavery, which rested on enslaved women's ability to reproduce more slaves.

While historians have studied political thought over citizenship and population during the eighteenth century, Morgan contends that few have considered political theory and its correlation to citizenship in relation to the slave trade and capitalism.⁹ One area requiring expansion though is the discussion on Europe's transition into a capitalistic society and the political climates of the eighteenth century. Morgan could have used the opportunity to provide more context about economic practices happening in Europe at the time and the shift from the Medieval feudal system to a capitalistic system to further show the changing political, social, and economic climate in Western society.

More importantly though, she examines how African women understood slavery in Africa and how their concept of slavery shifted as they came to understand what their bodies came to mean and what they were worth in captivity in the New World.¹⁰ Africa possessed its own slave trade system for centuries, but European's misunderstanding of African practices meant they often viewed African ruler's gifting of people (enslaved from conquest) as a form of diplomacy or tribute as a justification for creating a free forced-labor system based on enslaved African men, women, and their descendants.¹¹ Thus, African women's

⁸ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 37.

⁹ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 93.

¹⁰ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 165.

¹¹ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 69.

understanding of slavery changed as they crossed the Atlantic and were forced into hard manual labor on plantations. In particular, chapter four is full of horrific scenes discussing enslaved women's experiences on slave ships from childbirth, sexual violence, disease, and death and their eventual sale in slave markets, an aspect not discussed in detail in Morgan's previous work, *Laboring Women*. For those captured and sent aboard ships, men and women often rebelled against their enslavers or sometimes took their own life before reaching the shores. Morgan discusses various documents that briefly mention unnamed women starving themselves to death, jumping overboard to drown, or who died fighting sailors who tried to physically and sexually abuse them. Journal entries from ship physician Dr. Alexander Falconbridge (c. 1760–1792) recalls some enslaved women who hung themselves aboard the ship by using the loose ends of rope before reaching the shore.¹²

Dehumanizing African kinship and motherhood paired itself with European's exploitation of female reproduction. Morgan suggests that "enslaved African women's reproductive capacity meant that they embodied the contradictions at the heart of the development of Atlantic markets."¹³ Plantation owners and enslavers eagerly purchased enslaved females in the hopes of attaining any unborn children as a new source of free labor, yet they justified their enslavement and exploitation by stripping the title of "mother" from enslaved women. According to Morgan, "Motherhood had to be replaced by something more functional" as Black women were dehumanized and viewed as "breeders."¹⁴ Devaluing human bonds between Black families also simultaneously came to define the meaning of kinship, family, and citizenship in a Western context for White Europeans and colonists. Considering enslaved women as property and "breeders" excluded them from womanhood, and thus, from what Europeans

¹² Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 168.

¹³ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 204.

¹⁴ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 165.

considered to be part of the legitimate population.¹⁵ The last portion of the work takes a dramatic shift from demographics and enslaved women's experiences as commodities to their roles in resistance. In particular, she examines women's self-liberation efforts and their essential role as rebel activists in Maroon communities.¹⁶

Overall, Morgan compellingly shows how enslaved women's bodies were central to the development of the Atlantic slave trade as reproductive vessels and how ideas about kinship bound together to justify enslavement. But what makes her work stand out from the rest is Morgan's fueling question of how African women came to understand and navigate their commodification in the Atlantic World as well as how they came to comprehend an economic system unfamiliar to them. Enslaved women are often given a peripheral seat in the history of slavery by historians and scholars, commonly resigned to a passive existence to the larger narrative, but Morgan brings these women's experiences to the forefront as in her previous works. At times, the academic prose used is inaccessible for the average reader, especially when paired with the emphasis on quantitative data. Nevertheless, the book is brimming with new insights and questions that should alter any future historians' understanding of enslaved African women as individual intellectual agents rather than people who often take on a passive and peripheral role in the discourse of transatlantic history

¹⁵ Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 104.

¹⁶ Maroons were self-liberated enslaved Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, and their descendants who acquired their freedom by escaping chattel enslavement and who lived in remote tropical mountain communities throughout the Caribbean and the Americas.

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Author Bio

Brittany Mondragon graduated from California State University, San Bernardino in May 2022 with a master of arts degree in history. Backed with a master of science degree in geographic information systems from the University of Redlands, Brittany concentrates on issues revolving around environmental history, the history of science (specifically ethnobotany), colonialism, and trade. Her thesis explores the intersectionality of race, gender, and botany in the British colonial Atlantic during the eighteenth century by examining the appropriation and management of enslaved women, their uses of ethnobotanical medicines, and the power relations behind their depiction as witchcraft practitioners. She will start teaching at community colleges this year and possibly begin pursuing a doctoral degree in history. She currently works at Mt. San Jacinto Community College under the Professional Development department. Apart from scholarly pursuits, Brittany enjoys painting, hiking, gardening, playing board games, and learning the harp. She would like to thank Dr. Jeremy Murray and her editors for all of their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the editing process.



2022

Film Review: “Cats are Excellent Conductors of Electricity”: A Review of The Electrical Life of Louis Wain

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Film Review: “Cats are Excellent Conductors of Electricity”: A Review of *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*

By Brittany Mondragon

Reaching the pinnacle of artistic fame at the start of the twentieth century in Britain and America, British artist Louis William Wain’s (1860–1939) legacy has slipped and faded over the past hundred years. A name once recognized by most for his famous anthropomorphic and psychedelic cats, Wain is often credited with changing the Western perception of the feline from a malicious creature to a cuddly playful house cat. In the words of the famed writer H.G. Wells (1866–1946), “[Wain] invented a cat style, a cat society, a whole cat world. English cats that do not look like Louis Wain cats are ashamed of themselves.”¹

Medieval Europe’s association of the cat with witchcraft and the demonic lasted up until the late sixteenth century, and by the nineteenth century, cats were either used as rodent catchers or biological test subjects. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century (with the help of Wain’s artwork), however, that felines also became objects of admiration and pedigree status.² The shifting perceptions of cats over the past hundred years are seen in the number of cat-owning families today; there were approximately 95.6 million house cats in America in 2017 and 110.1 million house cats in Europe in 2020.³ Despite his cheerful

¹ H.G. Wells quoted from Sam Kalda, *Of Cats and Men: Profiles of History’s Great Cat-Loving Artists, Writers, Thinkers, and Statesmen* (New York: Ten Speed Press, 2017), 33.

² “Cast as Pets: Historical Literature,” *Library of Congress*, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://guides.loc.gov/cats-as-pets/introduction>.

³ “Number of cats in the United States from 2000 to 2017,” Statista, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/198102/cats-in-the-united-states-since-2000/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20national%20pet,owned%20at%20least>

and lighthearted cat illustrations and paintings, Wain's life is considered a tragic one. Rarely earning money for his work and struggling with mental illness, a look into the life of Louis Wain and his family reflects the social stigmas surrounding mental health and socioeconomics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A renewed interest in Wain's life and his artistic works is captured in the 2021 film, *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, directed by Will Sharpe. Starring Benedict Cumberbatch as Louis Wain, the historical film—in its muted palette scheme—follows the life story of the artist and the tragedies that befell him. Born in London on August 5, 1860, Wain was born to a wealthy aristocratic family and was the first-born and only male child of six children.⁴ Often truant from school, possibly due to being bullied for his eccentric demeanor and the scar from a cleft lip, Wain eventually became a student at the West London School of Art and later a teacher for a short time.⁵ Other than the aforementioned details, the film does not mention much of Wain's earlier life except that he was plagued with recurring nightmares (which he documents in a personal illustrated diary) and that he grew a mustache as an adult to hide his scarred lip.

Narrated by actress Olivia Colman, the audience learns that at the early age of twenty, Wain became the sole provider for his mother and five sisters after his father, William Matthew Wain (1825–1880), passed away in 1880 and the family experienced economic hardship. He soon became a freelance artist specializing

[one](https://www.statista.com/statistics/516041/cat-population-europe-europe/#:~:text=This%20statistic%20presents%20the%20estimated,approximately%20110.15%20million%20in%202020); “Number of pet cats in Europe from 2010 to 2020,” Statista, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/516041/cat-population-europe-europe/#:~:text=This%20statistic%20presents%20the%20estimated,approximately%20110.15%20million%20in%202020>.

⁴ His father was William Matthew Wain, (1825–1880) and his mother was Julie Felicite Boiteux (1833–1910). He had five sisters: Caroline E.M. (1862–1917), Josephine F.M. (1864–1939), Marie L. (1867–1913), Claire M. (1868–1945) and Felicie J. (1871–1940).

⁵ “Depicter of Cats,” *The West Australian*, July 7, 1939, p. 18, Trove, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/46405823>.

in drawing animals and country scenes as a news illustrator in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* and *The Illustrated London News*, a weekly magazine run by his friend Sir William James Ingram (1847–1924) in the 1880s. In 1883, Wain fell in love and married the Wain estate’s governess Emily Richardson (1850–1887), a gentry woman who was ten years older than Wain, despite his sisters’ disapproval.⁶ While contemporary films often romanticize love stories between two people from different socioeconomic classes, the stigma surrounding age differences continues to persist today, especially when the woman is older in a heterosexual relationship. Played by Claire Foy, Emily Richardson-Wain takes on a more youthful appearance and there is no mention of her age. For the unaware audience, she appears to be of equivalent age or slightly younger than Wain, which reinforces the continuous stigma regarding age differences. In real life (and as portrayed in the film), the scandalous marriage sent shockwaves throughout the London elite and the Wain family sank further down the social ladder. The marriage lasted a brief three years before another tragedy befell the newlyweds, and Wain’s wife was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. She died on January 2, 1887.

During those three years of marriage between 1883 and 1887, Wain and Emily rescued a black and white kitten which they named Peter. Peter became a beacon of hope for Wain and his primary companion for several years. “Peter the Cat” inspired the first of many famous sketches and paintings of cats created by Wain. In 1886, he began drawing anthropomorphized cats performing activities like playing golf or cards or sitting together for tea. His lighthearted works that buried his life-long pains became instantly popular and were featured in children’s books, newspapers, and journals. In the 1890 issue of *English Illustrated*

⁶ The term governess is obsolete today but was a title used up until the twentieth century. Governess referred to a woman, generally of the gentry or middle class, employed to teach children in a private and often wealthy household. Unlike a nanny who cared for children holistically, governesses focused on education and learning.

Reviews

Magazine, writer J.E. Paton's (n.d.) article "Cats and Kittens; or 'In Defense of the Cat'" featured some of Wain's illustrations. Believing that the public needed to "make a cat a real companion," the article included people's changing opinion of cats as rodent-eating alley pests, imploring "a cat who is properly treated, spoken to kindly, called by its own name, and has its senses cultivated by the appreciative owner, not only becomes in every whit as companionable as a dog, but in her turn bears progeny that are in advance of their parents."⁷ A journal titled *Louis Wain Annual* featured his works and ran from 1901 to 1915, a lengthy fourteen years.



Figure 1. *Carol Singing* (n.d.) by Louis Wain. This image is an example of one of Wain's possible earlier works done in the Victorian style. The black and white anthropomorphic cat featured on the right is likely a reference to Peter.

Courtesy of WikiArt.⁸

⁷ J.E. Paton, "Cats and Kittens; or, 'In Defense of the Cat,'" illustrations by Louis Wain, *English Illustrated Magazine 1889–1890*, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://archive.org/details/english-illustrated-mag-1889-1890/page/450/mode/2up?q=Wain>.

⁸ Louis William Wain, *Carol Singing*, watercolor, gouache, pen and pencil on paper, 15 x 22 inches, Wikiart, public domain,



Figure 2. *In the Vineyard* (n.d.) by Louis Wain. This image reflects one of Wain's more popular styles with anthropomorphic cartoon cats in vibrant colors. Courtesy of WikiArt.⁹

Wain's success as a cat-loving artist amounted to him becoming the president of the National Cat Club (founded in 1887) from 1898 to 1911 and a longtime member of the Society for the Protection of Cats.¹⁰ This marks a turning point in the film and the decline of Wain's mental state. While talking with Miss Judith Shenton (n.d.) at the National Cat Club pedigree competition, Wain describes his evolutionary theory of cats as "excellent conductors of electricity" with whiskers acting as antennas.¹¹ Wain claims that, in time, "they will turn blue, [and] eventually they will walk on their own hind legs and communicate to us in our own

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carol_Singing_by_Louis_William_Wain_watercolor.jpg.

⁹ Louis William Wain, *In the Vineyard*, Wikiart, public domain,

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/louis-wain/in-the-vineyard>.

¹⁰ The National Cat Club promoted the breeding of pedigree and pure-bred cats and also organized cat show competitions among the British elite. In July 1887, the first National Cat Club Show was held at the Crystal Palace in London. While Wain became president of the club from 1898 to 1911, the film portrays him as somewhat aloof to the pedigree competitions. "Depicter of Cats," *The West Australian*.

¹¹ *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, directed by Will Sharpe (Amazon Studios, 2021), 1:03:28 to 1:04:01.

language.”¹² The film, which began with a clearly focused camera, sees an increase in the frequencies of camera effects and optical illusions. As the film progresses, the increase in flashes, colorful floating orbs, fisheye-lens, and kaleidoscopic static parallels Wain’s mental wellbeing. Another important reference also takes place during the competition when Miss Shenton exclaims, “I’ve heard even gentry are keeping cats as pets now, and so handsome too.”¹³ The script writers’ (Simon Stephenson and Will Sharpe) inclusion of the sentence subtly acknowledges Britain’s and America’s shifting perception of the cat, as well as the socioeconomic status associated with being able to properly care for a pet.

Despite his fandom, Wain’s personal life continued in tragedy and his work became ever more fantastical. According to the narrator, “Wain wept without ceasing for several years, but at the same time, he was overtaken by an extraordinary discovery that the more intensely he suffered, the more beautiful his work became.”¹⁴ He never copyrighted any of his works and never received any monetary compensation for most of his art, often trading illustrations for meals or haircuts.¹⁵ His sister, Marie Wain (1867–1913), was admitted to a mental health institution and never left after struggling for years with diagnosed schizophrenia. The combination of Wain’s socially-unapproved marriage, the lack of business prowess, and his sister’s health condition diminished the

¹² *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, 1:03:28 to 1:04:01.

¹³ *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, 1:03:10 to 1:03:11.

¹⁴ *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, 1:15:15 to 1:15:26.

¹⁵ Lucy Davies, “The Innocence and Agony of Louis Wain: He was the most Sought-After Illustrator of the Late 19th Century, Famous for His Whimsical Cat Pictures, Yet Louis Wain Died in a Psychiatric Hospital Exchanging His Drawings for Biscuits. Now, Thanks to a Film Starring Benedict Cumberbatch, a New Exhibition and Collectors such as Nick Cave Reviving His Name, His Drawings are in Demand Once More,” *Telegraph Magazine* (December 2021): 11, 28,

<http://libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/innocence-agony-louiswain/docview/2608693529/se-2?accountid=10359>.

Wain family's social status and the remaining four women never married.



Figure 3. "Untitled" (n.d.) (left) by Louis Wain and *Psychedelic Cat* (n.d.) (right) by Louis Wain (1875). These images are examples of his more whimsical and fanciful versions of cats. Courtesy of WikiArt and Wikimedia.¹⁶

After the heartbreaking death of his cat, Peter, in 1989, Wain moved to New York a few years later in 1907 and reached similar fandom in America. Despite his success, however, Wain struggled with his ever-deteriorating mental health and increasing nightmares. In a few short years, he also witnessed the death of his mother, Julie Felicite Boiteux (1833–1910), and sister, Marie, as well as his friend and employer, Sir Ingram. Then, in 1914, he fell into a coma after attempting to get off a moving trolley. Inspired

¹⁶ Louis William Wain, "Untitled," public domain, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/louis-wain/untitled-5>; Louis William Wain *Psychedelic Cat*, 1875, public domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Psychedelic+Cat+wain&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>.

by a vision while in a coma, Wain awoke to design a line of futuristic cat toys (*Figure 4*) that became a desired whimsical commodity for children during World War I (1914–1918) since his artwork became less popular as his colorful, cheerful artwork did not match the public’s tone amidst the war.¹⁷ However, tragedy struck again after a German U-boat struck a cargo ship containing almost all of Wain’s toy merchandise in 1915. Shortly afterward, Wain’s oldest sister, Caroline Wain (1862–1917), died at home, and Wain’s declining mental health initiated violent outbursts that became too much for his remaining sisters to properly care for him.



Figure 4. A toy line collection called “Futurist Cats” designed by Louis Wain in 1914, inspired by a vision while in a coma. Courtesy of CoArt Magazine.¹⁸

In 1924, at the age of sixty-four, Wain was diagnosed with schizophrenia and admitted to the lowly pauper ward at Springfield Mental Hospital. There, he continued to paint with the provided supplies but his work took on even more psychedelic and kaleidoscopic effects. After a year of living at the institution in rags and unkempt hair, Dan Rider (n.d.), an inspector and old acquaintance of Wain’s, recognizes Wain. Rider immediately begins a campaign to relocate Wain with the help of Wain’s sisters. Supported by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937)

¹⁷ Davies, “The Innocence and Agony of Louis Wain,” 11, 28.

¹⁸ Louis William Wain, “The Futurist Cats,” 1914, CoArt Magazine, public domain, <https://coartmag.com/news/feature/futurist-cats-louis-wain/>.

and writer H.G. Wells, the Louis Wain Fund received enough money from public donations to relocate Wain to a better institution.¹⁹ One year later, Wain became a patient at the notable Bethlem Royal Hospital and later at the Napsbury Hospital in 1930, where they had access to outdoor gardens and could keep cats for company. In addition to transferring Wain to a more comfortable facility, Prime Minister MacDonald provided the Wain sisters a small Civil List pension in compensation for Wain's artwork to the public.²⁰



Figure 5. "Untitled" works (n.d.) by Louis Wain. These images are examples of Wain's later work of kaleidoscope cats. They were possibly created while he was institutionalized, but the lack of dates makes dating the pieces difficult. Courtesy of Wikimedia.²¹

¹⁹ Davies, "The Innocence and Agony of Louis Wain," 11, 28.

²⁰ "Artist in Focus II – Louis Wain," Bethlem Museum: Museum of the Mind, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://museumofthemind.org.uk/blog/artist-in-focus-ii-louis-wain>.

²¹ Louis William Wain, "Untitled," Wikimedia, public domain, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/75/Louis_Wain_-_Katzen3.jpg/800px-Louis_Wain_-_Katzen3.jpg?20100101204144.

Unfortunately, the film glosses over the horrific history of the rise of mental institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and America. According to Disability Studies historian Sarah Rose, the surge in building mental institutions with state and federal funding was a “consequence of the burgeoning eugenic movement” that began in the mid-nineteenth century.²² While the hospital is dingy and dark in the film, the overall scene of the room is a cleaner version of the crowded beds and unsanitary conditions in which most patients lived. In reality, physical and mental abuse existed rampantly in custodial facilities and the abysmal conditions patients lived in resulted in needlessly high death rates.²³ There is no mention or indication of the brutal treatments patients often endured in these institutions, such as electroshock therapy, insulin-induced coma, or restraints like straitjackets or being chained to beds for extended periods. When Rider asks a nurse about the patient’s turn-out rate in the film, the nurse replies simply, “we have had some successes. It depends on the patient’s willingness to cooperate.”²⁴ At one point, Rider looks over a man lying in bed who appears to be asleep or may have received the insulin-induced coma treatment, which gained traction in the 1930s, but the scene is open for the audience’s interpretation.²⁵ Later, Rider asks Wain about his experience at

²² Developed by Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911), eugenics became a popular field in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that examined how to arrange reproduction among humans to increase the occurrence of hereditary traits deemed desirable by society. Disturbingly based on racial biases and other biases that affected people of color, women, and those with disabilities, eugenics became increasingly discredited for being unscientific. Sarah F. Rose, *No Right to be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1840-1930s* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2017), 50.

²³ Rose, 83, 85.

²⁴ *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, 1:34:48 to 1:34:54.

²⁵ The insulin-induced coma treatment was developed by Dr. Manfred Saket (1900–1957) from the University of Neuropsychiatric Clinic in Vienna. After conducting experiments with animals in his kitchen for years, he was granted access to research further in 1933 at the university and began publishing in 1934. The treatment was believed to help with several mental conditions including schizophrenia. Kingsley Jones, “Insulin Coma Therapy in

Springfield, saying, “Do you like it here, Mr. Wain?,” to which Wain woefully responds, “There are no cats. I cannot see... outside.”²⁶ Then, the scene immediately switches to show groups of people rallying support for the Louis Wain Fund, and then to a neatly groomed Wain painting by a window at a new facility before deciding to take a walk outside on the grounds.

For several decades, scholars and scientists have pondered if Wain truly had schizophrenia or if it was another condition. The film reflects this by never mentioning or showing Wain being diagnosed with schizophrenia specifically. Instead, the film focuses on his declining mental state without attributing it to a specific disorder. Unlike his sister Maria, Wain never concretely demonstrated the symptoms associated with schizophrenia. In 2001, psychiatrist Michael Fitzgerald argued Wain most likely had Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) rather than schizophrenia. According to Fitzgerald:

He did not show deterioration in his skill as a painter and this remained with him towards the end of his life. There is absolutely no evidence that “his pictures show a visual representation of the progression of his schizophrenia.” He did go through a paranoid psychotic period just like Isaac Newton but the fundamental diagnosis was Asperger’s syndrome. In adult psychiatry Asperger’s syndrome is very commonly confused with schizophrenia.²⁷

Similarly, art curator, Patricia Addridge, claims that while Wain’s style did change drastically, like many famous artists, his skill at

Schizophrenia,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* Vol. 93, no. 3 (2000): 147–49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/014107680009300313>.

²⁶ *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, 1:36:18 to 1:36:28.

²⁷ Michael Fitzgerald, “Louis Wain and Asperger’s Syndrome,” *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* Vol. 19, no. 3 (2002): 101–10, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0790966700007217>.

the craft never diminished. If Wain did have schizophrenia, his quality of work would have decreased, but his later kaleidoscope cats continued to show artistic mastery in symmetry and approach.²⁸

However, there has also been a long-held association of cats with schizophrenia, and the correlation has been substantial enough to continue its research today. Bacteria from “cat-scratch fever” arguably plays a role in the development of schizophrenia.²⁹ However, with only one percent of the American and European population having schizophrenia (in correlation to the high number of cat-owners), the relationship between the neurological condition is more likely linked to the bacteria fleas and lice carry rather than cats themselves.³⁰ A research study from 2021 found that *Bartonella* bacteria can infect the blood of people diagnosed with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. In their test group, seventy percent of their patients’ blood contained *Bartonella* compared to only one percent of their control group undiagnosed with schizophrenia.³¹ According to the study from North Carolina State University:

²⁸ Fitzgerald, “Louis Wain and Asperger’s Syndrome,” 101–101.

²⁹ A Fasseeh, B Németh, A Molnár, F-U Fricke, M Horváth, K Kóczyán, Á Götze, Z Kaló, “A systematic review of the indirect costs of schizophrenia in Europe,” *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 28, Issue 6 (2018): 1043–1049, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cky231>; “Schizophrenia – Fact Sheet,” Treatment Advocacy Center, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/evidence-and-research/learn-more-about/25-schizophrenia-fact-sheet#:~:text=Schizophrenia%20is%20a%20chronic%20and%20severe%20neurological%20brain%20disorder%20estimated,untreated%20in%20any%20given%20year>.

³⁰ A Fasseeh, B Németh, A Molnár, F-U Fricke, M Horváth, K Kóczyán, Á Götze, Z Kaló, “A systematic review of the indirect costs of schizophrenia in Europe,” 1043-1049; “Schizophrenia – Fact Sheet”; “*Bartonella* Infection,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed May 10, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/bartonella/index.html>.

³¹ Tracy Peak, “Pilot Study Finds Evidence of *Bartonella* Infection in Schizophrenia Patients,” North Carolina State News Services, April 8, 2021,

There has been research suggesting that *cat ownership is associated with schizophrenia due to the zoonotic parasite Toxoplasma gondii, but to date there has been no conclusive evidence in support of a causative role for this parasite...Bartonella are bacteria historically associated with cat-scratch disease*, which until recently was thought to be solely a short-lived (or self-limiting) infection. Cats can become infected with Bartonella via exposure to fleas and potentially ticks, which are natural vectors of the bacteria. The cat is a host for at least three of the 40 known Bartonella species.³²

Nothing conclusive has yet to be determined and ascertaining what neurological condition Wain may have possessed is still unresolved.³³ Nevertheless, a conversation on mental health takes a prominent role in *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*.

Wain's legacy as an eccentric and talented artist is memorialized in his works and the new film. Wain's art has been featured in various galleries including the art gallery at the Bethlem Museum of the Mind. His story is also one of the hardships of life and a mirror of the deficits of society when it comes to providing mental health care and poverty relief, which is adequately portrayed in *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*. Cumberbatch skillfully portrays Wain as a struggling human being and talented artist, shifting between poignant scenes of utter desperation to inspiring clips of artistic devotion using Wain's

<https://cvm.ncsu.edu/pilot-study-finds-evidence-of-bartonella-infection-in-schizophrenia-patients/>.

³² Peak, "Pilot Study Finds Evidence of Bartonella Infection in Schizophrenia Patients," emphasis added.

³³ As of 2022, the CDC claims there is no evidence supporting that ticks carry Bartonella while fleas, lice, and sand flies are known carriers. "Bartonella Infection," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed May 10, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/bartonella/index.html>.

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two-handed painting technique. Thanks to Wain's unconventional way of seeing cats during a time when they were nothing more than pests in an alley, cats have found a way into our homes and our hearts.

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2022

Film Review: Passing

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Film Review: *Passing*

By Cecelia Smith

First published in 1929, Nella Larsen's (1891–1964) novella, *Passing* (1929), offers readers an uncomfortable perspective about the issue of Black identity in the United States. The concept of “passing” refers to the practice by those categorized as a member of one or more minority or oppressed racial groups who use their own racial ambiguity to gain access to the privileges afforded to the dominant group. In Larsen's complex novel, two Black women struggle with their identities as one uses her appearance to escape the disadvantages that Blacks faced in 1920s New York by deceptively “passing for White,” while the other lives comfortably as a Black woman, only occasionally using her light complexion to ease into White society.

Born in 1891 to a Danish seamstress and a Black West Indian cook, Larsen was of mixed-race heritage. Author George Hutchinson, as the most recent biography of the writer, relates a theory of her background offered by author Thadious M. Davis, who hypothesizes that her natural father, Peter Walker (b. 1867), decided to “pass” and thus became the “White” Peter Larsen. Nella's sister, Anna (n.d.), was light enough to pass as White, but Nella was not. Davis argues that the instability in her life—abandonment by her father, emotionally absent from her mother—led to Larsen's own ambivalence towards Black identity, her “confusion” about race, her competitiveness toward other women, and an inability to find her true place among other African Americans.¹ Regardless of that instability, Larsen eventually became recognized as a critically important novelist of the 1920s

¹ George Hutchinson, *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line*, (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 2009), Kindle edition, introduction; Thadious M. Davis, *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A Woman's Life Unveiled*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1994).

and 1930s during the Harlem Renaissance with a small collection of short stories, and her two best known long-form novellas, *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929).²

It is within the present-day animus toward race, racism, and racial equality that the film version of Larsen's novella comes to fruition. *Passing* (2021), directed by Rebecca Hall (b. 1982), joins the narrative and renews an old perspective of Black identity that remains a viable, though seldom discussed, controversy in today's climate of hostilities. Starring Tessa Thompson (b. 1983) as Irene Westover Redfield and Ruth Negga (b. 1982) as Clare Kendry Bellew, Hall's film brings to life the reunion of two former high school friends which reignites their common obsession with their own identities.³ Both African American, Irene and Clare are described as fairly light-complected women in Larsen's novella. Clare, however, lives her life passing as a blonde-haired White woman, married to a well-to-do White businessman, John, who is oblivious as to her true heritage. Irene is married to a Black doctor, Brian, and they, along with their two sons, live in the heart of Harlem, New York.

Hall's film is deliberately shot in a majestic black and white medium, a stylized use of cinematography which not only enhances the movie, but is a veiled strategy forcing audience members to remember that this is a film about race. While black and white films tend to provide a bit more intensity and starkness, this film is somehow softer around the edges, giving the experience an almost dream-like quality, nostalgic, fuzzy, and unclear, akin to movies of the era. In an interview with writer Chelsea Avestruz, Hall stated, "The irony of black-and-white films is they're gray, there's nothing black or white about it, ever."⁴ The

² Nella Larsen and Charles R. Larson, ed., *The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen: Passing, Quicksand, and The Stories*, Anchor Books: New York, 2001.

³ *Passing*, directed by Rebecca Hall (AUM Group, 2021), <https://www.netflix.com/search?q=passing>.

⁴ Chelsea Avestruz, "Why Netflix's *Passing* Is A Black & White Move," *ScreenRant*, November 12, 2021, <https://screenrant.com/passing-movie-black-white-cinematography-story-why/>.

grayscale color palette is apropos for the time frame, the 1920s, but in addition, the lack of color counters real life imagery, compelling the viewer to focus on the narrative and not the skin tones of the main female characters.

The decision to use black and white as a medium is impactful, but the choice of Negga and Thompson as leads is considered by some to be a controversial selection. Both actors are predominantly cast in other roles that depict women of color, and questions arise as to whether the audience can effectively suspend belief that these women could pass for White. In a review of the movie's initial trailer, author Nylah Burton addresses this specific issue. She observes that many people critiqued whether Negga and Thompson are successful in their portrayals. The debates are centered around whether these two women could actually be White-passing. She writes, "They pointed out the features of Negga and Thompson's flesh and bone—their skin, the shape of their noses, the curl of their baby hairs—to say it was impossible that these two women could have passed for white in the 1920s."⁵ For some viewers observing these women on screen, there is the drawback of critiquing the character based on complexion or facial features rather than the merits of their storytelling, thus falling into the trap of pigeonholing actors to a role by their race. However, the effectiveness of the medium helps to defuse the critiques and stereotypes used against African American actors, evidenced by the work of cinematographer Eduard Grau. His manipulation of shadow and light without overly relying on the characters' makeup, plus camera exposure, actor's outfits, and film locations facilitates Hall's directing, allowing for a focus on the narrative.⁶ In addition, both actresses maintain an acute awareness of the impact of race. In a *Vogue* interview in 2016, Negga explained that "she was aware of the myriad ways in which her identity and ethnicity might be read, territorialised and co-opted; while

⁵ Nylah Burton, "The *Passing* Trailer Highlights That Race Is A Delusion," Refinery, September 24, 2021, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2021/09/10686104/passing-trailer-reaction-ruth-negga-tessa-thompson-race>.

⁶ Avestruz, "Why Netflix's *Passing* Is A Black & White Movie."

Thompson stated that she was conscious of the ways in which identity is a creation.”⁷

Alongside the black and white imagery, and every bit an asset to director Hall’s work, is the musical score for the film. Gentle piano interludes slide in between activities on the screen, somehow transporting the characters along on their journey. The piano composition is from musician Devonté Hynes, a British singer and songwriter also known as Blood Orange.⁸ In an interview about the composition, Hynes spoke about his inspiration. Author Lydia Abraham writes,

He drew heavily from the music of Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou, an Ethiopian nun whose bluesy, jazz-inflected piano playing has earned her a cult following outside the Ethiopian Orthodox Church where she first found artistic inspiration.⁹

In the article, Hynes says his goal was “to create a subtle sonic experience that would accentuate the performances.”¹⁰ The music is fitting and non-intrusive. The musical notes tickle and glide over the senses, offering an easy, unconscious transition from one anxious scene to the next.

As the drama unfolds, Irene walks the streets in a White neighborhood, engages with the White cashier at a toy store, and hurriedly enters the back of a taxi with its White driver, when it seemed the heat and the atmosphere overtook her. In all of those encounters, no one considers her out of place. No one questions who she is; she is just another White woman going about her daily

⁷ Janine Bradbury, “‘Passing for White’: How a Taboo Film Genre is Being Revived to Expose Racial Privilege,” *The Guardian*, August 20, 2018. <https://screenrant.com/passing-movie-black-white-cinematography-story-why/>.

⁸ Lydia Abraham, “Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou and Devonté Hynes create the aural world of *Passing*,” *The Score*, December 2, 2021, <https://netflixqueue.com/passing-score-dev-hynes/en-gb>.

⁹ Abraham, “Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou and Devonté Hynes.”

¹⁰ Abraham, “Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou and Devonté Hynes.”

activities. Irene is, however, uncomfortable in her effort to temporarily pass for White while simultaneously recognizing the privileges that open up to her as she tries to blend in seamlessly within White society. Her awkwardness is noted in the manner in which she hides her eyes beneath the lacy brim of her hat, refuses to look passersby in the eye, and checks her face in the mirror, dabbing white pancake makeup to her cheeks. The fear coursing through her is palpable as she waits to be discovered. Irene is guarded in her actions, and it seems very much as though she is unsure of the steps that she is taking. Later in the movie it is revealed that she has indeed tried “passing” before, but her insecurity in the opening scene is fully on display. Viewers then travel with her to her home in Harlem, and she appears confident in her own skin, embracing her race.

By contrast, when the audience first meets Clare, she demonstrates a comfort and ease at “being White.” She has been White for so long that she does not worry about anyone questioning whether she belongs in this White society. In the café of the hotel where she is staying, two older White women give no particular scrutiny to her when her husband leaves her at the table. When she eventually eyes Irene across the room, she does not break her stare. Irene, initially not recognizing her, appears intimidated, squirms and prepares a hasty exit; it is obvious she feels she has been discovered by this unfamiliar White woman. Their subsequent meeting is one of surprising revelations. Later in her room upstairs, as Clare introduces Irene to her husband, her confidence is even more demonstrative when she eggs him on to reveal that his nickname for her is “nig,” a shortened version of the racial epithet. The uncomfortable laughter from Irene is almost maniacal, and one wonders if she is intoxicated, or merely attempting to placate John. John easily reveals his contempt toward Blacks, confessing to Irene when she pointedly asks, “So you dislike Negroes, Mr. Bellew?” He responds, “No, no, no, not at all. I hate them.”¹¹ It is a powerful scene, one that indicates John

¹¹ *Passing*, 17:14 to 18:09.

believes Irene to be White, and therefore, he can emphatically display the comfort he feels as he discusses his disdain for Blacks to her. All the while, Clare laughs in collusion with John's declarations but waits with bated breath for her charade to collapse.

Not much is known about their prior friendship, however, the relationship that redevelops between Irene and Clare is engulfed by their shared experiences. As the story unfolds, a subsequent meeting in Irene's home occurs as Clare shows up unexpectedly, distressed that Irene has avoided responding to her letters. Irene weakly tries to dismiss her concerns by offering the excuse that Clare should not visit Harlem because it is not safe, and she might be discovered for passing as White. This does not appear to be a concern for Clare. She follows Irene around the house, and it is in this instant that the audience can see just how much she wants to interact with Irene, practically begging to stay even though Irene feigns work. Clare then invites herself to the charity event that her friend is staging, offering another opportunity for her to mingle or, as Irene says when explaining White novelist Hugh Wentworth's attendance, "The same reason you're here: to see Negroes."¹²

Throughout the movie, the two women traverse the obvious disparity between them, noted not only in the issue of race but also of classism. Both women belong to the upper class but it is Irene who does not seem to navigate her status as well. Irene lives in a beautiful home with her two children. She quickly says to Clare, "Mine are dark," when Clare reveals her fear that her daughter "Margery might come out dark."¹³ But her relationship with Zulena, the darker complected maid, is tenuous at best, and it is interactions between the two that exposes the superiority Irene feels over her due to her status and the color of her skin. She is rather reserved and performative in her attempts at charity work, giving the appearance of busyness and importance, absent the

¹² *Passing*, 38:47 to 39:14.

¹³ *Passing*, 11:16 to 11:45.

charitable heart. For example, while speaking on the telephone with Wentworth in the planning stages of her own charity event, her enthusiasm is at best restrained. In the scene at the dance, she makes her way to their seats, but she remains pressed against a pillar removed from the crowd while watching Clare interact with other guests. She does not possess the same social skills as Clare, and her only true interaction is with Wentworth, with whom she surreptitiously reveals Clare's secret.

Irene seems to display a naivete toward the world, doing her best to keep her sons oblivious of the horrific news of a lynching and dismissive of the use of racial epithets. But this effort is not merely to protect her sons; it is evident that she must shield herself from the realities of her world to guard against her own lingering knowledge of the oppression that Blacks face daily. It is she that does not want to hear the truth. It is the crushing weight of this knowledge of oppression that hinders her, also expressed in the underlying envy she feels toward Clare, who manages to exist in their world free from the "burden of Blackness."¹⁴

Clare is relegated to hotel life. The audience is not privy to her actual home, but the impression given is one of fanciness and prestige. It is Clare who is a world traveler, living in a White world accompanying her husband on business trips and taking her daughter to Europe for boarding school. In a brief amount of time, she develops a relaxed relationship with Irene's maid and plays easily with Irene's children, one of whom labels her a "Princess."¹⁵ She even seems to appreciate the maid's cooking skills more so than Irene and demonstrates a yearning for home cooking. When Clare discovers that Zulena is cooking yams, notably associated with Southern cuisine, she questions the method of cooking and surreptitiously asks Irene, "Where did you find her, Rene? I long for a maid who knows real home cooking."¹⁶ She directly

¹⁴ Burden of Blackness is the everyday oppression that people of color carry in a society designed to promulgate and perpetuate White supremacy, through both legal and social systems. It is, however, created by society, not Blackness itself.

¹⁵ *Passing*, 44:35 to 45:18.

¹⁶ *Passing*, 40:55 to 41:25.

contradicts what John proclaims in the hotel room as he states, “Why she won’t have them [Negroes] near her, not even as a maid.”¹⁷

At parties, it is flirtatious Clare who is carefree and dancing, appreciating Harlem’s music, both inside events as well as while sitting on the steps of Irene’s home. At these points in the film, it does not seem that she fears the possibility that her true identity could be revealed, choosing to consistently frequent the Harlem neighborhood, although she understands the safety net over which she dangles could fray at any moment. But most importantly, Clare is once again enjoying being “home,” being amongst those whom she secretly hopes and wishes are still her people, though it is not an identity she wishes to resume.¹⁸

The dichotomy between the two women is clear. Clare bears no guilt about her choice as she consciously moves about in the world passing for White; beneath that façade, she appreciates exactly who she is, who she has become. She, however, desperately misses her interactions with the Black community. In one scene she laments, “I come here and I really remember what home is.”¹⁹ The harshness of being Black is still a necessity for both of the women to navigate, but it is the one who lives as a White woman who seems better equipped to comprehend this idea. By contrast, Irene seems lost, disconnected from the reality of her Blackness. She seems in search of a non-existent truth, one in which she would be a Black woman, living her Black life, but able to secure the comforts and advantages afforded White society. Her connections with others, both Black and White, appear cold and contrived. Even interactions with her children at times seem strained, which shows that her identity is not her only complication. In one scene as she is standing in an upstairs window staring down at her children playing outside, there is a longing emitting from her, one that indicates she does not enjoy the same relationship with her boys that both her husband, Brian, and her

¹⁷ *Passing*, 17:14 to 18:12.

¹⁸ *Passing*, 9:49 to 10:15.

¹⁹ *Passing*, 9:49 to 10:15.

maid exhibit. The subsequent interaction with her husband about Brian regarding her fear that her youngest son has picked up some “queer ideas from some of the older boys [about sex],” shows a prudishness.²⁰ While she praises that her young son is growing up to be like his father, there is a subtle underpinning of bias toward him, as she does not offer the same evaluation of her older son.

Relationships are formed, and conflicting emotions emerge as audiences discover the challenges of identity that envelope the two women. In the beginning of the film, Clare appears comfortable in her own skin, in her Whiteness, regardless of the deception, but as the story develops, her understanding of her precarious situation eases its way into her daily life. The audience is initially led to believe that she does not truly care. However, Clare laments that her friend Irene is happy, free, and, most importantly, safe. These words are Clare’s confession that while she might appear to be happy, she is far from content in this existence that she has created. The audience is not privy to either woman’s prior life, but it is clear that this reunion has hampered their existence, and the issue of race has had a great impact on their lives. The scene draws out the sadness that she is experiencing, but it also presents the notion that Clare knows at any moment the “safety” of being White will crumble. It is a fitting premonition of her tragic fate.

As Irene utters the words, “We’re all of us passing for something or the other,” it signifies several storylines that were not fleshed out but left to the audience’s imagination.²¹ The seemingly cozy intimacy between Irene’s husband, Ben, and Clare was not fully seen between himself and Irene, but it was not clear whether there was infidelity between the two. In addition, for a brief moment as Irene clasped Clare’s hand, there was the passing idea that a lingering sexual tension might exist between the two women; however, the audience must decide whether this interaction is an unsatisfied desire, or more demonstrative of a kinship. Moreover,

²⁰ *Passing*, 22:15 to 23:30.

²¹ *Passing*, 50:06 to 51:07.

throughout the film there are subtle nuances that expose the idea of “passing,” giving the title of the film more weight than had been previously thought. In the opening scene a man is observed dying on the ground, passing on from life to death. There are specific moments in Irene’s bedroom as she observes the growing crack in the ceiling which intimates the passing of time. Hall uses these various subtleties to push forward the main theme of passing, and it is a gentle reminder to the audience that passing is something we all must experience.

The tragedy of this film is borne out in its necessity. Identity, in the form of one social construct or another, forces people to sometimes exist as someone they are not. The topic of passing is a delicate concept that in Black history is infrequently discussed. In author Janine Bradbury’s article on the taboo film genre of Black people passing for White, she notes that the genre was popular in the 1940s and 1950s when segregation was rife and the “one-drop rule”—which deemed anybody with even a trace of African ancestry to be Black—prevailed. Movies such as *Show Boat* (1951), *Pinky* (1949), and a sentimental favorite, *Imitation of Life* (1959), showcased the lives of mixed-race characters who attempted to pass for White.²² *Imitation of Life* was a remake of a 1934 film, both of which are considered classics, and the 1959 adaptation became the last major film of the [passing for White] genre.²³

The movie *Passing* is not just about two women who desire to be something that they are not. It seeks not just to relate the story of a woman who chooses another identity over her own, it offers multiple layers of race, class, culture, and gender. It also speaks to obsessions, secrets and lies, and the consequences of such, along with highlighting the underlying shame these women feel for their own skin and for their own race. There is anxiety

²² George Sidney, *Show Boat* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1951); Elia Kazan and John Ford, *Pinky* (Twentieth Century Fox/Good Harvest Productions, 1949); John M. Stahl, *Imitation of Life* (Universal Pictures, 1934); Douglas Sirk, *Imitation of Life* (Universal Pictures, 1959).

²³ Bradbury, “Passing for White.”

raging through the characters, underlying anxiety wending its way throughout the one-hour and thirty-eight minute film, and anxiety building for the audience as they wait for their questions to be answered. Will Clare's true identity be revealed? What will happen if John finds out? And if he does, just how much will he tell their daughter about Clare's history? Will Irene give up her attempts to "pass"? With the tragic ending of the film, nothing is answered, and even more questions arise.

Director Hall's own story materialized in the pages of Larsen's book as her maternal grandfather had also passed as White.²⁴ Hall's film highlights the torment that ultimately intrudes in both of these women's lives. *Passing* is an excellent rendition of the Nella Larsen novella. Hall's directorial work provides fascinating insight into an often-concealed version of Black history. It is a necessary addition to the conversation about Black identity, one that is rarely discussed. The film forces audiences to challenge their own thoughts about social constructs, and to reconsider what identity actually means

²⁴ Terry Gross, "'Passing' Filmmaker Rebecca Hall Shares the Personal Story Behind Her Movie," NPR, November 30, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/11/30/1059824073/passing-rebecca-hall-film>.

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2022

Film Review: Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)

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Film Review: *Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)*

By Cameron Smith

In the summer of 1969, a music festival was held in New York state. Hundreds of thousands attended. The festival, however, did not take place in Bethel, New York, home of the infamous Woodstock festival (August 15, 1969–August 18, 1969). The event, known as “The Harlem Cultural Festival,” took place in Harlem, New York, several months before the world-renowned Woodstock Music and Art Fair.¹ Held on weekends from June 29 through August 24, the festivities were filmed at a park in Harlem.² Although buried in the sands of time, this musical and multiethnic phenomenon was resurrected by one of music’s finest archaeologists. In his directorial debut, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson (b. 1971) presented a documentary film about the festival, revealing a legacy that had been forgotten over decades, eclipsed by a music festival that celebrated the carefree attitude of the hippie era. Released in 2021, the film *Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)* offers an alternative to Woodstock and highlights the importance of African American culture through coverage of the Harlem Cultural Festival.³

Along with his many accolades, Questlove is the iconic drummer of the hip-hop conglomerate known as The Roots, and he provides the supporting sound to the quippy dialog of current *Tonight Show* host, Jimmy Fallon (b. 1974).⁴ What is lesser known about Questlove is that he stays busy outside of his role as a

¹ *Woodstock*, directed by Michael Wadleigh (1970; Warner Bros).

² Gind2005, Black Woodstock 1969, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_Woodstock_1969.jpg.

³ *Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)*, directed by Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson (2021, Searchlight Pictures).

⁴ *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, produced by Lorne Michaels. NBC Studios, New York, 2014–present.

drummer and has tackled many side projects and provided decades of soundscapes to music, entertainment, and hip-hop culture. The recently released Oscar-winning documentary, *Summer of Soul*, exemplifies his devotion not merely to the arts but to upholding the rituals of African American culture and contemporary music. Hip-hop culture is known for elements such as DJs, breakdancers, graffiti writers, and MCs (Masters of Ceremony). In addition to his love for hip-hop music, Questlove is a superfan of pop as well as rhythm and blues. His influence and devotion to music have given birth to documentaries and books showing the complexity of the African musical diaspora.

Born Amhir Khalib Thompson in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1971, the prolific artist who became known as Questlove was raised in a world governed by rhythm. His father, Lee Andrews (1936–2016) was the lead singer for Lee Andrews & The Hearts; his mother, Jacquelin Thompson (n.d.), held her own as a member of the Philadelphia soul conglomerate, Congress Alley.⁵ In the cross-section between the revolutionary counterculture movement of the 1960s, and the burgeoning disco era of the 1970s, Questlove became enthralled with the African American dance show, *Soul Train*, which aired from 1971 to 2006. According to a New York Times article entitled, “The Passion of Questlove,” his obsession with the dance series was such that Questlove missed the recording of a career-defining single he produced because he was in Japan digitizing old episodes of *Soul Train*.⁶ This penchant for music explains why he formed “The Roots” crew in high school and demonstrates his continued devotion toward Black musical tradition. What began with Questlove playing backup bucket drums to crewmate Tariq “Black

⁵ National Public Radio, “Ahmir Thompson Reflects On His ‘Roots,’” NPR, March 13, 2009,

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101868609>.

⁶ Jasmine Hughes, “The Passion of Questlove,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 2021,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/12/magazine/questlove-summer-of-soul.html>.

Thought” Trotter’s (b. 1973) rhymes on the streets of Philadelphia, morphed into a pivotal hip-hop band.⁷ Whereas a hip-hop group was typically composed of a DJ and MC, an evolution including live instrumentation was taking place, connecting old school musical traditions with the new.

When Questlove began his work on the documentary, he stated:

I am truly excited to help bring the passion, the story, and the music of the Harlem Cultural Festival to audiences around the world. The performances are extraordinary. I was stunned when I saw the lost footage for the first time. It’s incredible to look at 50 years of history that’s never been told, and I’m eager and humbled to tell that story.⁸

The Harlem Cultural Festival, referred to by some in later years as the “Black Woodstock,” was conceived by Tony Lawrence (c. 1936), a singer and community-activist, to celebrate African American culture. In the film, civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton (b. 1954) praised New York City Mayor John Lindsay (1921–2000)—a liberal Republican—as a co-facilitator of the event, calling the mayor popular amongst the Black population. However, writer Raymond Robinson (n.d.) of the New York *Amsterdam News*, a Black owned newspaper, hinted at the inevitable: The world would lionize Woodstock and forget about Harlem. He wrote, “The only time the white press concerns itself with the black community is during a riot or major disturbance.”⁹

⁷ “The Roots,” The Roots, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://the-roots.weebly.com>.

⁸ Michael Saponara, “Questlove to Direct ‘Black Woodstock’ Documentary on 1969’s Harlem Cultural Festival,” *Billboard*, December 2, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/music/rb-hip-hop/questlove-black-woodstock-documentary-8545166/>.

⁹ Jonathan Bernstein, “This 1969 Music Fest Has Been Called ‘Black Woodstock.’ Why Doesn’t Anyone Remember?,” *Rolling Stone*, August 9,

The festival was held in Mount Morris Park (also known as Marcus Garvey Park), located between Harlem and East Harlem in New York City; as the home of the Harlem Renaissance (1920s and 1930s), the area is significant for its rich cultural history.

Aside from being named after Marcus Mosiah Garvey Sr. (1887–1940), a pan-Africanist and businessman, this location is part of the Mount Morris Park Historic District.¹⁰ While Woodstock was held on a farm on the outskirts of town, the Harlem Cultural Festival was in the middle of the city, giving it a more community-oriented atmosphere.

The documentary first introduces the audience to Harlem through a tapestry of colorful images. Included among the imagery and soundbites is footage of what the city was like in the late 1960s. There was a marked dichotomy between unrest and social life, depicted in scenes of burning buildings and police brutality versus social gatherings and nightlife. As a distant homage to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s, the film is reminiscent of the movement that paved the way for intellectual and cultural development. The festival's line-up of prolific artists ranged from a young Stevie Wonder (b. 1950) to a vibrant Nina Simone (1993–2003) and included blues, gospel, jazz, funk, and rock music styles; each performance demonstrated the diversity of the Black and Brown music experience.¹¹

Although both festivals occurred in 1969, there were many differences between The Harlem Cultural Festival and what became known as Woodstock. For example, attendees at the

2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/black-woodstock-harlem-cultural-festival-history-859626/>.

¹⁰ In 1971, The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission declared Mount Morris Park to be a historic district. Walking tours take visitors past famous Harlem brownstones, across 125th Street, known as “the heartbeat of Harlem,” and the local parks where Black Woodstock occurred.

<https://welcometoharlem.com/tour/mount-morris-park-historic-walking-tour/>.

¹¹ A segment devoted to East Harlem exhibited the music of Mongo Santamaría (1917–2003) and Ray Barretto (1929–2006), an American percussionist of Puerto Rican ancestry.

Harlem festival wore clothing that ranged from church-going attire to brightly colored threads, demonstrating a more sedate experience and a local “home” connection. At the Woodstock event, audience members wore clothing associated with the hippie lifestyle; images of promiscuously dressed and naked men, women, and children permeate the Woodstock film. Chaos was managed differently at both concerts as well. Tony Lawrence was a calming presence when the crowd got riled up at the Harlem festival. Where Woodstock was more of a happy accident, every step of The Harlem Cultural Festival was meticulously calculated, down to the placement of the stage, due to the reliability of natural lighting. There was a sense of connection to the artists and the changing Black identity. The message of Woodstock revolved around safe drug usage, but the message in Harlem concerned political liberation, referencing assassinations and revolutions.

Many elements made The Harlem Cultural Festival an unprecedented force even before it was devised. By the late sixties, events in the country involved two Kennedy assassinations— John F. Kennedy (b. 1917) in 1963 and Robert Francis Kennedy (b. 1925) in 1968—and the assassination of two of the country’s most prominent Black leaders, Malcolm X (b. 1925) in 1965 and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (b. 1929) in 1968. Among African Americans, a climate of tension resulted in a hodgepodge of Dr. King’s non-violent tactics contrasted with the philosophies of Malcolm X and The Black Panther Party, which included the philosophy of self-defense and a proclivity towards self-righteous violence. On top of these fresh political and ideological wounds, there existed friction between the Black communities countrywide and the injustice wrought by police brutality. Depicted in *Summer of Soul* is a montage of images that accentuate this tense and occasionally explosively violent atmosphere. The film encapsulates not merely the streets of Harlem but the entire country. Though a cynic would be downtrodden by the country’s particular course of events, like a phoenix of hope from the ashes that the sixties wrought, hope converged in the gathering at The Harlem Cultural Festival. With around three hundred thousand

attendees and located in a park within walking distance of local residents, it would seem, according to many an attendee, that the cultural festival was somewhat of a miracle whose purpose was to divert the pain-stricken Black community from having to fight for their freedom, and direct them towards a moment of clarity, peace, and self-liberation.

To add another layer of complexity to the spectacle of The Harlem Cultural Festival, Neil Armstrong (1930–2012) and Buzz Aldrin (b. 1930) became the first humans to walk on the moon in July 1969. While collectively, perhaps, the country was fascinated, considering this feat occurred during the Cold War Era (c. 1945–1991), interviews from *Summer of Soul* capture a range of emotions felt in response to the event. The consensus from many Black voices was one of dissatisfaction and one of duality; on the one hand, there was an acknowledgment that this was a step forward for science from some, but largely the main feeling was that this feat was unremarkable in comparison to the tangible oppression Black citizens of the era were dealing with, and to a large extent are still dealing with in modernity.¹² This response to such a monumental event, especially one voiced by the people of Harlem, reflects who was in the crowd that day: an informed people, but at the same time an agitated group who felt that their definition of what progress meant did not align with what the country felt was a step forward.

When Questlove restored the legacy of The Harlem Cultural Festival, so too was the purpose behind this phenomenal spectacle restored. From the documentary's brilliant colorful visuals to the way each scene captured sublime moments of Black and Brown identity, joy, and independence, there are many ways in which this festival both converged and significantly diverged from the messages left behind by Woodstock, all while being its own entity driven by definitions of progress unique to the period. The element that separates Questlove and *Summer of Soul* from the

¹² *Summer of Soul*, 1:27:47 to 1:29:59.

Woodstock festival—and the numerous different cultural geodes that form this tapestry of rhythm, music, and life—is “Black Joy.”

Reiterated by Questlove in interviews and throughout his career, Black Joy represents the sublime moments in African American lives that have often been obfuscated by a linear view of Black history. For example, Black history is often confined to slavery and civil rights movements, essentially dehumanizing Black people, which eliminates the idea that there could be any joyous events in Black people’s lives. The fascination with Woodstock as a phenomenon is not misplaced, but in overshadowing The Harlem Cultural Festival, it represents the erasure of Black Joy in favor of the idyllic peace and love movements that captivated the 1960s and 1970s. Woodstock was famously known for the phrase, “Don’t Take the Brown Acid,” which epitomized the carefree and laissez-faire attitude that prevailed in the 1960s counterculture. Conversely, one attendee of The Harlem Cultural Festival described the smell of fried chicken as a memory that he kept.¹³ The comparison between the acid in the highly publicized Woodstock event and the smell of fried chicken in Harlem is representative of nostalgia and shows that what is valued in Black culture is truly different from the stereotypes of drug use and laziness that have branded Black people in American culture.

The significance of Questlove’s documentary, *Summer of Soul*, is more than just the musical aspects rediscovered in this film. This documentary reveals a different side to Black identity, offering an alternative to the monolithic depictions of Black history. Not only did Questlove make history by winning an Academy Award and a Grammy for the film in 2022, but he also brought the conversation back to a joyous event of Black excellence that had been hidden. He restored a sense of meaning to music and reminded viewers of the ability to create bonds between people.

¹³ *Summer of Soul*, 22:25 to 23:59.

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Reviews

2022

Museum Review: “Brave Hearts: A Virtual Exhibit” with Room to Grow

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Museum Review: “Brave Hearts: A Virtual Exhibit” with Room to Grow

By Michelle Curtis

The Indian Boarding School, Sherman Institute, for good and bad, has been an Inland Empire fixture since the turn of the twentieth century in Southern California. First, as a means for assimilation, exploitation, and used as a tourist attraction for those who wanted to see the “last of the Indians,” it became a place for cultural reclamation where faculty and staff foster student agency instead of stifling it.¹ Without the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Brave Hearts* virtual exhibit and the unique partnership between the Sherman Indian Museum and California State University San Bernardino’s (CSUSB) Public History Department would not exist; The pandemic created challenges in teaching the CSUSB course Exhibit Development and Design, which is typically an intensive hands-on, in-person class. Designing the *Brave Hearts* exhibit was a creative way to make a virtual class “hands-on” as students in Dr. Daisy Ocampo’s Exhibit Development and Design class (Spring 2021) researched, collaborated, planned, and created the exhibit.

The exhibit reached far more people than everyone involved in the design process could have imagined. Designing and executing *Brave Hearts, a Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*, provided students in Dr. Ocampo’s class with a challenging and rewarding process of turning the exhibit into reality. *Brave Heart’s* purpose was to educate and inform the museum’s visitors about the history of the Sherman Indian Boarding School, the assimilation programs led by school administration that was inflicted on students for generations, and the agency that students were able to display despite the militarized

¹ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present,” Sherman Indian Museum, accessed October 19, 2021, http://www.shermanindianmuseum.org/sherman_hist.htm.

structure of the school. The exhibition turned out exceptionally well despite the restrictions put in place by the pandemic, limited resources, and time available to students; however, some valid criticisms remain that an extension or a future second exhibit could address.

On March 3, 1903, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) opened the Sherman Institute, located at Magnolia Avenue and Jackson Street in Riverside, California, to educate Native American students and assimilate them into Anglo-American culture.² By 1909 students from forty-three tribes located in California, the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest, and the Midwest plains attended Sherman.³ Over the years, the tribal population of the school changed depending on the policies of the BIA.⁴ At first, the school held first-grade to eighth-grade classes and later expanded to teach through twelfth-grade.⁵ By the 1930s, Sherman had an enrollment of more than 1,200 Indigenous students and had become an accredited high school.⁶ However, enrollment dropped during the Depression in the 1930s as California Indians began attending public schools.⁷ Starting in 1946 and extending into 1961, Sherman stopped admitting California Indian students and worked exclusively with Navajo students from the Southwest, most of whom had never had a formal education.⁸ In 1963, Sherman gradually reopened to students; in 1971, officials re-accredited Sherman Institute as a high school and renamed it Sherman Indian High School.⁹ The Sherman Indian Museum resides in the only original building left on campus. It houses a collection of more than 2,000 cataloged records, items, artifacts,

² “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

³ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁴ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁵ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁶ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁷ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁸ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

⁹ “Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present.”

and items donated to the museum by community members in an effort to preserve the Sherman Institute's history.¹⁰

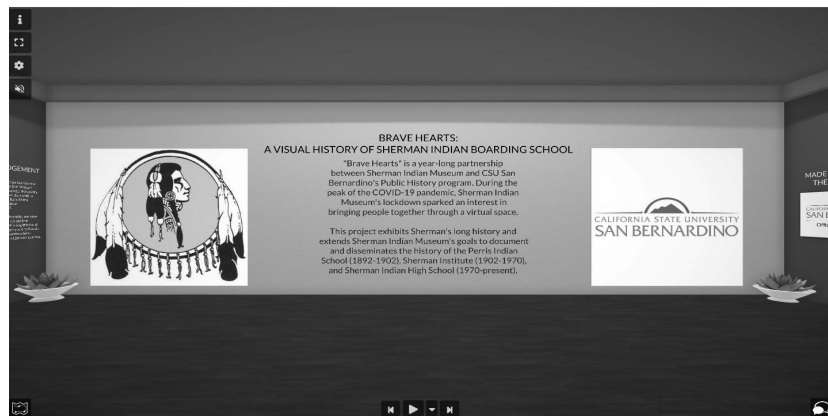


Figure 1. Opening View of *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*. Courtesy of *Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibit*.¹¹

In 2020, when the pandemic forced the world to quarantine for at least a year, the curator of the Sherman Indian Museum, Lorene Sisquoc (Apache/Mt. Cahuilla), approached CSUSB professor Dr. Ocampo with the idea to create a virtual exhibit that would serve as a cultural hub, enabling people to visit the Sherman Indian Museum from home while giving Dr. Ocampo's public history students experience in an emerging field of exhibit design.¹² Dr. Ocampo developed her Exhibit Development and Design class for the Spring of 2021 with these goals in mind.¹³ When interviewing Dr. Ocampo about her plans for the class, she commented, "I know this now; in retrospect, this was a very ambitious program put together, and I think we accomplished so much because students traditionally read a book."¹⁴

¹⁰ "Sherman Indian High School Beginning to the Present."

¹¹ Daisy Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*, Sherman Indian Museum, 2021, virtual exhibition, <http://tiny.cc/6e9ruz>.

¹² Daisy Ocampo, interview with the author, March 18, 2022.

¹³ Daisy Ocampo, interview with the author, March 18, 2022.

¹⁴ Daisy Ocampo, interview with the author, March 18, 2022.

The class began by doing a literature review on Sherman's history and exploring Sherman's Digital Collection on Calisphere, a digital collections database containing documents from various Californian libraries, archives, and museums.¹⁵ Using the research from the literature review, the students decided that assimilation and student agency would be the overarching themes they wanted to cover in the exhibit. The class paired off into groups with each group taking charge of a room that dealt with a specific part of Sherman's history; the literature review was crucial to this part of the process. The literature review provided the students with the background knowledge that they as a class needed to narrow down the subjects they wanted to focus on in the exhibit. Next, they each designed a prospective floorplan using the Artsteps platform and, as a group, chose the layout that worked best for the exhibit.¹⁶ The groups then did further research for their specific room and began combing Sherman's Digital Collection for primary sources to use.¹⁷ Finally, they used mind maps to graphically organize our rooms' narratives and began writing exhibit labels.¹⁸ Dr. Ocampo did an excellent job of having the class mirror the exhibit design process used by other institutions when it came to planning exhibits. Throughout this process, the class worked closely with Lorene Sisquoc and Amanda Wixon (Chickasaw/Choctaw), the Sherman Indian Museum's curators. At the end of the semester,

¹⁵ Matt Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education Beyond the Mesas* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Matt Sakiestewa Gilbert, Lorene Sisquoc, and Clifford E. Trasfzer, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); and Matt Sakiestewa and Kevin Whalen, *Native Students at Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute's Outing Program, 1900–1945* (University of Washington Press, 2016); Calisphere, "Sherman Indian Museum Collection," accessed March 29, 2022, <https://calisphere.org/collections/27124/?q=>.

¹⁶ Artsteps is a free platform that allows users to create virtual art/museum galleries within 3D spaces. It is useful for artists and art organizations to model actual and virtual exhibits.

¹⁷ Calisphere, "Sherman Indian Museum Collection." To access the Sherman Indian Museum Collection, see: <https://calisphere.org/collections/27124/>.

¹⁸ Mind Maps are graphic organizers that allow users to organize information and show relationships between points.

each group presented their finished Artsteps rooms for a grade. During the summer, Dr. Ocampo secured student assistant positions through CSUSB for six of the students, including the author, to polish the exhibit for its opening over the summer and into the fall.

The students who worked on the exhibit during the summer had jobs relating to the opening. Jean Martinez edited and polished every room except the cemetery room with Dr. Ocampo; Foilan Garcia and Ezequiel Vera, successfully planned and promoted Brave Heart's opening; the author took on the remaking of the cemetery room, placing the tour for the exhibit's opening, including the tour stops and labels associated that are in use today; Candy Navarrete (Western Shoshone) and Marlene Cardenas worked to make the exhibit's appearance uniform and beautiful. Each student who worked on the exhibit over the summer interviewed a member of the Sherman Community or alumni and took an oral history about their time (or a relative's time) and experiences at Sherman and the lasting effect the school had on them. They integrated these histories throughout the exhibit. Planning and constructing the rooms was a new experience for most of them and required a lot of critical thinking skills. Most of those who were working on this exhibit had not used visual media in their assignments, and *Brave Hearts* required them to think deeper about the visual aspects including photos, news articles, and documents they saw within the Sherman Indian Museum's collection. The film *Redskin* (1929) provided an opportunity for a deeper analysis, while the film's assimilation narrative comes from the point of view of an Indian, the film's writers and director were Anglo American.¹⁹ The film gave them insight into the views and stereotypes placed on Indigenous peoples by a majority of Anglo-Americans in the late 1920s.

¹⁹ *Redskin*, directed by Victor Schertzinger (1929, Paramount Famous Lasky Corp), YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxN-IX-9XkE>.

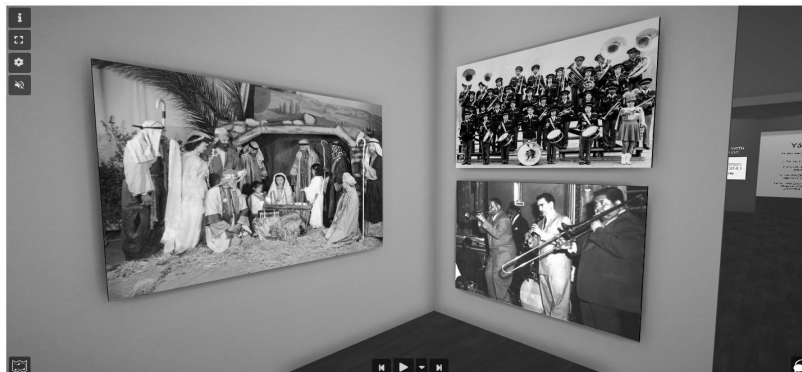


Figure 2. *Student Life Room*, photos of Nativity play and music program. Courtesy of *Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibit*.²⁰

The *Student Life* section of the *Brave Hearts* exhibit, curated by Ezequiel Vera and Froilan Garcia, covers activities students participated in at Sherman Institute, including sports, music, and student government.²¹ The BIA intended to assimilate Sherman students into Anglo-American culture through their activities, but students found ways to resist assimilation and keep their agency. For instance, the music program at Sherman Institute included only classical western musical instruments and music scores, but some students, like Russel Moore (n.d.) (Pima) and Robert Levi (n.d.) (Cahuilla), used their musical talents after they left Sherman.²² Moore became a successful Jazz musician and played lead trombone in Louis Armstrong's Orchestra.²³ Levi proved instrumental in preserving the Cahuilla Bird Songs of Southern California when he recorded at five CD set of Cahuilla Bird Songs at the Sherman Indian Museum.²⁴

²⁰ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

²¹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

²² Daisy Ocampo, interview with the author, March 18, 2022.

²³ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

²⁴ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

On the other hand, some activities stripped students of their agency completely. For example, from the 1930s to the 1950s, the school required students to participate in historical and nativity plays.²⁵ Historical plays such as Spanish-themed plays put students in the role of Conquistadores and communicated to students that they were the native enemy and their culture showed its inferiority by being defeated and conquered.²⁶ Nativity plays also promoted Christianity among students and devalued Indigenous spirituality and religious practices; Sherman students and staff played the roles of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, angels, and the Wise Men.²⁷ The photos and captions in the Student Life section of the exhibit give a good cross-section of activities available to the Sherman Institute students. However, the room's heavy focus on assimilation needs balance through the use of better wall text and captions about the friendships and bonds formed by the students who participated in these activities. These friendships demonstrate that students at Sherman Institute were able to exercise agency. The inclusion of individual students such as Moore, who used skills they learned at Sherman Institute in the real world to become successful, perfectly highlighted how student-specific instances of agency affected the lives of the people there.

The Military Room, designed and researched by Diana Estrada and Jean Martinez, focuses on the contribution of Sherman's veterans and Sherman's early military regimentation. One wall focuses on Navajo code talker James King (n.d.), whose retention of his native language helped the United States win World War II (1939–1945). King, despite being forbidden to speak his native language at Sherman, was able to retain and use his language to serve his country translating classified messages into the Navajo language for the military. The room also showcased

²⁵ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

²⁶ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

²⁷ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

other Sherman veterans. Moreover, the Military Room demonstrates the military style format the Sherman Institute was run in. Students followed a strict military schedule, wore military like uniforms and even performed drills on the weekends for the public. The stories of the other veterans featured in the room show the commitment to service that Sherman students have demonstrated. While the room was very well put together, it would have been helpful to see more about the initial arrival and beginning trauma that the new students at Sherman Institute endured to help the visitor understand where the cycle of intergenerational trauma begins.

The author designed the section of the exhibit that covers the Outing Program and the Vocational Education Program at Sherman, and Jean Martinez edited the room.²⁸ The outing program placed students as young as ten in menial labor jobs; girls and young women were placed in homes as babysitters and housekeepers while boys and men worked on farms and other manual labor jobs.²⁹ The Sherman administrators designed Sherman's vocational training program to keep students living in urban areas and away from the reservations by teaching them trades that had no use on reservations. For example, girls at Sherman could learn cosmetology, and men could learn large animal husbandry, the reservations were not economically well off enough to support a cosmetology business, and most reservations practiced small animal farming such as goats and sheep, not cattle.³⁰ The Outing Room also discusses the link between Sherman Superintendent Harwood Hall (n.d.) and Mission Inn owner Frank Miller (n.d). The two men used their business ties to secure the land where Sherman sits today and exploited student labor at the Mission Inn, in which Miller had students doing

²⁸ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

²⁹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

³⁰ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

housekeeping, manual labor, and occasionally singing and playing their instruments.³¹ The room does a thorough job of explaining the Outing Program and its assimilationist motives. However, if the author had more exhibit space or time, she would have further emphasized that the Sherman women who worked in Southern California homes were able to form urban native communities where they made friends and practiced their languages and cultures. The Outing Room also does a good job exploring the ties between Sherman and the Mission Inn. Sherman's Nursing Program came about out of need, not assimilation, making it a unique part of the vocational training program, which is also highlighted in the next room of the exhibit.



Figure 3. Family members visit a sick student in Sherman's hospital. Opposite empty beds in the hospital. Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibit.³²

Diana Estrada, Valerie Mann, and Jean Martinez designed the Nursing Room.³³ The room discusses Sherman's Nursing Program, which came about out of necessity in 1907 when Dr.

³¹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

³² Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

³³ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

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Mary Israel (n.d.) needed nurses who would not leave their jobs in search of better pay.³⁴ Dr. Israel's nursing program had an advanced curriculum that included sterilizing equipment and performing basic surgical procedures.³⁵ The room features a wall highlighting Ellen Norris, researched by Jean Martinez; it details Norris' career as a nurse and a political activist where she testified before Congress about the poor quality of education in Indian Boarding Schools and against the termination of tribes. Norris's wall, the product of Jean Martinez's research, provides an excellent example of agency. With more exhibit space, the room could have spent more time on the epidemics, such as trachoma, typhoid, and tuberculosis, that plagued the school and surrounding tribes which created a need for the school's cemetery. One of the most poignant items in the room is a picture of a family having a rare visit with their child in Sherman's hospital; the caption informs the reader that visits by family and friends were discouraged, and the school's administration did not send updates to families very often, which led to anxiety and worry on the part of the family.³⁶ This image and its caption vividly portrays the reality that many Indigenous families faced when attempting to visit their children. Sometimes the only form of news from Sherman could be the worst news a parent can receive about their child, their death.

³⁴ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

³⁵ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

³⁶ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

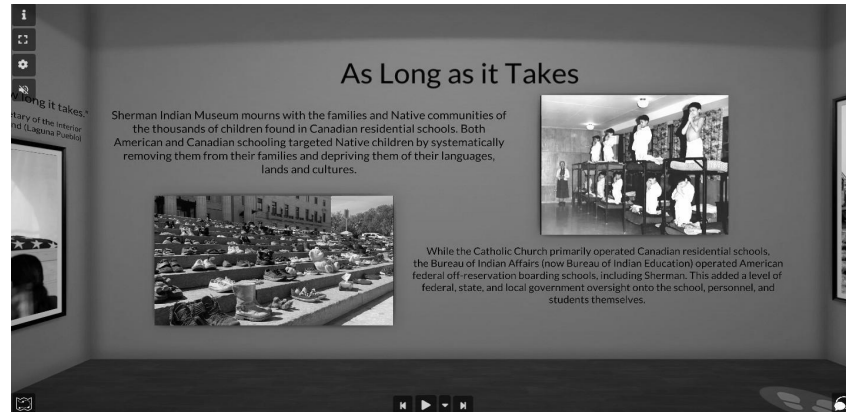


Figure 4. Wall of Cemetery Room dedicated to the Canadian Residential Schools. Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibition.³⁷

Lindsay Rudolph and the author initially designed the Cemetery Room, but Dr. Ocampo and the author later redesigned it to incorporate relevant and tragic contemporary events.³⁸ Their original vision for the Cemetery Room progressed from sorrow to healing and celebration. Lindsay and the author wanted to tell the stories of several individuals buried in the cemetery and have all of the students' names and dates on display as a memorial. However, the pandemic hampered their plans; records that they needed were in the brick-and-mortar museum and, due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, were inaccessible to them. The other half of the room mainly went as planned, and they focused on the revitalization of the cemetery.

In May 2021, at the beginning of the editing process, *Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc Kukpi7* (Chief) Rosanne Casimir announced the discovery of more than two hundred unmarked graves at Kamloops Indian Boarding School in British Columbia. By July 2021, Canadian officials rediscovered almost 1,100 other

³⁷ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

³⁸ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

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unmarked graves at four other residential schools.³⁹ This devastating discovery added to the existing plans for the room and brought the whole exhibit's importance into crystal focus. Dr. Ocampo recalled, "The responsibility and the weight of the delivery changed completely....To have been able to produce something as a class and design an entire exhibit to mark that moment... is very significant."⁴⁰ The students adjusted the room's theme to focus on healing and community involvement. They rendered half of the room orange, a color which represents the experience of Indigenous children in the boarding school systems having their native identities taken from them.⁴¹ In June 2021, the Rosebud Sioux were able to transfer and reinter the remains of nine children who died at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania; images from the ceremony adorn the walls of the Cemetery Room as a symbol of hope and healing.⁴²

³⁹ Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, "Remains of Children of Kamloops Residential School Discovered."

⁴⁰ Daisy Ocampo, interview with the author, March 18, 2022.

⁴¹ Sarah Manning, "Wearing Orange to Heal, to Remember, and Build Collective Power: NDN Collective Honors Orange Shirt Day," NDN Collective, September 30, 2021, <https://ndncollective.org/wearing-orange-to-heal-to-remember-and-build-collective-power-ndn-collective-honors-orange-shirt-day/>.

⁴² Brandi Morin, "These Indigenous Children Died Far Away More than a Century Ago. Here's How They Finally Got Home," History, August 6, 2021, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/these-indigenous-children-died-far-away-more-than-a-century-ago-heres-how-they-finally-got-home>.

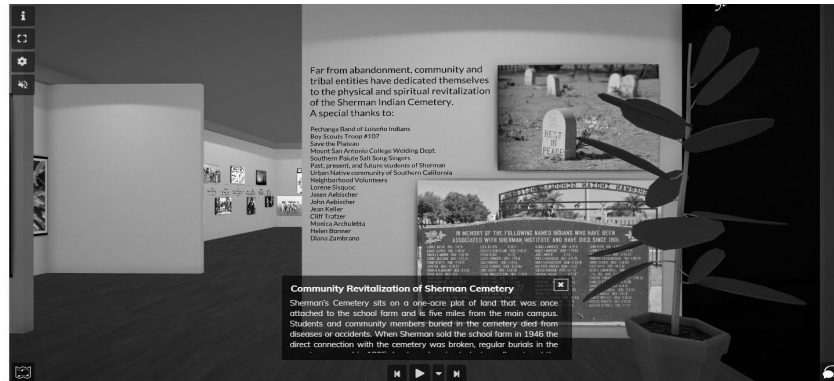


Figure 5. Sherman Cemetery Room wall dedicated to the community members who helped watch over and revitalize the cemetery. Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibition.⁴³

The students and Dr. Ocampo devoted the other half of the room to Sherman's cemetery, located on a corner of the school's farm, which first opened in 1904 and held students and Native community members.⁴⁴ Most of those buried in the cemetery died from disease, although some died from accidents, including a kitchen explosion.⁴⁵ Regular burials in the cemetery ended in 1935 as enrollment in the school dropped, and more accessible means of transporting student remains back to their homes was developed.⁴⁶ When Sherman sold the school farm in the 1940s, the cemetery was no longer directly connected to Sherman and fell into disrepair as vandals and teenagers claimed it as a place to gather.⁴⁷ Far from abandonment, neighbors watched over the cemetery and did what

⁴³ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

⁴⁴ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁴⁵ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁴⁶ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁴⁷ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

they could to clean up the trash and vandalism.⁴⁸ In 2002, a Boy Scout, Jasen Aebischer (n.d.), chose to revitalize the cemetery for his Eagle Scout project, which included raising funds for ground-penetrating radar to find all the graves and new headstones.⁴⁹ The project included the addition of planting native plants, building a new fence, and placing benches in the cemetery.⁵⁰ The revitalization of Sherman's cemetery was a community's labor of love that proved agency persisted. Dr. Ocampo and the author felt it important to recognize those who watched over the cemetery over the years; an abbreviated list of people and organizations are emblazoned on the Cemetery Room wall as a reminder to visitors that the children buried there have never been forgotten or abandoned.⁵¹ Students, student organizations, community groups, and native organizations have all taken part in the spiritual and physical revitalization of the cemetery.⁵² In 2004, Salt Song Singers performed in a ceremony at Sherman's cemetery to aid children buried there in their transition to the next world and aid in community healing.⁵³ Nevertheless, the link between the epidemics at Sherman and the cemetery could have been highlighted more in this room; and in doing so would have provided a clearer picture of life and death at Sherman and be used as a way to connect the recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. It seems fitting that a place of sorrow is where healing begins both in the exhibit and in the real world.

⁴⁸ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁴⁹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵⁰ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵¹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵² Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵³ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

A brief clip of the film, *Redskin* (1929), greets visitors on the wall in the Art Room. The film tells the story of Wing Foot, a Navajo Chief's son who is taken by the BIA to an Indian Boarding School and assimilated into Western culture; Wing Foot finds he does not fit in either world.⁵⁴ *Redskin* remains notable because portions of the movie were filmed at Sherman and because of its sympathetic portal of Native Americans. The clip depicts the violence and cultural shock students experienced with their arrival at Sherman. It is a perfect addition to the exhibit and helps the visitors better understand the message of assimilation in a way that photos and labels never could.⁵⁵

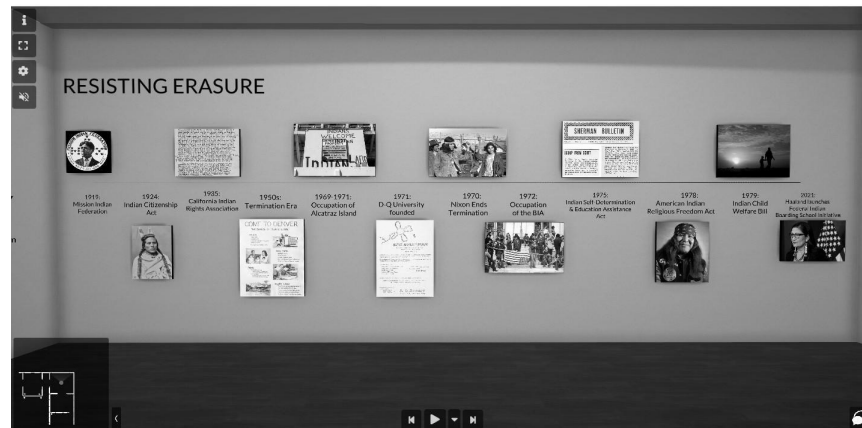


Figure 6. Timeline one the wall of the Native Agency Room. Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibition.⁵⁶

The Native Agency Room tracks the changes in national politics that transformed student culture at Sherman, from the culture of assimilation that *Redskin* demonstrates to Sherman Indian High School's focus on reclaiming native identity through

⁵⁴ *Redskin*.

⁵⁵ *Redskin*.

⁵⁶ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

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education.⁵⁷ Marlene Cardenas and Candy Navarrete (Western Shoshone) curated this room and put a significant amount of time and effort into its timeline, showing the progression and resistance to government-led erasure of tribes.⁵⁸



Figure 7. A view of the Fashion Room in the Brave Hearts Exhibit. Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibition.⁵⁹

Navarrete also curated the Fashion Room, which documents student agency through self-expression and the reemergence of native regalia at Sherman as the school's focus changed from assimilation to cultural preservation through education.⁶⁰ While the images of fashion progression and the Native Fashion Show at Sherman appear lovely, their captions lack context. They do not connect the fashion pictured with student agency, or efforts by staff to promote cultural preservation that were part of the room's theme. Adding these details to the room

⁵⁷ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵⁸ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁵⁹ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School Opening Day Event*.

⁶⁰ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

would have made the room extremely interesting. Navarrete chose the images in this room well, especially the regalia photos that display groups of students from the late 1960s through the 1980s. These images show the range of tribal cultures at Sherman and visualize the school's change in focus.⁶¹ Students at Sherman formed friendships and fictive kinship bonds with each other that have lasted through the years.



Figure 8. A view of the Lasting Memories Room. Photo Courtesy of Brave Hearts Virtual Exhibition.⁶²

Pamela Leyva curated the Lasting Memories Room, and its photos display students in their downtime, on field trips, and at dances enjoying each other's company.⁶³ The room emphasizes the ties students made with each other, and shows how those ties often last after students left Sherman and have kept alumni sending their children to Sherman.⁶⁴ In addition, many alumni have stayed involved at Sherman and make up a very involved community that

⁶¹ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁶² Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School*.

⁶³ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

⁶⁴ Ocampo, "Artsteps | 'Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School.'"

helps make Sherman what it is today. Leyva arranged the photos in the room effectively, and they depict happy Sherman students, but their labels do not offer enough context to portray how unique and vital the family ties forged at Sherman continue to be.

Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School opened to the public in a Zoom ceremony on September 24, 2021.⁶⁵ Dr. Ocampo hosted the opening, and CSUSB President Tomás D. Morales and Assembly Member James Ramos (Serrano/Cahuilla) gave opening remarks.⁶⁶ Dr. Ocampo, Sisquoc, Martinez, Wixon, Navarette, and the author narrated the exhibit's tour.⁶⁷ At the end of the tour, a question and answer period was held, and Sherman Alumni Matthew Leivas said a few words about his time at Sherman.⁶⁸ The opening exceeded their expectations, and the comments they received were mostly positive. However, some of the alumni felt that the exhibit did not do a good enough job capturing the happy memories and friendships they made at Sherman. While they value the voices of current Sherman students and alumni and felt excited to share their exhibit with them, they also did not design the exhibit with them as the intended audience, but rather to those unfamiliar with the history of Sherman. The team wanted to highlight student agency pushing back against the government's desire for assimilation for an audience who had never attended an Indian boarding school. They recognize that the school did not always foster happy memories, and they did our best to highlight the struggles that early students endured alongside the fond memories one can find with alumni after the government abandoned the assimilation mission. After the exhibit opened, interest grew far beyond their

⁶⁵ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School Opening Day Event*.

⁶⁶ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School Opening Day Event*.

⁶⁷ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School Opening Day Event*.

⁶⁸ Ocampo, *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School Opening Day Event*.

expectations. Organizations from around Southern California asked Dr. Ocampo to present the exhibit. University of California, Davis contacted Dr. Ocampo about training ninth-grade to twelfth-grade history teachers to use the *Brave Hearts* exhibit in their curriculum. The Dorothy Ramon Learning Center has decided to use the exhibit in its curriculum, and a set of virtual reality (VR) goggles is now in the Pfau Library at CSUSB, so those that want can experience the exhibit in VR.

Working on *Brave Hearts* turned out to be a challenging and rewarding experience, and the final exhibit came out remarkably well for the number of resources, time, and space available to us. However, there is room for improvement in the exhibit, and with more space and time, future students could address those issues either in the original exhibit or in an extension. Their designs for the exhibit proved largely successful, but some rooms lack the context that would have allowed their contents to paint a clearer picture of student agency, administration assimilation, and structural efforts. The students, Dr. Ocampo, and the author designed the *Brave Hearts* exhibit to educate the visitor about the history of Sherman Indian Boarding School, the program of assimilation that administrators inflicted on students at the school for decades, and the agency that students maintained in the face of the militarized structure of the school. *Brave Hearts* also charts the school's culture and curriculum changes as federal policy regarding Native Americans had changed. Americans have memory holed the treatment of Indigenous communities. This exhibit, with its broad appeal, has the potential to raise awareness not only about Sherman's history but also about the treatment of Native Americans in the early-twentieth century, leading to the process of reconciliation that both communities need in order to heal from the inter-generational trauma that Native Americans endure.

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You can find *Brave Hearts: A Visual History of Sherman Indian Boarding School* at: <http://tiny.cc/6e9ruz>.

Sherman Indian Museum's Calisphere collection can be found at: <https://calisphere.org/collections/27124/>.

For those interested in learning more about Sherman's history, the following books are an excellent place to start: Matt Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education Beyond the Mesas* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Matt Sakiestewa Gilbert, Lorene Sisquoc, and Clifford E. Trasfzer, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); and Matt Sakiestewa and Kevin Whalen, *Native Students at Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute's Outing Program, 1900–1945* (University of Washington Press, 2016).

The following Native run organization has made it their mission to start healing the intergenerational trauma caused by Indian Boarding Schools in the twentieth century: The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/>.

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Author Bio

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Museum Review: First Americans Museum

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Museum Review: First Americans Museum

By Michael Chavez

In October 2021, I had the opportunity to visit the newly opened First Americans Museum (FAM) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Opened in September 2021, and situated along the Oklahoma River, the FAM was designed to serve as a museum that tells Native American history with Native people at the center. The museum focuses on the thirty-nine tribes that call Oklahoma home either because it was their native homeland or because it was where the United States government displaced their ancestors. Cultural Affairs Director, Heather Ahtone, member of the Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation, provided an eye-opening comparison in a recent interview to put that in perspective, stating “We have more languages spoken in Oklahoma than Europe and our placement in this specific landscape is comparable to moving the forty-four nations in Europe to the island of Great Britain—not even the entire United Kingdom.”¹ Working to educate visitors while telling their stories through their own voices by providing interactive, informative, and intuitive exhibit construction, the FAM serves as a pivotal establishment of Native American representation while simultaneously utilizing innovative exhibit designs.

From the exterior, the glass and metal structures that make up the main focus of the interior hall immediately catch guests’ attention; they are a reflection of long grasses woven into vessels or baskets. Inspired by the woven grass lodges of the Wichita peoples, this landmark is visible from Interstate 40 and downtown Oklahoma City as one views the museum from further upriver. Less visible from upriver, but no less important to the mission of the museum, is the giant earthen mound built to pay homage to the

¹ Heather Ahtone (Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation), email interview with author, March 24, 2022.

Mound Builder civilizations of eastern Oklahoma like the Caddo or Wichita. Facing East to the rising sun, a prevalent theme among Native American traditions, this mound functions as a massive solar clock where the summer equinox rests at the peak of the mound; six months later, during the winter solstice, the sun can be viewed through a concrete tunnel towards the base of the mound. The tunnel is so large a semi-truck can drive straight through it. Harkening back to ancient traditions and materials while mixing in modern construction techniques, the designers of the museum firmly stamped their position upon the landscape. Walking up to the main entrance, visitors are greeted by the statue *To Touch Above* which hangs roughly thirty feet atop stone supports. In 2010, a father and son team, Demos Glass (Cherokee Nation) and Bill Glass Jr. (Cherokee Nation), with assistance from Dakota Coatney and DJ Bolin (Cherokee Nation), assembled the thirteen-foot, open palm sculpture. The artists explained that the open palm, also a universal sign of peace among Native Americans, symbolized prayer, not to the sun in the East but to the creator responsible for flora, fauna, and humanity. Visitors that walk through the front door enter the Hall of the People and can soak in the ambient light let through by the glass and steel windows. Now that guests are facing West through the panes, the large tunnel at the base of the mound becomes visible. The flood of light washes over visitors, forcing their eyes to adjust, metaphorically representing the adjustment to the flood of new knowledge guests will have to contend with during their visit.

***OKLA HOMMA* Gallery**

The museum is broken up into two main galleries. The downstairs gallery, *OKLA HOMMA*, chronicles the Native history of the tribes that call Oklahoma home from pre-European contact to the violent removal of Natives by encroaching Europeans and the United States. The gallery concludes with modern stories of perseverance among Native peoples. The second gallery, the mezzanine gallery *WINIKO: Life of an Object*, examines the weight that culturally

sensitive items carry among Native peoples such as rattles used for ceremonies around death and well-worn moccasins of a medicine man.

According to Ahtone, every member of the curatorial staff descends from an Oklahoma tribe coming through very clearly in the presentation of the exhibits. Ahtone stated, “our curatorial team, an all-Native team of eleven, worked through the difficult process of identifying priorities in our collective stories and then building the relationships with the communities to ensure the accuracy and tone of how we presented them.”²

Moving inside the entrance to *OKLA HOMMA*, the lighting softens, guiding visitors into what feels like a subterranean space complete with a large Caddo style pottery edifice serving to drive home the point that guests are about to fully immerse themselves into a native environment. Soft lighting and the sounds of narration pull visitors towards *Origins*, a 320-degree projection screen where Native voices detail the origin stories of their respective tribes of Oklahoma. Thus, the Hall of the People symbolically cleansed visitors and finished that cleansing by creating a fresh canvas with the immersion into a darker environment, allowing *Origins* to present Native histories with both greater context and enlightenment. Continuing further along the main hall, guests are provided with bright displays of regalia and artifacts in conjunction with large text panels detailing the Native experience in the United States in a linear timeline. Among the text panels are color variants in red and black. Red panels indicate events in the timeline of Native history: the rise of corn, the formation of powerful Native coalitions, or treaties of sovereignty signed with the United States. The black panels, however, carry a negative connotation and are often filled with violent transgressions against Native peoples to remove them from the land. The third type of panel incorporates both colors with the red fading into black. These blended panels are indicative of the mindset many Native peoples hold for these

² Heather Ahtone (Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation), email interview with author, March 24, 2022.

events. Events that are weighed with both trauma and triumph find their balance within the blended panels.

This paneled section of *OKLA HOMMA* functions much like a bridge between *Origins* and more contemporary displays. The panels are divided into three distinct eras. The first section is devoted to the pre-contact era prior to 1492 to the 1830s. The second set is concerned with 1830 to 1907 during which Oklahoma became a state and the United States government moved Native Americans en masse to what is known today as the reservation system. The final section, which spans from 1907 to the present, mixes in more and more blended panels creating a sense of positive momentum as visitors move forward. What some might argue is an intentional sensory overload accomplishes the goal of folding guests into this narrative. Instead of a multitude of degrees of separation from the historical material, visitors suddenly find themselves invested in the Native experience. Lending to this immersive environment are the small alcoves where the light source emanates from a central fire-like base which flickers to the voices of those giving oral histories passed down to them by their ancestors who learned from those before them.

While the principal focus of the FAM is to tell the story of the Native peoples of Oklahoma, there are numerous examples—such as the interactive trade exhibit—that allow visitors to see the transcontinental trade that took place among Native peoples across the northern continent during the pre-contact era. The museum does not just tell the story of Oklahoma tribal nations; it tells the story of Native peoples across the continent and, as a result, visitors come from all over the country and the world. Being a descendant of the Tongva of the Los Angeles River basin here in Southern California, it was a cathartic moment seeing the name of my people and the vast trade routes that connected them to the tribes of what is now Oklahoma.

Tri-colored panels and grim reminders of a dark past in the form of voiceovers by Native storytellers give way to the brevity of resurgence. As the timeline moves closer to the present day, the black panels give way to displays of popular stereotypes about

Native peoples as well as clear examples of counteraction by Native peoples against harmful caricatures. That proud re-claiming and proclaiming of Native American heritage took off with the Red Power Movement of the 1970s. It only gained more momentum as many Native American tribes pushed forth legislation to regain sovereignty where they could.

The final leg of *OKLA HOMMA* is dedicated to showcasing Native pride by highlighting local Oklahoma Pow Wows, contemporary celebrities and historical figures of Native ancestry, and celebrating the warrior spirit that exists among Native Americans. Visitors can sit inside of a halved touring van to watch a first-person point of view documentary that takes the audience on a journey all over the state to observe pow wows. Each stop places visitors on a different tribe's land, providing a nuanced and detailed view of a common activity among Native peoples. Guests are not just viewing these activities either. With interactive projection technology, visitors can take part in traditional Native American games such as *Hand Games*, which is a guessing game, and *Chunkey*, which is a disc rolling and spear throwing game popular in mound building cultures.

The OKLA HOMMA section serves a greater role than simply educating visitors about games and pow wows though. Beyond the tall temporary walls, erected like multiple mini-billboards paying tribute to the warrior spirit of Native American peoples, there are also walls with the familiar faces of famous athletes with Native ancestry. Here, the contributions of Native Americans to the United States military are also immortalized on these larger than life depictions. It completes the efforts of museum staff which were to demonstrate that Native Americans are not a people of the past who have disappeared altogether. They are proud, resurgent, and very much alive in the spaces allotted to them, with greater aspirations to break free of those limits. In an email interview with the author in March 2022, Ahtone remarked, "It was my intent to listen to the voices and wisdom of our

ancestors and to create a space for the Indigenous children of the future.”³

WINIKO: Life of an Object

On the mezzanine level, the exhibit style changes dramatically. Here, in the WINIKO: Life of an Object gallery, the timeline takes a backseat to the objects themselves. Composed of commissioned pieces and pieces on loan from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), *WINIKO* works instead to tell a story with each piece. Where the pieces on display in the lower exhibit (*OKLA HOMMA*) work to accent and punctuate, here, they are the main draw. Displayed over multiple sections, these pieces, while demonstrating exquisite craftsmanship, were never intended to represent peak moments in the civilizations they came from. Rather, they are personal items. Children’s shoes, baby carriers, and ceremonial belts are reminders of the lives they once belonged to. In the WINIKO gallery, the experience transcends time. It is easy to visualize a small baby on the carrying board, a man holding the intricately carved staff, and a young woman wearing a hand-sewn skirt.

Interactive exhibits are not just limited to the first floor either. WINIKO punctuates each section of the exhibit with an archway with hidden panels that visitors must literally uncover to take in all the information. Of course, like on the first level, not everything in this exhibit inspires happiness. More than a few of the panels display gut-wrenching photos of human remains, a reminder of the dark origins of Native Americans in museums. In years past, Native Americans were relegated to the subject of anthropology, not necessarily history. It was this distinction that facilitated an environment where Native Americans were studied and displayed as an animal would be, with some exhibits including skeletal remains. It is the same past that the exhibit curators

³ Heather Ahtone (Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation), email interview with author, March 24, 2022.

intended to move away from. Respect and collaboration with Native American peoples in regard to the items on display represent an overdue revolution in the world of museum curation. In some cases, where curation staff and tribal authorities determined it necessary, there are empty display stands with item descriptions. In compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, which prohibits holdings or collections which may include Native American remains or culturally sensitive pieces, some items in the Smithsonian collection were curated for this exhibit but kept from display in a show of respect. This small but significant step is a complete turnaround from museum practices common even fifty years ago.

The exhibit takes visitors on a circular path symbolizing the familiar circular patterns of Native life and the life of the objects on display. Where below visitors rode a wave of Native American history presented in a vibrant and immersive fashion, here the exhibit style is more subdued making for a quieter viewing which suits its intentions well. Those intentions are to, first and foremost, celebrate Native American peoples and culture while demonstrating respect by seeking permission first instead of displaying sacred items as though Native American cultures are from a bygone era. Treating these items with respect and not as relics lends itself to the education of visitors in a more comprehensive manner rather than merely imparting neutral or objective facts.

Final Review

As a whole, the FAM functions as an immersive and educational “living” museum. I use “living” here as an acknowledgment of the intentions of the museum’s creators as conveyed by Cultural Affairs Director Ahtone, who stated,

Our story is not disconnected from our relationships across the continent. So telling ‘our’ story was both complex and emotional for every one of us because

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of the scope and the personal responsibility we each carried on behalf of our families and communities.⁴

⁴ Heather Ahtone (Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation), email interview with author, March 24, 2022.

Author Bio

Michael Chavez is a recent graduate of California State University, San Bernardino where he earned his master's degree in history in 2022. He previously earned his bachelor's degree from California State University, San Bernardino in 2019 and also holds a Museum Studies Certification from California State University, San Bernardino due to his concentration on the museum profession. Specializing in collections management and curation, Michael has had professional internships with the March Field Air Museum and Dorothy Ramon Learning Center, to name a few. He is not only a student of Native American history; he also proudly traces his ancestry back to the Tongva of the Los Angeles Basin who were among the tribes in servitude at Mission San Gabriel and are commonly referred to as "Gabrielinos."

Michael currently resides in the city of Pomona, ancestral lands of the Tongva, with his wife Sasha who earned her bachelor of arts degree in communications from the University of La Verne in 2019. Michael and his wife are expecting their newborn son in May 2022. It is his hope that this project will open the doors of curiosity for many readers, encouraging them to learn more about the history of California and raise awareness about the current struggle of many tribes who lack federal recognition, like the Tongva, currently residing on their ancestral homelands in the California.



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Museum Review: Homestead-Workman Family Homestead Museum

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Museum Review: Homestead-Workman Family Homestead Museum

By Jose Castro

Located at 15415 East Don Julian Road in the City of Industry outside Los Angeles, California, the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum is a historical site consisting of two well-maintained homes owned by the Workman-Temple family. Here, visitors can learn a century's worth of Southern California history from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century in a historical site that represents the social evolution of the Western United States. Owned by the City of Industry, visitors can enter this site and be guided through the homes' halls and rooms by volunteers for free. The return to the museum after the COVID-19 pandemic has been sporadic due to budget and staff cuts but, little by little, museum staff are beginning to restart the guided tours and activities that they have done for more than thirty years.

Since 1981, the museum has been open to the public with two historical houses on its premises. One is the Workman House, which is an adobe house built by William Workman (1799–1876), who was the co-founder of Rancho La Puente, in 1842.¹ The other is the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture home named La Casa Nueva built in 1920 by Walter Temple (1869–1938). The Workman-Temple Homestead Museum also includes the family cemetery (built in 1850) where Pío Pico (1801–1894), the last

¹ Rancho La Puente was granted to John Rowland by Governor Juan Alvarado as a 17,740-acre ranch for \$1,000. The rancho was enlarged to 48,790 acres in 1845 when Governor Pío Pico named both John Rowland (1791–1873) and William Workman as co-owners. With the annexation of California by the United States in 1848, the validity of the grant was reviewed by the United States Land Commission. It was not until 1867 that the title was confirmed by then-President Andrew Johnson (1808–1875). Rancho La Puente, *The Homestead Museum Blog*, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org/about-us/rancho-la-puente>.

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governor of California while California was under Mexican rule, is buried. Apart from being a historical site, the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum also holds a vast archive of documents such as letters, books, pictures, and newspapers dating from 1830 to 1930.



Figure 1. Workman Adobe House Built in 1841. Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.²

The City of Industry purchased the property in 1971 and began an extensive restoration process to return the site to its original appearance. Both houses were damaged prior to the city's acquisition of the properties, but La Casa Nueva required a more detailed restoration than the Workman Adobe House. The city hired specialists to restore the buildings. Goetz Art Studios, an East Los Angeles company recognized for its tile murals, so accurately reproduced the missing and broken tiles that it is difficult to distinguish the new ones from the originals. John Wallis and Associates, a company who has made stained glass windows in Pasadena since the 1920s, reproduced all the missing windows and cleaned and repaired the surviving original windows. As a result of the workers' efforts, the stained-glass windows appear as they did

² "Workman Adobe House," Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

in the 1920s. It took over five years to restore the house to its original prestige.³ Once the restoration was finished, both homes were opened to the public for free as a museum. From the walls to the ceiling, every detail in the restoration is essential to avoid deterioration that accumulates over time due to natural wear. Due to restoration efforts on behalf of the City of Industry, Walter Temple's La Casa Nueva and William Workman's House have been maintained and preserved over the past few decades so that new generations can learn about the history of Los Angeles and the prominent Workman-Temple family.

The history of the Workman House began in 1841 when Rancho La Puente was granted to Workman and John A. Rowland (1791–1873) north of Puente Hills, in the San Gabriel Valley. The first phase of the house was built by the banks of what was once the San Jose creek in 1842. The architecture was a common and traditional Mexican frontier house. The main column of the house is made up of three adobe rooms. The adobe bricks are made with sand, clay, straw, and water, and the bricks were turned out onto the ground for several weeks to dry them out. Wooden lintels were placed across the top of the doors and windows to open support, and the house was covered with plaster to preserve the abode.⁴ The roof was flat and originally there were wooden doors and windows, but it was later replaced with brick wings and a second story during expansion.

The second phase of construction began after 1849 during the California Gold Rush (1848–1855). Workman began to have unprecedented economic growth due to the profits from raising cattle and the sale of raw hides and tallow, and he began to expand the house.⁵ In the 1870s, the Workman House was transformed

³ "Cultural Heritage," City of Industry, accessed December 2, 2021, <https://www.cityofindustry.org/about-industry/cultural-heritage>.

⁴ "Cultural Heritage," City of Industry.

⁵ Paul R. Spitzzerii, "Gold, Guns and Growth Preview: The Expansion of the Workman House During the 1850s," *The Homestead Museum Blog*, January 8, 2021, <https://homesteadmuseum.blog/2021/01/08/gold-guns-and-growth-preview-the-expansion-of-the-workman-house-during-the-1850s/>.

from a modest adobe home into an American Victorian house. A second floor was added to the building and rooms added to the wings designed by architect Ezra Kysor (1835–1907).⁶ The picturesque Victorian country home reflects the architectural tastes that were popular in mid-nineteenth century America. Today, the Workman House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a California State Historic Landmark.⁷

Inside the house, most of the rooms are empty; only one bedroom has furniture that belonged to John Temple (n.d.) from 1899. The bed, dresser, and chamber pot are positioned in the way they are believed to have been when the house was inhabited. In this way, the visitor can observe how the family lived in the Victorian Era (1837–1901) with the large curtains on the windows, the wooden furniture and the marble fireplace that adorns the place. Moreover, visitors are able to view the changes made to the house over time to understand how Los Angeles changed from the 1840s to the 1890s with pictures posted by the museum in the empty rooms. These images illustrate the city's changes from a Mexican pueblo to an American metropolis of the late nineteenth century, and the Workman Adobe Home reflects this demographic and cultural shift.

In 1899, the Workman family lost the homestead due to financial problems. It was not until 1917 when Walter Temple (1869–1938), the youngest grandson of William Workman, decided to buy his grandfather's old house. He then built a new house next door and named it La Casa Nueva. Fortune came to Temple in 1914 when he found oil at his home in the Montebello Hills. He began doing business with Standard Oil and investing in real estate. By 1917, he purchased his grandfather's house and the adjoining land that included the family cemetery. Being an architectural and artistic work, the construction of La Casa Nueva

⁶ Ezra Kysor was one of the most famous architects in the 1800s. Among the most recognized works was Pico House, and Cathedral of St. Vibiana.

⁷ Erected 1976 by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in cooperation with the City of Industry. "William Workman Home," The Historical Marker Database, accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=50981>.

began in 1922 and took five years to finish due to its intricate craftsmanship.⁸

La Casa Nueva, built as an adobe home with hand crafted steel and wood, is a symbol of appreciation towards Temple's Hispanic and English roots. There is Mexican symbolism from the entrance of the door to the stained-glass windows. Though the artistic and historic value of architectural craft is significant, they are often disregarded since few are found in museums or art galleries and most craftsmen remain anonymous.⁹ From the entrance door, the visitor can appreciate the detailed figures carved in the wood, such as medieval knights helmets and Spanish-European symbols, and see how the icons cast in steel was not only to give aesthetic but to give a message representing the wealth and lineage within the Workman-Temple family.

Temple commissioned well-known Los Angeles architects Walker Eisen (1919–1941) and Roy Seldon Price (1888–1940) to design La Casa Nueva, and Mexican workers who specialized in adobe construction oversaw the actual labor and development. The 12,400-square-foot home was built with a Spanish Colonial Revival style, and it is noted for its fine architectural crafts, including stained glass, ceramic tile, wrought iron, and carved plaster and wood.¹⁰ During the 1920s and 1930s, the Spanish Colonial Revival was one the most popular architectural styles in Southern California.¹¹ It was sought to resemble the Spanish

⁸ Paul R. Spitzzerii, "Family History," *Homestead Museum*, accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org/about-us/family-history>.

⁹ Max A. Van Balgooy, "Architectural Craft at the Homestead Museum," *Homestead Quarterly* (Winter 1990).

¹⁰ "Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum," Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed December 2021, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

¹¹ According to Ione R. Stiegler, "the Spanish Colonial Revival style includes a wide range of elements influenced by Spanish Colonial architecture in the United States, and incorporates elements from the broad history of Spanish architecture, including Moorish, Gothic, Byzantine, and Renaissance fountains with tiled roofs, windows of multiple panels, exterior spaces and decorative

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European Mediterranean, so wealthy families began to build this type of house in the sunny state of California to evoke a status of wealth and power.



Figure 2. La Casa Nueva Main Entrance. Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.¹²

Surrounding La Casa Nueva, the visitors can walk through a grapevine-covered corridor with a concrete floor that features the names of all the California missions as well as tile diamonds, six-pointed stars, and coats of arms. This house is composed with artistic colorful ceramic tile as well as clay tile roofs, roughly plastered walls, arched doorways, and wrought iron window grilles. The largest and most public spaces of La Casa Nueva are the Main Hall, Living Room, Dining Room, and Library. Outside

details.” Ione R. Stiegler, “Style 101: Spanish Colonial Revival,” IS Architecture, accessed May 2, 2022,

<https://isarchitecture.com/style-101-spanish-colonial-revival/>.

¹² “La Casa Nueva Main Entrance,” Workman and-Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

of the main house, is the Tepee House, a conical adobe structure that Mr. Temple used as an office.

The two most important handcrafted elements of the house are the stained glass and the tiles. La Casa Nueva's stained-glass windows represent one of the largest public collections of its kind in California. The artists drew their inspiration from the stained-glass windows of medieval Europe. The glass coloring is done in different steps and various metallic oxides are added during the manufacturing process. According to researcher, author, speaker, and blogger, Max A. van Balgooy:

In the early nineteenth century, stained glass became popular in the United States with the introduction of the Gothic Revival style of architecture. Drawing on medieval churches for inspiration, the Gothic Revival influenced the design of churches, houses, and furniture, which began to feature trefoils, pointed arches, and crockets. Like their medieval counterparts, windows often used stained glass. Much of this glass was imported from England or Germany, but beginning in the 1840s, skilled craftsmen quickly became adept at producing stained glass windows in the United States.¹³

The stained-glass windows found throughout La Casa Nueva demonstrate the variety of techniques popular in the early twentieth-century. In some parts, such as the main entrance, craftsmen used colored enamels in the stained glass, such as blues, reds, and greens, to render clothing and landscapes in the images. In the bedrooms and smaller rooms, techniques of painting are more easily seen with roses, irises, morning glories, and wisteria bloom painted onto the glass.

¹³ "Stained Glass," Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed December 2021, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org/about-us/la-casa-nueva/stained-glass>.

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Figure 3. Back Side of La Casa Nueva and Tippy House, Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.¹⁴

Every room contains a stained-glass window, totaling nearly fifty pieces throughout the historical house. The most important is the triptych, the centerpiece in the main lobby room. When visitors enter the lobby of the house, the first thing the visitor can see is the pictographic window that is illuminated by sunlight, depicting various Indigenous American nations observing the arrival of European ships. Additionally, one of the rooms in the home is the Music Room with an arched ceiling to preserve the acoustic and decorated with stained windows representing famous classical music composers. The Study Room also has stained glass that represents the writers and scenes from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605) and William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1594).

¹⁴ "Back Side of La Casa Nueva and Tippy House," Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.



Figure 4. Stained Glass Window. Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.¹⁵



Figure 5. Stained Glass Window Celebrating The American Immigration to The West. Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.¹⁶

¹⁵ “Stained Glass Window,” Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

¹⁶ “Stained Glass Window Celebrating The American Immigration to The West,” Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

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The handmade tile is another important element in the house and is found in nearly every room, either as baseboards, stair risers, fireplace surrounds, wall niches, or window seats. According to the Homestead Museum website:

These tiles range in size from 2-inches to 3-inches to 5-inches and feature the characteristic convex face covered with thick, bumpy glaze. Over two dozen different tile patterns are used throughout the house, including flowers, birds, and rabbits covered in blue, yellow, green, white, and red. This tile was purchased from B. A. Whalen, a Los Angeles dealer in ‘Spanish, Italian and Mexican furniture, wrought iron, tile and pottery’ and was most likely imported from Puebla, Mexico.¹⁷

Those panels were made by an artist named Pedro Sanchez (n.d.). In the Dining Room, a 36-inch by 24-inch panel features a potted plant with stylized flowers. Lining the back of a built-in cupboard in the Breakfast Room is a 24-inch by 29-inch panel showing two peacocks eating a basket of fruit. In the bedroom of Thomas Temple (n.d.), a niche contains a 32-inch by 27-inch panel of a Madonna and Child guarded by two angels.¹⁸ While the Mexican ceramic tile was imported from Puebla and is handmade and has brighter colors, the American made tile was built in factories and each of them uses different patterns in brilliant colors, such as blue sunflowers and pink roses.¹⁹

¹⁷ “Tilework,” Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed December 02, 2021, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org/about-us/la-casa-nueva/tilework>.

¹⁸ “Tilework,” Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum.

¹⁹ Talavera ceramic tile is from Puebla, Mexico. Puebla was the most prominent of the Mexican centers of pottery production to employ the technique of tin-enameled earthenware. Johanna. Hecht, “Talavera from Puebla,” in *Heilbrunn*



Figure 6. La Casa Nueva Main Lobby. Courtesy of the Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum, City of Industry, California.²⁰

Just by looking at each room, the visitor understands why La Casa Nueva took five years to build. Creating and installing so many architectural crafts was a time consuming process. Since the City of Industry obtained this property, efforts have been made to maintain every room as it was in the 1920s, and the museum volunteers and workers work diligently to maintain and sustain the museum to its original prosperity. Not only is the building important, but visitors can get in touch with a 1920's atmosphere with a collection of furniture and artifacts that the museum has obtained over the years. Some of the furniture was donated by the Temple family like the family piano made in the 1800s and brought from the East Coast. Because the late Temple family member, Edgar Temple (n.d.), helped the museum to refinish the

Timeline of Art History (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tala/hd_tala.htm.

²⁰ "La Casa Nueva Main Lobby," Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed May 20, 2022, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

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houses where he lived with his father Walter Temple, the furniture is placed according to when the Temple family lived there in the 1920s.

Currently, the museum is continuing to develop an online archive to show their entire collection. There are two online permanent exhibits for the public to access and use for research. The virtual exhibits are *Collective Strength: The Battle for Women's Suffrage*, and *Drying Out: Living With Prohibition in Los Angeles*.²¹ According to Museum Director Paul Spitzzeri:

[We] have a pretty good collection of early (pre-1890) photographs, a good selection of family artifacts, including papers and photos, and the pretty remarkable first ledger for the store of Henry Dalton, at Los Angeles and Azusa from 1846-1856, which, of course is from the end of the Mexican era to the first decade or so of the American period. Only a small percentage of the Homestead's collection of over 30,000 objects are on display at the site.²²

Lately, museum staff have worked diligently to digitize documents and photograph valuable artifacts to be put on their webpage and other websites like Calisphere. Currently, approximately 500 artifacts from the museum are available for public viewing. Spitzzeri noted that the museum “just finished a collaboration with the USC Digital Library, with five hundred of our photos relating to underrepresented groups (mainly ethnic minorities) scanned to that database.”²³ Josette Temple (1936–2020) was the granddaughter of Walter Temple. She passed away in 2020, and she donated hundreds of valuable photographs and negatives, approximately 2,500 papers, letters, and other

²¹ “Online Exhibits,” Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org/about-us/online-exhibits>.

²² Paul Spitzzeri, e-mail interview with author, March 31, 2022.

²³ Paul Spitzzeri, e-mail interview with author, March 31, 2022.

documents that are useful for the museum. She also donated family furniture and other objects that will be placed in La Casa Nueva.²⁴ This new collection will be an enormous and important addition to the museum.

The museum provides school tours, lectures, workshops, performances, and special tours to visitors, and Workman-Temple Family Homestead Museum also works to support other institutions. In addition, the museum staff hosts book clubs, special talks, and events related to California history. As Spitzzeri recalls:

We've occasionally helped other historical organizations, such as the Historical Society of the Pomona Valley, on managing artifact collections, and have loaned objects or images to museums, such as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, which is using a photo for an exhibit that will be shown there this fall and then in Nashville in 2023. We've had a long-time connection with the Boyle Heights Historical Society and Boyle Heights Community Partners because the Workman family established that community in the 1870s.²⁵

The jobs of the few paid workers at the museum are difficult. There are only seven paid staff members (five full-time and two part-time) and sixty-five volunteers who have the responsibility of being docents and desk assistants.²⁶

²⁴ "Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum," Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, accessed December 2021, <https://www.homesteadmuseum.org>.

²⁵ Paul Spitzzeri, e-mail interview with author, March 31, 2022.

²⁶ The paid members are Paul Spitzzeri, who is the museum director; the programs manager, Gennie Truelock, who oversees all public programs like tours and events; a programs coordinator, Steven Dugan, who works with the volunteer program and other administrative tasks; the facilities coordinator, Robert Barron, who oversees our computer network, site maintenance and restoration and other projects; the collections coordinator, Michelle Muro, who oversees general operations of the artifact collection, exhibit, care of the historic

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In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Industry cut the museum budget by forty percent, laying off several paid employees and keeping only the seven. The museum stopped doing festivities that were very successful such as the Festival of the 1920s, which managed to have up to 5,000 attendees in two days in 2019. This festivity brought the public, families, and children closer to the museum and closer to local history. Therefore, it is important that these beautiful family festivals return to promote the museum and encourage people to come to visit this historic site. The City of Industry, who owns the museum and is in charge of its financial support, needs to increase the budget for next year and thus return funding to hold these events and hire paid staff to coordinate the events and manage the museum. In 2022, three of the best paid workers left after receiving positions at private fund museums, and they left their position to unpaid volunteers who had the impetus to work as Public Historians.

The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum is a small historical site that is supported primarily by volunteers and a hand-full of paid workers. Volunteers include students from high school, community colleges and universities, and people who like history and want to contribute their time to this museum. As Spitzzeri recommends, “volunteering and finding internships are always very important and my advice is to be open to possibility, meaning keeping any and all options open and being prepared, as much as can be done, to encounter surprising and unexpected opportunities.”²⁷ When Spitzzeri was a young history student at California State University, Fullerton he came to the museum as a volunteer and from there, he received the opportunity to be a paid staff member and later received the position as the museum’s

houses, and other duties; the public programs specialist, Isis Quan, who is mainly concerned with managing social media platforms as well as event development; and the public program’s assistant, Bea Rivas, who helps with tours, events, site supervision, and other assignments needed for the museum to function.

²⁷ Paul Spitzzeri, e-mail interview with author, March 31, 2022.

Director. He recommends Public History students to first be a volunteer, gain experience from the position, and learn what it means to be in the public history profession. Spitzzeri recalled, “I became director by sticking around for almost thirty years, working up from intern to Education Specialist to Volunteer Supervisor to Collections Coordinator and Manager and finally to Assistant Director before our long-time Director retired in 2016.”²⁸

Although the majority are volunteers, the responsibility of running the museum is in the hands of paid staff. It is a rigorous job to coordinate events, create exhibitions, manage files and have all services available to the public. From fourth graders, who are brought on field trips, to historians and the public, who visit to learn about the history of Rancho La Puente, everyone is welcomed by staff who, volunteering or paid, are willing to help and inform everyone who visits this historic museum.

Thanks to donations from the Temple family and the City of Industry for funding this location, the people of Los Angeles County have access to a rich piece of local history. Inside the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum is a site full of archives with pictures, primary sources, and documents that historians can use and for the public to enjoy. Some of those sources are also being brought online as museum staff work to develop a virtual archive and virtual events to reach people from all over the world. Meanwhile, the entrance and all public and school events are free in this beautiful historical site museum.

²⁸ Paul Spitzzeri, e-mail interview with author, March 31, 2022.

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