



# the corvette

## **The Corvette**

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## **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This journal was created and published on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. The *Corvette* acknowledges the historic and continuing relations of Salish peoples on this land and invites readers to remain mindful of the effects and processes of existing settler-colonialism within academic institutions and local communities, to breathe life into commitments to truth and (re)conciliation.

## **SUBMISSIONS**

The *Corvette* publishes the work of current and recently-graduated University of Victoria History Undergraduate students. The *Corvette* endeavors to publish articles that represent the best scholarship produced by UVic students concerning the past. We are interested in all methods and fields of inquiry.

## **PUBLISHING**

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## COVER IMAGE

The United Nations designated 1975 as International Women's Year. Around the world women rallied and marched in support of women's rights. This photograph depicts activists participating in the International Women's Year rally held in Victoria, British Columbia, on May 10, 1975. Protesters at the centre of the image -- holding signs reading "So What?" and "International Tokenism Year" -- illustrates the long path forward for many countries to realize goals established at the United Nations conference on the status of women held in Mexico City that same year. In fact, the United Nations would go on to declare 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women.

This photograph is from the Everywoman's Books Fonds (AR 50) in Special Collections and University Archives, which contains records documenting the founding and operations of Everywoman's Books, a non-profit volunteer-run collective dedicated to selling feminist literature in Victoria, established in 1975. Among its efforts, Everywoman's Books sought to create an impetus for political understanding and action. In addition to photographs, the fonds includes correspondence, log books, reports, audiovisual materials, and even the stained glass sign designed for Everywoman's Books by Heather Hestler. The fonds is one of several in the Victoria Women's Movement Archives. With donations of materials from Everywoman's Books, Lynn Greenhough, and Sharon Keen, the fonds is an important record of the work of local feminists to further the rights of women.

Heather Dean  
Associate Director  
University of Victoria Special Collections



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## President's Message

I am pleased to introduce the sixth edition of *The Corvette*, the University of Victoria's student-run history undergraduate journal.

Within this excellent collection of articles, readers will be taken on a journey through passages of history with discussions on colonialism, justice, gender, technology, politics and more. In the following pages, we have the opportunity to engage with examples of local and world histories and articles that really highlight the breath of historical study that occurs on campus.

At UVic, we have a new Strategic Framework – one that articulates our vision to be the Canadian research university that best integrates outstanding scholarship, engaged learning and real-life involvement to contribute to a better future for people and the planet. The Framework sets out six strategic priorities for our university and among them are specific commitments to dynamic learning, research excellence and engaging locally and globally. The research and knowledge being mobilized within the pages of this publication directly reflect and advance those priorities and our vision.

The student researchers engaged in the creation of *The Corvette* have gained valuable skills like thinking critically, tackling queries in depth and with rigour and contributing knowledge. These essays showcase what our finest undergraduate researchers are capable of when provided with hands-on opportunities through research, writing, and publishing, as well as acting as copy editors and peer reviewers. The result is an excellent collection of work from students who have benefitted from their engagement in research-inspired learning. Congratulations to *The Corvette* and our talented UVic undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and mentors who have created this extraordinary and thought-provoking

collection of historical essays. I celebrate your accomplishments and thank you for sharing your knowledge.

Sincerely,

Professor Jamie Cassels, QC  
President and Vice-Chancellor

## Chair's Message

Over the last six years the publication of the *Corvette* has been more reliable as a sign of spring than the arrival of nesting birds, flowering skunk cabbage or groundhog shadows. Like other signs of spring, it represents fertility and new growth. In this volume we witness the miracle of fresh ideas sprouting after a fall gestation and a long winter of incubation as they were passed back and forth between the warm hard drives of authors and editors to emerge, now, onto the pages of this volume.

In its original meaning “Corvette” means a little basket, which is appropriately suited to catching and sharing these vernal offerings, but for most people, “Corvette” conjures up the Chevy sports car. Here too the name is appropriate, for this iconic car, since its 1953 conception, has come to represent freedom, adventure, style and a remarkable amount of power in a small car.

The Corvette you cradle as you read this is the incarnation of a joint adventure of the dedicated team of editors and authors that produced it, an example of editorial grace and beauty, and it represents the freedom of ideas that are the hallmark of the academy and our department. Finally, this small package is bursting with intellectual power.

This year the authors take you on a fast ride from Victoria, via Vancouver, all the way to Egypt with stops in the United States and Kingdom to Russia, with a short detour through cyberspace, and some time travel back to the early Eighteenth Century. The topics weave through medical, gender, environmental, political, religious, social and immigration history and traverse sources as diverse as court transcripts and a Broadway musical.

As the car has undergone many transformations though its history, so has this mighty journal which started back in 1980 with the aspirational title the “Ascendant Historian.” There is no doubt that working on that horse-and-buggy version of the Corvette made me a better writer, editor and historian. It also allows me to say from experience how much work and attention goes into crafting an article to make it ready for publication, and how much effort, care, and generosity goes into editing articles to create a journal.

For all their efforts we owe a great debt to the authors and the editors of the *Corvette*. Thanks for this great ride!

John Lutz, chair  
University of Victoria History Department  
Co-Editor, *Ascendant Historian*, 1980 edition.

## Editor's Introduction

“So, what exactly do you plan on doing with your history degree?”

This is a question that plagues historically-included undergraduates both past and present. Even as historicism becomes more and more prevalent in popular discourse, this notion of “doing something with your degree” continues to be an interrogation directed at undergraduates who have chosen to embark in this apparently-inadequate choice of field.

And so, I am honoured to present to you the sixth edition of the *Corvette*, the University of Victoria's peer-reviewed undergraduate history journal. The eight authors published demonstrate of the great variety of topics explored by history undergraduates at our university. The authors consider new approaches to old topics, analyze the new media through which historical knowledge is communicated, and collectively express the flourishing spirit of historical inquiry in our department.

I invite you to read these exceptional papers. Explore the historical eras, from Tsarist Russia to the Egyptian Revolution and in-between. Examine the historical worlds brought to life on the Broadway stage and the Xbox One. Deconstruct the 'mythhistories' of Stanley Park and compare the multiplicity of contested narratives surrounding the death of William C. Hopkinson. Consider how gender norms affected the outcome of rape trials at the Old Bailey and the language of medical advertisements in the *Daily Colonist*.

This journal would not exist if not for the actions of the previous editorial teams who have established this tradition and provided countless resources. Our three professor advisors, Dr.

Neilesh Bose, Dr. Peter Cook, and Dr. Mitchell Lewis Hammond, lent their time and knowledge to give invaluable advice to the authors and the editorial team, for which we are grateful. Lastly, we would be nowhere without the assistance of our peer-reviewers, copy-editors, and the History course union that supports us.

I would also like to personally thank the *Corvette's* Associate Editor-in-Chief, Julianna Nielsen, for all her hard work, in addition to the assistance of Rhett Mutschke, Wren Shaman, Pier Olivia Brown, Sean Stinson, Anthony R. Auchterlonie, and Lindy Marks. I am also especially indebted to the assistance of Heather Dean from Special Collections at McPherson Library who worked with us to find the cover photo for this edition. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of the UVic's Student Society in funding the journal.

And, finally, I'd like to thank those who choose to read the introductions of journals prior to reading the articles. We write this all for you.

Happy exploring,

Colin Mooney  
Editor-in-Chief, the *Corvette* 2019

## Hamilton: An American Elitist

AMANDA ENGEL

*An unexpected cultural phenomenon, Lin Manuel Miranda's Hamilton: An American Musical brought Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton back into the public eye over 200 years after his death. This paper inquires as to whether Hamilton accurately depicts the political beliefs of its titular character. It also explores the ways in which Hamilton can help us understand the relationship between individuals, social power, and our conceptualizations of the past. In doing so, it concludes that the show fails to address the elitist ideas that saturated Hamilton's political theory. Consequently, it argues that Hamilton projects contemporary values onto a historical figure and supports the highly contentious Great Man Theory of History.*

Alexander Hamilton is making a comeback. Slandered both in life and centuries after death, Hamilton's work has been, at best, relatively unappreciated by the public and, at worst, caricatured and demonized by Thomas Jefferson and his admirers.<sup>1</sup> But everything changed when lyricist, composer, and performer Lin-Manuel Miranda began dazzling Broadway audiences with *Hamilton: An American Musical* in 2015. A celebration of Hamilton's life, the show was highly praised for its cast of non-white actors and its unique musical style, which combines rap, hip-hop, R&B, and traditional showtunes. *Hamilton's* cultural impact was significant; it quickly earned a level of mainstream recognition that was unheard of for a Broadway musical. The show has arguably become the most popular and accessible means of learning about Hamilton and by extension, perhaps, the era in which he lived. As such, we have to wonder: Is *Hamilton* really the revolution we think it is?

This paper will consider the following questions: Does *Hamilton: An American Musical* offer a fair and comprehensive depiction of Alexander Hamilton's politics? What does its portrayal of

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen F. Knott, "The Four Faces of Alexander Hamilton: Jefferson's Hamilton, Hollywood's Hamilton, Miranda's Hamilton, and the Real Hamilton," *American Political Thought* 7, no.4 (Fall 2018): 543-544.

Hamilton imply about the nature of the past as it relates to individuals and social power? In exploring these questions, it will first provide context surrounding Alexander Hamilton's life and how it has been portrayed in popular contemporary works. It will then discuss his political beliefs with regards to republicanism, economics, and immigration, and whether or not these beliefs were effectively captured in *Hamilton*. Finally, it will consider the broader implications of *Hamilton*'s portrayal of its titular character, and what these implications suggest about the progression of history. Ultimately, *Hamilton: An American Musical* neglects to highlight the elitism and distaste for common people that pervaded Alexander Hamilton's political theory. In turn, it projects present day ideals onto a historical figure and perpetuates the questionable notion that history is driven by select heroic and socially powerful individuals.<sup>2</sup>

### **Alexander Hamilton: Then and Now**

In 2004, historian Ron Chernow published *Alexander Hamilton*, an 818-page biography about the life of America's first Treasury Secretary. The book tells Hamilton's story in immense detail. Born in the mid-1750s, he suffered an impoverished childhood on the Caribbean island of Nevis.<sup>3</sup> Upon noticing his talents, the community sent him to America to receive an education, and within a decade Hamilton had served in the Continental Army both in combat and as George Washington's top aide.<sup>4</sup> After the war he became a lawyer, penned 51 essays for *The Federalist Papers*, and served as a delegate at the Constitutional Convention.<sup>5</sup> In the new national government Hamilton once again served under Washington, this time as Treasury Secretary.<sup>6</sup> While in office, he created ambitious financial systems and fought so relentlessly with Thomas Jefferson that it caused the formation of

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<sup>2</sup> It is crucial to note that, although this paper focuses on political inaccuracies in *Hamilton*, these are not the show's only historical flaws. There are also representational inaccuracies, such as the noticeable absence of African-American characters and mention of Indigenous peoples. Such issues fall outside the scope of the present thesis, but nonetheless offer a wealth of opportunities for future study.

<sup>3</sup> Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004): 7, 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-86.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5, 248.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

America's first political parties. Tragically, after their career-long political rivalry piqued with Hamilton's endorsement of Jefferson during the election of 1800, Hamilton was killed in a duel with then-Vice President Aaron Burr in 1804.<sup>7</sup>

Ultimately, Chernow portrays Hamilton as a troubled yet sympathetic, brilliant, and admirable figure. As David Brooks wrote for the *New York Times*, "Other writers... have done a better job describing Hamilton's political philosophy, but nobody has captured Hamilton himself as beautifully and fully as Chernow."<sup>8</sup> It was this portrayal of Hamilton—a rags-to-riches immigrant who became one of the most powerful men of the Founding Era, a man who seemed simultaneously human and superhuman—that caught the attention of Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Eleven years after Chernow's biography was published, *Hamilton: An American Musical* premiered on Broadway. Stage time is essentially balanced between Hamilton's professional life and his personal life. Like Chernow, Miranda depicts Hamilton as a complex figure. He is brilliant, brave, charming, ambitious, and exceptionally hardworking. He is also hot-headed, egotistical, and at times neglectful of his family. However, although the show explores the positive and negative aspects of Hamilton's temperament and personal life, it conveniently leaves out the questionable aspects of his politics.

### **The Politics of Hamilton vs. The Politics in *Hamilton***

Elitism and mistrust of the masses were central to Alexander Hamilton's political theory. Politically, his two leading commitments were to build a strong and active national government that could assert authority over the states, and to diversify the American economy by encouraging commerce and mass-manufacturing.<sup>9</sup> These priorities were accompanied by fear that republicanism would result in anarchy, and fear that powerful monarchies in the international system would be able

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> David Brooks, "Creating Capitalism," *New York Times*, (25 April 2004). <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/25/books/creating-capitalism.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Shankman, "A New Thing on Earth: Alexander Hamilton, Pro-Manufacturing Republicans, and the Democratization of American Political Economy," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 325-326.

to overcome the new American nation.<sup>10</sup> As such, according to historian Andrew Shankman, Hamilton’s policies promoted consolidation, elite management of new investments, and the promotion of elite commercial classes at the expense of small producers.<sup>11</sup> Through these policies, Hamilton sought to “empower elites and prevent the chaos of social fluidity, mobility, and democracy that he believed would overwhelm the republic.”<sup>12</sup> This is a touch ironic, not only because Hamilton himself was a social climber, but because social fluidity, mobility, and democracy are celebrated themes in *Hamilton*.

While *Hamilton* does address the protagonist’s desire for a strong federal government, it does not tell the audience what this truly meant to him. In the song “Non-Stop,” just before he attends the Constitutional Convention, Miranda’s Hamilton raps about his desire “for a strong central democracy.”<sup>13</sup> In reality, the extent to which Hamilton wanted a democracy was questionable. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Hamilton did give a six-hour speech in which he proposed a new form of government for the United States, as recounted in “Non-Stop.”<sup>14</sup> While the musical mentions this as a way of highlighting Hamilton’s intellect and egotism, it does not touch upon the contents of the speech.

Hamilton believed that both the Executive and the Senate should be elected by electors to “serve during good behaviour.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, they would remain in office until they died, resigned, or were removed for committing offenses such as treason. Only the Legislative Assembly would be elected by the people to serve fixed terms, and it would be far outweighed by the lifetime offices held by people in the Senate, Executive, and Supreme Court.<sup>16</sup> This plan indicates an extremely low level of faith in common people’s abilities to rationally

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>13</sup> Lin-Manuel Miranda, “Non-Stop,” *Hamilton: An American Musical*, (Avatar Studios, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Chernow, “Alexander Hamilton,” 231.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Hamilton, “Constitutional Convention. Plan of Government,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, (18 June 1787).

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-04-02-0099>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

select and change their minds about their political leaders. Hamilton's ideal was startlingly undemocratic- some scholars have even called it monarchical.<sup>17</sup> Revealing such information in the musical would have alerted the modern masses as to just how little confidence Hamilton had in their historical counterparts.

We see Hamilton's aversion to the populace emerge once again in a letter he wrote to Edward Carrington, the first U.S. Marshal for Virginia. In the letter, Hamilton discussed the accusation, put forth by Madison and Jefferson, that he was a power-hungry monarchist. Hamilton noted that while he was "*affectionately* attached to Republican theory," he was "far from being without doubts."<sup>18</sup> He feared that republicanism would lead to "faction and anarchy" and "engender disorder in the community."<sup>19</sup> Hamilton was trying to avoid coming across as radical- he made a point of asserting that he was not "disposed to promote Monarchy & overthrow State Governments."<sup>20</sup> However, through this letter we see that any support he showed for republicanism and popular control of government was merely theoretical- he was skeptical that such measures would succeed in practice.

In the Letter to Edward Carrington, Hamilton spends considerable time discussing and defending his financial plan. One year prior, he had engaged in a heated debate over this plan with Thomas Jefferson, who vehemently opposed it.<sup>21</sup> Although Hamilton's plan passed in both the House and Senate, Washington hesitated to sign it due to resistance from his southern Cabinet members. In February of 1791, Hamilton submitted his "Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United States" to Washington. In his Opinion, Hamilton declared that establishing a national bank would not excessively favour his own capitalist leanings over southerners' agrarian leanings.<sup>22</sup> In other words,

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<sup>17</sup> Billy G. Smith, "Alexander Hamilton: The Wrong Hero for Our Age," *The Independent Review* 21, no. 4 (Spring 2017): 519.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Hamilton, "Letter to Edward Carrington," (26 May 1792).

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/letter-to-edward-carrington/>.

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

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Chernow, "Alexander Hamilton," 351-352.

<sup>22</sup> Hamilton, Alexander. "Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United States." (23 February 1791).

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/opinion-on-the-constitutionality-of-the-bank-of-the-united-states/>.

Hamilton's plan to assume state debts and establish a national bank faced accusations of elitism, and he had to defend against them.

*Hamilton* addresses this debate over the national bank in "Cabinet Battle #1," a rap battle between Hamilton and Jefferson. In his verse, Jefferson notes that the bank would tax southern states to pay off northern debts, and suggests that Hamilton designed his financial plan to heighten his own power as Treasury Secretary (to which Hamilton responds, "Not true!").<sup>23</sup> Hamilton's retort includes a brief defense of the Bank Bill itself. As the song states, "If we assume the debts/ The union gets/ a new line of credit/ A financial diuretic... If we're aggressive and competitive/ The union gets a boost/ You'd rather give it a sedative."<sup>24</sup> It then enters into a long (and well-earned) assassination of Jefferson's character. However, "Cabinet Battle #1" still sidesteps a broad and crucially-important issue that permeated this debate; namely, the extent to which the Bank favoured elite merchant classes.

This avoidance may have occurred because Hamilton's bank *was* elitist, in that it promoted a hierarchical system of crediting and finance. The bank was structured to privilege already powerful public creditors, placing them among the directors and allowing them to select who was deserving of a loan.<sup>25</sup> Thus, elites could prevent the masses from accessing funds via the national bank, instead permitting only likeminded businessmen to use this capital. Speculators would be able to use public resources to pursue commercial goals, while agricultural communities would grow increasingly economically obsolete.<sup>26</sup> Even if Hamilton's financial plan was not explicitly partial towards the merchant class, it implicitly institutionalized their prevalence.

Additional evidence of Hamilton's elitism can be identified in his stance on immigration, which is especially important to discuss given the way he is portrayed in the musical. Miranda's Hamilton is presented as a shining example of what immigrants can do for American society. He is, as highlighted by historian Joanne B. Freeman, "an immigrant striver above all else, born disadvantaged, battling against the odds to

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<sup>23</sup> Lin-Manuel Miranda, "Cabinet Battle #1," *Hamilton: An American Musical*, (Avatar Studios, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Shankman, "A New Thing on Earth," 334.

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

promote himself and to better his adopted nation.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed, celebrating immigrants is one of the show’s themes; our hero is introduced as a “bastard, orphan, immigrant,” and “Immigrants/ We get the job done” is a fan-favourite line.<sup>28</sup> While this message is in itself admirable, perhaps Alexander Hamilton should not be its poster-boy.

Despite being an immigrant himself, Hamilton was mostly anti-immigration. He supported the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, which made it harder for immigrants to become citizens and permitted their deportation if they were thought to be disloyal (he did, of course, encourage exceptions for some foreign merchant elite.)<sup>29</sup> Further, in an 1802 article for the *New York Post*, Hamilton argued against President Jefferson’s proposed open-immigration policies. Writing under the pseudonym Lucius Crassus, Hamilton declared:

“The safety of a republic depends essentially on a uniformity of principles and habits; on the exemption of the citizens from foreign bias, and prejudice; and on that love of country which will almost invariably be found to be closely connected with birth, education and family.”<sup>30</sup>

He concluded the article by stating that open-immigration “would be nothing less, than to admit the Grecian Horse into the Citadel of our Liberty and Sovereignty.”<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, in Hamilton’s eyes, the only people more suspicious than the American masses were the foreign masses.

This section has explored elitism in Hamilton’s ideas about republican governments, economic policy, and immigration policy. It has also highlighted the ways in which this elitism was brushed over,

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<sup>27</sup> Joanne B. Freeman, “Will the Real Alexander Hamilton Please Stand Up?,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 259.

<sup>28</sup> Lin-Manuel Miranda, “What’d I Miss?” and “Yorktown,” *Hamilton: An American Musical*, (Avatar Studios, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Jason Frank and Isaac Kramnick, “What ‘Hamilton’ Forgets About Hamilton,” *The New York Times*, 10 June 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/11/opinion/what-hamilton-forgets-about-alexander-hamilton.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Hamilton, “The Examination Number VIII,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, (12 January 1802). <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-25-02-0282>

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

ignored, or contradicted in *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Notably, Lin-Manuel Miranda has acknowledged that some historical inaccuracies (such as the number of Philip Schuyler's children) were included to make the show "stronger dramatically."<sup>32</sup> However, sidestepping or outright erasing broad aspects of Hamilton's political character arguably extends beyond the realm of mere "inaccuracy." While the artist certainly has claim to creative license, it is clear that the way Alexander Hamilton is portrayed in *Hamilton* has troubling implications as to how we perceive socially-powerful "heroes" in contemporary retellings of history.

### **Alexander Hamilton: America's "Great Man," 240 Years Later**

Many sources have been left for us by and about Alexander Hamilton. He was an extremely prominent figure in early American public life who, in the words of Miranda, "wrote like he was running out of time."<sup>33</sup> Hamilton wanted to be remembered, and he used his talents, his time, and his social status to ensure that he would be. Given the numerous texts that exist in relation to him, we can make well-supported arguments for both "Hamilton the self-important monarchist" and "Hamilton the immigrant rags-to-riches folk hero." In this sense, he was both of those things, and he was neither of them.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's heroic depiction of Hamilton offers insights into the relationship between our present day ideals and the ways we choose to construct history. Namely, it shows us how a historical person's story can be tailored to suit the needs of the storyteller. In all likelihood, Miranda had particular social messages he wanted to convey through his art, and Alexander Hamilton was an *almost* perfect vehicle through which he could communicate them. However, it seems that to ensure Hamilton's story would entirely align with the present day morals he wanted to promote, Miranda had to tweak a few aspects of Hamilton's character. The embodiment of the American immigrant ideal cannot, after all, be disdainful of poor immigrants.

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<sup>32</sup> Lin-Manuel Miranda, "Lin-Manuel Miranda On the Play's Historical Inaccuracies," *Genius.com*, Video File, (n/d). <https://genius.com/videos/Hamilton-lin-manuel-miranda-on-the-play-s-historical-inaccuracies>.

<sup>33</sup> Miranda, "Non-Stop."

Similarly, Miranda's *Hamilton* shows us how a person's story can be tailored to suit the needs of the people it is being told to. For *Hamilton* to work both artistically and commercially, the character of Alexander Hamilton needed to be agreeable to a modern liberal audience. Audiences can forgive personal flaws- they are what make a character human. Political shortcomings, however, are of a different nature. It would be hard for much of *Hamilton*'s demographic to root for and admire a protagonist who loved the merchant elite but mistrusted the poor. As such, in order to truly connect with the show's audience, Alexander Hamilton's politics could not be depicted in a way that highlighted the elitism that permeated his beliefs.

What happens, then, when we portray historical people in a way that conceals the less-favorable aspects of their character while emphasizing the good? We are left with a story that appeals to audiences and focuses on sympathetic characters, but also a story that celebrates the Great Man Theory of History- the questionable notion that history is driven by a few heroic and socially powerful individuals, rather than by society as a whole.<sup>34</sup> *Hamilton* leads us to view Hamilton as a man whose politics were on the "right side of history," and who worked tirelessly to leave a mark on that history that we can still be proud of today. In doing this, however, it simply encourages us to project our present-day ideals onto a historical figure.

It seems today's American liberals and moderates want to celebrate a Founding hero who was anti-slavery, pro-immigrant, and fervently dedicated to the emerging republic. They want a character-driven historical narrative with themes of both inclusivity *and* conventional nationalism. The problem is that such narratives do not necessarily exist with regards to the Founding Fathers. Alexander Hamilton meets us halfway, but Miranda had to do the rest himself. While *Hamilton* fulfills our desire for a Founding history we can be unabashedly proud of, this pride is not fully earned. Ultimately, *Hamilton* makes a Great Man out of someone who was, in reality, simply a man.

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<sup>34</sup> Edward Peter Stringham, "Hamilton's Legacy and the Great Man Theory of Financial History," *Independent Review* 21, n.4 (Spring 2017): 524. ISSN: 1086-1653.

## Conclusion

This paper has considered the following questions: Does *Hamilton: An American Musical* offer a fair and comprehensive depiction of Alexander Hamilton's politics? What does its portrayal of Hamilton imply about the nature of the past as it relates to individuals and social power? The first section offered a brief overview of Hamilton's professional life, and the complex ways in which his life was portrayed by Chernow and Miranda respectively. The following section discussed how Miranda's depiction of Hamilton did not accurately represent his political character, arguing that *Hamilton* ignores the elitism that in fact pervaded Hamilton's political beliefs. In doing so, it notes that Hamilton was skeptical of the practical efficacy of republicanism, advocated for a financial system that would benefit capitalists at the expense of small farmers, and opposed open immigration policies. The final section considered what *Hamilton* can tell us about how contemporary values shape our retellings of history, and the problematic nature of this relationship. To conclude, it is apparent that *Hamilton: An American Musical* conveniently "forgets" that elitism and reservations about common people were central elements of Alexander Hamilton's political theory. In turn, it projects present day ideals onto a historical figure and furthers the dubious Great Man Theory of History. While it is important to recognize the significant contributions that individuals have made to America's history, we must remember that truth can rarely be confined to a singular narrative.

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## Exploring the Rise and Fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

AVISHKA LAKWIJAYA

*In July 2013, the Egyptian military under the leadership of Abdel Fattah el Sisi unceremoniously removed the President of Egypt Mohammad Morsi from the office of President. This event marked the end of the Muslim Brotherhood short reign in power from June 2012 to July 2013. Broadly speaking, this paper examines the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, advancing the argument that the very same ideologies, experiences, and decision-making of the Brotherhood that enabled it to gain prominence during the late 20th century set the groundwork for its struggles and ultimate failure under Morsi's rule. In the process of making this argument, I discuss the prevailing themes of the conflict between religiosity and secularity as well as political authoritarianism.*

When state institutions fail to meet their citizens' needs, religious institutions step in to provide for these. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood shifted from being a "political missionary society" in the 1920s to being a pragmatic political organization that toppled the regime of Hosni Mubarak in 2012.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the Muslim Brotherhood, its founder Hasan al-Banna described the members of the coalescing organization as being "monks by the night and knights by the day."<sup>2</sup> His aim was to create an organization that "combined a pre-modern concern with cultivating pious character and virtue with a modern interest in creating effective organizations and movements, all for the purpose of establishing an Islamic socio-political order."<sup>3</sup> When the Muslim Brotherhood, under the leadership of Mohamad Morsi, ruled from June 2012 to July 2013, it was clear that the socio-political doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston, "'Monks by Night and Knights by Day': Ḥasan al-Bannā', Tarbiya, and the Embodied Ethics of the Early Muslim Brotherhood," *Religion Compass* 12, no. 7 (2018): 3

<sup>2</sup> Houston, "Monks by Night and Knights by Day," 3.

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

had evolved and, in many respects, had deviated from Hassan al-Banna's vision of an Islamic order.

This essay will argue that the very same ideologies, experiences, and decision-making processes of the Brotherhood that enabled it to gain prominence during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century set the groundwork for its struggles and ultimate failure under Morsi. For the purpose of this essay, political legitimacy will be distinguished from social and religious legitimacy, leading to a discussion of the prevailing conflicts and conflicts between religiosity, secularity as well as authoritarianism in Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood emerged in 1928, amidst the currents of decolonization movements and the waves of a widespread rejection of secular rule that had come to embody Egypt's ruling elite at the time. The Muslim Brotherhood believed that deeply integrating Islam into Egyptian society was the way to rid Egypt from colonial domination, and during the Brotherhood's early years, it was seen as an effective organization that set itself apart from the political chaos of Egypt.<sup>4</sup> As author Kristen Stilt mentions, the Brotherhood was initially focused on working for the Muslim community and placed a high emphasis on morality and religiosity.<sup>5</sup> Within this context, the Brotherhood was seen as "a group of do-gooders or religious teachers" who were not seen as having any political power.<sup>6</sup> Through the use of Islamic education and effective propaganda in the 1940s and the 1950s, the Brotherhood developed a strong support base among anti-colonial Egyptians.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and until the late stages of the Hosni Mubarak regime, the Brotherhood continued to develop its fight for more political power within Egypt as its leaders came to the realization that political power was a necessity to instil Islam into Egyptian society.<sup>8</sup> This demand was never satisfied under the regimes of Gamal Abdel

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<sup>4</sup> Cleveland, L William and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2016), 190.

<sup>5</sup> Kristen Stilt, "'Islam is the Solution': Constitutional Visions of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *Texas International Law Journal*, 46, no. 1 (2010): 77.

<sup>6</sup> William Polk, *Crusade and Jihad: The Thousand-Year War Between the Muslim World and the Global North* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018), 365.

<sup>7</sup> Polk, *Crusade and Jihad*, 365-67.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Mubarak, during which time Egypt was susceptible to major economic struggles with many lower-class and middle-class individuals growing disillusioned with the government's failure to uphold its side of the social contract. The Brotherhood capitalized on these failures of state institutions, stepping in to provide educational and medical services for Egyptians, which contributed to the expansion of their support base.<sup>9</sup> However, despite making progress, they remained an "unofficial political party" throughout the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries because of the exclusionary politics of the regimes of Sadat and Mubarak.<sup>10</sup>

At the heart of Egyptian national identity, there has been a prevailing conflict between the religious and the secular schools of thought, expressed by Egyptian policy-making since the 1950s. Nasser's confrontations with the United States, Britain, and Israel in the 1950s and 1960s helped conceal and distract religious Egyptians from the fact that Nasser was a staunch secularist, his regime embodying a period in Egyptian history where religious influence was pushed away from political life. Following his death, however, Islamism regained prominence.<sup>11</sup> With the decolonization movement in the backdrop, Egypt's shift to Islamism was part of a widespread effort to reject the remnants of imperialism and the recently identified threat of neo-colonialism. In this sense, the socio-economic conditions that facilitated the rise of the Brotherhood in Egypt were not entirely unique to Egypt—the socio-economic conditions of several Middle Eastern countries were deteriorating from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The Egyptian revolution fits into the wider circumstances of the Arab Spring.

Following Nasser's death in 1970, the statecraft of the Egyptian government continued to turn its back to the sensitivities and the needs of the majority of Egyptians as the socio-economic conditions within the country deteriorated. Under the regimes of Sadat and Mubarak, Egypt's foreign policy became increasingly oriented to the Western powers. Among many Egyptians, Anwar Sadat's decision to sign the Camp

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<sup>9</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Upended Path: The Rise and Fall of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *The Middle East Journal* 69, no. 4 (2015): 529.

<sup>10</sup> Stilt, "Islam is the Solution," 79.

<sup>11</sup> Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: from Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 94.

David treaty with Israel became known as the deal “that betrayed the millions that died in Sinai.”<sup>12</sup> This kind of foreign policy foreshadowed what was to come during Mubarak’s reign from 1981 to 2011. During the early years of Mubarak’s regime, his policies showed just how secular, neoliberal and Western-oriented the country had become. For instance, he supported the US-led invasion of Iraq in 1991, which the Muslim Brotherhood criticized.<sup>13</sup> The Brotherhood capitalized on the failings of the state and portrayed the state as being “un-Islamic,” driving the sentiment that the state was unsympathetic to the needs of the population.<sup>14</sup> For instance, following the 1992 earthquake, the Brotherhood led relief efforts, as opposed to the government.<sup>15</sup> Instances of the Brotherhood stepping in to carry out the responsibilities of the government became a commonality, helping to solidify the perception that the Brotherhood was a ‘political missionary society.’ Furthermore, these actions helped to appeal to the Islamic aspects of Egypt’s identity.

Starting in the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood made a disconcerted attempt to give legitimacy to its political status by working with the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) which was responsible for reviewing and interpreting Egypt’s 1971 constitution.<sup>16</sup> According to Article 174 and Article 177 of the 1971 Constitution, the SCC is independent and “its members shall not be removed from office.”<sup>17</sup> As journalist Sahar Aziz states, all laws had to be approved by the SCC, which made the court a “powerful tool in shaping electoral politics.”<sup>18</sup> Both these factors allude to the fact that the SCC is one of the most powerful institutions within the country, which did not bode well for the Brotherhood as it meant that it would have to work within the powerful judiciary system that was an integral part of the state’s authoritarian political apparatus. Consequently, the Brotherhood had to maintain a pragmatic relationship with the SCC while also not seeming like a

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>13</sup> Stilt, “Islam is the Solution,” 78.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>17</sup> Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1971, Article 174 and Article 177. Accessed with <https://bit.ly/2JNRzbn>.

<sup>18</sup> Sahar Aziz, “Egypt’s War of Attrition,” *Al Jazeera*, April 7, 2013. <https://bit.ly/2YwmEUe>.

puppet of the very state institutions it opposed. As will be discussed later in this essay, maintaining this fragile balance proved to be difficult.

The 1971 Constitution expressed the conflict between religious and secular schools of thoughts. Article 2 of the Constitution stated, “Principles of Islamic law are the principal source of legislation,” seeming to imply support for Hassan al-Banna’s view on the indoctrination of Islamic principles to Egyptian society.<sup>19</sup> This statement, however, appears to be in contradiction with the secular policymaking of the Egyptian government in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nature of the SCC’s role meant that it had the power to decide as to what degree Islamic law should be integrated into the Egyptian constitution.<sup>20</sup> The 1971 Constitution expresses strong Islamic undertones while also emphasizing inherently secular sets of ideals. In addition to the aforementioned commitment to Islamic principles in legislation, the constitution uses strongly religious proclamations such as “swear by Almighty Allah” to emphasize loyalty to the constitution.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Article 40 and 47 implies a strong commitment to religious tolerance and pledge to political plurality.<sup>22</sup> However, this pledge to tolerance is vague and the constitution does not define the concept of political plurality in this context. In what appears to be a contradiction to Article 44, Article 5 states “no party shall be organized on religious referential authority.”<sup>23</sup> Since the Brotherhood is an organization that aims to build Egyptian society along Islamic values, this article could be interpreted as one that bars them from political leadership. These articles illustrate how Egypt’s 1971 Constitution was problematic for the Brotherhood as it posed an existential question to its legitimacy as a political player. As mentioned earlier, the Brotherhood was aware of the importance of securing political legitimacy in order to make a disconcerted attempt to restructure Egypt along Islamic principles.

One of the most significant steps in this process of gaining political legitimacy occurred in 2007 when the Brotherhood released its first party platform.<sup>24</sup> This platform had several severe weaknesses

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<sup>19</sup> Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Article 2.

<sup>20</sup> Stilt, “Islam is the Solution,” 83.

<sup>21</sup> Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Article 155.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 9, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 5, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Stilt, “Islam is the Solution,” 84.

which, as will be discussed later, continued to plague the Brotherhood deep into its time in power. First, because there were no lawyers involved in the drafting committee, the platform was vague, meaning that it was difficult to implement certain elements of the platform.<sup>25</sup> Second, the openness of the platform was seen as a desperate attempt by the Brotherhood to overemphasize its reformist aspects in order to expand its support base.<sup>26</sup> One of the Brotherhood's main fears was that its vision of instilling Islamic principles into Egyptian politics would be interpreted as wanting to establish a theocracy, such as in the case of Iran, which was not what the Brotherhood wanted.<sup>27</sup> Most importantly, this platform accepted the Egyptian constitution's interpretation of Islam and the platform saw no reason to amend it or introduce a new one.<sup>28</sup> This was fundamentally problematic because the SCC's interpretation of Islam within a legal context differed from the Brotherhood's interpretation of Islam within a legal context.<sup>29</sup>

The Brotherhood had struggled to appeal to secular factions in Egypt throughout its existence. This struggle again alludes to the tensions between the religious and secular aspects of Egypt's identity. On the religious front, the Brotherhood had to please its grass-root support and the Salafists.<sup>30</sup> For clarification, the Salafists were a group Islamists who pushed for a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and they were gaining popularity among disenfranchised Muslims throughout the Arab Spring.<sup>31</sup> On the secular front, the Brotherhood had to calm the anxieties of those who believed it would implement Sharia Law and take away their political rights.<sup>32</sup> They needed the support of both these very distinct groups. Once again, the challenge of appealing to both the religious and secular factions proved to be a challenging theme in the broader Middle East. Implementing a religious order in a country that had been under secular authoritarian regimes from the time

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 80-86.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 85-89.

<sup>30</sup> Alison Pargeter, *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power*, New Ed (London: Saqi Books, 2013), 253

<sup>31</sup> Pargeter, *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power*, 254

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 252.

of its independence was in itself, a very difficult task. Therefore, these early contradictions and ambiguities in its 2007 platform set the foundation for the bigger constitutional problems that arose when Morsi became the first civilian President of Egypt in 2012.

While the Muslim Brotherhood was fighting for its political rights, throughout the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Mubarak regime's policies became increasingly authoritarian. This was a distinct shift in the relationship among factions of the Muslim Brotherhood and factions of the Mubarak regime in the 1980s, during which time, the Mubarak regime thought the best way to give itself legitimacy was to accommodate opposing parties.<sup>33</sup> However, this transformed into a policy of repression as a result of the increasing prominence of the Brotherhood and Islamic extremists in the 1990s.<sup>34</sup> This need for legitimacy on the part of the regime alludes to an interesting point regarding the relationship between legitimacy and authoritarianism. There is a common misconception that authoritarian regimes do not feel the need to give their rule legitimacy, as their rule can be maintained through direct or indirect coercion. However, Mubarak's actions illustrated that authoritarian regimes *do* feel the need to maintain some level of popular legitimacy.

In addition to political repression during the Mubarak regime, Egypt's worsening socio-economic situation was a major contributing factor to the failure of the regime and its social institutions, and the rise of the Brotherhood. Mubarak's attempt at mass privatization under the neoliberal politics of the 1990s meant that the wealth gap between the rich and the poor grew wider.<sup>35</sup> In the 1990s, Mubarak hoped that his promises of economic reform "could redress the grievances generated by the regime's worn out social contract."<sup>36</sup> Developmental plans such as the Cairo 2030 initiative, aimed at attracting local and foreign elite to downtown Cairo, alienated the middle and lower-class Egyptians.<sup>37</sup> As Al-Awadi illustrates, mass privatization did not help to improve the dire

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<sup>33</sup> Hesham Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*, Vol. 46 (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), 190-193.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>35</sup> Jack Shenker, *The Egyptians: A Radical Story* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 40-42.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, 190.

<sup>37</sup> Shenker, *The Egyptians*, 42.

socio-economic state of most Egyptians.<sup>38</sup> This alienation led to an increased willingness to “resist the spread of any free market doctrine that denied them social and economic rights.”<sup>39</sup> Religion became an avenue to vent these socio-political frustrations in the sense that religious organizations such as a Brotherhood, became a vehicle to express these frustrations.<sup>40</sup>

When Morsi rose to power in 2012, it was clear to observers that the Brotherhood had undergone considerable transformations since the 1920s. Since its inception, the Brotherhood has faced challenges from all sides of the political spectrum; yet, it was often the underestimated commitment to reliance and change that had kept it alive. Over the Brotherhood’s lifetime, its political ideology has been readapted to fit changing political climates. As Noha Mellor argues, the Brotherhood kept moving between being “anti-West and pro-West, between promoting isolationism and promoting international dialogue” depending on the socio-economic conditions and the political landscape.<sup>41</sup> This was by no means a static organization that was unwilling to change to fit the needs of the population. Moreover, this willingness to change was not unique to the Brotherhood in Egypt—the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria also attempted to portray itself as an inclusive organization that advocated for political pluralism.<sup>42</sup> In an attempt to seem progressive, the leader of the Syrian Brotherhood stated in 2010 that he would have “no objections to a Christian or a woman becoming President, so long as they were the people’s choice.”<sup>43</sup> From an ideological point of view, this is highly progressive and it illustrates just how much the organization has changed since its early years.

By 2012, it became clear that the Brotherhood was no longer a “political missionary society,” it was a fully-fledged political party with more power and influence than ever before. Mohamed Morsi’s inauguration speech appealed to a strong commitment to economic development centered along reviving the tourist industry; however,

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, 190.

<sup>39</sup> Shenker, *The Egyptians*, 46.

<sup>40</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, 544.

<sup>41</sup> Noha Mellor, *Voice of the Muslim Brotherhood, Da’wa, Discourse, and Political Communication* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 210

<sup>42</sup> Pargeter, *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power*, 101

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

these plans for economic development did not seem so different from the plans established by the Mubarak regime.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, excluding the occasional Islamic proclamations, there is no indication in the speech that suggests anything about the role of Islam in public life.<sup>45</sup> This was likely done in an attempt to widen the support base with general appeals to the broader Egyptian electorate. This transition into the leading political party meant that the Brotherhood would assume the task of solving the problems created by Mubarak's regime.

When the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power in 2012, it faced a multitude of challenges that posed existential threats to its political legitimacy. They faced the daunting task of revitalizing a weak economy, addressing the high unemployment rate, and calming the fears of a population that demanded inclusive governance.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, they faced the scrutiny of Egypt's powerful Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) and the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC), two of the most important institutional pillars of the previous regime under Mubarak. As a result of the power they held, the SCC and the SCAF were arguably Morsi's most important allies, but also, his most dangerous critics. As a result of its popularity, the Brotherhood underestimated the potency of these threats and felt a false sense of invincibility.<sup>47</sup> To the dismay of Egyptians, the Brotherhood failed to effectively address the aforementioned issues. As one Egyptian stated, "the parliament was all Muslim Brotherhood, everything in the country was Muslim Brotherhood."<sup>48</sup> This belief resonated with the majority of Egyptians who felt isolated by the Brotherhood's policy-making. While the Brotherhood proved to be very effective at mass mobilization in the decades leading up to the revolution, it proved to be highly

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<sup>44</sup> "President Mohamed Morsi's Speech at Cairo University, Saturday, June 30, after Taking Oath of Office," Transcript, From *Ikhwan Web* (accessed December 5, 2018). <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30156>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 545-546.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick Kingsley, "How Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's first elected president, ended up on death row." *Guardian*. 1 June 2015.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/01/mohamed-morsi-execution-death-sentence-egypt>

<sup>48</sup> Kira D. Jumet, *Contesting the Repressive State: Why Ordinary Egyptians Protested during the Arab Spring* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 53.

inexperienced in the field of politics.<sup>49</sup> The reasons for its political inexperience laid in the fact that pre-Morsi government structure of Mubarak allowed very little room for political plurality. The Brotherhood's political inexperience proved to be fatal for the regime's longevity as it meant that Morsi was more concerned with "monopolizing power and marginalizing others than about building alliances or protecting the independence of national institutions such as the judiciary or the media."<sup>50</sup> The fact that Morsi was seen as a middle man between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Mubarak regime did not bode well with popular opinion.<sup>51</sup> This perception isolated the Brotherhood and was highly self-destructive as it stemmed from a failure to recognize the fact that the 2011 revolution was driven by a diverse group of people that had different political views but were willing to compromise.<sup>52</sup> By this point, it was clear that the Brotherhood had turned its back on the secular factions of the country.

By isolating itself from the people of Egypt, the Brotherhood essentially cut off one of its most important sources of potential support. The Brotherhood's relative unpopularity gave the powerful SCAF a justifiable reason to act against the elected party. The other important player in this power struggle, the SCC, also turned its back to the Brotherhood. The SCC's task of being an impartial actor within Egypt came under scrutiny and two of these instances are presented here. First, just before Morsi came to office, the Supreme Court dissolved the lower house of parliament which was led by the Brotherhood.<sup>53</sup> Second, SCC was further criticized by the Brotherhood when it struck down a new law that had given the Brotherhood a significant advantage within the people's assembly.<sup>54</sup> Both these decisions significantly weakened the political power of the Brotherhood. In response, Morsi implemented the

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<sup>49</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 546.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 546.

<sup>51</sup> Sarah Childress, "Khaled Fahmy: Sisi Is 'Much More Dangerous'," *Frontline*, 17 September 2013. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/khaled-fahmy-sisi-is-much-more-dangerous/>.

<sup>52</sup> *The Square*, Directed by Jehane Noujaim. Washington: GathrFilms Participant Media, 2013. Netflix.

<sup>53</sup> Patrick Kingsley, "How Mohammad Morsi, Egypt's First Elected President, Ended Up on the Death Row."

<sup>54</sup> Aziz, "Egypt's War of Attrition."

Emergency Law in 2013.<sup>55</sup> The introduction of this law was highly unpopular among the public as it gave Morsi dictatorial powers, which led to him being called the “new pharaoh.”<sup>56</sup> This law was implemented partly to bring in a new constitution as the Brotherhood felt the 1971 constitution did not suit their political agenda.<sup>57</sup> This decision shows how the Brotherhood miscalculated when in the 2007 platform, they saw no need to bring in a new constitution. This is again, one link that shows that the past decisions of the Brotherhood affected its ability to govern in 2012. As one revolutionary expressed, Egypt had effectively gone from being a military dictatorship to a religious dictatorship.<sup>58</sup> Morsi’s decision to cooperate with the Police and SCAF instead of cooperating with the revolution proved to further isolate the Brotherhood.<sup>59</sup> These incidents only exacerbated the growing concern that Egypt was heading for an ‘Iranian styled theocracy.’<sup>60</sup> While a theocratic system was likely not what the Brotherhood envisioned, the *perceived* sense of a theocracy undoubtedly made the Muslim Brotherhood extremely unpopular with the secular factions of Egyptian society.

In June 2013, the Head of the Egyptian Armed Forces, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, stated in a speech that Morsi had threatened the very institutions of freedom within the country and threatened the use of unjust violence and therefore the SCAF, as advanced by el-Sisi, was left with no choice other than to overthrow the sitting president, speaking to the power dynamics at play.<sup>61</sup> The state apparatus of the Mubarak regime was still very powerful in spite of the revolution as the ‘deep state’ was largely unchanged by the revolution of 2011, which meant that Brotherhood was not as powerful as it seemed.<sup>62</sup>

In conclusion, this essay explored the conflict between religious and secular schools of thought within authoritarian socio-political discourse in Egypt and considered how this conflict influenced the

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<sup>55</sup> *The Square*, Netflix.

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

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>59</sup> Childress, “Khaled Fahmy: Sisi Is ‘Much More Dangerous’.”

<sup>60</sup> *The Square*, Netflix.

<sup>61</sup> Abdel Fattah Khalil al-Sisi, “Transcript: Egypt’s army statement,” *Al Jazeera*, (3 July 2013), <https://bit.ly/2JWRiD8>.

<sup>62</sup> Childress, “Khaled Fahmy: Sisi Is ‘Much More Dangerous’.”

Brotherhood's rise and fall. It is clear that the Brotherhood's socio-political ideology became increasingly malleable to fit the demands and expectations of the population. This resulted in a deviation from Hasan al-Banna's founding doctrines, leading to a sharp divide between the ideals and realities of the Brotherhood's policies and practices, evidenced during Morsi's short reign. The Brotherhood's false sense of invincibility, following its rise to power, swiftly gave the ability for the remnants of the Mubarak-era state apparatus to regroup.

On the other hand, the level of resilience displayed by the Brotherhood in the late-20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> centuries made them an effective source of opposition to exclusionary state politics. Yet, when Brotherhood rose to power in 2012, it was unable to adjust to this exclusionary system of politics. Morsi's secretive decision-making isolated the Brotherhood from the Egyptian people and gave the SCAF the legitimacy it required to overthrow Morsi. In an interview, professor Khaled Fahmy, who is a professor at the American University of Cairo, describes colonial Egypt as a place with a "flawed constitution and a paralyzed political system."<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, these same observations can be applied to describe the state of the country through the 1970s to the current state of affairs. The deeply complex and repressive nature of Egypt's present political apparatus is both a cause and a consequence of the constitutional and political flaws.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid..

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## **Conscription, Communal Life, and Conflict: The Soldatka as a reluctant social disruptor in Alison K. Smith's "Authority in a Serf Village"**

PIER OLIVIA BROWN

*Between 1705 and 1825, two million Russian peasants were recruited to spend their remaining lifetime in the Imperial army. Once a soldier left the village he was unlikely to be heard from again, but a soldier's wife, a soldatka, was also thrust into an unenviable role: a single woman with no prospects of remarriage could scarcely be lower in the village social order. This study follows the aftermath of an 1819 recruitment levy in the village of Chmutovo, Kostroma Province using archival correspondence translated and presented in Alison K. Smith's "Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia." This microhistory illustrates the larger themes of gender, authority, patronage, and communal responsibility which might emerge in any discussion of Imperial Russian social history. However, it is the unique voice of the soldatka - who Beatrice Farnsworth called "The quintessential outsider in a community based on married couples," - and the shifting attitudes of others towards her that reveal unexpected dynamics in village life.*

During Russia's Imperial Era the state remained largely uninvolved in the lives of privately-owned serfs. Tracy Dennison keenly observed that "the largest landholding families in imperial Russia more closely resembled sovereign princes of the Holy Roman Empire than English gentry."<sup>1</sup> As a result, the provinces of Imperial Russia were in part a mosaic of privately-owned peasant enclaves. Peasants within these enclaves were expected to complete labor obligations or pay *obrok* that drove profits for their landlord; in their scarce free time peasants also had to maintain a community among themselves in order to survive.

Demands from the state for tax revenue and military recruits represented still more from-above factors with which peasants had to contend. Collection of these diverse dues was farmed out by the state and landowners to a commune of village elders, known generically as the *mir*, who were somewhat too old to work at maximum capacity and

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<sup>1</sup> Tracy Dennison, "Contract enforcement in Russian serf society, 1750-1860," *The Economic History Review* 66, no.3 (August 2013): 717.

enjoyed the elevated status that came with their age and gender.<sup>2</sup> The *mir* determined what burdens fell to which households, and so the distribution of obligations was usually coloured by a village elder's personal biases. Depending on the social standing of a household, their burden could be eased or worsened when obligations were distributed among the village. Recruitment levies were the heaviest of burdens, and hotly contested because of their finality and the often devastating impact on a household. Once a soldier left the village he was unlikely to be heard from again, but a soldier's wife, a *soldatka*, was also thrust into an unenviable role.

The translations made available through Alison K. Smith's 2009 article published in the *Journal of Social History*, "Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia," illuminate the aftermath of a recruitment levy in the small village of Chmutovo, Kostroma Province.<sup>3</sup> Smith's essay follows the events in more or less chronological order, they are outlined briefly as follows. In the Spring of 1819 Chmutovo elders are forced to pick a second military recruit after the man they preferred to send went missing. The wives of the first and second recruit sent petitions to a Moscow office in charge of the extensive Iusupov family holdings (herein referred to as "the estate office") to complain about treatment they had received from a particular village elder, Dmitri Dmitriev, who was in turn chastised by the estate manager. The frantic tone of the *soldatka*, Pelageia Iakovleva, was originally matched by the village elder, calling his abilities into question and generating sympathy for both of the mistreated women. In the end, a new village elder adjusts the tone of his correspondence and higher authorities are satisfied that all is in good order. Pelageia's petitions continue, but the estate office eventually threatens to send her children away if she "cannot live in society peacefully."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Steven L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986): 128.

<sup>3</sup> Alison K. Smith, "Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia" *Journal of Social History* 43, no.1 (Fall 2009): 157-173. Smith accessed the letters through the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, "Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia," 169.

Beatrice Farnsworth called the *soldatka*, “The quintessential outsider in a community based on married couples,” and Smith’s translations give further support to this view.<sup>5</sup> First, military obligations are distributed by the commune and, therefore, are subject to the same practices of punishment and patronage as other communal obligations. Second, *soldatki*, like other single women, became easy targets for abuses including theft and corporal punishment. Finally, the *soldatka*’s acts of correspondence and self-advocacy could finalize the process of becoming an outsider. The partial translations available, or even the full letters themselves, cannot provide a complete picture of what happened in Chmutovo. Nor can the story of one small village in Kostroma province be representative of what *soldatki* experienced as a whole. Regardless, the conflict in Chmutovo was not isolated by any means, (ninety levies had recruited 2 million peasants across the empire between 1705 and 1825) so it will be a useful example to illustrate typical themes of what could have happened in other enclaves across the Russian Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Smith’s study focuses on the composition of the letters themselves and the preferential treatment that the Moscow estate office meted out to villagers with a more agreeable (to the estate office) writing style. When Dmitriev neglects the proper formalities in his correspondence with the estate office, for example, he is told in reply that his petitions “are so stupid, that it is barely possible for something to be stupider than them.”<sup>7</sup> The same response orders that Dmitriev do his best to make the *soldatka* comfortable in her time of grief. Pelageia’s concerns have “merit” because “the petitions received from her are always written solidly.”<sup>8</sup> Through “Authority in a Serf Village” Smith demonstrates the role of writing as a “weapon of the weak” in this serf village managed from long-distance. However, this essay will place the letters and the conflict in a socio-historical context. The letters will provide detail about how recruitment was used both as patronage and

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<sup>5</sup> Bernice Farnsworth, “The Soldatka: Folklore and Court Record,” *Slavic Review* 49, no.1 (Spring 1990): 58.

<sup>6</sup> Alison K. Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 18.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 157.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

punishment, and how higher authorities (i.e. Iusupov and his estate manager) interacted with intermediate authorities (i.e. village elders) in times of crisis.

The military draft is especially significant because, as John Keep puts it, “[recruitment], together with the collection of the poll tax, which was related to it, served as the principal point of contact, so to speak, between the autocracy and its subjects.”<sup>9</sup> Although conducted through intermediate authorities (like the *mir*), the state might have its biggest impact in a peasant woman’s life when her village is called to supply troops.

As Peter the Great rationalized his government and introduced concepts from German and Swedish bureaucratic examples, the Russian state was better equipped than ever to sort its population into categories with distinct obligations and privileges.<sup>10</sup> It was under Peter’s reign that conscription began to resemble what it was in 1819, when the recruit levy in question reached Chmutovo. Instead of drafting specific individuals, levies called for a certain number of recruits per certain number of souls.<sup>11</sup> Exactly who would leave the village, probably forever, was left for the commune to decide. Unsurprisingly, individuals and families routinely tried to influence the outcomes of these recruitment decisions, if they had the means. In 1817, Chmutovo had only 19 men and 25 women, seven households in total.<sup>12</sup> Alongside the serfs were 25 cows, 22 sheep, 6 pigs, and 13 horses.<sup>13</sup> Each household’s proceeds of farming and/or factory work went towards paying *obrok*, a cash rent of sorts, to the Iusupov landowners – the margins were probably thin at the best of times.

Elders and landowners took recruitment levies as an opportunity to rid themselves of troublemakers, or otherwise use the threat of

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<sup>9</sup> John L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462-1874* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985): 144.

<sup>10</sup> Jerome Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 415.

<sup>11</sup> Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*, 467.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 160.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

conscription to keep young men in line.<sup>14</sup> The first recruit from Chmutovo, Mikhail Ivanov, was alleged by elder Dmitri Dmitriev to have stolen livestock from other peasants and, among other things, to be “always drunk and disorderly.”<sup>15</sup> In Petrovskoe, a larger village to the South in Tambov province, one or more reasons for induction are included alongside the names on recruit lists. Among the thirty-nine names included on the 1831 recruit list, fifteen were accused of stealing estate property, fourteen of stealing peasant property, six were apparently “lazy and remiss in household responsibilities,” four had “committed various pranks,” two had failed to fulfill corvée obligations, and six had been selected by lot.<sup>16</sup> Ideally, as Hoch notes, a recruit is kept unaware of their fate for as long as possible to prevent them from fleeing or from maiming themselves.<sup>17</sup> Mikhail Ivanov did at some point become aware of what was about to happen, and in response he taunted the village elder, Dmitri Dmitriev, then inflicted some unspecified “damage” to one of his legs before fleeing. Ivanov was never sent into service with the army, but while he was missing from the village his young wife, Dar’ia Vakhrameeva, and his mother became easy scapegoats for Dmitriev. Demands for Chmutovo to send a recruit continued, but Dmitri Dmitriev felt strongly that there was no one so “negligent in social life” as Ivanov who could be sent in place of the deserter, that Chmutovo “will be extremely ruined” if they are forced to break up yet another family.<sup>18</sup> From this it is clear that while the draft was at times a useful disciplinary measure, it could also devastate smaller villages where every set of working hands was needed desperately.

Conscription was more of a threat to poorer peasants than anyone else, and one practice put this discrepancy in concrete terms; exemptions from service or surrogate recruits could be purchased, but

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<sup>14</sup> Boris Mironov, *A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700-1917* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000): 327.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 161.

<sup>16</sup> Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 154. (Table 31).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 151-152.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 161.

only for an extraordinary price.<sup>19</sup> Mikhail Ivanov wrote in a petition to the estate office that he had failed to procure a loan from his fellow villagers to purchase an exemption, “O blood suckers!” he lamented, but it is unclear if the blood sucking neighbors cannot or simply will not lend Ivanov the money.<sup>20</sup> Judging by the prevalence of laws restricting it, the practice of purchasing surrogates specifically to fill recruitment quotas was rampant; one 1804 law was intended to stop serfs who had been sold individually (not tied to a plot of land at the time of sale) from serving in the army immediately afterwards, but the practice continued.<sup>21</sup>

Communes similarly targeted economically vulnerable households at risk of dereliction, or unproductive households already in debt. Chmutovo and other enclaves in the Iusupov family holdings all received a letter in 1813 threatening village elders with relocation, should their village fall into debt “...then take the responsible village elders and their children to Moscow and give the fit ones as recruits, the unfit ones [give] to the factory.”<sup>22</sup> Like many of their fellow nobles, the Iusupov family was itself deeply in debt. By 1818, the Prince I. B. Iusupov owed 693,630 rubles to state lending agencies.<sup>23</sup> Regardless, this threat makes it clear that an intermediate authority could lose his position if he failed to collect quitrent; a fact that was probably well known to the elders in Chmutovo. The commune had the responsibility to care for needy villagers but for many reasons, including threats from above, elders might prioritize paying dues and treat the *soldatka* as an easy target for exploitation and arbitrary displays of power.

Petitioning the estate office, Dar’ia claimed she and Ivanov’s ninety-year-old mother had been “brutally flogged” by Dmitriev, and that he “stole and sold all the grain acquired for food” out of her storeroom.<sup>24</sup> Ivanov was eventually found after several months, but his

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<sup>19</sup> Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 156.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 162.

<sup>21</sup> Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*, 427.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 161.

<sup>23</sup> Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*, 379.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 162.

leg wound had become infected and he was no longer fit to serve. When a replacement recruit was finally chosen, Mikhail Ul'ianov, his wife, Pelageia Iakovleva, immediately struggled to meet her usual obligations; now she was alone to care for four children under the age of seven and two elderly female relatives. Soon Pelageia replaced Dar'ia as Dmitriev's target, and in a letter to the estate office dated August 24, 1819 Pelageia stated "Dmitri Dmitriev comes and says give me money—where am I to get money... he says if you don't give me [money], then we will sell all your cattle and grain."<sup>25</sup> Although Dmitriev was likely striving to keep the village out of debt, and keep himself from the Iusopov factory in Moscow, his mistreatment of Dar'ia and Pelageia had caused petitions to inundate the estate office. Hoch observes that it is in an elders best interest "that local bureaucrats should be kept both distant and content."<sup>26</sup> Since Pelageia threatened late August 1819 that she would visit the estate office herself if she did not receive a swift reply, Dmitriev had succeeded in keeping the bureaucrats neither content nor distant.

The proverb, "It is bad with a husband, twice as bad without him," highlights the plight of the *soldatka* as well as the widow.<sup>27</sup> In fact, a soldier's wife was known to be even worse off than a widow; the *soldatka*'s husband is gone but not dead, so she is alone but she cannot remarry. In her study of *soslovie*, Smith defines the source of conflict: "unattached women, childless or not, aged or young, were often seen as social (and moral) disruptors."<sup>28</sup> Chmutovo is no exception, and while it is not possible in this essay to review all of the thousands of documents sent between the Iusopov's villages and their estate office, there is good reason to assume that Dar'ia and Pelageia experienced a notable uptick in slander, gossip, threats, and accusations after their husbands' departures.<sup>29</sup> Tellingly, Dar'ia is not mentioned in this drama once her husband returns from the infirmary where his leg festered. So at the very

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>26</sup> Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 151.

<sup>27</sup> Elaine Elnett, *Historic Origin and Social Development of Family Life in Russia* (New York: AMS Press, 1926), 119.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being*, 33.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, "Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia," 160.

same time that Mikhail Ul'ianov took Mikhail Ivanov's place as a recruit, Pelageia traded places with Dar'ia as a town pariah.

In the long run, Pelageia's decision to maintain contact with the estate office lowered her status in the village still further. To Smith, Pelageia's petitions seemed to produce diminishing returns as the estate office and other villagers in Chmutovo move on from the traumatic recruiting events of 1819. The *soldatka* continued pleading for her husband's return and (most detrimentally) sustained her demands for special financial treatment. This brought her trouble on two fronts.

First, in asking for the return of a military recruit, Pelageia was threatening the commune's authority in distributing military obligations. Replies from the estate office and from Nikolai Borisovich Iusupov himself restate communal jurisdiction over these matters. "Her demand for the exchange of her husband is completely reckless;" reads a reply from the estate office, "for he was given with the agreement of the society...so to exchange him is no longer possible."<sup>30</sup> The office may have found her demand reckless because earlier, in August 1819, a petition was sent directly to Nikolai Borisovich Iusupov, bypassing the village commune and the estate office. Iusupov was somewhat sympathetic in his reply to Ul'ianov's mother, but ultimately he restates the proper hierarchy to her, that "because he Ul'ianov was sent through the agreement of the commune, then there is no need to return him."<sup>31</sup> By challenging the commune's decision to send Mikhail Ul'ianov, his wife placed herself at odds with the traditional subordinate role she was expected to fill. So Pelageia was out of line when she challenged the intermediate authorities in Chmutovo, but she also made enemies in other villagers.

The second factor which degraded Pelageia Iakovleva's status in Chmutovo over the long-term was the appearance of special treatment. If Pelageia was relieved of her *obrok* duties, as she continually requested, the money would have to be paid by her fellow villagers; or as Edgar Melton puts it, "one household's gain (a reduction in its share of rents and taxes, or having its males spared from

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 164.

conscription) inevitably shifted the burden to another.”<sup>32</sup> Indeed, when Mikhail Ivanov saved himself from conscription he condemned another household to dissolution. Ideally, all needy peasants including *soldatka* could rely on the commune for support. To be sure, the state and landowners did not consider poor relief to be one of their responsibilities; the office saw any cost incurred caring for the *soldatka* as an investment in the village’s future prosperity; ...for if in four years her oldest son is sent to [work at the factory in] Moscow, then will earn not just one person’s quitrent, but even 2 and 3 persons’ worth in one year, consequently the money you spent paying the soldier’s wife Iakovleva’s dues would not be lost capital, but rather given as a loan for only some time.<sup>33</sup>

Generally, communes or other societies to which Imperial subjects belonged preferred to slough off unproductive elements. In fact, Pelageia alleged that Dmitriev expressed out loud his desire to “drive [her] out of the village.”<sup>34</sup> This unwelcoming attitude towards disruptive or unproductive members was typical, even if the estate office had trouble understanding why.

Deviation from gender obligations was a serious offence detrimental to collective wellbeing. Women out of step were regarded as polluting agents,

In one Old Believer tale, a demon washed away his pollution after visiting a whorehouse by using water in uncovered vessels in Christian homes. This water then caused illness among the believers. The moral is clear: the presence of immorality in the community brings affliction even to the righteous.<sup>35</sup>

Maintaining the social hierarchy was seen by Russians in all walks of life as a means to avoid chaos and ruin. The *soldatka* did not enter into her new role by choice. Just like their husbands, Dar’ia and later Pelageia used every recourse at their disposal to resist the draft. Unlike the soldiers, however, the *soldatka* remains in her village at least

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<sup>32</sup> Edgar Melton, “Household Economies and Communal Conflicts on a Russian Serf Estate, 1800-1817” *Journal of Social History* 26, no.3 (Spring 1993), 560.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, “Authority in a Serf Village: Peasants, Managers, and the Role of Writing in Early Nineteenth Century Russia,” 168.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>35</sup> Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the world of the orthodox Slavs, 900-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989): 76

long enough to witness the destruction of her former life. Distrust, jealousy, and threats may ultimately drive her to leave or to subordinate herself to her neighbors.

Life in a serf village was characterized by relentless burdens and a sense of communal responsibility. Fulfilling the extravagant material demands of a landlord and the state was only possible through strict adherence to the common goal. Yet through the *mir's* system of patronage, the collective burden was unequally distributed to punish or reward households – depending largely (but not entirely) on the personal bias of village elders. Since much of serf life was dictated by forces out of the village's control, distribution of responsibility took on an extraordinary social significance. The conscription dispute in Chmutovo illustrated all of this clearly, that the process of selecting a conscript was strategic and disciplinary, that social outliers such as *soldatki* were treated as unproductive and therefore villainous, and finally that appeals to a higher authority for reprieve were customary but narrowly acceptable. To expand on this last point, Chmutovo seemed supportive when Pelageia complained about Dmitriev's abuses (since his conduct affected every household), but she lost all support once her petitions began to resemble pleas for special treatment. Of course, the *soldatka* did endure a unique loss – one which, without support from the state, landlords, or the village, could be impossible for a single woman to overcome. The *soldatka* simply had no role in communal life, and became a liability as a result.

Alison Smith's translations made it possible to conduct a limited exploration into the role of the soldier's wife in her village and in the estate bureaucracy. Conflicts like the one in Chmutovo during 1819 and the early 1820s are represented to one degree or another in archived estate documents throughout the Russian Federation. Therein lies opportunity to further prove or disprove what has been discussed here; hopefully, the current limited body of research on the *soldatka* herself can be expanded. Thanks to the insights of Smith and other social historians of the Russian Imperial era who expend the additional effort to bring non-noblewomen's lives into focus.

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## **Martyr or Murderer: Mewa Singh and the Assassination of William C. Hopkinson**

ERIN CHEWTER

*This paper investigates the role of subjectivity in historical writing by highlighting the ambiguities, lacunae, and incommensurable accounts found in the archival records of a case from early twentieth-century British Columbia: the assassination of immigration agent William C. Hopkinson by Sikh Vancouverite Mewa Singh in the aftermath of the Komagata Maru incident of 1914. Emerging from within a period of extreme anti-Asian agitation in British Columbia, the archival documents surrounding Hopkinson's assassination are racially charged and bifurcated along the lines of the concurrent antagonism between the Sikh community and government officials in Vancouver. Through these documents, Mewa Singh can be cast as either a cold-blooded murderer or a martyr standing up for the dignity of his community. As an exercise in critical reflexivity, this paper holds open a space for the ambiguity of the past and argues for the social significance of historians as self-aware storytellers and meaning-makers.*

### Abbreviations Used:

BCA (BC Archives)

CRIB (Central Registry of the Immigration Branch)

CVA (City of Vancouver Archives)

HHSFC (Henry Herbert Steven Fonds Collection)

KMF (Komagata Maru File)

LAC (Library and Archives Canada)

HJKMRC (Hugh Johnston Komagata Maru Research Collection)

SFUDC (Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections)

### **Introduction**

Just after ten o'clock on the morning of October 21, 1914, Bhai Mewa Singh Lopoke Ji<sup>1</sup> entered the Vancouver courthouse at 800

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding Sikh names, Khalsa Sikhs are required to take the last name Singh, if male, and Kaur, if female. For further specification, an individual's place of birth is sometimes listed following Singh/Kaur. Bhai, meaning "brother," often occurs in front of the name to indicate a high level of participation in the gurdwara (a Sikh temple). Ji is an honorific.

Hornby Street and fatally shot immigration official William C. Hopkinson. Hopkinson's death was the apex in a series of clashes between the authorities, their informants, and Vancouver's Sikh community following the forced departure of the *Komagata Maru*—a vessel carrying 356 British subjects who were denied immigration to Canada on the grounds of their racialized identity as South Asians. There are many gaps in the history of these clashes due to both the conflicting interpretations found within racially-charged primary sources and a lack of documentation regarding the covert actions behind these clashes. Many of the historians who have approached the topic have felt the need to fill in these gaps, revealing a collective discomfort with historical ambiguity.<sup>2</sup> Inevitably, their personal backgrounds and biases shape the history they choose to write.<sup>3</sup>

This article resists a conclusive narrative, focusing instead on the conflicting versions of the event provided in both primary sources and the existing body of historical writing about the Sikh experience in early twentieth-century British Columbia. The court transcript from Mewa Singh's trial has been an indispensable resource. Mewa's written statement will be contrasted with contemporary news reports, the testimony of witnesses, and several letters between Canadian authorities. By bringing attention to these incommensurable accounts, I attempt to sit with the ambiguity of the events rather than banish it through narrative imposition. It is my ambition to generate a history that compels

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<sup>2</sup> For examples, see Hugh J. M. Johnston, "Assassination," in *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 189–207,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvic/detail.action?docID=3412927>; Norman Buchignani, Doreen M. Indra, and Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 58–63; and Richard J. Popplewell, "North America, 1905–14," in *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904–1924* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1995), 147–64.

<sup>3</sup> In this regard, I feel it is pertinent to disclose some basic information about myself in order to allow the reader to gauge how I might approach this topic. I am a settler of British decent born on the territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of New Credit. I have admittedly socialist tendencies and a penchant for decolonization politics. I was baptized Protestant but have adopted an agnostic view of religion. I am from a working-class background and am of the first generation in my family to attend university. These various facets of my identity shape my worldview and inevitably influence my choice in topic for historical research and the stories I tell.

critical thinking on the part of its readers, opening more doors than it closes and revealing the subjective nature of all historiographical practice.

### **It All Began With a—Bang!**

On the day of Mewa Singh's trial, October 30, 1914, the courtroom was tightly packed. According to one report, all seats were taken well before the proceedings commenced, and as many as two thousand would-be spectators had to be turned away.<sup>4</sup> Just four South Asians were permitted in the crowded courtroom—and only after submitting to a thorough search by court security.<sup>5</sup> Another reporter declared that no South Asians were present.<sup>6</sup> Those in attendance heard the testimonies of several witnesses to the crime, which had been committed only nine days before in the corridor outside the same courtroom. Like Hopkinson, most of the witnesses had been at the courthouse on the day of the murder to testify at the trial of Bela Singh, a Sikh with whom Mewa was well acquainted.

W. A. Campbell, who had accompanied his brother-in-law to the courthouse for an unrelated hearing that morning, was sitting in the witness room when the shooting occurred. His testimony recounts the assassination as follows: Hopkinson had been standing to one side of the witness room entrance when Campbell saw Mewa Singh walking down the corridor with his hands in his pockets. As Mewa reached Hopkinson, he drew two pistols and fired “a shot or two.” Hopkinson stepped out into the corridor and began to grapple with Mewa. A third shot brought Hopkinson to his knees. From there, Campbell said, Hopkinson attempted to get up, grabbing at Mewa's thighs before the latter brought the butt of one pistol down upon Hopkinson's head. At this point, Mewa

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<sup>4</sup> *Vancouver World*, “Murderer of Inspector Found Guilty,” 29 Oct 1914, LAC, HJKMRC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-5116/newsclipping-vancouver-world-muder-inspector-found-guilty>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Sun*, “Mewa Singh Says Crime Justifiable,” Oct 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

used the second pistol to fire several more shots into Hopkinson, who had collapsed on the floor.<sup>7</sup>

Paul Caldwell, a mechanic and friend of the deceased, was standing next to Hopkinson that morning but had been looking in the opposite direction when he heard gun shots. Turning around, he saw Mewa Singh firing directly into Hopkinson.<sup>8</sup> One newspaper reported that Caldwell had seen Mewa jumping around like a “fiend” while shooting Hopkinson; however, this detail is not present in Caldwell’s testimony.<sup>9</sup> The next time Caldwell saw his friend, Hopkinson was dead. The post-mortem performed that afternoon revealed bullet wounds to Hopkinson’s lower left thigh, the left side of his back, and two fatal shots that penetrated his right lung and heart.<sup>10</sup>

James McCann, the head janitor at the courthouse, had been working elsewhere in the building when he heard the gunshots. As he headed in the direction of the commotion, McCann saw “a number of Hindus” coming down the steps and shouted for someone to arrest them.<sup>11</sup> The newspapers made much of this group of men fleeing the gunshots. While many others had also fled from the danger, the press and McCann declared these particular men suspicious, with repeated emphasis placed on their ethnicity.<sup>12</sup> As McCann entered the corridor he saw “a Hindoo with two revolvers” standing over the body. As McCann approached, he noted that the assailant appeared “dazed” but quickly

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<sup>7</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, In the court of Oyer & Terminer & General Gaol Delivery, Vancouver Fall Assizes, Vancouver, BC [proceedings at trial], *Komagata Maru: Continuing the Journey*, 1–4, <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/node/10326>.

<sup>8</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 12–13.

<sup>9</sup> “Jury Charges Hopkinson’s Death to Mewa,” 23 Oct 1914 [unidentified news clipping], CVA, HHSFC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10797/newsclippings-lawyer-warned-he-be-killed-jury-charges-hopkinsons-death-mewa>.

<sup>10</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 9–11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Express* (Woodstock, ON), “Immigration Agent Shot Dead by Hindu,” 29 Oct 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2; *Vancouver World*, “Murderer of Inspector Found Guilty,” 29 Oct 1914; *Province*, “W.C. Hopkinson was Killed by Hindu this Morning,” 21 Oct 1914, LAC, HJCMRC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-5107/newsclipping-vancouver-daily-province-w-c-hopkinson-was-killed-hindu-morning>; *Vancouver World*, “Inspector Hopkinson Shot Dead in Court House Corridor by Hindoo,” 21 Oct 1914, LAC, HJCMRC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-5383/newsclipping-vancouver-world-inspector-hopkinson-shot-dead-court-house-corridor-hindoo>.

pointed a gun at McCann's chest when the latter took hold of him. According to McCann, he immediately knocked one pistol out of Mewa's hand. At this point, Mewa surrendered and handed McCann the other gun, saying, "I shoot, I go to station."<sup>13</sup>

McCann's testimony admits that Mewa was stunned and gave himself over to the authorities, however, Mewa's demeanor, words, and actions after shooting Hopkinson vary widely in reports of the murder. Some claimed that Mewa struggled intensely with McCann to flee after the shooting.<sup>14</sup> Vancouver's *Daily Province* reported that the "assassin attempted to escape but he, as well as other Hindus in the corridor, were arrested." Mewa is described as struggling and attempting to kill McCann, shouting: "I shoot, I don't care."<sup>15</sup> Another article in *Vancouver World* reported that "the murderer and his companions immediately attempted to rush from the building," and that when McCann confronted him, Mewa tried to pull the trigger but upon realizing the "fruitless nature of the struggle, said 'All right, I go with you'."<sup>16</sup> More sympathetic accounts wrote that Mewa dropped his weapons and surrendered immediately after the shooting.<sup>17</sup>

The disparity between these different accounts of the shooting were not interrogated during Mewa's trial. After hearing the testimonies of five witnesses, the Crown prosecutor observed that the defence had neglected to cross-examine any of the witnesses. Mewa Singh's lawyer, E. M. N. Woods, explained to the court that his client had instructed him that, in lieu of a defence, Woods should read a statement prepared by Mewa. Reporters described Mewa's statement as "rambling";<sup>18</sup> however, it contains a wealth of valuable information regarding the unorthodox methods employed by Hopkinson and his team of informers.

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<sup>13</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Express*, "Immigration Agent Shot Dead by Hindu," 29 Oct 1914; M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Province*, "W.C. Hopkinson was Killed by Hindu this Morning," 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>16</sup> *Vancouver World*, "Inspector Hopkinson Shot Dead," 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>17</sup> Satnam Singh Sangra, "Shaheed Bhai Mewa Singh," *Khalsa Diwan Society Vancouver*, <http://kdsross.com/about/history/shaheed-bhai-mewa-singh/>;  
Sohan Singh Pooni, "Bhai Mewa Singh Lopoke: The Immortal Martyr of Canada," *Global Sikh Studies*, <http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/stockeng/sohan1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Vancouver World*, "Murderer of Inspector Found Guilty," 29 Oct 1914.

### Surveillance and Intimidation

Immigration inspector and intelligence agent Charles W. Hopkinson was a well-known and controversial figure in Vancouver during this period. Speaking of Hopkinson after his death, contemporary newspapers and officials stated that he was born in London, omitting the detail that his mother was Indian and of the Brahmin caste.<sup>19</sup> Recent biographies cite his actual birthplace as Allahabad, attributing the confusion to Hopkinson's wilful denial of his Anglo-Indian heritage.<sup>20</sup> Hopkinson's British father had been killed in Kabul while acting as an escort to Sir Pierre Louis Napoleon Cavagnari, a military administrator for the British East India Company.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after his arrival in Canada, Hopkinson was appointed to Vancouver's Immigration Branch in 1909. Around the same time, he was recruited by the RCMP for the special commission of surveilling South Asian immigrants.<sup>22</sup> It was believed that anti-British radicals of the Ghadar Party had infiltrated and corrupted the Sikhs of Vancouver.<sup>23</sup>

In his statement, Mewa professed that most of the meetings held at the gurdwara concerned the Sikh community's frustration with racist immigration policies.<sup>24</sup> At that time, the wives and children of South Asian immigrants were being refused entry to Canada due to race-based exclusion laws. On April 10, 1908, Canada's *Immigration Act* had been amended to include a continuous passage clause, barring entry to "any immigrants who have come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives or citizens."<sup>25</sup> The amendment was introduced to placate the panic of white British

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<sup>19</sup> *Province*, "W.C. Hopkinson was Killed by Hindu this Morning," 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>20</sup> "Hopkinson, William Charles (1880–1914)," *Komagata Maru: Continuing the Journey*, <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/node/14691>.

<sup>21</sup> Popplewell, "North America, 1905–14," 151.

<sup>22</sup> Popplewell, "North America, 1905–14," 151; "Hopkinson, William Charles (1880–1914)."

<sup>23</sup> The Ghadar Party was an anticolonial revolutionary organization of the Indian independence movement, active from 1913 to 1948.

<sup>24</sup> *Rex v Mewa Singh*, 30 Oct 1914, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Canada, Act to Amend the Immigration Act, *Statutes of Canada* 1908, ch. 33, p. 357, LAC, accessed via *Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21*, <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/continuous-journey-regulation-1908>.

Columbians over what was frequently referred to in contemporary reports as the “Asian invasion” (an increase in South Asian immigrants to the province between 1906 and 1908).<sup>26</sup> With no direct sailings available from India to Canada, the amendment deprived South Asian British subjects of their right to free travel throughout the British Empire.<sup>27</sup> Paired with Hopkinson’s surveillance, the continuous journey clause incensed the Sikh’s of Vancouver and generated an atmosphere of increasing antagonism between the Immigration Branch and the Sikh community.

By 1914, Hopkinson had recruited several informers from within Vancouver’s South Asian community and extended his surveillance network down the coast into the United States.<sup>28</sup> As a result of Hopkinson’s efforts, the Sikh community had become split into two factions, with one side working with the immigration officials to spy on the other. Mewa’s testimony reveals that Hopkinson and his men employed dubious tactics to incriminate their targets: forging letters, bribing officials, and issuing death threats to those who resisted their plots.<sup>29</sup> The press and Hopkinson’s consorts at the Immigration Branch praised his dedication to his work. One article described him as fearless, “one of the few men in Vancouver who understand the character of the East Indian people and knew how they should be handled.” The article continues, “his death undoubtedly will confirm the people of British Columbia in their determination to end the immigration of these people to this country.”<sup>30</sup> This quote reveals the extent to which Hopkinson’s work supported and was, in turn, emboldened by the anti-Asian sentiment that dominated Vancouver during this period.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Reg Whitaker, Gregory S. Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby, “You Drive Us Hindus out of Canada and We Will Drive Every White Man out of India!” in *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 39–41.

<sup>27</sup> Buchignani, Indra, and Srivastava, *Continuous Journey*, 26–32.

<sup>28</sup> Popplewell, “North America, 1905–13,” 153.

<sup>29</sup> *Rex v Mewa Singh*, 30 Oct 1914, 16–25.

<sup>30</sup> *Vancouver World*, “Inspector Hopkinson Shot Dead,” 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>31</sup>For a discussion of Vancouver’s racially charged atmosphere in the early twentieth century, see Erika Lee, “Hemispheric Orientalism and the 1907 Pacific Coast Race Riots,” *Amerasia Journal* 33, no. 2 (2007): 19–47, <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.33.2.y263745731125524>; and Gillian Creese,

The judges and juries of British Columbia's courts were far from immune to this pervasive racism. Moreover, Hopkinson appears to have had a suspicious degree of influence over the outcomes of any trials concerning his friends and enemies. "I can hardly recall a case, whether civil or criminal, in which I did not find Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Reid taking part on the opposite side," reflected Woods.<sup>32</sup> In response to this suspected corruption, Mewa Singh lost faith in the court's ability to serve justice and resolved to take matters into his own hands.<sup>33</sup> In the statement read at his trial, Mewa outlined the series of events leading up to the assassination. It was his conviction that the deadly vendettas that had been playing out on the streets of Vancouver could be traced back to the Immigration Branch's favouritism and patronage.<sup>34</sup> Association with Hopkinson granted virtual legal immunity and special privileges. In return, Hopkinson furthered his surveillance activities by extracting favours from his those he protected.<sup>35</sup> Mewa had nearly been taken in by this mechanism himself.

On July 16, 1914, Mewa Singh had crossed the Canada-United States border alongside Balwant Singh Khurdpur, Bhag Singh Bhikiwind, and Harnam Singh Kahri Sahri. Once in the United States, they purchased several firearms from a hardware store in Sumas, Washington. Depending on the source, this was either for their personal use or for the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* to use in revolt against the British.<sup>36</sup> Mewa Singh was arrested while trying to re-enter Canada the following day and was found to be concealing a pistol and several

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"Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the 'Oriental Problem'," *BC Studies*, no. 80 (Winter 1988–89): 24–51, <https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i80.1295>.

<sup>32</sup> E. M. N. Woods to C. J. Doherty, 24 Dec 1914, LAC, HJKMRC, RG13, vol. 1467, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-4801/e-m-n-woods-lawyer-woods-downie-counsel-mewa-singh-charles-j-doherty-minister-justice-page-1>.

<sup>33</sup> *Rex v Mewa Singh*, 30 Oct 1914, 24–25.

<sup>34</sup> E. M. N. Woods to C. J. Doherty, 24 Dec 1914.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914; "Serious Charge Against Hindus," 23 Oct 1914 [unidentified news clipping], CVA, HHSFC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10803/newsclippings-serious-charge-against-hindus-charge-murder-laid-against-hindu-hindu-sues>; "Statement of Mewa Singh, son of Nand Singh, Village of Lopoke, District of Amritsar, India," Aug 1914, CVA, HHSFC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-5209/statement-mewa-singh-son-nand-singh-village-lopoke-district-amritsar-india-page-1>.

rounds of ammunition.<sup>37</sup> In Mewa's account of what transpired, Hopkinson, Bela Singh (Hopkinson's foremost informant), and Malcolm Reid (the head of the Vancouver Immigration Branch) explained that he could either go to jail for several years or pay a small fee of fifty dollars. The choice was his conditionally: "I will get you off free if you say that Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh, and Harnam [Singh Kahri Sahri] have given you these pistols to give to [Husain] Rahim," Hopkinson allegedly offered.<sup>38</sup> Hopkinson had been eager to apprehend these members of the Shore Committee, a group that had been advocating on behalf of the passengers stranded for two months aboard the *Komagata Maru* since it arrived in Vancouver's harbour on May 23 to challenge the continuous journey regulation.

It is clear from the letters between authorities that Hopkinson played some part in securing Mewa's acquittal; Mewa's reaction to the proposal, however, remains unclear.<sup>39</sup> By some accounts, Mewa betrayed his comrades and expressed his immense gratitude to Hopkinson for the intervention.<sup>40</sup> According to Mewa, he refused to comply, insinuating that the unsigned statement presented by Hopkinson and Reid to their superiors was a fabrication.<sup>41</sup> In a letter to W. D. Scott, the Superintendent of Immigration, Reid confessed that "Mewa Singh had intimated he would be willing to tell a correct story, which we thought might possibly involve some of the local agitators among the Hindus. The story as given is not entirely satisfactory . . . I think it just probable that he may give us still further information."<sup>42</sup> This was not to be Mewa's last encounter with the immigration authorities.

An article published just after Hopkinson's assassination claimed that "a plot has been uncovered through the discovery of a letter on the person of a Hindu which had in its ramifications the removal of

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<sup>37</sup> M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914.

<sup>38</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 18.

<sup>39</sup> E. B. Robertson to C. J. Doherty, 4 Jan 1915, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2; M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914.

<sup>40</sup> E. B. Robertson to C. J. Doherty, 4 Jan 1915; *Province*, "W.C. Hopkinson was Killed by Hindu this Morning," 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>41</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 18–21; "Statement of Mewa Singh," Aug 1914.

<sup>42</sup> M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 8 Aug 1914, CVA, HHSFC, KMF, p. 647, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10771/copy-letter-reid-w-d-scott-re-hindus-detained-sumas-and-enclosing-statement-mewa-singh>.

not only inspector Hopkinson, but others as well, including several Sikhs, who were believed to have told the authorities of seditious meetings and doctrines.”<sup>43</sup> The Sikhs referred to here are Arjan Singh and Harnam Singh Furio, both informers to Hopkinson that had been killed in the months preceding the assassination. On August 31, Harnam’s body was found along the train tracks in the Kitsilano area with his throat slit and a turban wrapped around his feet.<sup>44</sup> Less than a week later, Arjan died of a bullet wound to his neck after being shot by Ghadarite Ram Singh in what the jury ruled to be an accident.<sup>45</sup> The media and Canadian authorities seized these two deaths as proof that Hopkinson and his supporters were marked men in the books of an extremist Sikh faction seeking retribution for the *Komagata Maru* incident.<sup>46</sup>

The memorial ceremony for Arjan Singh was held at the local gurdwara on September 5, 1914. Shortly after the service began, Bela Singh arrived and began shooting at the mourners, fatally wounding Bhai Bhag Singh Bhikiwind and Bhai Battan Singh. This act of violence is interpreted multifariously in the sources. One newspaper reported that Bela simply pointed “his revolver at certain other Hindus in the auditorium” and that the charge of murder was a “conspiracy to have Bela Singh arrested and possibly discredited by his employers.”<sup>47</sup> In the version of events provided by all of the wounded men, Bela began shooting unprovoked.<sup>48</sup> Bela’s claim that he was acting in self-defence was eventually accepted by the jury. His acquittal shocked many in the Sikh community. Both Mewa Singh and his lawyer, Woods, reported that when asked by the police constable about his motives for killing Bhag and Battan, Bela Singh replied: “Hopkinson and Reid, they know,

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<sup>43</sup> “Three More Hindus,” 24 Oct 1914 [unidentified news clipping], CVA, HHSFC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10803/newsclippings-serious-charge-against-hindus-charge-murder-laid-against-hindu-hindu-sues>; In my research I failed to come across any evidence of such a letter existing.

<sup>44</sup> Johnston, “Assassination,” 126.

<sup>45</sup> “Ram Singh Held Guilty by Jury,” Sep 1914 [unidentified news clipping], CVA, HHSFC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10809/newsclippings-jagat-singh-pay-death-penalty-mewa-singh-be-tried-friday-ram-singh-held>.

<sup>46</sup> *Citizen*, “Hindu Question,” 23 Oct 1914.

<sup>47</sup> “Serious Charge Against Hindus,” 23 Oct 1914.

<sup>48</sup> Johnston, “Assassination.” 194–95.

go and ask them.”<sup>49</sup> Woods also mentioned that the deceased men were shot in the back and were men who had openly disapproved of the methods of Bela and Hopkinson.<sup>50</sup>

Mewa Singh was present during the shooting at the gurdwara. In his statement, Mewa identified this as the tipping point that led to his decision to remove Hopkinson. Such a desecration of sacred space and killing of innocents enraged Mewa. To add insult to injury, Hopkinson had approached Mewa after the shooting and ordered him to give testimony favorable to Bela as payment for Hopkinson’s intervention on Mewa’s behalf during the pistol-smuggling fiasco. Mewa claimed to have rebuffed repeated attempts by Hopkinson and his informant Baboo Singh Lithur to pressure Mewa into lying for Bela’s benefit, at which point his life was threatened.<sup>51</sup>

### “A Man of High Ideals”

Bhai Mewa Singh was born in 1880 in Lopoke, a village in the Amritsar district of Punjab. He migrated to Canada in 1906 along with a few thousand other Punjabi Sikhs in pursuit of work. Taking a job at the Fraser Mills in New Westminster, Mewa spent his spare time acting as a Granthi at the Vancouver gurdwara.<sup>52</sup> Some contemporary accounts describe Mewa as “a very devout man [who] never attended any political meetings . . . [and] would only go to the temple to pray”<sup>53</sup> and as a “religious man and a man of high ideals . . . who had the highest conception with regard to the sacredness of the precincts of the Sikh Temple.”<sup>54</sup> By contrast, the immigration agents painted him as a man of

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<sup>49</sup> E. M. N. Woods to C. J. Doherty, 24 Dec 1914; Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 24.

<sup>52</sup> Pooni, “Bhai Mewa Singh Lopoke,” 1–2; Verne A. Dusenbery, “On the Moral Sensitivities of Sikhs in North America,” in *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India*, ed. Owen M. Lynch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 240, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft296nb18c/>; In several sources Granthi is translated as “priest,” which does not accurately represent the less authoritative role of Granthi, a ceremonial reader of the Guru Granth Sahib at the gurdwara. The intentional lack of priestly authority in the gurdwara is a definitive element of the Sikh religion.

<sup>53</sup> *Province* (Vancouver), “Sohan Lal Says He is a Victim,” 4 Dec 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

<sup>54</sup> E. M. N. Woods to C. J. Doherty, 24 Dec 1914.

so weak a mind that he was susceptible to influence from anyone around him.<sup>55</sup>

During his first years in Canada, Mewa would have witnessed severe anti-Asian discrimination. This included the 1906 race riots in Vancouver, the 1907 disenfranchisement of South Asians, and the implementation of the “continuous journey” order-in-council.<sup>56</sup> During the *Komagata Maru* incident of 1914, Mewa had been a member of the Shore Committee, providing support to the passengers.<sup>57</sup>

Mewa’s statement at his trial reveals that he had become fixated on the disgrace heaped upon him and his community through the underhanded methods wielded by Hopkinson and his men:

All night long it haunted me that here I am, a man that says my prayers, and those men harass me like this with these wrong statements and trying to disgrace me. . . . these people have disgraced us altogether; they think we are nothing. Sikhs are nothing; there is nothing left of us, we are walked on.<sup>58</sup>

As a devout Sikh, Mewa found grievous complaint with Hopkinson’s double-dealing; he called the agent a “blood sucker” and accused him of taking bribes and cheating both the government and the Sikhs.<sup>59</sup> His repulsion to Hopkinson’s behavior was inspired by one of the main tenets of Sikhism: one’s living should be earned through honest means.<sup>60</sup> Mewa felt justified in his actions: “I know my prayers have been accepted, and God knows between the right and the wrong. In our prayers it says that we must see right done. We cannot shut our eyes and see wrong done.”<sup>61</sup> Sikhism has a long tradition of martyrs who have followed Guru Gobind Singh’s instruction to “uphold the right in every place, to destroy sin and evil,” and that “when all other means have

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<sup>55</sup> E. B. Robertson to C. J. Doherty, 4 Jan 1915.

<sup>56</sup> Buchignani, Indra, and Srivastava, *Continuous Journey*, 26, 32.

<sup>57</sup> For an extensive study of this event, see Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru*.

<sup>58</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 22–24.

<sup>59</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Gurcharn S. Basran and B. Singh Bolaria, *The Sikhs in Canada: Migration, Race, Class, and Gender* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23.

<sup>61</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 17.

failed, it is permissible to draw the sword.”<sup>62</sup> Mewa Singh decided to kill Hopkinson and, in so doing, sacrifice his own life to stop the injustice and restore honour to himself and his community.<sup>63</sup>

### **Heads Will Roll**

After hearing Mewa’s statement, the jury deliberated for less than ten minutes and returned with a guilty verdict. Unaffected by Mewa’s words, they proceeded to recommend “that both Dominion and provincial authorities formulate some plan for the better protection of those brave officers whose duties call upon them to risk their persons in defence of law and order. We further recommend that special attention be paid to watching Hindoos and other foreigners.”<sup>64</sup> The jury’s sentiments reflected those found in the press. Hopkinson’s death had incited a wave of intensified hatred and suspicion against all South Asians in Vancouver.<sup>65</sup> The most extreme expression of this sentiment came from Conservative parliamentarian H. H. Stevens. In a rushed telegram to Prime Minister Robert Borden on the day of the murder, Stevens suggested that “local officers be instructed to arrest and deport every Hindu known to be connection with recent meeting Sikh temple.”<sup>66</sup> The calls for vigilance and retribution were endorsed by the Vancouver’s mayor, Truman S. Baxter. Upon hearing of Hopkinson’s death, Baxter is reported to have exclaimed, “This thing must stop . . . it is bad enough having these Hindus kill their fellow countrymen but when they shoot our citizens, it has come to the limit of our endurance.”<sup>67</sup> In the aftermath of the shooting, the authorities detained

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<sup>62</sup> A. H. Burton, “Free Translation From the 'Khalsa Shancher' of Stockton, California,” Feb 1915, LAC, HJKMRC, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-4825/free-translation-khalsa-shancher-stockton-california-mr-h-burton-h-burton-interpretor-copy>;

Basran and Bolaria, *The Sikhs in Canada*, 18–19.

<sup>63</sup> See *Rex v Mewa Singh*, 30 Oct 1914, 26.

<sup>64</sup> “Jury Charges Hopkinson's Death to Mewa,” 23 Oct 1914.

<sup>65</sup> This is evident from the racially-charged and fear-mongering rhetoric found throughout the majority of news articles published in the aftermath of the assassination, as cited in the bibliography below.

<sup>66</sup> H. H. Stevens to R. Borden, 21 Oct 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

<sup>67</sup> “Serious Charge Against Hindus,” 23 Oct 1914.

any South Asians they deemed suspicious and conducted mass interrogations and searches.<sup>68</sup>

Although Mewa declared that he had acted on his own, neither the press, the public, nor the immigration officials could accept that Hopkinson's death was not part of a larger anticolonial conspiracy by the Ghadarites.<sup>69</sup> As one paper reported, "it is the opinion of the police that the murder of inspector Hopkinson is the outcome of a meeting of a certain element of Hindoos held yesterday or the day before . . . [where] a drawing took place and the fateful lot fell to the murderer."<sup>70</sup> The assumed leaders of the anticolonial faction were quickly arrested and charged with inciting the murder. Husain Rahim, Sohan Lal Aulakh, Balwant Singh Khurdpur, and Kartar Singh Chand Nawan were put on trial as the masterminds behind the assassination.<sup>71</sup> These four men had also been members of the Shore Committee during the *Komagata Maru* incident. All the accused were acquitted due to lack of evidence.<sup>72</sup>

Vancouver's press appears to have been appalled and confused by Mewa's apparent peace of mind after the murder. His composure was interpreted as proof of either insanity or that he was nothing more than a cold-blooded murderer: "Pacing up and down his cell with a cynical smile on his face, the murderer is apparently as happy as can be."<sup>73</sup> In the weeks preceding his execution, Mewa Singh's lawyer defied his wishes and wrote in desperation to Charles J. Doherty, the Minister of Justice, to request an inquiry into his client's mental health. He felt that Mewa's "pure religious fanaticism" had inspired him to feel righteous in killing Hopkinson. As a result of this petition from Woods, the superintendent of the New Westminster Insane Asylum conducted an inquiry on January 3. Superintendent J. G. Mackay concluded in his

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Rex v Mewa Singh, 30 Oct 1914, 25; E. B. Robertson to C. J. Doherty, 4 Jan 1915; M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914; *Saturday Sunset*, "Death of Officer and its Causes," 23 Oct 1914.

<sup>70</sup> *Vancouver World*, "Inspector Hopkinson Shot Dead," 21 Oct 1914.

<sup>71</sup> "Serious Charge Against Hindus," 23 Oct 1914; *Province* (Vancouver), "Rahim Suggested the Murders Say Witnesses," n.d., BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

<sup>72</sup> W. D. Scott to W. W. Cory, 7 Dec 1914, BCA, CRIB, GR-1547.60, vol. 561, file 808722, mflm. B01235, part 2.

<sup>73</sup> M. R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, 22 Oct 1914; *Vancouver World*, "Inspector Hopkinson Shot Dead," 21 Oct 1914.

letter to Doherty that, “although a devoted follower of his own creed,” Mewa Singh was very much of sound mind.<sup>74</sup>

According to all accounts, Mewa Singh had appeared indifferent upon hearing Justice Morrison announce the death sentence. On January 11, 1915, Mewa Singh was taken from his cell at the New Westminster jail and hanged for his crime.<sup>75</sup> Before ascending the scaffold, Mewa is reported to have avowed: “I cheerfully face that death, of which the world is afraid. By death do we come to a knowledge of God.”<sup>76</sup> Several hundred Sikhs attended the execution. After receiving Mewa’s body, those present took part in a funeral procession to the site of his cremation near Fraser Mills.<sup>77</sup> In the Sikh community, Mewa Singh has earned the title of *Shaheed*, martyr; his death continues to be commemorated each year in gurdwaras along the Pacific coast.<sup>78</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The racial tensions between Sikh and white Vancouverites during the early twentieth century is embodied by the ambiguous historical figure of Bhai Mewa Singh Lopoke Ji. This paper has attempted to engage the reader in a joint endeavour to tease apart the surface details of Hopkinson’s assassination, revealing the connections to broader mechanisms of British colonialism and race-relations in British Columbia’s early history. In so doing, we find that the accounts of Mewa Singh’s character, his assassination of William C. Hopkinson, and the events leading up to that day vary widely from source to source, presenting a challenge to any historian looking to extract the so-called

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<sup>74</sup> C. J. Doherty to Superintendent, Insane Asylum, New Westminster, 3 Jan 1915. [telegram] LAC, HJKMRC, RG13, vol. 1467, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10353/charles-j-doherty-minister-justice-superintendent-insane-asylum-new-westminster-re-mental>; J. G. Mackay to C. J. Doherty, 5 Jan 1915, [telegram] LAC, HJKMRC, RG13, vol. 1467, SFUDC, <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10354/j-g-mackay-acting-superintendent-insane-asylum-new-westminster-charles-j-doherty-minister>.

<sup>75</sup> E. M. N. Woods to C. J. Doherty, 24 Dec 1914.

<sup>76</sup> Burton, “Free Translation From the 'Khalsa Shancher'.”

<sup>77</sup> Melanie Hardbattle, “Mewa Singh’s Funeral 1915,” *Asian Pacific Post*, 22 Apr 2014, <http://www.asianpacificpost.com/article/6103-mewa-singh%E2%80%99s-funeral-1915.html>; *Vancouver World*, “Mewa Singh Goes to Gallows,” 11 Jan 1915.

<sup>78</sup> Sangra, “Shaheed Bhai Mewa Singh.”; Burton, “Free Translation From the 'Khalsa Shancher'”; Dusenbery, “On the Moral Sensitivities of Sikhs in North America,” 240–41.

facts of the matter. As such, the case of Mewa Singh serves as a potent reminder that the process of writing history is one steeped in subjectivity.

With that in mind, we ask ourselves: was Mewa Singh a murderer or a martyr? His story has been and continues to be told from both perspectives. The historian is a storyteller. We craft narratives through a selective process that generates cohesion and meaning from the archival scraps left in the wake of human lives that are often messy, nuanced, and far from self-evident in their didactic value. The selective and subjective nature of this process, rather than detracting from the value of history, is the heart of its role in society. As Walter Benjamin wrote, every real story “contains, openly or covertly, something useful. . . . In every case the storyteller is a [person] who has counsel for [their] readers.”<sup>79</sup> The historian, as storyteller, renders past experiences communicable. In writing a history, we pick and choose what is included and excluded from our source material, responding to the contemporary needs of ourselves and our communities. It must be emphasized that the making of meaning is not an abhorrent contamination of a mythically objective science of history. Indeed, our subjectivity only becomes dangerous when we seek to deny or obscure it through a pretense of pure fact. With this in mind, I ask you to make what you will of this particular story—to find meaning in it—but always with the awareness that to do so ethically requires a commitment to transparency in your subjective position and intention. The story can never be divorced from the teller. Was Mewa Singh a martyr or a murderer? The answer is in the telling.

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<sup>79</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 86.

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## Slingshots and Game Controllers: Video Games within Middle Eastern Conflicts

CALLUM McDONALD

*This essay will place a series of Middle Eastern-made video games into the political and military conflicts in which they are played. In contrast to scholarship focusing on how video games represent and narrate colonial and post-colonial reality onscreen, this paper will focus on how video games relate to their (Middle Eastern) players' lived experiences of ongoing conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the global "War on Terror." This paper will survey a selection of six primary video games, all participating in the aforementioned conflicts: two by the Islamic State's online supporters, two by the Syrian developer Afkar Media, and another two by Lebanon's Hezbollah. This selection contains games which serve a variety of political languages, whether colonial-imperial, anti-imperial, or post-colonial. This paper intends to show how the political character of these games is tightly bound to the local context of the playership, in ways that turn games into propaganda. This essay seeks to challenge a Euro-American, middle-class ideal in video game studies that treats gameplay as escapism—giving excitement to players who are otherwise disconnected from the world of politics. Consequently, historical video games, divorced from reality, are measured by how well (or poorly) they simulate a past or present. Increasing the focus on video games' meaning within some Middle Eastern gamers' highly politicized social worlds could permit video game studies to open itself up to both global politics and specific regional histories.*

Video games are a natural home for rich representations of reality, combining sound, visuals, text, and narrative.<sup>1</sup> What is more, players can actively shape a game's storyline. As such, video games are fertile ground for affirming, changing, or challenging colonial and imperial narratives. Although these games reimagine the past, they are played in the context of the present. This essay will consider colonial and post-colonial video games made in the Middle East within the contexts in which they are played. These games do not primarily

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<sup>1</sup> Dima Saber and Nick Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*': hegemony, history and resistant videogames in the Middle East," *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no.1 (2016): 83, doi 10.1177/0163443716672297.

represent colonial-imperial conflicts onscreen; they first and foremost function within live politico-military conflicts, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the “War on Terror.”

This essay argues that propaganda becomes the primary function of these video games when they are played in militarized contexts and that this political dynamic is especially potent for youth who are themselves trapped in weaponized colonial-imperial contexts.<sup>2</sup> This argument will be advanced through three different case studies: ISIS’s modified versions of *Grand Theft Auto V* and *ARMA 3*, which legitimate ISIS’s imperial control over subject populations in Iraq and Syria; Hezbollah’s games, *Special Force I* and *II*, which seek to empower Palestinian and Lebanese anti-imperial resistance to Israeli encroachment into Palestine and Lebanon; and the Syrian developer Afkar Media’s post-colonial games, *Under Ash* and *Under Siege*, which sensitively revisit the events of the Palestinian intifadas (in 1987 and 2000), valuing recollection over revenge.<sup>3</sup> All of these games represent the past, recent past, or future in a different way, and each game gains

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<sup>2</sup>. Zahera Harb, *Channels of Resistance in Lebanon: Liberation Propaganda, Hezbollah and the Media* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011), 4.

<sup>3</sup>. It is also important to note that as of the publication of some of this essay’s sources, namely Abdel Bari Atwan’s 2015 book *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, ISIS controlled a territory, an empire, the size of Great Britain in Iraq and Syria. Today in 2019, they have nearly lost their empire, except on the Internet. While this complicates this essay’s characterization of ISIS’s media as “made in the Middle East,” this paper nevertheless argues that a Middle Eastern geographical context is essential to understanding ISIS’s video games; *Special Force*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2002); *Special Force II*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2007); *Under Ash*, video game, developed by Afkar Media (Dar al-Fikr, 2003); *Under Siege*, video game, developed by Afkar Media (Dar al-Fikr, 2001); “*Salil el-Sawarem* [Clash of Swords],” video game montage, developer unknown, in “Watch: Islamic State’s Terror Video Game,” by Michelle Malka Grossman, *Jerusalem Post*, September 21, 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/IS-claims-it-created-a-terror-video-game-375935>; *ARMA 3*, video game, developed by Bohemia Interactive (Bohemia Interactive), 2013; *ARMA 3* [machinima], video game mod, developer unknown [ISIS?], publication date unknown; Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: the Digital Caliphate* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), 9, 11, 12, 155, 156, 164; “Map of Syrian Civil War,” Live Universal Awareness Map, <https://syria.liveuamap.com/> (accessed 29 March 2018); Helga Tawil Souri, “The Political Battlefield of Pro-Arab Video Games on Palestinian Screens,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no.3 (2007): 538, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/224586>.

additional meaning when played within a given context. Ultimately, situating these games in their respective conflicts can liberate video game studies from a decidedly Euro-American vision of video games as an escapist middle-class pastime. To stay mindful of context, playership, and authorship, this essay will start by providing an introduction to the nature of the political context that these video games inhabit, before moving on to draw some general conclusions from each specific case study.

First, the use of the words “imperial” and “colonial” will be clarified. While the former denotes the foreign control of a territory and population, the latter expands the definition to include settlement projects.<sup>4</sup> Since such a large part of this essay is devoted to games in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is important to disclose that this essay takes the stance that Israel represents both an imperial power and a colonial power. Israel is imperial in the sense that the state has maintained military control over an unwilling subject people, both in southern Lebanon historically and in Palestine (the West Bank/Gaza) today.<sup>5</sup> It is colonial because Israeli citizens, having settled the land of the modern Israeli state since the nineteenth century, are now settling on the internationally-recognized territory of another group, the West Bank Palestinians.<sup>6</sup> As Ilan Pappé puts it, “Possessing the land was a national or religious mission, but the means were colonialist.”<sup>7</sup> A colleague of Israel’s second president, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, confirmed this comparison: “The Zionist establishment should defend the Jewish workers against the Arab one, as the French government protects the French colonialists in

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<sup>4</sup>. Contemporary definitions of imperialism and colonialism can be applied to early and current Israeli state-building, as described by Ilan Pappé. The phrases “postcolonial” and “anti-imperial” are taken to be fixed expressions. Elsewhere, the terms “colonial” and “imperial” have been used together, with a hyphen or a conjunction, when both concepts apply, or separately when a distinction is warranted; Ilan Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism: A Comparative View of Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no.4 (2008): 612, 628, doi 10.1215/00382876-2008-009.

<sup>5</sup>. Southern Lebanon was even seen as a site of potential settlement for Israel; Harb, *Channels of Resistance in Lebanon*, 80, 82; Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 2009), 30.

<sup>6</sup>. Before 2005, there were Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip as well; Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine*, 31, 308, 368.

<sup>7</sup>. Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism,” 616.

Algeria against the natives.”<sup>8</sup> This attentiveness to the specific nature of Middle Eastern context is crucial throughout this paper, because when Hezbollah’s video games are described as being played in an ongoing anti-imperial context, the imperial power in question is Israel.

Numerous games—European, Middle Eastern, or otherwise—let players engage with a history or an alternative history of anti-imperial struggle.<sup>9</sup> Some of these games, particularly Indian-made video games, travel back a hundred years or more to explore colonial conflicts.<sup>10</sup> They permit an engagement with the colonial past and ongoing colonial legacies on behalf of their playership. This essay, however, concentrates on games played in *ongoing* violent contexts, and less on the contents of the games themselves. While this is not to downplay ongoing colonial and imperial legacies in countries such as India, an adolescent twenty-first-century Indian gamer is no longer under physical threat from the British Army that she is battling onscreen.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, for a Palestinian in the West Bank, a game like Hezbollah’s *Special Force*, which permits him to shoot at Israeli soldiers, is a vastly different experience; he is substituting the all-too-real violence of his own life for the violence onscreen.<sup>12</sup> This is true for all the games dealt with here: violent contexts turn otherwise *commemorative* games into politically *active* ones. Consequently, it is easy to see the significance that the identity and geographical location of a player has for the study of video games.

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<sup>8</sup>. Yaakov Rabinowitz, “Defending the National Labor,” trans. Ilan Pappé, *Ha-Poel Hazair*, March

10, 1908, in Ilan Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism: A Comparative View of Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no.4 (2008): 618, doi 10.1215/00382876-2008-009.

<sup>9</sup>. Mukherjee provides an extensive list of relevant colonial and post-colonial games; Souvik Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 88.

<sup>10</sup>. Mukherjee mentions post-colonial Indian games like *Bhagat Singh* and *Somewhere*, both recreating the British Empire in India onscreen in novel ways; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism*, 15, 16, 88; *Somewhere*, video game, developed by Studio Oleomingus (Studio Oleomingus), 2014; *Bhagat Singh*, video game, developed by Mitashi (Mitashi), 2002.

<sup>11</sup>. This refers to *Bhagat Singh*, which allows the player to fight and kill British redcoats; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism*, 15, 16.

<sup>12</sup>. Souri, “Pro-Arab Video Games,” 540-1.

Reflecting this political context, the games made by Middle Eastern developers are, in part, designed to reverse the Western gaze of games showing American troops and planes invading the Middle East.<sup>13</sup> Increasing numbers of American military video games produced since the 1990s have concentrated on terror groups and the Middle East, particularly after the events of September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center was attacked.<sup>14</sup> This global political context is essential to understanding games depicting the Middle East in the twenty-first century. *Splinter Cell*, for instance, specifically deals with 9/11, while *Counter Strike: Global Offensive* pits two teams of players, “terrorists” and “counter-terrorists,” against each other.<sup>15</sup> As Afkar Media developer Radwan Kasmiya notes, “Arab gamers are playing [foreign] games that attack their culture.”<sup>16</sup>

This essay will study games which largely meet three criteria: they represent the Middle East onscreen; they are developed by political actors who are themselves not primarily the agents of Western states; and they are primarily (if not exclusively) played by gamers in the Middle East. The final criterion is essential for this paper: this essay will privilege the identity and context of the playership over that of the authors and over the game content, even though they overlap to some extent in the case studies explored here. Furthermore, by refocusing on the political contexts in each of the three case studies, this paper can help contribute to the decentring of video games from the Western core to the

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<sup>13</sup>. Saber and Webber, “‘This is our *Call of Duty*,’” 83; the US Army’s official video game, *America’s Army*, designed for recruitment, lets the player carpet bomb all of Beirut; *America’s Army*, video game, developed by the United States Army (United States Army, 2002).

<sup>14</sup>. Saber and Webber, “‘This is our *Call of Duty*,’” 79.

<sup>15</sup>. The “maps,” or the location of each game match, are diverse geographical locations, but are almost always devoid of people/civilians (i.e., the native populations). Two of *Counter Strike*’s maps represent an alternate present in which Tunis is overrun by French troops. These mostly American-made games are played in the Middle East, for instance at Saudi Arabia’s male-only gaming conference, Gamers’ Day; “Gamers Day [يوم اللاعبين],” supported by the General Entertainment Authority, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2017 (accessed 30 March 2018); *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*, video game, developed by Valve Corporation and Hidden Path Entertainment (Valve Corporation, 2012); *Tom Clancy’s Splinter Cell*, video game, developed by Ubi Soft Montreal (Ubi Soft Entertainment, 2002).

<sup>16</sup>. Saber and Webber, “‘This is our *Call of Duty*,’” 6; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Colonialism*, 47.

Middle Eastern periphery that developers such as Afkar Media have themselves undertaken.

### Case Study I: ISIS and Its Video Games

Islamist groups have long participated in the appropriation of the video game medium. For example, an American game *Quest for Saddam* (whose goal is to assassinate Saddam Hussein) was followed shortly by *Quest for Bush*, a release by an al-Qaeda affiliate.<sup>17</sup> ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham) also produced video games and game montages which participated in the offscreen struggle of the “War on Terror.”<sup>18</sup> A video mash-up called *Salil el-Sawarem* (“Clash of Blades”) was created from a modified version of the American title *Grand Theft Auto V*, an open-world game in which the player is allowed to wander the streets of “Los Santos,” California, committing random crimes, like shooting civilians and police officers.<sup>19</sup> The exact origins of the montage, due to the anonymous nature of both Internet content in general and ISIS’s illegal following, are unknown. Fittingly, ISIS, which modelled itself off of international crime groups, used this game montage to project a freelance, rugged look onto the organization.<sup>20</sup>

The montage from *Salil el-Sawarem* depicts bearded ISIS fighters blowing up trucks, shooting police officers, and committing

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<sup>17</sup>. *Quest for Bush*, video game, developed Global Islamic Media Front (Al-Qaeda, 2006); *Quest for Saddam*, video game, developed by Petrilla Entertainment (Petrilla Entertainment, 2003); Ahmed Al-Rawi, “Video games, terrorism, and ISIS’s Jihad 3.0,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017): 2, doi 10.1080/09546553.2016.1207633; Adrienne Shaw, “Beyond Comparison: Reframing Analysis of Video Games Produced in the Middle East,” *Global Media Journal* 9, no.16 (2010): 2, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/325231491?accountid=14846>.

<sup>18</sup>. ISIS also has a playable game, a modified version of *ARMA 3* with a similar goal to *Salil el-Sawarem* and with similar global origins; Saber and Webber, ““This is our *Call of Duty*,”” 87; *ARMA 3*, video game, developed by Bohemia Interactive (Bohemia Interactive, 2013).

<sup>19</sup>. This game is not confirmed to actually be playable; Saber and Webber, ““This is our *Call of Duty*,”” 78; “*Salil el-Sawarem* [Clash of Swords],” video game montage, developer unknown, in “Watch: Islamic State’s Terror Video Game,” by Michelle Malka Grossman, *Jerusalem Post*, September 21, 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/IS-claims-it-created-a-terror-video-game-375935>.

<sup>20</sup>. Atwan, *Islamic State*, 19.

other acts of *ad hoc* violence.<sup>21</sup> The fact that the game is not fully playable and is modified is particularly interesting. The game appropriates American content, turning violence once seen as unthreatening by an American playership into a type of religious-inspired political violence that could actually evoke fear in the United States; a symbolic reversal of the American military's real-life monopoly on violence. Another ISIS game, a modified version of *ARMA 3*, allows the player to fight battles as ISIS or the Kurdish Peshmerga.<sup>22</sup> The organization also appropriated the popular first-person shooter series *Call of Duty* to swell its international support. For instance, one ISIS-made digital image sported a direct reference to *Call of Duty*: "THIS IS OUR CALL OF DUTY AND WE RESPAWN IN JANNAH [heaven]."<sup>23</sup> In sum, ISIS's global mission within the "War on Terror" was reflected in its surface appropriation of American games, a strategic posture necessary in the context of a multi-national terrorist initiative like the Islamic State.

Technology, and by extension video games, were essential to ISIS's existence and success in recruitment.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the games themselves can be understood as symbols for ISIS's global business model: they were built by ISIS's international supporters. While this complicates the games' Middle Eastern credentials, they are still influencing and influenced by the territorial context of imperial conquest in Iraq and Syria.<sup>25</sup> ISIS, or "the Digital Caliphate" as Abdel Bari Atwan calls it, sprang from three local events: the power vacuum in Iraq

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<sup>21</sup> "Salil el-Sawarem [Clash of Swords]," video game montage, developer unknown, in "Watch: Islamic State's Terror Video Game," by Michelle Malka Grossman, *Jerusalem Post*, September 21, 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/IS-claims-it-created-a-terror-video-game-375935>.

<sup>22</sup> Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 83, 85; *ARMA 3*, video game, developed by Bohemia Interactive (Bohemia Interactive, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> "Respawn" is gaming jargon for reincarnate or rebirth, from "to spawn again." This is an interesting blend of English gamer language and an Islamic theological term (*jannah*, meaning heaven); Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 87, 88; Qur'an, 18:107, Arabic Word Study Tool, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=jan~aAtu&la=ar&can=jan~aatu0&prior=lahumo&d=Perseus:text:2002.02.0006:sura=18:verse=107&i=1> (accessed 1 April 2018).

<sup>24</sup> Atwan, *Islamic State*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 85.

following Saddam Hussein's expulsion from power following the 2003 American invasion under George W. Bush; the resurgence of al-Qaeda's Iraq branch, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his successors; and the Syrian Civil War of 2011, into whose chaos the Islamic State in Iraq's "Caliph Ibrahim" could concentrate his ground forces.<sup>26</sup>

Internationally, ISIS sought the broadest audience possible, hence the use of English in its game montage and the foreign fighters in its ranks.<sup>27</sup> The global net was very much part of ISIS's media strategy. ISIS would hijack the Internet by employing what are called "flaming" tactics: drowning out their opponents with obscene, violent language and stopping debate, while pulling in spectators and widening their viewership.<sup>28</sup> This unwitting media coverage helped increase the audience of the group, which in turn swelled the number of international recruits (thirty-thousand-odd people, mostly from Middle Eastern and North African countries as of 2015) who contributed to ISIS's army in Iraq and Syria.<sup>29</sup> ISIS's video games emphasize visuals over playership. In contrast to Hezbollah's "home-grown" and fully playable games, which had a more specific audience, ISIS's modified games were part of a broader recruitment strategy that relied on aggressive violence to gain airtime around the world.<sup>30</sup>

## Case Study II: Syria's Afkar Media and Palestinian Games

*Under Siege* and *Under Ash* are two games created by the Damascus-based developer Afkar Media and released by the company Dar al-Fikr in 2001 and 2003, respectively.<sup>31</sup> The games have been played widely, especially in Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Both games are first-person shooters, but the killing of civilians, unlike American games and ISIS's

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<sup>26</sup>. Atwan, *Islamic State*, 37, 39, 40, 79, 91, 98.

<sup>27</sup>. Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 85.

<sup>28</sup>. Al-Rawi, "Video games, terrorism, and ISIS's Jihād 3.0," 4; Atwan, *Islamic State*, 18.

<sup>29</sup>. Atwan, *Islamic State*, 168.

<sup>30</sup>. Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 85.

<sup>31</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Games," 538; Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism*, 117; Rhonda Roumani, "Muslims craft their own video games," *Christian Science Monitor*, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/gaming/2006-06-04-syrian-firm-games\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/gaming/2006-06-04-syrian-firm-games_x.htm).

<sup>32</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Games," 538.

games, is not encouraged.<sup>33</sup> *Under Siege* takes place in a fictitious continuation of the First Intifada (1987-1993) and is set in 1994.<sup>34</sup> The First Intifada broke out in 1987 after a road accident involving an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) vehicle in Gaza killed four Palestinians.<sup>35</sup> The game relocates the Intifada by depicting it as a reaction to the real-life massacre of twenty-nine Palestinians by extremist Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein in 1994, who appears in the first level's cut scene.<sup>36</sup> The Palestinian youth who fought against well-armed IDF soldiers are, in the game as in real life, armed with slingshots.<sup>37</sup> The games themselves were released during the Second Intifada (2000-2005), when Palestinians, for the second time since 1993, rose against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.<sup>38</sup> The sequel, *Under Ash*, is based on that Second Intifada.<sup>39</sup> The game's character, Ahmed, must reach the Al-Aqsa Mosque in old Jerusalem by dodging Israeli bullets.<sup>40</sup> The initial goal is to rescue wounded people from Al-Aqsa, where the player takes a rifle from an IDF soldier, only to push the soldier off of the Dome of the Rock compound, a recreation of the actual beginning of the Intifada.<sup>41</sup> Like many video games, both of these games recreate a history—or in the case of *Under Ash*, current events. What is extraordinary is not the content of the games, but the rapport that Palestinian kids who lived through these events have with these video games.

Syrian Afkar Media's Palestinian titles, *Under Ash* and *Under Siege*, are popular in the country they depict. They become a political

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<sup>33</sup>. Players lose points for attacking civilians. The game does allow the player to shoot Israeli settlers, however; Souri, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 539, 544; "Salil el-Sawarem," video game montage, in "Watch: Islamic State's Terror Video Game," by Grossman, *Jerusalem Post*, September 21, 2014.

<sup>34</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Games," 538.

<sup>35</sup>. William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 5th ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2013), 442.

<sup>36</sup>. A cut-scene is the part of a game which most resembles a movie. The player is made to watch a short clip which fills in the narrative background for the playable content about to come. In this case, animated scenes of the Palestinian Intifada greet the player before each round of the game; Souri, "Pro-Arab Games," 538.

<sup>37</sup>. Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 444.

<sup>38</sup>. *Ibid.*, 478, 479.

<sup>39</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Games," 538.

<sup>40</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>. *Ibid.*

alternative to violence for children and adolescents, who represent a large, increasingly educated, urban, but under-employed demographic in the Middle East.<sup>42</sup> “I can be a resistance fighter even though in real life I don’t want to do that,” said an eight-year-old Arab interviewee commenting on the role of anti-imperial video games.<sup>43</sup> Far from provoking violence in youth, as many commentators in the United States worry, many Palestinian youth are told by their parents to stay inside and thus to choose video games *over* political violence.<sup>44</sup> Many present-day Palestinian parents are not concerned with the violence portrayed onscreen; their children are very familiar with real violence, from Israeli soldiers to bombs, and some parents are just happy that the current adolescent and pre-adolescent generation have an alternative to endangering themselves by attacking occupation forces, as their older siblings did during the Intifadas.<sup>45</sup> Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Palestine’s West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation and colonization, while the Gaza Strip has been under military blockade, entailing mutual cross-border attacks.<sup>46</sup> The youth of Palestine today, much like their seniors, have not known a world outside this occupation/blockade. Too young to have participated in the Second Intifada against Israeli occupation in 2000-2005, many young Palestinians feel powerless, with the diplomatic solution also often seen as a failure.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the age factor, public spaces like parks and playgrounds have been destroyed post-Second Intifada.<sup>48</sup> As Helga Tawil Souri puts it, playgrounds became battlegrounds.<sup>49</sup> Within this

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<sup>42</sup>. This describes young adults, too, including those who fought in the Palestinian Intifadas, but they are not dealt with here; Juan Cole, *The New Arabs* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 1, 3, 5, 13.

<sup>43</sup>. Ed Halter, “Islamogaming; the state of gaming in the Muslim world,” *PC Magazine* 25, no.23 (2006): 4, in Shaw, “Beyond Comparison: Reframing Analysis of Video Games Produced in the Middle East,” 4.

<sup>44</sup>. Souri, “Pro-Arab Video Games,” 538, 546.

<sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*, 542.

<sup>46</sup>. The Gaza Strip was also under occupation and settled until the 2005 withdrawal of the Israel Defense Force and the settlers; Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine*, 30, 32; Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 481.

<sup>47</sup>. Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 485.

<sup>48</sup>. Souri, “Pro-Arab Video Games,” 550.

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

environment, video games, too, make this transition from toys to weapons.

Both *Under Siege* and *Under Ash* appeal to the lived experience of Palestinian youth; both games deal explicitly with the recent history of Palestinian resistance.<sup>50</sup> In the Middle East, approximately 50,000 units of *Under Ash* were sold, plus 250,000 downloads (not counting numerous pirated copies).<sup>51</sup> While small by American standards, the immense difficulty of downloading fifty megabytes from the Internet via characteristically poor Palestinian digital infrastructure has led the games' developers to call it a "strong emotional message."<sup>52</sup> In brief, the impact that games depicting the Israel-Palestine conflict have when the player is reliving their own reality is testament to the importance of political, emotional, and geographical context in video game studies.

### Case Study III: Lebanon's Hezbollah and Its Games

Before directly discussing Hezbollah's video games *Special Force I* and *II*, it is important to frame the games' strategic and military context: Hezbollah's propaganda response to the major Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.<sup>53</sup> Hezbollah, the only group to retain its weapons after the 1975-1989 Lebanese Civil War, was the primary resistance group to Israel's continued stay in Lebanon from 1982 to 2000.<sup>54</sup> The goal of Hezbollah's resistance was complete liberation of Lebanese territory, including southern Lebanon, which Israel had held since June

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<sup>50</sup>. Interestingly, it has been noted that games like *Special Force* have difficulty selling in countries like Egypt and Jordan, which are quite literally removed from the worst of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Clearly, the attractiveness of these games comes not from some collective Arab spirit or hatred of Israel, but from the hard reality of the conflict and its similarity to onscreen histories for Arabs youth directly experiencing violence; Shaw, "Beyond Comparison," 4.

<sup>51</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 538.

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, is on record affirming this view. The group announced its official existence in 1985; Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 80, 81; *Special Force*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2002); *Special Force II*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2007).

<sup>54</sup>. Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 383, 500; Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 1, 219.

of 1982.<sup>55</sup> Hezbollah, despite being a Shi'i sectarian organization in a religiously diverse polity, enjoyed a measure of support from the Lebanese government and general public during the war against occupation.<sup>56</sup> Hezbollah pioneered the political use of modern technology during the wars with Israel from 1982 to 2000. For instance, journalists from Al Manar, Hezbollah's television agency, followed troops into battle against the IDF.<sup>57</sup> They used their footage, sometimes including Hebrew narration, to break myths of invincibility surrounding the IDF.<sup>58</sup> Israeli media was manipulated into broadcasting Hezbollah's clips. Al Manar directly targeted Israeli mothers, asking them, "Why let your son die in south Lebanon?"<sup>59</sup> The Israeli mothers of deployed soldiers were affected by these videos and the accompanying violent scenes that had until then been hidden from the Israeli public.<sup>60</sup> Hezbollah eventually forced Israel's withdrawal on May 25th, 2000, in large part due to its propaganda campaign, although this would not be the end of the conflict.<sup>61</sup>

Hezbollah's video games fit within this political and military strategy. Hezbollah's Central Internet Bureau released the first-person shooter game *Special Force* in 2003, years after the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon.<sup>62</sup> *Special Force* interprets Israeli-Hezbollah battles for control of southern Lebanon in the early 1980s.<sup>63</sup> The player has to navigate the same dangers as a Hezbollah fighter: IDF soldiers, local terrain, and explosives. The game also provides target practice by letting the player shoot at Ariel Sharon and other Israeli leaders.<sup>64</sup> The video game provides what are both gameplay instructions

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<sup>55</sup>. Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 81, 114; Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 383.

<sup>56</sup>. Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 90.

<sup>57</sup>. *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>58</sup>. *Ibid.*, 183, 186.

<sup>59</sup>. *Ibid.*, 218, 219.

<sup>60</sup>. The pro-withdrawal Israeli Four Mothers lobby group is a direct result of Hezbollah's terror tactics; Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 218, 219.

<sup>61</sup>. Harb, *Channels of Resistance*, 219.

<sup>62</sup>. Other sources say the game was produced in 2002; *Special Force*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2002); Tawil Souri, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 539; Saber and Webber, "'This is our *Call of Duty*,'" 78.

<sup>63</sup>. Tawil Souri, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 539.

<sup>64</sup>. *Ibid.*

and guidance for real-life political activism: “You must oppose, confront and destroy the machines of the Zionist enemy and [uphold and defend] the heroic actions taken by the heroes of the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.”<sup>65</sup> *Special Force II* builds on similar themes, except it was released in 2007 following the destructive July 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel that it chronicles.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the games are played not just in Lebanon, but wherever local conflict gives them meaning. Helga Tawil Souri recounts being excitedly invited by a twelve-year-old Palestinian girl in the West Bank to play *Special Force*: “You have to play...you have to try this. This is the best game ever. It’s by Hezbollah...it’s the first game where you can shoot Israelis,” she said.<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusions

Clearly, these games exist in (and help narrate) violent modern-day contexts as much as they represent a historical past. The use of video games in partisan conflicts raises questions about their purpose and authorial intent. Are these games primarily narratives, telling the player and the historian a story through onscreen events? Or are they tools of propaganda, meant to rouse action in the here-and-now? Despite Hezbollah’s denial that its games are propaganda, the group’s video games are as implicated in the politics of resistance as the Al Manar TV broadcasters. And although propaganda is at its most obvious with *Special Force I* and *II* (the products of a specific political party), all the games in this paper become propaganda in the right context. This is true despite each game reflecting different commitments to politics, morality, and truthfulness. In other words, to call all these games propaganda is not to paint ISIS, Hezbollah, and Afkar Media with the same moral brush, nor is this to assume each developer’s complicity in their games’ propagandistic nature. A political context (perhaps shared by the developer, but perhaps not) creates propaganda out of games. This is how Afkar Media, a Syrian company not interested in propagandizing, can make vivid propaganda tools for Palestinian political actors. Indeed,

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<sup>65</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>. *Special Force II*, video game, developed by the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah (Hezbollah, 2007); Saber and Webber, “This is our *Call of Duty*,” 86.

<sup>67</sup>. Souri, “Pro-Arab Video Games,” 537.

a line from Afkar Media's *Under Ash* invites players to meditate on the ambiguity of cultural forms in political conflicts: "[Is this game] a real life story or a political propaganda [sic]? You have the right to decide."<sup>68</sup> This essay argues that one can choose both. Games can become propaganda when the imperatives of lived experience compel them, often leaving their authors and their original purposes behind. By placing video games into the political contexts of their players and their developers, this paper avoids analysing video games as forms of coded text exclusively based on their onscreen content. Instead, this essay follows Adrienne Shaw who focuses "on looking at games as forms of play and not as texts."<sup>69</sup> One must ask *who* plays a game, *where*, and *with what motivation*. Shaw puts it well: "Playing as a young Palestinian in the First Intifada in *Under Ash* may only relate to an actual story of rebellion via cut scenes and onscreen text, but that information is part of the game logic, part of the motivation for playing."<sup>70</sup> Even scholars who do contextualize onscreen historical references often adopt a very middle-class, Eurocentric view of modern players' contexts. For example, video game scholar Sun-ha Hong talks of "hyperreality" and players' desire for an escape back to a time when "life mattered" as motivators for gamers.<sup>71</sup> This ignores that for many people, Palestinian and Lebanese gamers included, life matters very much. Indeed, Helga Tawil Sourì argues that *Under Ash* and *Ander Siege*, the Palestinian games, are the most realistic ever invented due to their reimagining of the actual political lives of young Palestinians.<sup>72</sup> Scholars should problematize the North American archetypical suburbanite gamer, safely seated in front of their screen. Life under a military occupation is itself "hyperreal"—it requires no augmenting, no added excitement from video games. As an eleven-year-old boy from Gaza put it:

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<sup>68</sup>. Sourì, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 551.

<sup>69</sup>. Shaw, "Beyond Comparison," 7.

<sup>70</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>. Sun-ha Hong, "When Life Mattered: The Politics of the Real in Video Games' Reappropriation of History, Myth, and Ritual," *Games and Culture* 10, no.1 (2015): 37, doi 10.1177/1555412014557542.

<sup>72</sup>. Sourì, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 546; A. Galloway also argues this; A. Galloway, "Social Realism in Gaming," *Game Studies* 4, no.1 (2004): <http://www.gamestudies.org/0401/galloway>, in "Digital Arabs: Representation in video games," by Vít Šisler, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no.2 (2008): 212, doi 10.1177/1367549407088333.

I've watched our homes being demolished. I've watched my parents being humiliated at the checkpoint. For me, in this game, I can finally have some strength that I don't have in real life. I can fight for the dignity and honor of my parents.<sup>73</sup>

This Palestinian child is not looking to divert himself from reality, but to further engage with it.

In summary, video games are dependent on how their contents interact with the hopes, dreams, and political aspirations of those who play them. ISIS's *Call of Duty V* and *ARMA 3*, Afkar Media's *Under Ash* and *Under Siege*, and Hezbollah's *Special Force I* and *II* actively participate in the immediate histories of the conflicts they depict. Video games like these, far from being repositories of events, are animated by real-life military conflicts and, as such, are more realistic than they are escapist or "hyperreal." Whether a game attacks empire, seeks to establish one, or solemnly critiques imperialism, a video game becomes bogged down in the trenches, as it were, of whatever conflict its players find themselves in. ISIS's, Hezbollah's, and Afkar Media's games all act as propaganda in the sense that they participate in their players' politics, for better or for worse. This essay has concentrated on a small area of the Middle East (and with regards to ISIS, the Middle East-orientated cyberspace). The Arab-Israeli conflict and the "War of Terror" provide the context for a handful of Middle Eastern historical video games. Viewed in context, video games become more than their content and onscreen narratives written into lines of code. Reinterpreted, video games easily pass from the realm of representations and entertainment into the world of political technology, taking their rightful place next to the symbolism of the bomb-jacket, the Kalashnikov, and the slingshot. Video games create new meanings in these conflicts, trading Eurocentric, middle-class divertissement for political engagement.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>. Souri, "Pro-Arab Video Games," 540.

<sup>74</sup>. Many thanks go to Dr. Andrew Wender and to his teaching assistant for their encouragement with regard to publishing this essay and for their comments.

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## **‘Imprudent Sluts’ & ‘Sober Gentlemen’: Testimonial Injustice in Rape Trials at the Old Bailey, 1720-1742**

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*This article examines the role of gender in the testimony, character and credibility of the plaintiffs and defendants in rape trials in early modern England. I will argue that the emerging eighteenth-century culture of sensibility did not contribute to increased rulings in favor of women in rape trials as women’s perceived sexual character was used as a proxy for their moral character and was weaponized as evidence against them in rape trials. To do this, I will draw from feminist philosopher Miranda Fricker’s work on testimonial injustice. Testimonial injustice “occurs when a speaker is given less credibility than deserved [...] because of an identity prejudice held by the hearer.” I argue that early modern England rape trials exemplify testimonial injustices as they indicate that women’s testimonies were not afforded equal weight, and suffered less favorable legal outcomes due to the particularly gendered and circumstantial natures of the crime. These trials deserve historiographic attention to attempt to address these historical testimonials injustices and correct – or at least question – what historical documents have preserved as facts.*

In her 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice*, feminist philosopher Miranda Fricker argues that testimonial injustice, a form of epistemic injustice, “occurs when a speaker is given less credibility than deserved [...] because of an identity prejudice held by the hearer.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the speaker suffers “a credibility deficit.”<sup>2</sup> For example, Fricker explains that if a male judge has a prejudice against women, a woman’s testimony may be less likely to be believed. Moreover, “to suffer a credibility deficit impedes one’s capacity as an epistemic agent, making it both an ethical and an epistemic wrong when one suffers a deficit due to an identity prejudice.”<sup>3</sup> When considering testimonial injustices of the past,

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<sup>1</sup> Heidi Grasswick, "Feminist Social Epistemology," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/feminist-social-epistemology/>> (accessed 6 april 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Grasswick, "Feminist Social Epistemology."

<sup>3</sup> Grasswick, "Feminist Social Epistemology."

such as those recorded in trials, it is obvious that these records obscure the truth of history, specifically the history of the marginalized.

In her work, historian Andrea McKenzie explores the relationships between gender, class, character, verdicts, and punishments in early modern England – specifically how the reputation and class of witnesses, the accused, and the victim affected the outcomes of spouse-murder cases. In her article “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ ‘Her Evil Tongue’: Character and Class in Trials for Spouse Murder at the Old Bailey, 1674-1790,”<sup>4</sup> McKenzie argues that positive character witnesses were crucial to the acquittal of those accused of spouse-murder in early modern England, and that lenient charges were often associated with negative character witnesses for the victim. Furthermore, McKenzie, among other scholars in this field, writes that the “emerging eighteenth-century culture of sensibility contributed to a decriminalisation of female passion and sexuality.”<sup>5</sup> This “culture” refers to the new moral and spiritual values and the changing conceptions of gender during this time – including a greater sensitivity to the emotions of others.<sup>6</sup> She maintains that this rising “culture of sensibility” may have contributed to the increasingly lenient court judgements of women accused of spouse-murder.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, female defendants benefitted from sympathy only when their victims were poor and working class. She notes a “distinct continuity” in sexist gender ideology as “the dying accusations of female victims and the testimony of their female prosecution witnesses continue[d] to be routinely questioned or discredited as malicious and hence unreliable” in the trials.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing upon McKenzie’s lens of analysis and four volumes of “Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey, 1720-1742” hosted on the Eighteenth Century Collections Online database, I ask: what is the role of gender in the testimony, character, and credibility of

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<sup>4</sup> Andrea McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue’: Character and Class in Trials for Spouse Murder at the Old Bailey, 1674-1790” *American Journal of Legal History* (2017), 354-384.

<sup>5</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’ 354.

<sup>6</sup> G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’ 354.

<sup>8</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’ 354, 383.

the plaintiffs and defendants in rape trials in early modern England?<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, did this “emerging culture of sensibility” also contribute to increased rulings in favor of women in rape trials?<sup>10</sup> These trials deserve historiographic attention to attempt to address these historical testimonials injustices and correct – or at least question – what historical documents have preserved as facts. Therefore, I argue that early modern England rape trials exemplify testimonial injustices as they indicate that women suffered significant credibility deficits and less favorable legal outcomes due to the particularly gendered and circumstantial natures of the crime. Moreover, women in rape trials did not benefit from the “emerging eighteenth century culture of sensibility” that may have benefitted women accused of spouse-murder, as their perceived sexual character was used as a proxy for their moral character and was weaponized as evidence against them in rape trials.<sup>11</sup>

Certain characteristics of rape collaborate to put character and credibility at the forefront of legal judgements. Rapes often occur when the victim/survivor is alone with the perpetrator, without witness. The physical results of a rape are oftentimes similar to the results of consensual sex, thus rape was and continues to be a highly difficult (if not impossible) crime to prove with hard evidence due to questions of consent. Unlike other crimes, often the only tool a survivor has to prove a crime occurred is her own testimony. Furthermore, rape is a highly gendered crime, and thus an analysis of rape trials illustrates the crucial role that gender plays in the construction of credibility. Thus, testimony, character, and credibility played more significant roles in trials than perhaps any other crimes at the time. Keeping Fricker’s notion of “testimonial injustice” in mind, one can see how problematic these characteristics of rape can be in a trial setting.

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<sup>9</sup> In this paper, I will use the word ‘rape’ and ‘sexualized violence’ interchangeably. This is to emphasize the fact that rape is not about sex, but about power, control, and violence. It is not violent sex, but sexualized violence. This is an important distinction.

<sup>10</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’ 354.

<sup>11</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’ 354; This analysis is based on a limited sample of rape trials held in London between 1720 and 1742. Given the constraints of time and space, a wide range of additional sources could not also be consulted. Freed of such constraints, I might have, for example, consulted newspaper articles or trials from a larger span of time, which might change the conclusions reached here. I hope however to have provided a faithful and compelling analysis of the sources that I do have at hand.

Before proceeding with an analysis of the trials, it may be useful to clarify the sources of my research. I reviewed four volumes of “The “Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey, 1720-1742” hosted on the Eighteenth Century Collections Online database for rape trials in which the accused was acquitted. Though there are numerous trials where the accused was convicted – and an analysis of both acquittals and convictions would certainly be valuable – it is beyond the scope of this paper. The online archive is word-searchable, and contains records of 197,745 criminal trials between 1674 and 1913 from the Old Bailey, which was London’s central criminal court.<sup>12</sup> It is an extremely valuable source because it speaks to the lives of non-elite people, their daily lives and struggles, and the dominant values at the time. The published Proceedings are considered “quasi-official” reports, as they did not include every trial held at the Old Bailey, and only included partial transcripts of the trials.<sup>13</sup> In particular the case of the defence was frequently abridged, including testimony of defence witnesses. According to the Old Bailey official website, this is perhaps because the publisher “deemed them trivial or irrelevant.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, it is useful to keep this in mind when analyzing these cases, as the testimony of numerous unnamed character witnesses are omitted and yet carry significant weight in the court’s decision to acquit or convict.

Throughout the court records examined on the Old Bailey database, the accused’s conviction or acquittal was oftentimes decided through the prosecutor’s testimony, character witnesses, and credibility. In March 1720, Susannah Gilman accused the husband of her mistress (identified as M.L. in the trial transcript) of violently raping her while her mistress was out of the home.<sup>15</sup> Upon the mistress’s return, Susannah

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<sup>12</sup> “Homepage,” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>

<sup>13</sup> “Homepage,” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>

<sup>14</sup> “The Value of the Proceedings as an Historical Source,” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Value.jsp#reading>

<sup>15</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, for murder, robberies, rapes, sodomy, coining, ... To which are added, genuine accounts of the lives, behaviour, confessions, and dying speeches of the most eminent convicts. ... From the year 1720, to this time. ... Vol. 1, Dublin, 1742, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, University of Victoria, 24-29,

was warned to not mention the rape by threat of being killed by the man. This subsequent silence was used as evidence of his innocence, the argument being that a genuine rape would have been reported immediately.

A bad character witness of Susannah given by a defence witness, Mrs. Willis, was instrumental in the man's acquittal. Mrs. Willis testified: "I knew the Prosecutor and her Mother, the former of whom had a very indifferent Character: when she was but a Girl, she would have sworn a Rape against a Gentleman, which I hearing of, went to the Mother, and prevail'd with her to send for a midwife, who, upon searching her, declar'd it was no such Thing; and that the daughter was an imprudent Slut."<sup>16</sup> The trial of M.L. and Susannah Gilman is succinctly summed up in Mrs. Willis's testimony: Susannah's narrative is fictitious, given the perception of her imprudence. Her alleged sexual past, and thus her character, is invoked to discredit her testimony, which is an example of testimonial injustice and suggests that Susannah did not benefit from the new culture of sensibility. We can see the accusation of character functioning as a tool in the order in which it is presented – that Susannah was found false by search, was therefore an "imprudent Slut," and not to be given the same credibility as a woman whose search had yielded positive results, and whose social reputation was held in high regard.<sup>17</sup> That we are to believe that Mrs. Willis is a credible witness over the character, and thus the reality of Susannah Gilman's rape, is to suppose that the accuser herself is not credible due to her "indifferent Character" while she was young and her dubious sexual reputation.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in this case, her perceived sexual character was criminalized and her credibility eroded, which contributed to the acquittal of her alleged attacker.

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<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uvictoria&tabID=T001&docId=CW3324027681&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> (accessed 7 April 2018).

<sup>16</sup> "Select Trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 1, 29.

<sup>17</sup> "Select Trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 1, 29.

<sup>18</sup> "Select Trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 1, 29.

In the May 1725 case, Sarah Muns accused John Alloway of raping her on a boat on the River Thames.<sup>19</sup> The Court asks Muns, “Did he use no threats?”<sup>20</sup> Muns replied that he did not. The Court continues, “He did not? And yet now, by the Manner in which you give your Evidence, you seem very willing to pass for a young Woman of extraordinary Modesty.”<sup>21</sup> Alloway was acquitted. What is most remarkable about the court’s accusation in this exchange is the suggestion that Sarah’s case, and necessarily, her testimony, are called into question upon the chance that she is posturing herself as more ‘modest’ than she actually is. This implication calls into question her credibility – if she is passing, which is to say posing, as a woman of “extraordinary Modesty,” it suggests that a woman of immodesty might perhaps be likely to tell falsehoods.<sup>22</sup> The court suggests that Sarah Muns’ evidence was presented as part of her charade, in the image of her false modesty, which is to condemn any further representation of her case as being a falsehood akin to her demeanor. Once again, the emerging culture of sensibility did not benefit Muns as insinuations about her sexual character were used in the favor of the accused.

Early modern England rape trials reveal that gender also informed the credibility of the accused, which in turn informed the verdict. In virtually every case, men were the defendants and it was their positive reputation and character witnesses that resulted in acquittals despite the victims’ or other female witnesses’s testimonies. Robert Lander was indicted for the felony of raping 15 year old Amy Joel, as well as the misdemeanor of assaulting Joel with the intent to ravish in July of 1725.<sup>23</sup> Joel claimed that Lander, a neighbour known to her,

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<sup>19</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, for murder, robberies, rapes, sodomy, coining, ... To which are added, genuine accounts of the lives, behaviour, confessions, and dying speeches of the most eminent convicts. ... From the year 1720, to this time. ... Vol. 2, Dublin, 1742, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, University of Victoria, 194, <<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&rodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uvictoria&tabID=T001&docId=CW3323628131&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> (accessed 8 April 2018).

<sup>20</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 194.

<sup>21</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 194.

<sup>22</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 194.

<sup>23</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 288.

entered her mistress's kitchen and sexually assaulted Joel. Afraid to tell her mistress, Joel told her mistress's sister Ann. Ann testified that she believed Lander was guilty as he had tried to assault Ann before. Ann testified that after kissing her without consent, "he stoops down, pretending to buckle his shoe, and whips his Hand under my Petticoats; and if somebody had not came in, I don't know but he might have got his wicked Will of me, as he had of her."<sup>24</sup> However, the record states that "several gentlemen," having known him several years, testified to his good reputation: "they never knew him guilty of any immodest Actions."<sup>25</sup> Lander was acquitted of the felony and charged with the misdemeanor. In this case, two women from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Amy Joel, a lower class young servant and Ann, a presumably middle class woman) testified against Lander with no obvious ulterior motivations. Yet the unrecorded testimony of several unnamed and unknown men serve to acquit Lander of his actions. This case is thus a prime example of testimonial injustice, as the detailed testimony of both Joel and Ann were discredited by these unknown gentlemen's words. Joel and Ann's gender compromised their credibility as epistemic agents and was therefore the barrier to Joel's search for justice.

The testimony of the defence character witnesses involved in the March 1725 trial of John Simmons, accused of raping Mary Batten, contains several narratives that serve to discredit the crime as recounted by Batten.<sup>26</sup> Margaret Dixon, Mary's employer, recounts how Mary had dutifully shown her her injuries, which serves as evidence of the assault. However, John's mother-in-law assured the courts that such an assault was impossible, given her daughter's beauty and, by implication, the sexual access the accused had to her. In other words, why would he need to satisfy his sexual appetite elsewhere? The account of the trial concludes by summarizing the testimonies of several unnamed witnesses, asserting that John was a "sober industrious Man," before recording his acquittal.<sup>27</sup> Given the obvious weight given to these last testimonies, and that the evidence of Mary and Margaret should be

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<sup>24</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 288.

<sup>25</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 288.

<sup>26</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 318.

<sup>27</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 2, 321.

evaluated as beneath the moral claims of the mother-in-law and the additional witness reveals a testimonial injustice that favours the assertion of the accused's character over evidence. Given the explicit sexual and gendered nature of this and similar trials, it is revealed that such evident favour is the consequence of systemic injustice that privileges the words and testimonies of men above those of women, and treats men as credible epistemic agents above women. John Simmons is thus acquitted not by any fault of Mary Batten, but rather at the bolstering of public and judicial opinion on Simmons's behalf, rendering the accused untouchable from scrutiny.

In the January 1726 trial, Catharine Southall accused Thomas Coventry, a neighbour to Catharine, of raping her under a bridge.<sup>28</sup> Catharine's employer Mary testified on her behalf, saying that Catharine returned that night "in a vile Pickle, all over Dirt."<sup>29</sup> Mary sent for a midwife to examine her "strictly" who found evidence of intercourse.<sup>30</sup> Upon Catharine's admission that Coventry had raped her, Mary went to the local ale-house and overheard Coventry boasting about having sex with a 16 year old girl. The prisoner denied it, and claimed "the Girl used to come after me to our Cellar, and would always be giving me Apples, or Oranges, or one Thing or another."<sup>31</sup> This statement serves not only as evidence of his innocence, but also to discredit Catharine's sexual and moral character. That the jury found Coventry innocent reflects the social assumption that if a woman gives you one thing - her time, her fruit - that she must also be likely to give you her body. Coventry's mere denial of the rape, despite the testimony of multiple women, is a clear example of testimonial injustice, and demonstrates that in rape cases, ideas about women's sexuality were used to discredit women's

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<sup>28</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, for murder, robberies, rapes, sodomy, coining, ... To which are added, genuine accounts of the lives, behaviour, confessions, and dying speeches of the most eminent convicts. ... From the year 1720, to this time. ... Vol. 3, Dublin, 1742, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, University of Victoria, 64,

<<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uvictoria&tabID=T001&docId=CW3324588800&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> (accessed 8 April 2018).

<sup>29</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 3, 64.

<sup>30</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 3, 65.

<sup>31</sup> Select trials at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bailey, Vol. 3, 65.

testimonies and thus women did not benefit from the emerging “culture of sensibility” that supposedly decriminalized “female passion and sexuality.”<sup>32</sup>

As we have seen in the cases mentioned above, the tales that surround the men in these trials, if favourable towards his character, render the accused untouchable. Women’s detailed and witnessed accounts of the crime they suffered competed with nebulous assertions from neighbours and coworkers. We see a pattern of lauding the male character to the discredit of the female. The trials reveal that if a woman was shown, even by suggestion or rumour, to have acted licentiously, her credibility was called into question. It is as though the imagination of a woman is so volatile, so malleable with the suggestion of sexuality, that her claim cannot hold a candle in the eyes of the law. The reputation of the female prosecution was so vulnerable to charges of promiscuity, that her claims often fell to the ground. Contrastingly, in the same world, the same courts, the imagination of a man is so amenable to compliment, so infallible that the testimony of many women against him could not guarantee a conviction. And these are only the records of those who reported their sexual assaults.

Many people did not report sexualized violence for a variety of reasons. In general, violent offenses were massively underreported, and settled in informal ways.<sup>33</sup> The Old Bailey website indicates that “[w]omen account for a higher proportion of the victims who used less formal legal procedures such as summary jurisdiction and informal arbitration to prosecute crimes,” meaning that likely a number of women did report rapes but did not bring their cases to the criminal court at the Old Bailey.<sup>34</sup> Historian J.M. Beattie writes that reporting a rape was often discouraged and thus quite rare: “[t]hose who complained to a magistrate and went forward to trial opened themselves inevitably to publicity and to the embarrassment and pain of having to prove in court that an attack had taken place and that it was indeed a rape, that the accused had had carnal knowledge of her ‘forcibly and against her

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<sup>32</sup> McKenzie, “‘His Barbarous Usages,’ Her ‘Evil Tongue,’” 354.

<sup>33</sup> J.M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 124-25.

<sup>34</sup> “Gender and Crime,” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Gender.jsp>

will.”<sup>35</sup> Beattie notes that the courts were particularly concerned about false accusations and convictions in cases of sexualized violence, “and the result was that a women bringing a charge and giving evidence in court opened herself to an investigation into her life for if the defense could show that she was not of good character, doubt might be thrown on the accusation.”<sup>36</sup> Doubt was also cast on her testimony if she did not tell someone report the assault immediately to the authorities, or cry out for help.<sup>37</sup> This, despite the fact that, as we have seen, some of the survivors’ lives were warned by their attackers – on the threat of death – not to report. Additionally, many women lived alone in urban parishes near London and “without encouragement and support and the indignation of relatives, women were perhaps more anxious to press prosecution of rape.”<sup>38</sup>

Those who did report their rapes rarely received the justice they deserved. Despite the difficulty and rarity of reporting a rape and bringing it to criminal court, between 1720 and 1742, 85.48% of defendants in rape trials were found not guilty at the Old Bailey – nine defendants were convicted, while 53 were acquitted.<sup>39</sup> In most of the trials in which the defendant was convicted, the victim was under the age of 15. These statistical percentages remain fairly consistent for the next 100 years. It was not until the 1840s when convictions began to outpace acquittals for rape cases at the Old Bailey.<sup>40</sup> It was also around

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<sup>35</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 124-25.

<sup>36</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 125-26.

<sup>37</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 126.

<sup>38</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 130.

<sup>39</sup> “Statistics: Tabulating verdict category where offence category is rape, between 1720 and 1742. Counting by verdict,” *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913*, [https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/stats.jsp?y=verdictCategory&x=&countBy= verdicts &render=pic& offences offenceCategory offenceSubcategory=sexual rape& verdict s verdictCategory verdictSubcategory=& punishments punishmentCategory punishmentSubcategory=& defendantNames defendantGender=&defendantAgeFrom=&defendantAgeTo=& victimNames victimGender=&victimAgeFrom=&victimAgeTo=&divs\\_fulltext=&kwparse=and&fromMonth=&fromYear=1720&toMonth=&toYear=1742](https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/stats.jsp?y=verdictCategory&x=&countBy= verdicts &render=pic& offences offenceCategory offenceSubcategory=sexual rape& verdict s verdictCategory verdictSubcategory=& punishments punishmentCategory punishmentSubcategory=& defendantNames defendantGender=&defendantAgeFrom=&defendantAgeTo=& victimNames victimGender=&victimAgeFrom=&victimAgeTo=&divs_fulltext=&kwparse=and&fromMonth=&fromYear=1720&toMonth=&toYear=1742)

<sup>40</sup> “Statistics: Tabulating decade against verdict category where offence category is rape. Counting by verdict,” *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913*, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/stats.jsp?y=decade&x=verdictCategory&countBy= verdicts &render=pic& offences offenceCategory offenceSubcategory=sexual rape& verdicts verdictCategory verdictSubcategory=& punishments punishmentCategory>

this time that there was a significant uptick in rape trials. Though McKenzie observes an increasing sense of lenience in favor of women accused of spouse-murder in the courts from 1674-1790, this does not seem to be the case for women reporting sexualized violence in the same time period. It appears as though the “emerging culture of sensibility” did not influence the verdicts of rape trials at the Old Bailey until the 1840s. Though the increase in rapes taken to trial are in part due to an increase in population, it was also due to “an increased willingness to come forward,” according to Beattie.<sup>41</sup> He argues that women’s willingness to report may have come from a new perception of the court as “slightly more sympathetic to their plight, slightly more willing to consider women as victims than earlier views of women as sensuous and morally dangerous beings.”<sup>42</sup>

To conclude, the difficulty of proving rape leaves she with the least social power to prove her innocence not through evidence, but through testimony, character, and credibility. As Fricker argues, credibility is contingent on social location; those with the most marginalized social identities often suffer the greatest credibility deficits and thus the least favorable outcomes in legal proceedings.<sup>43</sup> In many of these cases at the Old Bailey, female rape prosecutors were in effect ‘the accused,’ with their lives and character on trial, rather than the other way around. Evidently, survivors of rape between 1720 and 1742 did not benefit from the “emergent eighteenth-century culture of sensibility” as did women who committed spouse murder in the same era.<sup>44</sup> The rape trials at the Old Bailey, like the trials analyzed by McKenzie, also exemplify a “distinct continuity” in sexist gender ideology well into the nineteenth-century.<sup>45</sup> The examples provided here of rape trials provide historical evidence for this argument – that time and again trial outcomes were informed by credibility, which in turn was informed by socio-economic identity and circumstances.

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punishmentSubcategory=& defendantNames defendantGender=&defendantAgeFrom=&defendantAgeTo=& victimNames victimGender=&victimAgeFrom=&victimAgeTo=& divs\_fulltext=&kwparse=and&fromMonth=&fromYear=&toMonth=&toYear=

<sup>41</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 130.

<sup>42</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 132.

<sup>43</sup> Grasswick, "Feminist Social Epistemology."

<sup>44</sup> McKenzie, "'His Barbarous Usages,' Her 'Evil Tongue,'" 354.

<sup>45</sup> McKenzie, "'His Barbarous Usages,' Her 'Evil Tongue,'" 354, 383.

This attitude towards sexualized violence, however, is far from a purely historical phenomenon and a few statistics illustrate this: in Canada, approximately one in three women will experience sexual assault in their adult life; “a higher risk of sexual assault was noted among those who were women, young, Aboriginal, single, and homosexual or bisexual, and those who had poorer mental health”; and “sexual offences are less likely than other types of violent crime to result in a finding of guilt.”<sup>46</sup> These statistics reflect Fricker’s argument; as the axes of oppression intersect, credibility deficits grow exponentially. That the hierarchies of social power that influenced early modern England rape trial convictions persist in today’s society is cause to carefully examine the ways character and credibility are used to inform outcomes of modern legal proceedings of sexualized violence. Ultimately, the rape trials in the Old Bailey are all too familiar to us, and reveal the ways, in the words of historian John Tosh, “the past becomes us.”<sup>47</sup> Though this is difficult history to research, it is important that we bear witness to it – not only to understand the history’s implications for our lives today, but also to acknowledge the experiences of these women and girls, who so rarely were offered the benefit of the doubt in their lifetimes.

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<sup>46</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006, “Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006,” Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry, 24, [http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/access\\_acces/alternative\\_alternatif.action?l=eng&loc=http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.pdf&t=Measuring%20Violence%20Against%20Women:%20Statistical%20Trends](http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/access_acces/alternative_alternatif.action?l=eng&loc=http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.pdf&t=Measuring%20Violence%20Against%20Women:%20Statistical%20Trends) (accessed 12 April 2018); Statistics Canada, 2017, “Self-Reported Sexual Assault in Canada, 2014,” Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry, 3, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14842-eng.htm> (accessed 12 April 2018); Statistics Canada, 2008, “Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007,” Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 10, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2018).

<sup>47</sup> John Tosh, *Why History Matters*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

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## Forging the Crown Jewel: The Creation of Stanley Park

JANINE CARMEL RZEPLINSKI

*Stanley Park is a well-loved park just past the downtown core of Vancouver. Like all parks, Stanley Park had to be created by many people across generations. Stanley Park opened in 1888 after years of planning. During this planning stage, the government retroactively established provenance for the park and began unsettling its many residents. Over the decades, authorities relocated residents in the peninsula; removed skeletons from burial grounds; turned the park into a tinder-box through sloppy roadwork; and removed numerous flora and fauna to fit Stanley Park within a specific image of the Pacific Northwestern locale. Most recently, authorities placed freestanding poles from other nations in the park to manufacture an Indigenous presence that fit within a specific visage. Employing the research of local historians Sean Kheraj and Jean Barman among other academics, this paper will recount and analyse the development of Stanley Park. Particular attention is dedicated to the ways in which municipal and federal governments removed and remade Indigeneity in the park. It is clear through this research that the constructed nature of Stanley Park undermines the overall image presented to locals and tourists.*

Stanley Park, dubbed the city's "Crown jewel," has existed almost as long as the city of Vancouver and has become essential to the city's identity. The park's land spans one thousand acres on a peninsula near a harbour in the Burrard Inlet. Excluding the obviously developed areas, the peninsula is popularly seen and portrayed as a "virginal wilderness" within a metropolitan core to which residents and tourists can escape. However, the history of the area contests this perception. This paper will argue that Stanley Park was constructed to appeal to tourist and resettler gaze and that the alterations to the peninsula contradict popular notions of it being "untouched". The "Crown jewel" of Vancouver was not found and preserved, but it is the result of the unsettling of both people and nature.

The history of Stanley Park, both before and after its establishment, is an example of the interactions between humans and nature. Alan MacEachern defined environmental history as a multidisciplinary area of history that looks at nature over time as well as the human relationships with it. These relationships are informed by

human use and perceptions of the environment. Environmental history relies on scholars maintaining a “dialectic belief” where we shape our environment and it shapes us in return, also known as “mutual determination”.<sup>1</sup> This paper operates under that lens. The creation of Stanley Park necessitated a mutually deterministic relationship between people and nature. Stanley Park’s environment informed anthropogenic approaches, and these approaches shaped the environment in return. The peninsula’s (re/un)settlement was informed by colonial perceptions of both ideal land use and ideal ecology.<sup>2</sup> As such, government officials sought to construct both a history and a present for Stanley Park that fit within their ideals. To create this history, they first needed to possess the land.

The colonial government constructed a history to justify their possession of the land. The land on which Stanley Park now resides was used by and home to many from the local Coast Salish nations, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-waututh.<sup>3</sup> However, according to colonial authorities and the federal government of Canada, it was a military reserve. This military reserve was supposedly established in 1863.<sup>4</sup> According to Jean Barman, the evidence for such a reserve is retroactive. It was not until years after the British Crown ceded land to

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<sup>1</sup> Alan MacEachern, “An Introduction in Theory and Practice,” in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel, (Toronto: Nelson), 2009, <http://niche-canada.org/method-and-meaning/an-introduction-in-theory-and-practice/>: xii.

<sup>2</sup> As the settlements encouraged and created by colonial governments were not the first on the land we now call Canada, I avoid using the term “settlement” without a prefix. The land was settled by First Nations prior to contact, and as such, I find it more appropriate to refer to “settlers” as “resettlers”. In the same line of thinking, to establish a colonial settlement is not only to “resettle” the land but to “unsettle” the peoples and ways of life that existed prior to resettlement. I employ the terms to reframe the ways in which we think of the resettlement of Canada by European peoples. See Jean Barman, “Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver,” *BC Studies* no. 155 (2007): 3-30.

<sup>3</sup> Sean Kheraj, “Historical Overview of Stanley Park,” *Stanley Park Ecology Society* (2012), 1, <http://stanleyparkecology.ca/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/02/SOPEI-Historical-Overview-of-Stanley-Park.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Renisa Mawani, “From Colonialism to Multiculturalism?: Totem Poles, Tourism, and National Identity in Vancouver’s Stanley Park,” *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 35, no. 1-2, (2006): 44.

the Canadian government under confederation that documentation supported such a claim. In 1880, the Dominion of Canada enforced their right to lands claimed by the Crown for “defence purposes” under the British North America Act. In Vancouver, “certain lands at the Burrard Inlet” were “marked” for these aforementioned defence purposes, but officials never fulfilled the legal requirements for such an act.<sup>5</sup> These lands did not include the peninsula, only the south shores of the First and Second Narrows. British officials explained their claim to the land by stating that as Governor James Douglas had the authority to possess the Narrows and the peninsula, they too had the authority to cede them to the young Canadian government. Formalities aside, the land technically belonged to the British Crown. Britain, in an effort to maintain good relations with the Dominion of Canada, “returned” the land to Canada.<sup>6</sup> The fabrication of documentation and history reveal the constructed nature of this history. Scholars like Renisa Mawani have integrated these events into the narrative of the park, moving it from a confounding legal situation into an accepted history. Barman’s research reveals the colonial logic and justifications that allowed British Columbia to possess the peninsula. The history of colonial ownership was altered as the land would be altered.

City officials began altering the land to prepare for Stanley Park’s opening, only for the environment to alter itself as well. The plans to create a public park were set in motion one month after Vancouver was established in the Spring of 1886. The Dominion permitted the city to use the peninsula as a park so long as it could be used for defence in case of emergency.<sup>7</sup> When the city obtained the land for the use of a park, the previously settled landscape was subsequently transformed. A road was built through and around the park on previously established First Nations trails. Midden, trash heaps made of organic material, such as the ones in Whoi Whoi (now Lumberman’s Arch), were discarded. This discarding of “trash” may not seem significant but the city was discarding evidence of previous settlement in the park. The road’s

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Barman, “Imposition of Stanley Park,” *Stanley Park’s Secret: the forgotten families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point*, (Vancouver: Harbour Books, 2005), 86-88.

<sup>6</sup> Barman, “Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity,” 21; “Imposition of Stanley Park,” *Stanley Park’s Secret*, 86-88.

<sup>7</sup> Barman, “Imposition of Stanley Park,” 89-90.

creation also resulted in the removal of Squamish families living in the area. Surveyors would chop sections of homes down while Indigenous people were inside.<sup>8</sup> This created a hostile environment for the families in Whoi Whoi and framed those who lived on the land in opposition to the Crown and the Dominion. Furthermore, according to Kheraj, the road work being done was “careless”. This “carelessness” would be devastating.<sup>9</sup>

In the summer of 1888, months before the park’s opening in the coming September, the road work resulted in a minor natural disaster that would legitimise the city’s paternalistic relationship with the park. The combination of the “carelessness” in the roadway construction and of the dry weather during the summer led to the peninsula’s forests going up in flame. The spread of the fires also spread fear in the hearts of many Vancouver residents. They grew concerned that the natural beauty they so desired would be preemptively destroyed. A “late summer rain” would quell the fires but not the anxiety felt by Vancouverites.<sup>10</sup> Kheraj writes that local authorities, motivated by a concern for preserving nature, used the fires to afford them the power to further intervene.<sup>11</sup> Officials constructed trails for firefighters and placed fire hydrants throughout the peninsula to protect it from future fires. In doing so, they could keep the park from being reduced to “blackened stumps”.<sup>12</sup> The Park Board “maintain[ed] the image of an undisturbed natural forest” only by disturbing it.<sup>13</sup> The fires and the roads’ created are connected incidents, revealing that the virginal Stanley Park was merely a construction by city officials. The focus on creating an uninhibited wilderness justified displacing the dead.

The presence of First Nations people and immigrants on the peninsula was hidden to create the modern understanding of the park as “untouched”. This is evidenced in the neglect of the cemetery in Brockton Point. Residents of Brockton Point and Kanaka Ranch were buried in the park and on Deadman’s Island. These residents included

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<sup>8</sup> Barman, “Imposition of Stanley Park,” 90-92; “Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity,” 20.

<sup>9</sup> Sean Kheraj, “Improving Nature: Remaking Stanley Park’s Forest, 1888-1931,” *BC Studies* no. 158 (Summer 2008), 72.

<sup>10</sup> Kheraj, “Improving Nature,” 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

Squamish families, mixed Anglo-Indigenous families, Chinese men who came in pursuit of gold, and Quebecois fur-traders. According to a Squamish man known as August Jack, Squamish and white people were buried closer to the water, and Chinese men were buried closer inland.<sup>14</sup> When the city established its own cemetery in 1887, a year after the establishment of Vancouver, this burial place was unsettled and neglected. Officials uprooted skeletons and bodies during road-building. Wooden fences that marked graves were not maintained by the city nor replaced with other forms of grave markers once the park was established. The “natural grandeur and primitive beauty” boasted by Vancouver officials was incompatible with a narrative that included Stanley Park’s past role as an eternal resting place.<sup>15</sup> The construction of the wild park could not accommodate a past of human settlement on the land. Thus, this past—represented by the grave markers—fell into disrepair and eventual decomposition, and the bodies of those buried in Stanley Park were unearthed and displaced to make way for resettlement. The resettlement would also require a removal of the park’s flora and fauna to satisfy a settler and tourist gaze.

Officials of the City of Vancouver created the park to alter the ecology while simultaneously framing Stanley Park as a locale of uninhibited nature. On the day of its inception, September 27, 1888, Mayor David Oppenheimer waxed poetic about the value of the park once it had been given a “helping hand”.<sup>16</sup> The peninsula (then beginning to be called the “Crown jewel” of Vancouver) was filled with “future potential” rather than current beauty.<sup>17</sup> The park’s alterations were done in accordance with social elite’s romantic ideals. This elite desired a return to nature while also requiring that this nature be aesthetically pleasing. This desire necessitated the intervention of

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<sup>14</sup> Barman, “Imposition of Stanley Park,” 94-96.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-96.

<sup>16</sup> Kheraj, “Improving Nature,” 65-66.

<sup>17</sup> From its inception, Stanley Park has been possessively referred to as a “Crown jewel”, which not only places it within the commonwealth and linguistically connects it to the British Crown but also renders Stanley Park a “national treasure” that the city must maintain and protect. Language like this permits intervention and a paternalistic relationship. Nicole Shukin, “Ecological Citizenship, Ecological Melancholia: The Ruins of Stanley Park,” *Dalhousie Review* 90, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 118.

scientists and urban planners.<sup>18</sup> Mud flats at the park's entrance were turned into the Lost Lagoon, a man-made lake; and, beginning in 1902, crows, owls, and hawks were shot to make the area more appealing and to preserve the local duck population. Grey squirrels were imported from New York to entertain park-goers.<sup>19</sup> In 1910, the city's efforts to alter the park under the guise of "preservation" were epitomised. That year, insect and fungi outbreaks began killing the trees. The outbreaks would attack the forest for years. The city responded, and "[d]ead and dying trees had to be removed; splintered tree tops had to be pruned; underbrush had to be thinned".<sup>20</sup> The removal of dead trees allowed for the park's overall skyline to be improved while also removing the risk of the insects and fungi breeding. The diseased western red cedar trees were replaced with the supposedly heartier Douglas fir. City officials also began spreading insecticides throughout the forest, initially by spraying hand but later by aeroplane. These actions were not without controversy as, in a moment of ecological citizenship, the *Vancouver Sun* raised concerns that park officials were attempting to "civilise" the forest in the peninsula.<sup>21</sup> This did not stop the officials. They continued to alter the forest, removing spruce and hemlock trees through controlled burnings. They also removed deciduous alder trees because they did not fit with the idea of Stanley Park as a quintessential Northwest conifer forest.<sup>22</sup>

Twenty years later, however, these actions were almost forgotten. In a 1936 tourist brochure, Stanley Park was referred as "virgin", a peninsula that "remains today as it was at the time the 'white man' came...".<sup>23</sup> The tourist brochure is, as evidenced, incorrect. The forest had been drastically changed in years prior. Yet, this brochure is an explicit example of how perceptions of Stanley Park were not true to

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<sup>18</sup> Kheraj, "Improving Nature," 65-66.

<sup>19</sup> Barman, "Changing Times," *Stanley Park's Secret*, 161.

<sup>20</sup> Kheraj, "Improving Nature," 90.

<sup>21</sup> The *Vancouver Sun*'s response is typical of what Nicole Shukin terms "responsibility" in which the ability to witness and then respond to a perceived "ecological trauma" "is rhetorically cast as an exemplary and emotional idiom of *national* citizenship." It is a liberal construction that relies on the naturalisation of certain environments as cornerstones of nation-state identity. See: Shukin, "Ecological Citizenship and Ecological Melancholia," 114-15.

<sup>22</sup> Kheraj, "Improving Nature," 76-90.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

its past or its present. The city had altered the park's ecology and responded to natural changes in its ecology with force. The removal of an Indigenous present in exchange for an Indigenous fiction reveals how Stanley Park was constructed for the tourist and the resettler gaze.

To further create a specific idea of Stanley Park, officials removed Indigenous residents and replaced them with symbols of Indigeneity. First Nations people's presence in the peninsula did not end with British or Canadian governments obtaining the land. At the same time of the fungi and insect outbreaks, authorities were trying to evict families at Brockton Point and in Whoi Whoi. The houses at Brockton Point were visible from the downtown core and considered unseemly and ugly. In 1913, a reporter described the village there in terms of decay and disarray. This language perpetuated the notion that First Nations people could not care for the land nor their properties correctly and that intervention by resettlers was necessary. In 1917, the City of Vancouver and the federal government joined together to unsettle the residents at Brockton Point. Those houses were then burned.<sup>24</sup> In Whoi Whoi, the residents were pressured to leave and were eventually relocated to reserves for the Squamish nation. The last Squamish resident, "Aunt Sally", died in Whoi Whoi, already renamed Lumberman's Arch, in 1923.<sup>25</sup> Officials unsettled the residents of Whoi Whoi and later elevated non-Salish nations at the cost of the Squamish residents.

Lumberman's Arch was the first location for the erection of a totem pole of Kwakwaka'wakw origins in 1903. In 1919, an imitation Kwakwaka'wakw village in Whoi Whoi was proposed but never actualised, though four poles were introduced in 1923, the same year as Aunt Sally's death. Again in 1936, more totem poles were erected. This was part of the celebration of Vancouver's fiftieth anniversary. These totem poles were introduced to "enhance the viewing experience for visitors".<sup>26</sup> The freestanding poles were an assortment of Kwakwaka'wakw and Haida poles. Some of the poles were removed from these nations under the guise of "preserving" culture, while others were created and maintained by people like Chief Dan Cranmer of the Kwakwaka'wakw in Alert Bay. These Indigenous creations were chosen

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<sup>24</sup> Barman, "Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity," 23-26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Mawani, "From Colonialism to Multiculturalism?," 46.

from the Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw under the colonial il/logic that these nations had better mental and physical faculties than the Squamish or other Coast Salish nations (who also did not create freestanding poles). Barman attributes the inclusion of Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw poles to the fact that these nations are far from Vancouver. The city can construct a historical and "authentic" Indigenous past from nations that do not claim title to Stanley Park or have any Indigenous present in accordance with that land. These poles were removed in 1962 and placed in Brockton point, once home to multiple families and a cemetery.<sup>27</sup> The totem poles, which still remain in Stanley Park despite the unsettling of Indigenous families, are evidence of how Stanley Park was constructed for a specific resettler and tourist gaze.

A history of unsettlement, alterations to the landscape, and colonial impositions reveal the constructed nature of the park. Rather than a "virgin wilderness", it is a carefully manicured locale with a cleaned underbrush, imported totem poles, and the early inhabitants removed. The city desired a visage pleasing to both residents and tourists alike, something the "untouched" forest could not provide. To do this, they created a narrative of the "primitive" wild by inventing a past and present suitable to newcomers. The city could not obtain a real "crown jewel" and so they forged one.

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<sup>27</sup> Mawani, "From Colonialism to Multiculturalism?," 31, 35-36, 44, 46-47; Barman, "Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity," 26-27.

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## Pictures of Health: Gendered Medical Advertising in *the Daily Colonist* from 1867 to 1917

ROBERT STEELE

*Canadian perceptions of gender radically shifted between the formation of the Dominion in 1867 and the end of the First World War in 1918. While Victorian gender ideals grew increasingly unstable as new roles for men and women appeared, such as the suffragette, the new woman, and the shell-shocked soldier, Canadians grew anxious over the gendered health of men and women. Alongside these social developments, this period also saw the mass-proliferation of advertisements in Canadian newspapers, many of which exploited contemporary concerns over men's and women's physical and mental health to sell their products. In the following essay, I will examine health advertisements in eight issues of the Daily Colonist (Victoria's most popular newspaper in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) published between 1867 and 1917, paying particular attention to three types of health ads: ads for patent medicine, ads for medical practitioners, and non-medical ads for health-preserving products. I argue that these gendered medical advertisements are uniquely positioned to help us understand late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gender dynamics precisely due to their role in both responding to and shaping gender ideals.*

On the twentieth of February 1900, a mock column appeared in the *Daily Colonist* (the precursor to the modern *Times Colonist*) that ironically draws attention to the numerous medical advertisements alongside which it was published: "Very Annoying.—One of the most vexatious things in modern times is to read as it were a story in our daily papers and then find at the end of the same a patent medicine ad."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in that same issue of the *Daily Colonist*, there are eleven medical advertisements spaced throughout only eight pages.<sup>2</sup> Gendered in their language, many advertisements published in the *Daily Colonist* exploited contemporary anxieties over men's and women's physical and mental health. This exploitation of health concerns is most evident in

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<sup>1</sup> "Very Annoying," *Daily British Colonist*, 20 February 1900, 5. Because the *Daily Colonist* went by several names during the period of 1867 to 1917, I will refer to it exclusively as "the *Daily Colonist*" in the running text; however, I will use the correct name in citations.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily British Colonist*, 20 February 1900, 1–8.

three types of health advertisements: ads for patent medicine (over-the-counter medicines that are trademarked under a patent and often sold regardless of their effectiveness), ads for medical practitioners, and non-medical ads for health-preserving products. While patent medicine ads most obviously built on late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gendered understandings of health, all of these ads exploited contemporary discourses of health and built on gendered anxieties to better sell their products. Examining these advertisements as they appeared in eight issues of the *Daily Colonist* over the fifty-year period of 1867 to 1917, I will argue that gendered medical advertisements are uniquely positioned to help us understand late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gender dynamics precisely due to their role in both responding to and shaping gender ideals.

In order to discuss how medical advertisements both reflected and shaped perceptions of gender, we must first understand how the form of the *Daily Colonist* affected both its advertising content and its readers' experiences of those advertisements. Advertisements were central to the form of the Canadian newspaper in the period of 1867 to 1917. Due to the cost of publishing, the majority of mid-nineteenth-century daily newspapers in Canada were limited to four pages of content and filled with as many advertisements as possible to keep up profits, with the result that "ads might consume as little as one-third or as much as three-quarters of a daily's space."<sup>3</sup> This emphasis on ads was certainly a feature of the *Daily Colonist*: on the front cover of its 18 February 1867 issue, the *Daily Colonist* featured thirty-one advertisements, making up nearly seventy per cent of the front-page content.<sup>4</sup> By 1900, the *Daily Colonist* had switched to an eight-page layout as printing costs became less prohibitive; nevertheless, advertisements still made up half of the front page articles and took up well over half of the front-page layout.<sup>5</sup> In his study of nineteenth-century Canadian newspapers, Paul Rutherford shows how advertisements were designed to attract readers' eyes by making "pleasing use of white space, pictures, and type," appealing to both

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1982), 118.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1867, n.p.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Colonist*, 20 February 1900, 1.

literate and less-literate people.<sup>6</sup> Advertisements, especially illustrated ones, were thus privileged in the daily press as a means to engage the broadest possible audience. Canadian daily papers, including the *Daily Colonist*, even devoted an entire section to “new advertisements,” which “proved that the publisher looked upon his commercial messages as a feature of the news.”<sup>7</sup> Readers of the *Daily Colonist* would therefore have understood advertisements as integral to their news consumption and followed the latest ads in the press in order to keep abreast of commercial trends. Advertisements are thus uniquely positioned as touchstones that can help us understand what late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century readers looked forward to reading in the press, the cultural trends that influenced them, and the ideals against which they measured their lives.

The most explicitly medical of the *Daily Colonist*'s advertisements were the patent medicine ads. Analyzing patent medicine ads in the nineteenth-century, Jane Marcellus explains how, in the antebellum United States, “about half of all advertising in periodicals was for drugs” and patent medicine advertising could comprise fully a quarter of the work produced by a major advertising company.<sup>8</sup> Though often ineffective and even dangerous, patent medicine increased in popularity over the course of the nineteenth century due to popular distrust in doctors and their reliance on dangerous treatments.<sup>9</sup> Many of the patent medicine ads in the *Daily Colonist* claimed to aid women with their supposedly flawed bodies: in 1867, S.T-1860-X plantation bitters were recommended “above all . . . to weak and delicate female and mothers [sic],” while Dinneford’s fluid magnesia was recommended as a “safe and gentle medicine for . . . delicate females and for the sickness of pregnancy.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in the Victorian era, physicians understood

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<sup>6</sup> Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>8</sup> Jane Marcellus, “Nervous Women and Noble Savages: The Romanticized ‘Other’ in Nineteenth-Century US Patent Medicine Advertising,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 41, no. 5 (October 2008): 787.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Stage, *Female Complaints: Lydia Pinkham and the Business of Women’s Medicine* (Norton, 1979), 45.

<sup>10</sup> “S.T-1860-X,” *Daily British Colonist*, 19 February 1867, New Advertisements, n.p.; “Dinneford’s Fluid Magnesia,” *Daily British Colonist*, 19 February 1867, Insurance, n.p.

women as uniquely “vulnerable to illness because of the very nature of [their bodies],” a perception that spread to the general populace so that images of unhealthy women became the norm in the Victorian imagination; patent medicine advertisements thus “capitalized on the images of women who were ‘worn out,’ ‘not well enough to work,’ ‘hysterical,’ or even ‘insane.’”<sup>11</sup> Because of their unique position as both news matter and popular sources of medical information, patent medicine ads reveal how the *Daily Colonist*’s original readership viewed the female body as inherently flawed and in need of medical attention, even as these ads helped shape this perception to hawk their own products.

While patent medicine ads promoted medical products of every sort, the most controversial were advertisements for contraception and abortifacients. The threat they posed to Victorian Canadian society is evident in the 1892 Criminal Code, which, as Constance Backhouse explains, banned “the sale, distribution, and advertisement of contraceptives.”<sup>12</sup> However, an understanding of Canadian women’s reproductive choices is first necessary to understand why they were so threatening. As Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren show, childbirth in Victorian British Columbia was a dangerous prospect: “In the early nineteenth century about one-quarter of the deaths of women aged between fifteen and fifty were related to pregnancy and its complications.”<sup>13</sup> Though abortion before the quickening (the moment when a fetus recognizably moved in the womb, usually in the fourth month of pregnancy) was never illegal under English common law prior to the nineteenth century, abortion at any point in a pregnancy was formally criminalized in Canada since the formation of the dominion in 1867 (though this was the case for many British North American colonies since 1810).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, though by 1900 the technology

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<sup>11</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies: Women and their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1991), 71; Sarah Stage, *Female Complaints*, 798.

<sup>12</sup> Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1991), 166.

<sup>13</sup> Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880–1997* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 44.

<sup>14</sup> Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice*, 147.

existed for abortions to be relatively safely performed in hospitals, women often had to self-induce their abortions as doctors were either afraid of prosecution or morally opposed (or both) and were unwilling to give information on contraception to avoid pregnancy in the first place.<sup>15</sup> Methods to terminate pregnancies ranged from the tame—hot baths, violent exercises, and purgative drugs or herbs—to the extreme—“the use of douches of Lysol, turpentine, or carbide . . . to the employment of instruments: catheters, speculums, sounds, lead pencils, needles, bougies, crochet hooks, and slippery elm.”<sup>16</sup> However, the most prolifically advertised method of abortion was abortifacients.

Because of the stigma surrounding abortifacients, advertisers of abortifacients disguised their products through euphemism. In a 1900 advertisement appearing in the *Daily Colonist* and directed towards “Married Women,” Mrs. Marion Wilmot promises a formula that would “relieve any irregularity or suppression” within five days and claimed to have “brought happiness to hundreds of anxious women.”<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, directing the advertisement towards married women and refusing any explicit reference to abortion, Wilmot protected herself from legal prosecution while still implicitly offering abortive medicine. On the other hand, by promising to “relieve any irregularity or suppression,” the advertisement draws upon actual women’s conceptions of pregnancy. As Backhouse explains, “Most nineteenth-century women did not consider conception an established fact until the foetus had ‘quickened’” and “would not have seen herself as pregnant but as ‘irregular’ and would have been seeking to ‘bring on a period,’ something that most women of [that] era believed to be well within their rights.”<sup>18</sup> The euphemistic nature of the advertisement’s promise for abortion was therefore legible to women readers of the *Daily Colonist*, and the paper and Wilmot could still avoid prosecution. Indeed, the extent to which abortifacient ads were legible to an early twentieth-century audience is evident in Dr. F.C. Curtis’s 1915 diatribe against these transparent ads: “Anyone can get them, they are patent medicine. . . . It is said in the

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<sup>15</sup> Angus McLaren, *Birth Control in Nineteenth-Century England* (Croom Helm, 1978), 240.

<sup>16</sup> Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice*, 147; McLaren and Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 43.

<sup>17</sup> “Married Women,” *Daily British Colonist*, February 20, 1900, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice*, 146.

advertisement that they are used for regulating monthly flow but really and truly they are . . . [i]ntended to bring about an abortion.”<sup>19</sup> Though the euphemistic nature of abortifacient medicine ads allowed women to believe they were exercising agency over their own reproductive choices, the abortifacients seldom worked and were occasionally harmful.<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding the unreliability of their products, these abortifacient ads reveal that women continued to view abortion, at least before quickening, as a viable, if not ideal, option well past the criminalization of all forms of abortion from the foundation of Canada and well into the twentieth century.

While patent medicine ads most explicitly reflected the contemporary discourse on women’s health, advertisements for medical practitioners equally implied the evolving control women had over their own health. The late nineteenth century was a time of competition between doctors and midwives. Though many doctors in the nineteenth century overprescribed strong medication, leading to health complications for their patients, the general trend was towards physician-delivered births among all classes, even when employing midwives was more economically feasible.<sup>21</sup> An advertisement for a midwife appearing in an 1885 edition of the *Daily Colonist* shows the tension between midwives and physicians by emphasizing the midwife’s extensive training despite being unlicensed: “Mrs. McGregor, midwife, . . . [has a] diploma and highest testimonials of proficiency from the University of Edinburgh.”<sup>22</sup> Published in 1885, when thirty per cent of all registered births were delivered by a midwife (the highpoint of midwife employment in Victoria), this ad demonstrates that Ann McGregor, who herself would become the most active of Victoria’s twenty-seven midwives in 1896, still needed to attract more patients through advertising in newspapers, the best way for local businesses to attract patrons at the time.<sup>23</sup> Though this advertisement reveals how midwife-employment waned in late-nineteenth-century Victoria, it also

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<sup>19</sup> McLaren and Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> McLaren, *Birth Control in Nineteenth-Century England*, 238.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Baskerville, “Giving Birth: Families and the Medical Marketplace in Victoria, British Columbia, 1880–1901,” *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 413.

<sup>22</sup> “Married Women,” *Daily British Colonist*, February 20, 1900, 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 118–19.

implies that women in Victoria attempted to take control of their pregnancies by seeking out what they believed to be reliable, scientific aid: doctors. Indeed, Peter Baskerville, in his analysis of birthing practices in Victoria between 1880 and 1901, explains that “shopping around for the appropriate birthing attendant was a common practice in late-nineteenth-century Victoria.”<sup>24</sup> Advertisements for birthing attendants thus offer us critical insight how women exercised agency by changing their birthing attendants, even when doing so played into the idealized and patriarchal privileging of masculine authority embodied by doctors.

Moreover, while patent medicine ads and ads for medical practitioners were explicit in their adoption of medical language, ads for health-preserving products equally made use of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century health concerns. On 18 February 1885, the *Daily Colonist* published an advertisement for Ball’s “Health-Preserving Corsets” (figure 1), whose “Misses” corset “fits the Miss and expands as she breathes, and does not injure the growing girl.”<sup>25</sup> In her examination of developing anxieties over the corset (which Victorians increasingly saw as dangerously constricting), Wendy Mitchinson argues that Victorians understood that women’s health issues originated not only from their own bodies but also from social impositions, such as fashion.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, this 1885 advertisement draws on contemporary fears about the ill effects of the corset on developing girls’ bodies, appropriating medical language in order to better market its product. This appropriation of medical language was not uncommon in periodicals. Sarah Stage, in her examination of patent medicine ads, explains how advertisers publishing in medical journals sometimes plagiarized medical information from the publication to increase the credibility of their products.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the advertisement for Ball’s “Health-Preserving Corsets” targeted its product name and advertisement to appeal to Victorian fears over the medical implications of their own fashion. On the other hand, this advertisement shows a

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<sup>24</sup> Baskerville, “Giving Birth,” 415.

<sup>25</sup> “Ball’s Health Preserving Corsets,” *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1885, New Advertisements, n.p.

<sup>26</sup> Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, 71.

<sup>27</sup> Stage, *Female Complaints*, 68.

cultural shift in the understanding of women's health, no longer reliant merely on women's nature but on social impositions as well. Mitchinson argues this new cultural awareness of the effect of corsets also betrays a desire to relocate women in the domestic sphere by emphasizing their roles as mothers over fashion.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, new ideas about the appropriate roles for women were on the rise; on the same page as the corset advertisement, a column appeared expressing the *Daily Colonist's* support of women's suffrage: "we believe the time has come when the ballot may be safely entrusted to the softer sex."<sup>29</sup> In highlighting a difference between men and women in this column, the newspaper reveals its support for women's suffrage to be founded in maternal feminism, which sought to achieve the vote for women on the grounds that women—as mothers—were uniquely qualified to care for society at large.<sup>30</sup> The *Daily Colonist's* support for women's suffrage is therefore not incongruous with its gendered medical advertising as these two features of the paper were united in their deep concern with promoting women's roles as mothers. The advertisement for Ball's "Health-Preserving Corsets" therefore functions on two levels, attracting readers by appropriating medical language and appealing to maternal feminism.

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<sup>28</sup> Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, 71.

<sup>29</sup> "Female Suffrage," *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1885, n.p.

<sup>30</sup> Cecily Devereaux, *Growing a Race: Nellie L. McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 20–21.

**BALL'S**



**HEALTH PRESERVING**

**CORSETS**

The **ONLY** CORSET made that can be returned by its purchaser after three weeks wear, if not found **PERFECTLY SATISFACTORY** in every respect, and its price refunded by seller. Made in a variety of styles and prices. Sold by first-class dealers everywhere. Beware of worthless imitations. None genuine unless it has Ball's name on the box.  
**CHICAGO CORSET CO., Chicago, Ill.**

**BALL'S HEALTH-PRESERVING CORSET** is a thoroughly Durable, Substantial Corset, and when quality is considered, is the **CHEAPEST** Corset in the market.

**BALL'S H. P. NURSING CORSET** needs only to be tried to be appreciated, and no other will be worn after a trial but this.

**BALL'S H. P. MISSES' CORSET**—It fits the Miss and expands as she breathes, and does not injure the growing girl.

**Figure 1:** “Ball’s Health-Preserving Corsets.” *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1885, New Advertisements, n.p. Image courtesy of the British Colonist Project, <https://bit.ly/2U2R69S>.

Women’s maternity was not merely a medical issue in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but a social one as well, with women defined in advertising as caring mothers in opposition to men’s lack of paternal care. A 1917 advertisement for life insurance entitled “It’s the Womenfolks who Worry” (figure 2) argues that men should

purchase life insurance so that their wives and children are not “left destitute.”<sup>31</sup> This advertisement plays on women’s common contemporary anxieties about marriage, born from the gendered family dynamics of the period. On the one hand, women were responsible for setting the budgets for the family’s needs which men often ignored in favour of their own desires.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, women were financially tied to their husbands and, should he die, they were often left without financial recourse; this reality was especially present for women in British Columbia, where the mortality rate among young working men was inordinately high by Canadian standards.<sup>33</sup> This advertisement plays upon women’s supposedly fragile mental health, revealing an anxiety experienced by the many women whose husbands were the sole breadwinners of the family, as was the ideal (though not necessarily the reality) for the early twentieth century. Moreover, the advertisement plays up the connection between women and their care of children in an illustration featuring an anxious-looking woman, forehead in hand, and a slumbering child in the background.<sup>34</sup> This illustration makes clear that the child’s health and wellbeing is the primary province of women, per the “angel in the house” dynamic in which women were responsible for the maintenance of the domestic sphere.<sup>35</sup> Not only does the advertisement gender the responsibilities of the family as inherently in the feminine sphere, but it also suggests an ideal image of masculinity by inversely explaining how men fail in maintaining it: “All around us we see women and children adrift—left destitute because of man’s very human tendency to ‘put off till tomorrow’ a responsibility which involves a little self-sacrifice.”<sup>36</sup> Men are thus supposed to be financially responsible, self-sacrificing, and proactive; moreover, a man’s failure to adhere to this construction of masculinity would result in the ruin of the family. Advertisements such as this one thus function as prescriptive literature, advising against mental fragility in both men and women,

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<sup>31</sup> *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1917.

<sup>32</sup> Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> John Douglas Belshaw, “The West We Have Lost: British Columbia’s Demographic Past and an Agenda for Population History,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): 43–44.

<sup>34</sup> “It’s the Womenfolks who Worry,” *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1917, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, 20.

<sup>36</sup> “It’s the Womenfolks who Worry,” *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1917, 3.

while also providing the answer to their problem: adherence to gender normativity. And if that doesn't work, buy insurance!

*It's the Womenfolks who Worry*

"ONLY \$760 left after the bills are paid. It will not last long. Then, there's the mortgage. The payments on it must be met or I'll lose our home. If it were not for the children I could go out to work. But what can I do with them? I will have to do something—but what?"

"Exaggerated" you say. Not at all. All around us we see women and children adrift—left destitute because of man's very human tendency to "put off till tomorrow" a responsibility which involves a little self-sacrifice.

You sir, must realize the coming of that certain day when death or incapacity for work will cut off your present income. The distress of your loved ones if you should be taken—the suffering and humiliation which they might have to face—do you not see it? Do you imagine your wife doesn't see it?

Banish this spectre of worry from your home. Make certain that after you are gone your widow will receive—regularly—every month—as long as she lives—a cheque to provide for her every need and to give your children a proper start in life.

You can do it by means of an Imperial Monthly Income Policy. Today—while you are insurable—ask us to tell you more about it.

**IMPERIAL LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY**  
of Canada

<b>HEAD OFFICE</b>		<b>TORONTO</b>
Kenneth Ferguson, District Manager	- - -	Victoria
Stanley Henderson, Manager for B.C.	- - -	Vancouver

Figure 2: "It's the Womenfolks who Worry." *Daily Colonist*, 18 February 1917, 3. Image courtesy of the British Colonist Project, <https://bit.ly/2FECp9v>.

While anxiety about women's mental health predominated advertisements before the First World War, anxiety over men's mental stability quickly came to the fore during the war along with the advent of a novel model of masculinity in advertising: the soldier. Advertising companies took up the image of the masculine soldier to sell products to men, as seen in an advertisement for Wrigley's gum in 1917 (figure 3). In the background, the advertisement shows a group of men fighting over a piece of gum, while in the foreground, two men, calm in relation to the violence behind them, are shown enjoying the gum.<sup>37</sup> This image reveals that an implicit virtue of the Canadian soldier, and by extension men, was their civility and self-discipline, which Wrigley's evoked to market gum. Moreover, the advertisement contains a subtle reference to an underlying social anxiety over soldiers' depressed mental health, again placing gum as the solution: "Soldiers cheer [Wrigley's gum] because it cheers them."<sup>38</sup> Mark Humphries explains how by 1916, the Great War had instigated a crisis of masculinity as "half the soldiers evacuated from the front were said to be suffering from mental breakdowns due to war trauma."<sup>39</sup> In emphasizing "cheer" as a benefit to soldiers, the Wrigley's gum advertisement (circulated one year after the 1916 realization of soldiers' trauma) both recognizes trauma as a new aspect to men's lives and upholds emotional control as the persistent ideal of masculinity to which men should return. Similarly, an advertisement for electro-shock therapy (figure 4), published in the previous edition of the *Daily Colonist*, more explicitly demonstrates this anxiety over men's lack of emotional control by positioning itself as a solution: "It renews the spirit of ambition and hustle. It makes men out of slow-going, discouraged weaklings."<sup>40</sup> Underlying the advertisement's curative claims of electricity are the forms of ambition, hustle, strength, and vigour associated with masculinity that were now threatened by the trauma of war. Notably, while some of the advertisement's health claims for men were similar to those made by pre-war medical advertisements (such as cures for stomach trouble,

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<sup>37</sup> "Wrigley's," *Daily British Colonist*, 20 February 1917, 10.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Mark Humphries, "War's Long Shadow: Masculinity, Medicine, and the Gendered Politics of

Trauma, 1914–1939," *Canadian Historical Review* 91, no.3 (September 2010): 508.

<sup>40</sup> "Electricity Acts Like Magic," *Daily British Colonist*, 18 February 1917, 12.

lumbago, and rheumatism), this post-1916 treatment also claimed to cure “a loss of nerve force,” revealing how emotional trauma now constituted a threat to men’s health and masculinity.<sup>41</sup> As these new advertisements indicate, the experience of the Great War shook the image of masculinity from its ties to emotional stability, a problem that needed to be medicated in order to restore pre-war gender norms.

**“What’s the row?”**  
**“No row—I dropped**  
**a piece of**  
**WRIGLEY’S**

**Soldiers**  
**Cheer It**  
**Because**  
**It Cheers**  
**Them**

**WRIGLEY’S**

This delicious, refreshing, long-lasting sweetmeat is a boon to the Soldier in the trenches and the Sailor on the seas.

It relieves fatigue, allays thirst, provides a most agreeable antiseptic for mouth and throat.

Sold everywhere.

Send some to your boy.

**MADE IN CANADA**

Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., Ltd., Wrigley Bldg., Toronto

**The Flavor Lasts!**

**Chew it**  
**after every meal**

**WRIGLEY’S SWEETENED TOBACCO**  
**WRIGLEY’S DOUBLE MINT**

**Electricity Acts Like Magic**

Electricity is the greatest nerve strengthener ever discovered. Everything is controlled by nerves. No organ would work without its supply of nerve energy. That power is electricity. Properly applied it has cured thousands and will cure you.

Dr. Bell’s Electro Appliance is an electric invigorating device that pumps a stream of vim into your body while you sleep. It renews the spirit of ambition and hustle. It makes men out of slow-going, discouraged workings. If you have stomach trouble, lumbago, rheumatism, kidney or liver complaint or just a loss of nerve force, our Electro-Invigorator is the best for self treatment: sold anywhere in the world today. All you feel is a soothing glow.

**Get My Cure Guarantee**

Cut out this coupon and mail it now for complete detailed information about how to cure yourself in the privacy of your own home. All personal communications strictly confidential. Consultation free. Send today or call.

**DR. BELL, ELECTRO APPLIANCE CO.,**  
**18 HASTINGS STREET WEST,**  
**Vancouver, B. C. (3-18-17) Dept. 88C.**  
 Please send me your free literature with your “Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back” proposition and factory prices.

Figure 3 (Left): “Wrigley’s.” Daily Colonist, 20 February 1917, 10. Image courtesy of the British Colonist Project, <https://bit.ly/2Wxmr1k>.  
 Figure 4 (Right): “Electricity Acts Like Magic.” Daily Colonist, 18 February 1917, 12. Image courtesy of the British Colonist Project, <https://bit.ly/2UovwMB>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Advertisements thus associated themselves, whether explicitly or implicitly, with contemporary gender discourses to better sell their products. Shaping both the layout and content of their advertisements to attract readers' attentions, late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century advertisers were in a unique position to mould readers' experiences of both the ads themselves and the newspapers in which they were published. In this way, whether for abortifacients or corsets, advertisements in late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canadian newspapers not only drew upon evolving gendered understandings of medicine to market their products but also actively shaped readers' gendered understandings of health.

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