



the corvette

University of Victoria
Undergraduate Journal of History
Volume 7 | 2020

| STAFF

CO-EDITORS

Lindy Marks and Sophia Anderson

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alec Lazenby and Charlotte Clar

Copyright © 2020

Authors contributing to *The Corvette* agree to release their articles under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported license. This license allows anyone to share their work (copy, distribute, transmit) and to adapt it for non-commercial purposes provided that appropriate attribution is given, and that in the event of reuse or distribution, the terms of this license are made clear.

Authors retain copyright of their work and grant the journal right of first publication. The articles in this edition are also published online as *The Corvette* 7.

Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication in this journal.

EDITORS

Pier Olivia Brown, Chantelle DeMontmorency, Susanna Fong, Callum McDonald, Colin Mooney, Michael Paramchuk, Hannah West

COPY EDITORS

Pier Olivia Brown, Chantelle DeMontmorency, Susanna Fong, Anne Hung, Kathryn LeBere, Callum McDonald, Colin Mooney

PEER REVIEWERS

Madeline Anderson, Pier Olivia Brown, Caelen Cook, Chantelle DeMontmorency, Susanna Fong, Ireland Good, Molly Hanley, Nicholas Jordan, Kathryn LeBere, Colin Mooney, Tylor Mathors, Callum McDonald, Rhett Mutschke, Michael Paramchuk, Janine Rzeplinski, Wren Shaman, Anish Shenwai, Joanna Smith, Robert Steele, Sean Stinson, Hannah West, Eric Zadravec

FACULTY ADVISORS

Dr. Martin Bunton, Dr. Peter Cook, Dr. Mitch Lewis Hammond

DESIGNER

Erin Chan

| CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

02 Editor's Note

Lindy Marks

03 Chair's Message

John Lutz

ARTICLES

06 Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Textual Evidence

Graham Braun

20 Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*: An Important Moment in the Evolution of the Historical Discipline

Hannah West

27 Sex Sells: Prostitution on the Lower Columbia River 1813–1821

Wren Shaman

38 Policing “Men in Petticoats” in the Victorian Press: Fanny and Stella in the *Illustrated Police News*

Robert Steele

48 “Biological Soldiers”: War and the Nazi Euthanasia Killings

Makayla Scharf

57 The ‘Sickly Boy’ and the ‘Real Man’: Kennedy, Castro, and Competing Masculinities

Mira Engelbrecht

68 Laying Bare the War: Responses to the My Lai Massacre and the Trial of Lt. William Calley in American Public Opinion

Jordan Smith

84 Unbuckling Purity Culture's Chastity Belt

Danielle Latour

92 Discovering Our History: Late Twentieth Century Feminist Organizing in Victoria, British Columbia

Seth Reimer

| Editor's Note

This journal was created and published on the unceded and occupied territories of the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land are both historic and continuing. Beyond acknowledgment, however, the discipline of history must recognize and remain cognizant of the ways in which colonialism continues to shape knowledge production, especially within academic institutions. *The Corvette* itself is implicated in this process by disseminating knowledge in a form created to adhere to colonial standards of knowledge production and I invite readers to reflect on this while reading it.

This volume of *The Corvette* would not have been possible without the support of the History community at UVic. I would like to thank everyone who submitted to the journal, as well as this year's editorial team and peer reviewers. Thank you as well to the History professors who work tirelessly to support and inspire us, and a special thank you to Drs. Martin Bunton, Peter Cook, and Mitch Lewis Hammond for serving as advisors to myself and the associate editor. I would also like to thank Sophia Anderson, Pier Olivia Brown, Robert Steele and Colin Mooney for their support and advice along the way. A huge thank you as well to Erin Chan for her hard work and vision in designing this volume. Finally, I would like to acknowledge that *The Corvette* relies on the generous funding of The History Undergraduate Society and the University of Victoria Students' Society.

Lindy Marks

| Chair's Message

There are two reasons why I am thrilled to be able to write a preface to this issue of UVic History Department's undergraduate research journal. The number of History Departments in Canada that produce their own undergraduate journal can be counted on one hand. So first, I am delighted by the fact that this is (at minimum) the 12th volume of the undergraduate journal – a remarkable testimony to the dedication and professionalism of UVic History students over many years, and to a department culture where such initiative thrives. The gender focus in this volume captures a theme of interest to many faculty members in our department and clearly it has captured some of the best student writers as well. The range of the essays, from ancient Greece, through the Renaissance, the early and mid- nineteenth century, to America of the 1960s and 1970s shows the breadth of interests, teaching and learning.

The second reason is more personal. This issue ushers out the era of *The Corvette*. Next Spring's issue will reintroduce the original title for the undergraduate journal, *The Ascendant Historian*. I was a founding co-editor for this journal in 1982 and, if my memory serves (I would not bet any money on this), the editorial board of the day accepted my suggestion for the title. The title was intended to be aspirational on two levels. Personally, the writers and editors for the journal had hopes to graduate and be able to use our historical skills in a way that would allow us to ascend from entry level jobs to have meaningful careers. This has come true for all those I am still in touch with.

But there was also a societal aspiration, that historians, with our insights on the world, would gain more traction and be better positioned in the future to use our knowledge of the past to help shape the future. And I see some evidence that this aspiration is also being achieved. Our colleague Mitch Lewis Hammond's book on *Epidemics and the Modern World* was published as Covid-19 was sweeping the world and everyone was looking for historical comparisons. Our colleague, Paul Bramadat has explored the history of the anti-vaxers. Many in our department explore the history of racism which is so much at the forefront of social ferment today. Others in the department explain to us the history of colonialism, single motherhood, same-sex relationships, patriarchy, hoaxes, fake news, strident nationalism, and food security. Collectively they are using a wide range of media from videos to museums, from the internet to print, to share these stories. May all historians continue this ascent!

Congratulations to all the authors and editors! This issue is a testament to your skills and dedication and a sign that there is a rising generation of historians making a difference in this world.

John Lutz, Department Chair, 2015-2019



Cover Image: Watercolour conceptual rendering of the Clearihue building on the campus of the University of Victoria by designer Allan W. Edwards.

| ARTICLES

Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Textual Evidence

—
Graham Braun

The Linear B script, inscribed on clay tablets recording the movement of commodities and people within the palaces of Mycenaean Greece (ca. 1700–1150 BCE), offers Classical scholarship a wealth of information regarding the linguistic, economic, religious, and social developments of early Greece. Yet the study of women in Mycenaean Greece has only recently arisen as an area of interest. While the Linear B texts present issues regarding archaeological context and translational difficulties, they nevertheless reveal much about three general classes of women: lower-class peasants, religious officials, and aristocratic women. This paper analyzes how these classes of women are presented on the Linear B tablets and identifies both gender roles between men and women, and hierarchal distinctions amongst women themselves. This leads to conclusions not necessarily representative of Mycenaean society as a whole, but rather that point towards different roles for women specifically in Mycenaean palatial economies.

Introduction

In 1952, Michael Ventris announced on a BBC radio broadcast that the Linear B syllabic script, found on clay tablets at Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700–1150 BCE) palatial sites on Crete and throughout mainland Greece, recorded the Greek language.¹ This was met with immediate skepticism, however by the time Ventris had published his first official publication of the decipherment alongside John Chadwick,² most Classical scholars had accepted the legitimacy of his claims. Although Ventris is usually considered the spearhead for the Linear B decipherment, there are other prominent scholars who were instrumental in the process. Alice Kober's preliminary work was imperative to Ventris'

1 Michael Ventris, 1952; The manuscript was published in "Deciphering Europe's Earliest Scripts: Michael Ventris on the Cretan Tablets," *Listener*, July 10th, 1952. The sites which have produced the richest collections of Linear B tablets are Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, and Mycenae. The recently excavated archive at Ayios Vassileos in Laconia is currently unpublished but will certainly provide much valuable information about the nature of the Linear B and the palace in which there were found.

2 Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, "Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73 (1953).

decipherment, as she concluded that Linear B recorded an inflected language, even without knowing it recorded Greek.³ Carl Blegen was an important contributor, making the Linear B tablets he excavated at Pylos available to specialized scholars. In fact, his testing of Ventris' syllabary on the famous Tripod Tablet (PY Ta 641) definitively proved that Linear B recorded Greek. In addition to the above names, Emmett Bennett and Sterling Dow both played influential roles. So, while Ventris was the first to develop a comprehensive and accurate syllabary, the Linear B decipherment would not have been possible without certain scholars creating the groundwork for Ventris' discovery.

The Greek Bronze Age (ca. 3000–1100 BCE) was a period of dynamic interconnection throughout the Aegean Sea and wider Eastern Mediterranean. While powerful civilizations like Mesopotamia and Egypt dominated their respective domains, prehistoric Greek civilizations interacted with them through trade relations, thereby experiencing a lot of cultural exchange. In the Middle Bronze Age period (ca. 2000–1550 BCE), the Minoan civilization on Crete dominated the Aegean. The Minoans were well known for their distinctive art, often containing elegant nature scenes, and lavish palaces, which first started centralizing the economy in the MM (Middle Minoan) IB period (ca. 1925–1900 BCE).⁴

Around the LM/LH (Late Minoan/Late Helladic) IIIA period (ca. 1400–1300 BCE), the Minoan civilization seems to come under the control of the ever-expanding Mycenaean population, originating on the Greek mainland.⁵ In the Late Bronze Age, the Mycenaeans,

3 Alice Kober, "The Scripts of Pre-Hellenic Greece," *Classical Outlook* 21, no.7 (1943); "Evidence of Inflection in the 'Chariot' Tablets from Knossos," *American Journal of Archaeology* 49, no.2 (April 1945); "Inflection in Linear Class B: 1—Declension," *American Journal of Archaeology* 50, no.2 (April 1946); "'Total' in Minoan (Linear Class B)," *ArchOrient* 17, no.1 (April 1949). It is truly a tragedy that Kober, despite such a contribution, passed away before she could see the decipherment come to fruition.

4 John Cherry, "Politics and Palaces: Some Problems in Minoan State Formation," in *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, eds. Colin Renfrew and John Cherry (New York: Cambridge University Press); Ilse Schoep, "Chronology and Geography: Middle Bronze Age: Crete," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. Eric H. Cline (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 113; Peter M. Warren, "Minoan Palaces," *Scientific American* 253, no.1 (July 1985): 97. While palatial sites are often problematic to identify, four may be confidently distinguished as palatial centres: Knossos commanding North-central Crete; Phaistos to the South of Knossos, overlooking the Messara Plain; Malia directly East of Knossos; and Kato Zakros on Crete's far Eastern coast.

5 John Griffiths Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, 5th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson), 89; Kim Shelton, "Chronology and Geography: Late Bronze Age: Mainland Greece," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. Eric

also exercising centralized economic and political activities through palatial elites, saw the cultural transfer of Minoan practices to the mainland. These included arts of various media, certain religious practices, and developments in political structures. One of the most influential transfers was the practice of utilitarian writing systems for recording palace goods and the movement of commodities. The Mycenaean Greek system, known as Linear B, likely developed from the Minoan Linear A script.⁶ Despite this exchange, one should note that although both Minoans and Mycenaeans used essentially the same script, they recorded completely different languages and although Linear B has been deciphered, aided by its recording of Greek rather than a lost language, Linear A has yet to be deciphered.⁷ Having considered the cultural context in which Linear B originated and developed, one may begin to understand the information Linear B tablets can present, as well as the restrictions to its interpretation.

The Linear B script, the use of which extended from ca. 1450-1200 BCE, records a syllabic script composed of syllabograms, characters that represent sound-values constructed in vowel-consonant pairs. This differs from an alphabet or abjad, which record individual sounds. A syllabic script is much less dynamic and malleable when recording spoken language, since it requires sound values that agree with its more exclusive vowel-consonant pairings. Hindrances introduced by the syllabic nature of Linear B, like the absence of final consonants and initial sigmas, makes translation and transliteration increasingly difficult. So, while spoken Mycenaean Greek may have retained those sounds, recording them in Linear B was effectively impossible due to its syllabic nature. For this reason, only highly trained palace scribes could read and compose Linear B tablets. Additionally, since only ten Mycenaean consonants existed, certain syllabograms transliterate to multiple different Greek consonantal sound-values. For example, the q- consonantal group records almost all Greek labiovelars,⁸ and the r- group records the sound values for both “ρ”

(/r/) and “λ” (/l/). This, along with the absence of final consonants, makes many Mycenaean words difficult to translate into Classical Greek, and short, two-sequence words are almost impossible to discern out of context, since they could represent multiple Greek words.

One should also note the archaeological context in which tablets are found. Since the tablets are both texts and physical artifacts, their contexts are inherently connected to their contents; for example, the inscriptions often identify the room they are in, like at the wool workshop in the Mycenaean palace at Thebes, Boeotia.⁹ Despite the clear advantages the tablets offer for modern scholarship, they do not present a wholistic view of Mycenaean society, because they are found solely at Mycenaean palatial sites and written specifically from the point of view of palatial elites. This becomes problematic when one attempts to use them to explain cultural phenomena and interactions from outside the palace. They were also exclusively used for utilitarian purposes, like recording goods moving into the palaces as taxes from surrounding polities, or recording the movement of people, usually workgroups working for the palace. Although there are some recordings of cult materials being supplied or received for ritual feasting, these simply list resources used for an unconfirmed religious purpose. So, although the Linear B tablets are extremely useful in the study of the Mycenaean civilization, it is vital to note that these very particular contexts and contents present a limited scope of Mycenaean life.

The examination of women in the Linear B texts is also subject to such challenges. The ability to identify women in Linear B texts is eased by the presentation of gendered inflections, however the nature of writing Linear B and Mycenaean Greek presents issues like the requirement of final consonants to identify gender, ambiguous proper nouns, and many obscure, foreign names.¹⁰ Barbara Olsen has discerned three ways to identify women in the Linear B tablets.¹¹ The first is the presence of the MUL ideogram,¹² indicating the recording

the lips.

9 John Chadwick, “Linear B Tablets from Thebes,” *Minos* 10, no.1 (1970): 127.

10 Barbara A. Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 25-26.

11 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 26-40.

12 An ideogram is a character that represents an entire word or subject. Ideograms often, but not always, resemble the subject they are intended to represent; however, this can lead to issues of identification if there is no clear reason to attribute a certain subject to a specific ideogram. The presence of ideograms allowed Linear B scribes to save space and time by simply including the ideogram and the number next to it when recording commodities or people.

H. Cline (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 143.

6 John Chadwick, *Reading the Past: Linear B and Related Script* (London: British Museum Publications, 1987); John Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 13-15; Thomas G. Palaima, “Thematic Topics: Linear B,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. Eric H. Cline (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 356-357. This conclusion is based off of comparison between syllabograms, morphological similarities, and chronological cohesion.

7 The decipherment of Linear A is further complicated by the nature of its contents; that is, lists of commodities without any complex sentences indicative of grammatical or syntactic qualities.

8 Labiovelar consonants are consonantal sounds created at the velum and

of women. The second is the use of a gender-specific family title like ma-te¹³ or tu-ka-te.¹⁴ The third is the use of gender-specific occupational titles or ethnic groups, which often possess feminine endings like *-i-ja or *-e-ja. This can distinguish workgroups of women or singular women in certain positions, for example do-e-ra¹⁵ or i-je-re-ja,¹⁶ as opposed to their masculine counterparts. Despite the issues and difficulties concerning the translation of Mycenaean Greek and identifying women in the Linear B tablets, much can still be uncovered about the social position of women in Mycenaean Greece.

The decipherment of Linear B in the 1950s was arguably the most important discovery for Aegean archaeology in the 20th century. It allowed scholars to read and interpret the Linear B texts in order to inquire about Mycenaean culture, politics, and social structures. Several important terms have been identified, such as wa-na-ka, or “lord.” There is also da-mo which, in Mycenaean Greek, translates to the governing body representing the people in a certain province, controlled by a palatial site. While much scholarly work has been done on political and social activities in the Linear B texts, including land tenure, agricultural practices, social hierarchy, and religion, the study of gender roles and women on the tablets is somewhat lacking. This paper will examine the roles of women in the Mycenaean economic, religious, and aristocratic spheres, while considering the problems of translation and archaeological context for the Linear B tablets. In doing so, it will identify trends in the activities and roles of women in Mycenaean palaces, from common occupations to the potential social mobility that was offered to women in the Late Bronze Age Aegean.

Women and Production

The best evidence for middle- and lower-class women in Mycenaean Greece comes in the form of workgroups indicated by feminine endings. These include a few different occupations that seem consistent throughout most of the Mycenaean palaces. Workgroups appear to be gender-segregated and women never infringe on perceptually masculine roles like bronzeworking and martial occupations.¹⁷ The perfume industry seems to be a male-dominated economic realm as

well.¹⁸ While this may seem peculiar based on modern, Western gender roles, which often feminize the perfume industry, one should not forget that perfume was used extensively throughout Greek chronology, regardless of gender. The exclusivity of labour division in the Mycenaean world is interesting when considering later Greek occupations, which were also gender segregated. For example, women were expected to be weaving, whereas men were expected to be out in the fields or participating in civic duties, among other public activities.

The most common industry utilizing female labour is the textile industry.¹⁹ Among the variety of roles for textile workers were wool carders (pe-ki-ti-ra₂),²⁰ spinners (a-ra-ka-te-ja),²¹ weavers (i-te-ja),²² and linen-workers (ri-ne-ja),²³ along with some others.²⁴ The tablets often indicate these occupations by recording allocations of raw materials (provided by taxing surrounding regions) to certain groups, who seem to have been assigned quotas and expectations in working those materials like linen, wool, or animal hides, into finished products.²⁵ Textile working was prominent at both Pylos and Knossos; however, the processing was much more centralized at Pylos, whereas Knossos took extensive records of textile processing outside the palace.²⁶ As mentioned previously, numerous tablets in the Kadmeion at Thebes identified a lucrative wool industry including many of the same positions as other palaces.²⁷

18 Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 626; Cynthia W. Shelmerdine, *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos*, (Gothenburg: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1985).

19 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 68; Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 626.

20 Related to the Classical Greek verb πέκω (“to comb”). cf. PY Ab 578; PY Ad 694.

21 Related to the Classical Greek noun ἰλακάτη (“distaff”). cf. KN Ak 5009; KN Lc 531; PY Aa 89; PY Aa 240; PY Ad 677; TH Of 34.

22 Related to the Classical Greek noun ἵστός (“loom”). cf. PY Ad 684.

23 Related to the Classical Greek noun λίνον (“linen”). cf. PY Ab 745; PY Ab 746; PY Ad 289; PY Ad 295; PY Ad 326; PY Ad 664; PY Ad 670; PY Ad 672; PY Ad 678; PY Ad 697.

24 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 72-84.

25 Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 627.

26 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 164-165; Cynthia W. Shelmerdine and Emmett L. Bennett, “Mycenaean States: Economy and Administration,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 306.

27 Chadwick, “Linear B Tablets from Thebes”; Marie-Louise Nosch, “The Textile Industry at Thebes in Light of the Textile Industries at Pylos and Knossos” in *Festschrift in Honour of A. Bartonek (Studia Minora Facultatis*

13 Classical Greek μήτηρ (“mother”).

14 Classical Greek θυγάτηρ (“daughter”).

15 Classical Greek δούλη (“slave-woman”).

16 Classical Greek ἱέρεια (“priestess”).

17 Cynthia W. Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” in *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World*, eds. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London: Routledge, 2016), 625-626.

Other labour positions held by women are sparse compared to those in the textile industry. The second-most frequent occupation is working in food production and general palace maintenance.²⁸ These women included flour-grinders (me-re-ti-ri-ja),²⁹ “bath-attendants” (re-wo-to-ro-ko-wo),³⁰ and palace attendants (a-pi-qo-ro).³¹ Many occupational titles are attested through allotment of rations, probably as payment for labourers. Ration tablets show two important aspects of gender roles in Mycenaean Greece. First, rations are the exact same for women and men of the same economic standing.³² Second, many tablets show children, designated by gender (ko-wa and ko-wo),³³ receiving rations alongside their mothers. All adults received two T-measure rations of both wheat and figs each,³⁴ and all children received one each.³⁵ It appears that young children accompanied their mothers to their workplaces until they were old enough to work on their own; girls would usually gain their own position in their mother’s workgroup, and boys would eventually join a male workgroup.³⁶ This certainly reinforces the gender segregation of occupations in Mycenaean Greece, and one might consider the main role for low-class women in the palace as textile workers. Considering the evidence presented by the Linear B tablets, it does not seem implausible to suggest that the established gender roles in the Late

Philosophica Universitatis Brunensis 6), ed. Irena Radova (Brno: Universitas Masarykiana Brunensis, 2001).

28 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 89.

29 Derived from the reconstructed noun *μελέτριά. John T. Killen, “The Textile Industries at Pylos and Knossos,” in *Pylos Comes Alive: Industry and Administration in a Mycenaean Palace*, eds. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine and Thomas G. Palaima, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1984), 58; Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 89; Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, “Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives.” cf. PY Aa 62; PY Aa 764.

30 Derived from the noun λοετροχόος (“the one drawing a bath”). cf. PYAa 783; PY Ab 553.

31 Related to Homeric ἀμφιπόλοι (“handmaidens” or “slave women”). cf. PY Aa 804; PY Ad 690; PY Fr 1205; TH Of 34.

32 Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 628.

33 Classical Greek κόρη (“girl”) and κόρος (“boy”).

34 Measures were distinguished with characters distinguishing dry and liquid measures, there being three standardized sizes of each. T-measure rations were the smallest dry measures in Linear B. Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959): 54-56.

35 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 67.

36 Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 630-631.

Bronze Age had some sort of influence on gender roles in the following Geometric, Archaic, and Classical Greek periods, since textile working was an idealized role for women in these subsequent periods as well.

Despite low-level labour positions for women working at a Mycenaean palace, it was nevertheless possible for women move up in the economic hierarchy. Two types of supervisors for the workgroups detailed above are distinguished in Linear B: DA and TA.³⁷ There are two differences between them, one connected to gender and one connected to hierarchical power. The DA supervisors managed all facets of production and the TA supervisors ensured daily operations were conducted well. DAs were always male, and TAs were always female.³⁸ While this does indicate some women were able to gain responsibility and leadership over a small group, she was always under the control of her male DA. Additionally, TAs are only ever seen controlling female workgroups. Although this shows a limited amount of economic power for Mycenaean women, one realm in which women often held distinguished positions and experienced a relatively high level of liberty was the religious sector.

Women in Religious Positions

Religion in prehistoric Greece has long been studied in its relation to female deities. From the Neolithic to Middle Minoan periods, the “Great Mother Goddess” has been conceptualized and considered as the main object of worship, starting with steatopygous figurines (figurines with especially accentuated breasts and buttocks) and working towards famous images like the snake goddess of Knossos. Mycenaean religion was influenced considerably by Minoan art and culture, and somewhat ambiguous female goddesses labelled “po-ti-ni-ja” were common in the Linear B texts, alongside many Olympian deities.³⁹ With the prominence of female divinities came the importance placed on female religious positions. The most common religious position held by women was priestess (i-je-re-ja),⁴⁰ attested at Pylos and Knossos.⁴¹

37 Named so due to the single, consonantal syllabograms *-da-* and *-ta-* that denote the positions’ titles.

38 Shelmerdine, “Women in the Mycenaean Economy,” 627-628.

39 Olympian divinities attested in the Linear B texts include Zeus, Poseidon, Ares, Hephaistos, Hermes, Hera, Demeter, and Dionysus, among some other minor deities. Athena, Artemis, and Apollo have also been suggested, but are by no means common. John Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 85.

40 Classical Greek ἱέρεια (“priestess”).

41 While the absence of *i-je-re-ja* at Thebes and Mycenae is notable, this may be due to survivorship bias in the archaeological record. Mycenae has

At Pylos, the specialized position of “key-bearer” (ka-ra-wi-po-ro)⁴² is also mentioned with solely feminine inflections. The key-bearer seems to be a woman responsible for the keys to the sanctuary or treasury, and is associated with “sacred gold” (i-je-ro-jo ko-ru-so-jo on PY Ae 303) and “temple’s bronze” (ka-ko na-wi-jo on PY Jn 829).⁴³

Often priestesses and key-bearers were allocated slaves to serve them and the sanctuary as a whole.⁴⁴ In addition to slaves, women of high religious status like key-bearers or priestesses could even own land. In fact, religious women make up almost all attestations for women owning property of any sort.⁴⁵ The nature of property ownership can be best seen with the case study of Eritha (e-ri-ta), the most prominent priestess at Pylos. She was the priestess of Pakijane (pa-ki-ja-ne), a cult site somewhere in the immediate area surrounding the palace. She appears on PY Ep 704, a tablet which certainly contains the most complex grammatical constructions to be found on a Linear B tablet. The tablet reads as follows: “[3] Eritha the priestess has a leased plot of communal land from the damos, so much seed: 374.4.1 wheat. [5-6] Eritha the priestess has and claims a freehold holding for her god, but the damos says that she holds a leased plot of communal land, so much seed: 374.4.1 wheat.”⁴⁶ This tablet shows a land dispute between Eritha and the damos (da-mo),⁴⁷ the local administration. Eritha claims she holds a plot of land designated for the gods, which is “freehold,” or free of tax, and the damos asserts that she holds communal, taxable land. The counts of seed show the size of each plot, measured in capacity of seed. In considering what this tablet shows about gender roles in Mycenaean society, one may suggest that women, in the position of priestesses, could

not produced a high number of Linear B tablets, and much of the Theban Kadmeion is buried beneath the modern city, making recovery efforts nearly impossible.

42 Related to Greek κλειδόφορος (“key-bearer”). cf. PY Ae 110; PY Eb 338; PY Ed 317; PY Ep 704; PY Jn 829; PY Vn 48; PY Un 6.

43 Cécile Boëlle-Weber, “Women in Mycenaean Religion,” in *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World*, eds. Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa (London: Routledge, 2016), 611-612.

44 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 237.

45 Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 136-144; 190-192. This includes women in religious positions at both Pylos and Knossos, however it excludes the ownership of small amounts of rations by middle- and low-class women in these palaces. Simple lists of objects owned by women in the Linear B texts, from wheat to landholdings, can be deceiving. One must note that any substantial ownership of materials besides rations is primarily held by priestesses or key-bearers.

46 PY Ep 704 lines 3; 5-6, trans. B.A. Olsen 2014.

47 Classical Greek δῆμος (“people” or “population”).

own and lease land, as well as represent themselves in judicial disputes.

One more religious position from the Linear B texts should be highlighted. This is the “slave of the god” (te-o-jo do-e-ra).⁴⁸ Although scholars have debated much about these people, their role in Mycenaean religion remains ambiguous. Fifty are mentioned at Pylos, twenty-three of which hold land related to Pakijane.⁴⁹ Interestingly, their status as slave of the god was passed down to their children, and it seems this distinguished them from priestesses, who were appointed.⁵⁰ This practice seems to be unique to prehistoric Greek religion, for no convincing comparison comes to mind from Archaic-Classical Greek religion.

In the broader context of Mycenaean religion, women played an important role, as indicated by the Linear B texts. Women in religious positions had noticeably more freedom and independence, evidenced by their ability to own large amounts of property and attend civic functions if needed. Positions like priestess and key-bearer were prestigious and important for ensuring cult operations were completed correctly. For a society in which political and religious power were so interconnected, the importance of balance and reciprocity between the palace and the sanctuary surely played a significant role in allowing Late Bronze Age priestesses to exercise their own autonomy.

Women in the Aristocracy

While women in religious positions may be considered somewhat elite in comparison to average palace workers, aristocratic women connected to the palace remain markedly enigmatic, specifically in the textual evidence. There were two notable elite titles associated with the palace, the wanax (wa-na-ka)⁵¹ and lawegetas (ra-wa-ke-ta).⁵² There was also the

48 Greek θεοιο δούλη. Male variants of these are attested as well.

49 Boëlle-Weber, “Women in Mycenaean Religion,” 613-615.

50 Boëlle-Weber, “Women in Mycenaean Religion,” 613-615.

51 Related to Classical Greek ἀνὴρ (“lord”).

52 Derived from the reconstructed **laFayétas*, related to *λάος* (“men/mankind,” also sometimes “army”). Etymologically it has been suggested to translate to “leader of the people,” who might have been the highest-ranking military leader or the official overseeing specialized labour organization for specific economic tasks. Stavroula Nikoloudis, “The Role of ra-wa-ke-ta. Insights from PY Un 718,” in *Colloquium Romanum, Atti del XII Colloquio Internazionale di Micenologia, Roma, 20-25 febbraio 2006*, eds. A. Sacconi, M. del Frio, L. Godart, and M. Negri (Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2008); Thomas G. Palaima, “Mycenaean Militarism from a Textual Perspective: Onomastics in Context: lawos, damos, klewos,” in *Polemos: le contexte guerrier en Égée à l’âge du Bronze: actes de la 7e Rencontre égéenne internationale, Université de Liège, 14-17 avril 1998 (Aegeum 19)*, ed. Robert Laffineur (Liège: Université de

basileus (qa-si-re-u),⁵³ the leader of the local polities surrounding the palace. Of the three, the wanax held the most political power, ruling over the entire area under palatial control. These titles only ever appear as masculine, and no female counterparts are ever attested.⁵⁴ In fact, politically or socially elite women remain quite invisible in the Linear B corpus.

A small number of tablets mention named, high status women, named, receiving valuable goods like sandals, baskets, and worked hide or leather.⁵⁵ That they are named should not be considered particularly significant, since many individuals are named in the Linear B tablets, regardless of social status.⁵⁶ The main difference, and reason why elite women do not appear as much as cult officials, is likely due to priestesses' economic activity. While priestesses, owning property and interacting with palaces in the form of ritual feasts, festivals, and rites, have many economic roles to attend to and as such are often recorded in the palace archives, elite women would not be working for the palace or do much of anything in terms of management, production, or political work, so there was simply no need to record their actions in the Linear B tablets.⁵⁷ Despite their high social status as aristocrats, these women were clearly not given any economic or political power beyond receiving small amounts of luxury goods.

Conclusion

Upon examination of the Linear B tablets found at Pylos, Knossos, and Thebes, the role of women in the Late Bronze Age Aegean in the economic, religious, and aristocratic realms becomes clear. Low-status women are most commonly described, appearing as labourers working for the palace. Their expected roles were likely in the textile industry; however, they could also be palace workers like "bath-attendants" or general servants. It seems that their children accompanied them and received rations alongside them for their work. Female and male labourers appear to have received equal rations for their work, but it does not seem that low-status women exercised particularly high

social mobility or autonomy. Women in religious positions, on the other hand, likely had the highest autonomy and economic freedom. They held high-status positions that were important for Mycenaean religion and politics, and could own large amounts of land, property, and even slaves. The case of Eritha shows they could even initiate legal disputes and represent themselves in front of the damos if they saw any sort of discrepancy. In the case of elite women, while they probably enjoyed comfortable and rich lifestyles, they had little economic or political influence, which were reserved for ruling men. More broadly, women could only be as hierarchically powerful as the TA position in workgroups, who were still under the supervision of the male DA. Women in Linear B were not described as holding any sort of political agency or given a title of socio-political authority, such as a basileus or wanax, with the exception of religious women who corresponded with the palace to ensure religious expectations were met.

Some notable comparisons can be made in relation to later Greek society, an obvious one being the expectation of textile working, as was the case for women in Classical Greece. Priestesses in the Archaic-Classical period also enjoyed some degree of autonomy in connection to their religious position. Additionally, both societies exclude women from holding any sort of political power, despite exercising very different political systems. While these tentative conclusions can be made from the Linear B textual evidence, one should not forget the contextual and translational issues that face the tablets. They present a very specific view of Mycenaean society, and as such should be read with some degree of caution. In addition to the archaeological and economic contexts in which the Linear B tablets are found, it may be tempting to consider how the gender hierarchies in Mycenaean Greece affect our perception of women in the tablets. This avenue, however, may prove to be somewhat fruitless given the utilitarian purpose of the Linear B texts. This is not to discount the reading of any text with gender dynamics in mind, however unlike a poetic or historical text, which may be charged with any number of political or social biases, the Mycenaean texts simply record commodities or people moving in and out of the palaces. Having said this, there may be a different methodological framework in which to view Linear B from a markedly gendered aspect that could be applied in future studies of Mycenaean women. Nevertheless, while the analyses of the roles of women in the Late Bronze Age Aegean present important evidence for their hierarchical status, they should be viewed as hypotheses, with the potential to be elaborated, disputed, and altered with future archaeological discoveries.



Liège, 1999).

⁵³ Classical Greek βασιλεύς. This word becomes a common word for "king" following Iron Age Greece.

⁵⁴ Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 63.

⁵⁵ Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 150-152. cf. PY Ub 1318; PY Vn 34.

⁵⁶ Dimitri Nakassis, *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁵⁷ Olsen, *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*, 153.

Bibliography

- Boëlle-Weber, Cécile. "Women in Mycenaean Religion." In *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World*, edited by Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa, 608–617. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Chadwick, John. *The Decipherment of Linear B*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.
- Chadwick, John. "Linear B Tablets from Thebes." *Minos* 10 (1970): 115–137.
- Chadwick, John. *The Mycenaean World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Chadwick, John. *Reading the Past: Linear B and Related Script*. London: British Museum Publications, 1987.
- Cherry, John. "Politics and Palaces: Some Problems in Minoan State Formation." In *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, edited by Colin Renfrew and John Cherry, 19–45. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Killen, John T. "The Textile Industries at Pylos and Knossos." In *Pylos Comes Alive: Industry and Administration in a Mycenaean Palace*, edited by Cynthia W. Shelmerdine and Thomas G. Palaima, 49–63. New York: Fordham University Press, 1984.
- Kober, Alice E. "Evidence of Inflection in the 'Chariot' Tablets from Knossos." *American Journal of Archaeology* 49, no.2 (April 1945): 143–151.
- Kober, Alice E. "Inflection in Linear Class B: 1—Declension." *American Journal of Archaeology* 50, no.2 (April 1946): 268–276.
- Kober, Alice E. "'Total' in Minoan (Linear Class B)." *ArchOrient* 17, no.1 (April 1949): 386–398.
- Kober, Alice E. "The Scripts of Pre-Hellenic Greece." *Classical Outlook* 21, no.7 (April 1944): 72–74.
- Nakassis, Dimitri. *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Nosch, Marie-Louise. "The Textile Industry at Thebes in Light of the Textile Industries at Pylos and Knossos." In *Festschrift in Honour of A. Bartonek (Studia Minora Facultatis Philosophica Universitatis Brunensis 6)*, edited by Irena Radova, 177–189. Brno: Universitas Masarykiana Brunensis, 2001.
- Nikoloudis, Stavroula. "The Role of ra-wa-ke-ta. Insights from PY Un 718." In *Colloquium Romanum, Atti del XII Colloquio Internazionale di Micenologia, Roma, 20-25 febbraio 2006*, edited by Anna Sacconi, Maurizio del Freo, Louis Godart, and Mario Negri, 587–594. Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2008.
- Olsen, Barbara A. *Women in Mycenaean Greece: The Linear B Tablets from Pylos and Knossos*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Palaima, Thomas G. "Mycenaean Militarism from a Textual Perspective: Onomastics in Context: *lawos, damos, klewos*." In *Polemos: le contexte guerrier en Egée à l'âge du Bronze: actes de la 7e Rencontre égéenne internationale, Université de Liège, 14-17 avril 1998 (Aegeum 19)*, edited by Robert Laffineur, 367–379. Liège: Université de Liège, 1999.
- Palaima, Thomas G. "Thematic Topics: Linear B." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, edited by Eric H. Cline, 356–372. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Schoep, Ilse. "Chronology and Geography: Middle Bronze Age: Crete." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, edited by Eric H. Cline, 113–125. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Shelmerdine, Cynthia W. *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos*. Gothenburg: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1985.
- Shelmerdine, Cynthia W. "Women in the Mycenaean Economy." In *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World*, edited by Stephanie L. Budin and Jean M. Turfa, 618–634. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Shelmerdine, Cynthia W., and John Bennett. "Mycenaean States: Economy and Administration." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, edited by C.W. Shelmerdine, 289–309. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Ventris, Michael. "Deciphering Europe's Earliest Scripts: Michael Ventris on the Cretan Tablets." *Listener*, July 10th, 1952, 57–58.
- Ventris, Michael, and John Chadwick. *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Ventris, Michael, and John Chadwick. "Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73 (1953): 84–103.
- Warren, Peter M. "Minoan Palaces." *Scientific American* 253, no.1 (July 1985): 94–103.

Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*: An Important Moment in the Evolution of the Historical Discipline

—
Hannah West

Niccolò Machiavelli was a political thinker, diplomat, and historian who wrote during the early sixteenth century. Machiavelli only published one major historical work, the Florentine Histories, which he wrote on the cusp of a shift within historical writing from the trends associated with the Middle Ages to those of the Renaissance period. This essay seeks to discover whether Machiavelli's historical writing is in line with our current perception of the trends within medieval histories or whether his style is too divergent for Machiavelli to be considered a historian of the Middle Ages. This paper examines Machiavelli's source work and approach to writing in order to conclude that the Florentine Histories deviates from the trends present within histories written in the Middle Ages, indicating that Machiavelli should not be considered a medieval historian.

Niccolò Machiavelli was a political thinker, diplomat, and historian who wrote during the early sixteenth century. He is best known for the political reflections that are outlined in his book *The Prince*. Accordingly, scholars who studied Machiavelli in the twentieth century emphasized his political philosophy over his historical writing. However, a small cohort of scholars broke away from the mainstream to study his historical writing, which amounts to one major work, the *Florentine Histories*, and a shorter essay, *The Life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca*. This paper will attempt to add to the discourse around Machiavelli's historical scholarship by questioning the extent to which Machiavelli follows the historiographical patterns of his recent predecessors, whom modern writers consider scholars of the Middle Ages. This essay will begin by giving a brief overview of Machiavelli's historical writing, followed by an outline of the two themes that indicate his place within the evolution of the historical discipline: his source work and his approach to writing. This paper will demonstrate that Machiavelli's historical writing is distinct from the histories written in the Middle Ages due to his focus on the internal rather than the external operations of Florence, his negative views on the recent events that took place in the city, and his integration of political messages into the *Florentine Histories*.

Machiavelli's major historical work, the *Florentine Histories*, begins

with the Roman domination of Italy and continues until 1492, forty years prior to its posthumous publication.¹ Within the preface of the *Florentine Histories*, Machiavelli notes that he was attempting to fill a gap in the scholarship; his predecessors had adequately described the numerous wars to which Florence had been subjected but had not provided an in-depth analysis of Florence's internal social and political history.² Machiavelli was commissioned to write the *Florentine Histories* by Giulio de' Medici who was impressed by his historical writing in *The Life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca*, published ten years earlier.³ Machiavelli agreed to write the history of Florence for its new rulers, the Medici, because the change in government had resulted in him losing his position in the employ of the Chancellor of the Republic of Florence.⁴ Machiavelli hoped that, by accepting a commission to write the *Florentine Histories*, he would gain favour with the new rulers and regain a prominent position within the government.

Although Machiavelli never regained his governmental position, he did write the *Florentine Histories*, a work that is considered a significant marker in the evolution of the historical discipline.⁵ However, Felix Gilbert points out that, due to Machiavelli's employment situation at the time the *Florentine Histories* were commissioned, the reader must be wary of judging Machiavelli's place within the historical discipline too quickly. Gilbert states that, because the *Florentine Histories* were commissioned, Machiavelli was less likely to significantly stray from the accepted writing style of the period for fear of angering the Medici.⁶ As a result, it is impossible to say for certain if the trends observed within Machiavelli's historical writing are reflective of his preferred writing style. However, as Machiavelli's only other historical work, *The Life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca*, is not extensive enough to use for comparison, this paper will solely analyze the *Florentine Histories*, retaining an awareness of his vested interest in impressing the Medici.

This paper will now engage with the sources of information that Machiavelli employed to write the *Florentine Histories*. The sources consulted varied widely across early modern historians. Some preferred first-hand accounts to archival work, while others considered their own observations to be the best source of knowledge on

1 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, trans. Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 369.

2 Ibid., 6.

3 Corrado Vivanti, *Niccolo Machiavelli: an intellectual bibliography*, trans. Simon MacMichael (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 144.

4 Ibid., 19.

5 Ibid., 144.

6 Felix Gilbert, *History Choice and Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 136.

which to base their historical writing. Machiavelli chose to integrate both methods, writing the *Florentine Histories* from information he extracted out of previous historians' histories, interspersed with his own memories and first-hand accounts in the later sections of the work.⁷ Consequently, when Machiavelli describes events that occurred before his lifetime, he refers to the Florentine people in the third person.⁸ However, when considering events within his living memory, he refers to the Florentine people as "we," inserting himself into the situation.⁹ His use of language indicates a shift from relying on written sources primarily gathered through textual analysis to the insertion of oral history and his personal recollection of events.

Throughout the text, Machiavelli gives the reader clues to the written sources that he consulted, allowing historiographers to surmise which aspects of each source he incorporated into the *Florentine Histories*. At the beginning of the first book, Machiavelli considers Florence's place within the Roman Empire.¹⁰ As a result, he was obliged to consult Roman historians such as Pliny the Elder and Tacitus, whom he mentions intermittently by name.¹¹ Machiavelli's consultation of early Roman scholars is also indicated by themes within his text, such as the argument that "the internal divisions of Rome could be bridged by conciliation," a theme also present in much of Livy's writing.¹² Many modern scholars believe that Machiavelli, like his recent predecessors, did not only read the ancient historians for factual information but also imitated their writing style.¹³ However, this argument is problematized by Mark Phillips, who points to a difference between Machiavelli's imitation of the ancients and his recent predecessors'.¹⁴ Most scholars of the early sixteenth century would have merely re-recorded previous historians' descriptions of events, but because Machiavelli was interested in the internal rather than the external workings of Florence, he could not resort to re-recording facts given that information about the international functioning of the city had previously never been recorded. Therefore, Machiavelli was

forced to critically read previous scholars' histories in order to infer the potential political motivations behind Florentine citizens' actions.¹⁵

Machiavelli's *Histories* continues into the Middle Ages, at which point he notes that he consulted historians of the time, such as Villani and Gregory of Tours.¹⁶ These historians, like the ancients, would not have had the political discourse with which to communicate internal political motivations to the reader, a fact which was compounded by their belief that tracing large conflicts was more important than recording internal strife. As a result, Machiavelli was left to infer the internal political motivations from the information that the medieval scholars included in their histories, combined with his own observations about human nature.¹⁷ Phillips illustrates the novelty of Machiavelli's consideration of political motivations with a comparison of the medieval scholar Villani's account of the 1343 revolt against tyranny (which the latter lived through) with Machiavelli's own account of the event.¹⁸ Phillips argues that Machiavelli adds language that would not have been present in Villani's text, such as "[the people's] indignation appears greater and wounds are graver when liberty is being recovered than when it is being defended."¹⁹ Machiavelli was asserting that liberty was the reason for the people's revolt, a concept alien to Villani and Machiavelli's recent predecessors Leonardo d'Arezzo and Poggio. In fact, Machiavelli was the first historian of Florence to consider the international function of the city and, by extension, the motivations behind domestic events. Many scholars of Machiavelli's history overlook this shift; however, it is important because it indicates a significant difference between how Machiavelli critically interpreted his sources and the historiographical trends of the late Middle Ages.

The second theme that reveals Machiavelli's place within the evolution of the historical discipline is his approach to writing the *Florentine Histories*. The first point of interest found in Machiavelli's writing is the presence of a predominantly negative outlook on the recent events that took place in Florence.²⁰ Machiavelli's negative view probably developed because the recent events in question led to the collapse of the republic he supported. Additionally, if he compared the current

7 Marks Phillips, "Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and the Tradition of Vernacular Historiography in Florence," *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979): 89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1855661>.

8 Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 9–184.

9 Ibid., 193.

10 The *Florentine Histories* were divided into eight books.

11 Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 55.

12 John Burrow, *A History of Histories* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 287.

13 Gilbert, *History Choice and Commitment*, 137, 149; Paul Avis, *Foundations of Modern Historical Thought: from Machiavelli to Vico* (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1986), 42.

14 Phillips, *Tradition of Vernacular Historiography in Florence*, 95.

15 This is not to say that there is not merit in the argument that Machiavelli took stylistic pointers from the ancients, only that he would have been forced to modify the style when inferring the internal relations that were never previously recorded.

16 Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 53.

17 Gilbert, *History Choice and Commitment*, 142.

18 Ibid.

19 Phillips, *Tradition of Vernacular Historiography in Florence*, 95; Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 98.

20 Ibid., 185–369.

situation in Florence with events in the past, the city would seem to have taken an undesirable departure from its previous trajectory. Although modern readers will never be sure of the reason, Machiavelli's negative outlook overshadows the second half of the text. Salvatore Di Maria and Corrado Vivanti point out that his negative views diverge from the historiographical trends of the period: Machiavelli's recent predecessors consistently attempted to place their subjects in a positive light.²¹

The second point of divergence from his contemporaries in Machiavelli's approach to writing history is the integration of his political arguments into the text. Machiavelli is believed to have thought that the point of writing history was to form "a basis for lessons of permanent political usefulness."²² Therefore, although less overtly than in his other texts, wherein every page there is a political opinion, Machiavelli subtly weaves his political lessons into the *Florentine Histories*.²³ The first clear instance of his political opinions concealed in the text appears in the third chapter of the *Florentine Histories*, in which he suggests that citizens were punished for small crimes while the government rewarded large crimes perpetrated by the powerful members of society.²⁴ This passage reflects Machiavelli's political message: that the rich need to consider how they are viewed by the people because there is nothing more dangerous to a ruler than dissatisfied citizens. Another clear instance of Machiavelli's political lessons is found in the first section of the eighth chapter, in which he excuses himself from discussing two conspiracies, one in Milan and one in Florence, because he had previously discussed them in the third book of his political work, *The Discourses on Livy*.²⁵ In modern literature, two books written on the same event, one written in the historical discipline and the other in political science, would analyze the event through different lenses. However, Machiavelli appears to believe that he would be repeating himself if he were to re-record the conspiracies in the *Florentine Histories*, indicating that he considered his historical and political writing to be very similar.

Modern scholars who analyzed Machiavelli's scholarship also agree that his inclusion of political messages sets him apart from his contemporaries. Hans Baron and Peter Mansfield claim that Machiavelli's history can be broken down into the contest between the fortune of man as against man's *virtù*, two concepts deeply rooted in his political

thought.²⁶ However, Machiavelli is not original in this regard. All historians are inherently influenced by their political beliefs, making politics and history inseparable. The difference between Machiavelli and his contemporaries is that he is more transparent about his political reflections.

Machiavelli was writing on the cusp of what John Burrows considers a "rupture" in the trends of historical writing, colloquially known as the divide between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period.²⁷ This essay has suggested that the *Florentine Histories* diverges from the trends present within histories written in the Middle Ages, indicating that Machiavelli should not be considered a medieval historian. There are three elements, based in Machiavelli's source work and in his approach to writing, that support this assertion: Machiavelli's focus on the internal rather than the external workings of Florence, his negative approach to the latter half of the book, and his integration of political messaging into the *Histories*. Future historians wishing to contribute to the discourse surrounding Machiavelli's historical writing could consider the same text in conjunction with the recognized historical trends of the Renaissance period to determine whether Machiavelli should be conceptualized as a Renaissance historian or whether, in fact, his writing lies between both periods—equally belonging to neither.



21 Vivanti, *Niccolo Machiavelli: an intellectual bibliography*, 166; Salvatore Di Maria, "Machiavelli's Ironic View of History: The *Istorie Fiorentine*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1992): 249, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2862748>.

22 Burrow, *A History of Histories*, 286.

23 Avis, *Foundations of Modern Historical Thought*, 33.

24 Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 122.

25 Ibid., 317.

26 Throughout the *Florentine Histories*, Machiavelli consistently attributes actions and events that he could not rationally explain to the fortune of man rather than to a divine influence, as medieval historians had done. When discussing *virtù* Machiavelli was referring to a collection of character traits that can guide a leader or a citizen to greatness. An interesting example of the interplay between these two concepts that Baron and Mansfield are referring to is located in the seventh book when Machiavelli describes Cosimo Medici's inheritance that he had left for his descendants: "with *virtù* they could equal him and with fortune surpass him." In this example, Machiavelli sees man's *virtù* only taking Cosimo's descendants so far. They would need luck to eclipse him; Machiavelli, *Florentine History*, 283; Hans Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 42.

27 Burrow, *A History of Histories*, 276.

Bibliography

- Avis, Paul. *Foundations of Modern Historical Thought: from Machiavelli to Vico*. Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1986.
- Baron, Hans. *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Through*. Vol. 1. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Bondanella, Peter. *Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973.
- Burrow, John. *A History of Histories*. London: Penguin Books, 2009.
- Di Maria, Salvatore. "Machiavelli's Ironic View of History: The *Istorie Fiorentine*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1992): 248–70. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2862748>.
- Gilbert, Felix. *History Choice and Commitment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Florentine History*. Translated by Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Phillips, Marks. "Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and the Tradition of Vernacular Historiography in Florence." *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979): 86–105. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1855661>.
- Vivanti, Corrado. *Niccolo Machiavelli: an intellectual bibliography*. Translated by Simon MacMichael. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Sex Sells: Prostitution on the Lower Columbia River 1813–1821

—
Wren Shaman

In the early and mid-1810s, as European presence at the mouth of the Columbia became entrenched, the prostitution of women was seen by local Indigenous nations, including the Chinook, to be a natural venture into the emerging capitalist system. The expansion of prostitution happened for multiple reasons and was facilitated by flexible standards of sexuality, women's powerful positions in society, and by the existing networks of slavery. Prostitution was seen as a lucrative endeavor by Indigenous nations, such as the Chinook, and its demise as a prominent aspect of life on the Lower Columbia only came with changing attitudes and sexual standards and the favouring of longer term, more committed relationships. Prostitution on the Lower Columbia was at no point static or easily definable. Limited availability of primary sources and differing sexual norms between Indigenous and western conceptions of sexuality complicate the study of sexual practices on the Lower Columbia, and scholars need to be conscious of them.

Fort George, at the mouth of the Columbia River, existed at a confluence of different cultures. Sexual relationships, including prostitution, took place frequently. Prostitutes were women, frequently slaves, who engaged in brief sexual encounters for some sort of gain, either for themselves or someone else.¹ However, because of limited primary sources and the differences between Indigenous and Western conceptions of sexuality, scholars must be attentive to not mischaracterize Indigenous sexual practices as prostitution; prostitution on the Lower Columbia was at no point static or easily definable. Prostitution, particularly among the Chinook peoples, emerged as an adaptation to the presence of European men and capitalist economies.² The exchange of sex for goods was able to expand readily because of three intimately connected factors: Chinookan conceptions of sexuality, women occupying prominent and influential positions in trade

1 Gray Whaley, "“Complete Liberty”? Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Social Change on the Lower Columbia River, 1805–1838," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 4 (2007): 672.

2 The Chinook were one of the most prominent nations on whose traditional territory Fort George was established.

networks, and because the practice of slavery had established a network of women who could be engaged in the selling of sexual favours.

Two significant challenges exist when examining prostitution on the Northwest Coast: the dramatically different world views that participants possessed and the one-sidedness of sources available. When studying prostitution on the Northwest Coast, problems arise from the distinctly different ways of engaging with the world that Indigenous peoples, including the Chinook, and Europeans had. The European world view was highly patriarchal, and women occupied a distinctly marginalized position. This belief was reflected in the limited inclusion in settlers' journals of the Indigenous women that European men encountered.³ Also arising out of differing world views and contributing to the challenging nature of this field of study are different understandings of acceptable sexual behaviour and what constituted prostitution between parties. Because of these varying conceptions it is important to not misrepresent Chinookan sexual and relational practices as prostitution, or to "discover" prostitution where there was none. The one-sidedness of the sources that are available to scholars who are exploring practices of prostitution is also problematic because the most accessible primary sources, and the only sources I could locate, are European-authored. My exploration of prostitution is almost entirely missing the voices of both historic and contemporary Indigenous women, which is a significant flaw. Other scholars' minimal engagement with Indigenous-authored sources begs the question if, for Settlers, this remains an ethical field of study, or if solely engaging with European sources reinforces damaging colonial notions of history. My position as a Settler is important in how I engaged with this exploration into the practices of prostitution among Chinookan women; my family settled along the Columbia river in the 1990s, and my relationship to the river contributed to my choice to study a history that was connected to it. I chose to explore the topic of Indigenous women in prostitution because I was interested in the agency that Indigenous women might have been demonstrating, but my ability to respond to this material is limited because I have no personal stake in the hardship or trauma that the Chinook experienced as a result of the expansion of prostitution.⁴

3 Historian Elizabeth Vibert hypothesizes that it was not mere inattention to the presence of women in the region that contributed to their insignificant representation in European's journals, but rather a deliberate attempt to write Indigenous women, and peoples, out of existence.

Elizabeth Vibert, "Landscaping the Wilds: Traders Imagine the Plateau," in *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807–1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 85.

4 I later argue that Chinook women engaging in prostitution was an exercise of agency, but it is important to remain conscious of power dynamics flowing

Although, as historian Gray Whaley contends, prostitution on the Northwest coast was one of the most common but least evidenced activities that took place in relation to Chinookan women, there is evidence of prostitution that is visible in primary sources such as: Alexander Ross', *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia Rivers 1810–1813*, Ross Cox's *The Columbia River*, and Alexander Henry and David Thompson's *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*. The writings of chief traders Duncan McDougall and Alexander Henry suggest that throughout the early and mid-1810s, as the presence of the Fort and of Western men became more entrenched at the mouth of the Columbia, prostitution became a solidified practice.⁵ Some instances of prostitution were clearly recorded, as Cox details:

Numbers of the women reside during certain periods of the year in small huts about the fort from which it is difficult to keep the men. They generally retire with the fall of the leaf to their respective villages, and during the winter months seldom visit Fort George. But on the arrival of spring and autumn brigades from the interior... pour in from all parts, and besiege or *voyageurs* much after the manner which their frail sisters at Portsmouth adopt when attacking the crews of a newly arrived India fleet.⁶ Mothers participate with their daughters in the proceeds arising from their prostitution.⁷

Other significant references to prostitution are visible in Henry and Thompson's journal. Henry and Thompson state, "A canotée of prostitutes came here this morning, but were not allowed to land, on pain of being put in irons; this threat, I hope, will keep them off," and continue on to state that the following day another canotée of prostitutes arrived the following day.⁸ Prostitution was a significant feature of the fur trade

between traders, who possessed many desirable goods, and women who engaged in prostitution.

5 Whaley, "Complete Liberty'?", 677, 684.

6 "Frail sisters" was a common euphemism for prostitutes throughout the nineteenth century.

7 Ross Cox, *The Columbia River: Or Scenes and Adventures During a Residence of a Six Years on the Western Side of the Rocky Mountains among Various Tribes of Indians Hitherto Unknown; Together with "A Journey Across the American Continent,"* ed. Edgar I. Stewart and Jane R. Stewart (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 167.

8 Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799–1814*, ed. Elliot Coues (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1897), 890, 891.

Evidenced in this quote are also some of the unfavourable attitudes that European men held towards Indigenous women, particularly those who were

along the Columbia, most frequently recorded among the Chinook, but such clear references are not common in the European sources.⁹ More subtle references such as the following observation, in which Cox notes the payment that a woman received, were more common than openly addressing prostitutes. Cox stated that one clerk at Fort George “was surprised at recognising... an old *chere amie*, who the preceding year had spent three weeks with him in his tent ... decorated with some of the baubles he had then given her.”¹⁰ This excerpt demonstrates that this woman had been compensated, with baubles, for the time she had spent with the clerk in the prior year.¹¹ Although prostitution was infrequently referenced in the journals left by traders, explorers, and fort managers, prostitution happened frequently around Fort George.

Indigenous conceptions of idealized sexuality were dramatically different from their European counterparts, and non-monogamous or extramarital sex were not viewed as problematic.¹² The Indigenous practice of wife-lending is one example their flexible approach to sexuality. Among the Chinook is a complex history of wife-lending, and the practice had important economic and social consequences. Wife-lending was frequently considered an aspect of reciprocal relationships; although this practice was not considered amoral or adulterous, to traders it seemed indicative of promiscuous sexual behaviour.¹³ Traders can be accused of corrupting this traditional practice into outright prostitution. The openness of Chinookan views of sexuality, as seen in the practice of wife-lending, contributed to the spread of prostitution because morally the Chinook did not conceive of a problem with women engaging in sexual activities with the European arrivals. This

engaged in prostitution.

The following day Henry and Thompson note “A canotee of prostitutes from the Clatsop village arrived” with which they engaged in minor trade. A canotée is an old French word for canoe.

9 Van Kirk, “Enter the White Man,” 34.

10 Cox, *The Columbia River*, 172.

11 Most sources indicate the term “baubles” is frequently used to refer to the payment women received in return for sex. Many instances indicate that they were frequently various forms of ornaments or jewelry.

12 Sylvia Van Kirk, “Enter the White Man,” in *Many Tender Ties: Women in the Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg MN: Watson & Dwyer Publishing, 1999), 33.

It is important to note that, while accepted levels of sexual activity were far less rigid than in a Western world view, sexual liberty was not equated with adultery. Clandestine or adulterous relationships were not sanctioned whatsoever, and a woman who was discovered with a paramour could be punished with physical mutilation or death.

13 Van Kirk, “Enter the White Man,” 33.

potential source of income in the emerging capitalist society, European men’s sexual desires, was quickly taken advantage of by Indigenous peoples. Nations, including the Chinook, adapted their society to take advantage of the valuable commodity that women possessed.¹⁴

Further than prostitution expanding because of historical roots of flexible sexual standards in Chinookan society, the practice expanded because of women’s active participation in trade networks. Prior to the arrival of European traders, Indigenous peoples were involved in and fostered complex trade networks with each other and with other Indigenous nations, both proximally and distally located. Historically, Indigenous women played important roles in trade networks.¹⁵ With the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous women in the Pacific Northwest expressed clear interest in engaging in the expanded trade networks.¹⁶ Women’s prominent economic roles were frequently noted in journals kept by European traders and explorers, and the powerful position Indigenous women held in societies was repeatedly noted. Contemporary journalists hypothesized that Indigenous women held so much power because they were largely responsible for food production, and in the context of the fur trade explicitly, women occupied important positions because they were responsible for preparing the furs that were to be traded. During the fur-trade period, Chinook women actively bartered for goods at trading posts, and they held important roles in decision making, especially while visiting the fort. In journals, there are scattered references to women trading grass mats, small animal pelts, roots, berries, and other gathered or crafted items, in exchange for knives, metal awls and needles, kettles, and cloth.¹⁷ Cox further expanded on the role of women as he witnessed it. He stated, “for among [the Chinook] old women possess great authority,” indicating that even outsiders could see the value placed in women’s decision making.¹⁸ Ross stated, in specific reference to Chinook women, that they would “trade and barter ... as actively ... as the men, and it is as common to see the wife trading at the factory as her husband.”¹⁹ Even outside the fort, trade with women occurred frequently, as seen

14 Ibid.

15 Lillian Ackerman, *A Necessary Balance: Gender and Power Among Indians of the Columbia Plateau*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 9.

16 Ramona Ford, “Native American Women: Changing Statuses, Changing Interpretations,” in *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women’s West*, ed. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 55.

17 Ackerman, *A Necessary Balance*, 18.

18 Cox, *The Columbia River*, 160.

19 Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia Rivers 1810–1813*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2000), 107.

in the journal of Alexander Henry. Henry stated that “we now daily trade raspberries from the women,” and he repeatedly noted the frequency with which he traded exclusively with women.²⁰ Women’s significant role in traditional and fur-trade economies contributed to their involvement in prostitution because they were already in a position to be trading the newly popular commodity of sexual favours.

Women were able to express a degree of financial autonomy by extending their trade network into the exchange of sex for goods.²¹ Because Chinook conceptions of sexuality varied immensely from Western understandings and idealized versions of the “chaste woman,” the exchange of sexual services for money or goods was not seen as problematic. Rather, the practice of exchanging sex for payment was a natural expansion of women’s role in trade as women possessed a valuable commodity that could be taken advantage of.²² Income from prostitution became integrated into Chinook community. For example, Cox noted the financial contribution that women were able to make when he stated that, “in many instances, husbands share with their wives the wages of infamy.”²³ Exchanging sexual favours for goods was a practical and lucrative way for Indigenous nations to adapt to and further

20 Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 912.

21 Whaley, “‘Complete Liberty’?,” 686.

It is worth noting, however, that most women who engaged in prostitution were slaves, and were not engaging in prostitution for self-gain, but rather were being mandated to engage in sex-based exchanges for the benefit of their owners.

22 An entirely different school of thought on why prostitution was present on the Northwest Coast exists and is worth acknowledging. American scholar Anne Butler writes about a marginally later time on the Northwest Coast, but she contends by extrapolation that the introduction of the fur trade led to a series of unprecedented changes for Indigenous women on the Northwest Coast. She argues that Indigenous women resorted to prostitution because they had been “totally excluded from ... the economic transformation of the West,” and engaged in sex work to obtain a minimal standard of financial security and autonomy.

The significant flaw with Butler’s argument is that it relies on economic determinism in relation to prostitution, and as Ronald Hyam posits, positions Indigenous women as the “victims of social and economic circumstances beyond their control.” The lack of agency that Indigenous women are provided by Butler is highly problematic.

Anne Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West 1865–90* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 12; Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press), 137.

23 Cox, *The Columbia River*, 167.

profit from the presence of an emerging European capitalist economy.²⁴

Chinook people intended to adapt to these unforeseen challenges by expanding and altering the role of slavery into one of prostitution.²⁵ Many, if not all, of the women that served as Chinookan prostitutes were slaves: captured or traded women that had little social status or bodily autonomy in Chinook society.²⁶ Slavery rendered these women effectively kinless and unbound them from a local or national identity, which diminished the level of respect they merited in communities and their bodily autonomy, both of which contributed to their obligations as prostitutes.²⁷ From the onset of the fur trade, journals kept by Europeans show the growing number of female Indigenous slaves who were involved in prostitution. Journals kept by Europeans initially noted the restrictions on Indigenous women around fraternizing with crew members, but within a few years of European presence in the region the practice of exchanging sex for goods was frequently noted.²⁸ Scholar Lorraine Littlefield argues that the demand to produce more goods that were traditionally associated with women’s gender roles contributed to the increased importance of slaves in the economy. Littlefield posits that the increased number of females further contributed to the role of female slaves in prostitution.²⁹ The practice of prominent women in Chinook society holding slaves was recorded in journals that were written at the time. For example, Alexander Ross noted that “a Chinooke matron is constantly attended by two, three, or more slaves, who are on all occasions obsequious to her will,” including engaging in sexual activities if that was demanded.³⁰ However, direct conclusions such as Littlefield’s require more work before fully entering discourses surrounding prostitution and female slaves. In conclusion,

24 Jennifer Windecker, “The Prostitution of Native Women of the North Coast of British Columbia,” *BC Historical News* 30, no. 3 (1997): 34.

25 Whaley, “‘Complete Liberty’?,” 690; Jennifer Windecker, “The Prostitution of Native Women of the North Coast of British Columbia,” *BC Historical News* 30, no. 3 (1997): 35.

26 Gray Whaley, “‘Complete Liberty’?,” 676.

In scholarship surrounding Indigenous women’s engagements in prostitution on the Lower Columbia there has not been consensus reached on if the practice took place in relation to both enslaved and non-enslaved women. However, most scholarship indicates that it was predominantly enslaved women who were engaging in prostitution, which complicates the narrative of prostitution being an exercise of agency.

27 Ibid.

28 Lorraine Littlefield, “The Role of Women in the Northwest Coast Fur Trade,” (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1987), 82.

29 Littlefield, “The Role of Women,” 80.

30 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 107.

existing structures of slavery contributed to the proliferation of prostitution because the slave trade produced many women who could readily engage in prostitution, willingly, or more commonly, by order.

Ultimately, prostitution was able to expand so readily because there was demand on the behalf of the European arrivals for the sexual favours of Indigenous women. The isolated and exhausting nature of many fort employees' existences "prompted traders, even those who were initially determined not to do so, to seek the companionship of Indian women."³¹ Despite European's idealized versions of womanhood and chastity, and European men thinking very little of the Indigenous women they met, as demonstrated by Cox, Ross, Henry, and Thompson, the sexual attitudes and liberties they witnessed aroused them, especially when there were no white women present.³² The desire to engage in sexual encounters, both brief and long-term, was clearly experienced by European men, which contributed immensely to the proliferation of prostitution.³³

As evidenced in some of the statements recorded by men like Cox, Ross, Henry, and Thompson, prostitution, and the women who engaged in the selling of sex were not looked upon favourably, and Northwest Company management repeatedly made efforts to stop prostitution around the fort. The desire to eliminate prostitution came primarily from the desire to stop the spread of debilitating sexual diseases, and because marriages *a la façon du pays* were of greater benefit to the company.³⁴ Prostitution on the Lower Columbia came to be problematic in the eyes of the Northwest Company especially because of its contribution to the spread of sexually transmitted infections. Contemporary journalists believed that disease and suffering were seen to be the "natural consequence" of engaging in such amoral activities.³⁵ The forts were to be places of proper British morality, yet men continued to engage in sexual activities and contract sexually transmitted infections that decreased their productivity, which the company did not tolerate.³⁶ Furthermore,

marriages *a la façon du pays* came to be seen as extremely useful to the Northwest Company. The establishment of long-term, committed relationships, as seen in marriages *a la façon du pays* between company employees and Indigenous women, served the company politically and financially. These marriages established a useful link between traders and local Indigenous nations, and one of the reasons that prostitution was discouraged was because the company viewed engaging in casual sexual relationships as a deterrent to getting married. As Robin Fisher states, marriage was encouraged because it better served the company than "having servants disappear over the fort wall to spend the night with Indian women."³⁷ In the early nineteenth century there were numerous attempts to stop prostitution from taking place on the Lower Columbia. One attempt took place under Chief Factor Alexander Henry. Henry arrived in the region with preconceived misconceptions about Indigenous women and prostitution, and because of his misconceptions he "evidenced little experience with or tolerance for women conducting trade."³⁸ His fear of furthering prostitution led him to accuse almost all female traders of being prostitutes and refuse to engage with them.³⁹ Prostitution, however, had become a financially lucrative aspect of the presence of colonials and was not one to be readily surrendered by the Indigenous peoples who engaged in the practice.⁴⁰

By the 1830s rates of prostitution on the Lower Columbia had decreased, as the profession came to be marginalized because of shifting demographics and conceptions of sexuality.⁴¹ While prostitution was definitely taking place on the Northwest Coast, it is important not to overstate its commonness. It is significant that, despite the fact that the fur-trade society can be seen as highly conducive to short term, transactional relationships between European men and Indigenous women, more committed relationships, in the form of marriages *a la façon du pays* were favoured, both by the Northwest Company and by

31 Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian Europeans Relations in British Columbia 1774–1890* (Vancouver BC: UBC Press, 1992), 41.

32 Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers*, 106; Cox, *The Columbia River*, 166; Henry and Thompson, 754, 859.

33 Van Kirk, "Enter the White Man," 33.

34 Marriages *a la façon du pays* were relationships that were established between non-Indigenous men and Indigenous women. The marriage practice that emerged was distinct from both Indigenous and European traditions and was initially not recognized by the church or European officials. Varying levels of commitment between spouses are seen in these marriages, but the practice of European men forming these unions with Indigenous women who were proximally located to their forts was common.

35 Van Kirk, "Enter the White Man," 34; Cox, *The Columbia River*, 172.

36 Vibert, "Landscaping the Wilds," 109.

37 Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 42.

It is worth noting that attempts to stop prostitution were at times very poorly received by the Indigenous nations they concerned. These attempts frequently had detrimental economic and social consequences for the company; for example when Chief Factor McDougall responded to Clatsop Chinookan chief Coalpo ignoring of his order to "send the girls away," McDougall responded by ordering Coalpo "to be off with the whole of his people immediately" and proceeded to destroy the remains of the Chinookan village at Fort George, temporarily alienating the Chinook and embittering relations.

38 Whaley, "'Complete Liberty'?", 684–685.

39 Ibid, 686.

40 Whaley, "'Complete Liberty'?", 684.

41 Ibid, 672.

individuals.⁴² In the early and mid-1810s, as European presence at the mouth of the Columbia became entrenched, the prostitution of women was seen by local Indigenous nations, including the Chinook, to be a natural venture into the emerging capitalist system. To the discontent of Northwest Company managers, the expansion of prostitution was facilitated by flexible standards of sexuality, women's powerful positions in society, and by the existing networks of slavery. Prostitution was seen as a lucrative endeavor by Indigenous nations such as the Chinook, and its demise as a prominent aspect of life on the Lower Columbia only came with changing attitudes and sexual standards.



Bibliography

- Ackerman, Lillian. *A Necessary Balance: Gender and Power Among the Indians of the Columbia Plateau*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.
- Butler, Anne. *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865–1890*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Cox, Ross. *The Columbia River: Or Scenes and Adventures During a Residence of Six Years on the Western Side of the Rocky Mountains Among Various Tribes of Indians Hitherto Unknown; Together with "A Journey Across the American Continent."* Edited by Edgar I. Stewart and Jane R. Stewart. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.
- Ford, Ramona. "Native American Women: Changing Statuses, Changing Interpretations." In *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West*, edited by Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, 42–69. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- Henry, Alexander and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799–1814*. Edited by Elliot Coues. New York: Francis P. Harper, 1897.
- Hyam, Ronald. *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*. Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1990.
- Littlefield, Lorraine. "The Role of Women in the Northwest Coast Fur Trade." MA thesis, Carleton, 1987.
- Ross, Alexander. *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia Rivers 1810–1813*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2000.
- Ruby, Robert and John A. Brown. *Indian Slavery in the Pacific Northwest*. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1993.
- Sleeper-Smith, Susan. "Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade." In *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal History in Canada*, edited by Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend, 26–55. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2006.
- Whaley, Gray. "'Complete Liberty'? Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Social Change on the Lower Columbia River, 1805–1838." *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 4 (2007): 669–695.
- Windecker, Jennifer. "The Prostitution of Native Women of the North Coast of British Columbia." *BC Historical News* 30, no. 3 (1997): 29–38.

42 Van Kirk, "Enter the White Man," 35.

Policing “Men in Petticoats” in the Victorian Press: Fanny and Stella in the *Illustrated Police News*

Robert Steele

In April of 1870, Ernest Boulton (Stella) and Frederick Park (Fanny) were arrested for cross dressing while leaving the Strand Theatre in London, transgressing Victorian gender norms and scandalized the contemporary press. The Illustrated Police News (IPN), a late-nineteenth-century periodical known for its explicit (and often exaggerated) coverage of crime, leapt on Boulton and Park’s case but struggled with how to report their non-normative identities. Using the IPN as a case study for the press coverage of the Boulton and Park case and combining a close reading of the language in the periodical with the social context of the trials, I argue that the IPN’s press coverage of the Boulton and Park case shows how class boundaries and, increasingly, gender boundaries were more important to the late-Victorian middle-class identity than sexuality.

On 28 May 1870, the *Illustrated Police News* (IPN) published a three-panel illustration depicting Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park in three states of gendered attire. In the left panel the two don women’s clothes, in the right panel the two don men’s clothes, while the central panel depicts Boulton in a transitional state of dress, with “a city gentleman” removing Boulton’s dress to reveal a men’s suit underneath (fig. 1).¹ The three side-by-side depictions of Boulton and Park in varying states of gendered attire and sexually charged positions indicate the complex contemporary press coverage of their criminal case. Boulton and Park, otherwise known as “Stella” and “Fanny” respectively, had been followed for a year by investigators and arrested alongside Hugh Alexander Mundell the previous month while leaving the Strand Theatre. While Mundell was released, Boulton and Park were both charged with “offense against public decency” for their cross-dressing and for “conspiracy to commit the felony”

¹ “Men in Women’s Clothes,” *Illustrated Police News*, May 28, 1870, 1; While I refer to Boulton and Park by their birth names throughout to reflect how the periodical press named them, I recognize that they may have wished to be referred to by their assumed names.

of sodomy.”² Contemporary press leapt on the case, with newspapers such as *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Illustrated Police News* printing sensational headlines, such as “The Men in Petticoats.”³

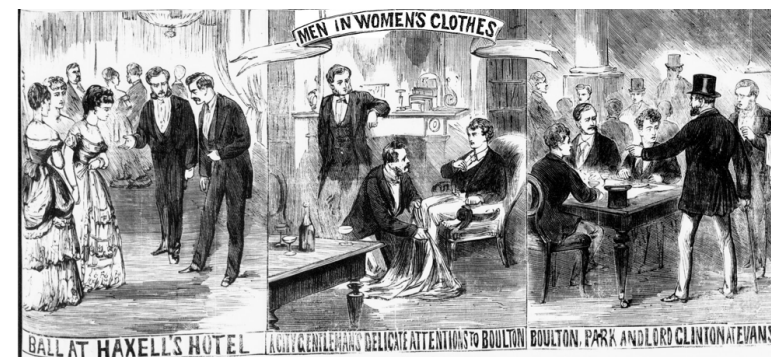


Figure 1. “Men in Women’s Clothes,” *Illustrated Police News*, May 28, 1870, 1.

With Boulton and Park at the intersection of so many identities (middle-class, gay, trans, non-binary, sex workers, actors), scholarly interpretations of their identities remain varied. Historians Sean Brady and Morris B. Kaplan interpret Boulton and Park as gay men who cross-dressed and likely engaged in anal sex; Charles Upchurch emphasizes Boulton and Park’s social identities as part of the middle-class; and Simon Joyce has recently attempted to reclaim Boulton and Park’s identities as transgender women.⁴ Just as modern scholars do not agree on how to Boulton and Park identified, contemporary press coverage of the case was equally confused about how to articulate and describe Boulton and Park’s non-normative identities. The three-panel front-page illustration of the IPN shows how the Victorian press could not confidently categorize Boulton’s and Park’s gender identities - depicting them as men, as women, and as somewhere in-between. Scholars have analyzed

² Morris B. Kaplan, “Men in Petticoats”: Border Crossing in the Queer Case of Mr. Boulton and Mr. Park,” in *Imagined Londons*, edited by Pamela K. Gilbert (State University of New York Press, 2002), 46.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴ Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861–1913* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 75; Kaplan, “Men in Petticoats,” 45; Charles Upchurch, “Forgetting the Unthinkable: Cross-Dressers and British Society in the Case of the Queen vs. Boulton and Others,” *Gender & History* 12, no. 1 (April 2000), 150; Simon Joyce, “Two Women Walk into a Theatre Bathroom: The Fanny and Stella Trials as Trans Narrative,” *Victorian Review* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2018), 83–98.

representations of Boulton and Park in *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Reynolds'*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, and the *Morning Post*, yet the *IPN* has not received comparable scholarly attention, despite its extensive coverage of the case.⁵ Using the *IPN* as a case study for press coverage of the Boulton and Park case by combining a close reading of the periodical's language with the social context of the trials, this study argues that the *IPN*'s press coverage of the Boulton and Park case exemplifies how class boundaries and, increasingly, gender boundaries were more important than sexuality to the late-Victorian middle-class identity.

To understand how the *IPN* represented Boulton and Park, we must first understand the context in which the *IPN* emerged as a sensational periodical. First published on 20 February 1864, the *IPN* was founded alongside a proliferation of periodical publishing in Britain during the 1860s. By the mid-Victorian era, technological and social developments radically changed British print culture. The early nineteenth-century surge of adult literacy; the abolishment of certain duties (the advertisement duty in 1853, stamp duty on newspapers in 1855, and excise duty in 1861), and innovations in wood- and steel-engraving techniques all contributed to a robust Victorian print culture. By the 1860s, British print culture was typified by a literate public eager to read illustrated periodicals and a publishing industry that was able to meet those demands.⁶ Responding to a popular demand for crime reporting, the 1860s publishing industry popularized the genres of penny newspapers (cheap newsprints) and penny bloods (crime periodicals), with the *IPN* being the only illustrated periodical at the intersection of both genres.⁷ While the *IPN*'s mandate to educate gave it a greater air of respectability than other crime periodicals, it nevertheless operated in the same register as "New Journalism," a popular late-nineteenth-century genre of reporting that focused on sensational storytelling for broad public appeal.⁸

Despite the *IPN*'s sensational genre, its publisher, George Purkess, defended the periodical's accurate depiction of events: "I know there exists a popular impression that our illustrations are largely imaginative, but as a matter of fact we are continually striving after accuracy of delineation."⁹ However, as Linda Stratmann explains, accuracy

was not necessarily the standard for the *IPN* which, attempting to titillate its readers, often depicted cross-dressing women, eroticizing the female body concealed under men's clothes.¹⁰ When the *IPN* portrayed men dressed as women, Stratmann argues, "it suggested a perversion which the reader was not expected to understand or feel any sympathy with, and could only observe with some dismay."¹¹

While Stratmann's claim may be true for other depictions of male cross-dressing, the *IPN* initially treated the Boulton and Park case with surprising delicacy, although subtly critiquing their gender identities. Notably, in its initial coverage of the case on 7 May 1870, the *IPN* established the practice of referring to Boulton and Park by feminine pronouns: "Adopting the pronoun used regarding the prisoner during the hearing of the case, 'she' had a small signet ring on the little finger of the left hand."¹² Using scare quotes around 'she,' the *IPN* conceded to the court's use of feminine pronouns to refer to Boulton and Park while also undermining the validity of those assigned pronouns. Though the *IPN* was clear that Boulton and Park were biologically male, it refrained from using masculine pronouns to refer to either of them, referring to them as "the prisoners," as "the defendants," or simply by their surnames throughout its initial coverage of their case.¹³ The simultaneity of the *IPN*'s gendering of Boulton and Park as men while referring to them by feminine pronouns (if only for accuracy to the courtroom) shows how the Victorian press strove to understand Boulton and Park more complexly than as merely cross-dressers while also refusing the potential for Boulton and Park identification as women.

The *IPN* was delicate to the point of being vague in its gendering of Boulton and Park, yet it was exhaustively detailed in describing their appearance. Indeed, much of the coverage in this article focuses on their attire, as exemplified by the initial description of their appearance upon being arrested: "Boulton wore a cerise satin dress with an 'open square' body.... 'Park wore a beautiful green satin dress, which was made with an 'open square body' and short sleeves, like that of

5 See Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861–1913*; Kaplan, "Men in Petticoats"; and Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain's Age of Reform*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

6 Linda Stratmann, *Cruel Deeds and Dreadful Calamities: The Illustrated Police News 1864–1938* (London: British Library, 2011), 7–8.

7 Ibid., 8.

8 Ibid., 7–8.

9 "'The Worst Newspaper in England': An Interview with the Proprietor of the 'Police News,'" *Pall Mall Gazette*, Nov. 23, 1886, 2.

10 Stratmann, *Cruel Deeds and Dreadful Calamities*, 86.

11 Ibid.

12 "Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women," *Illustrated Police News*, May 7, 1870, 2.

13 "Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women," 2.; "Charge against Gentlemen Personating Women," *Illustrated Police News*, May 14, 1870, 2.; "Men in Female Attire," *Illustrated Police News*, May 28, 1870, 2.; "The Men in Petticoats," *Illustrated Police News*, June 11, 1870, 2.; "Men in Women's Clothes," *Illustrated Police News*, June 16, 1870, 2.; "The Personation of Women," *Illustrated Police News*, July 2, 1870, 2.; "The Men in Female Attire," *Illustrated Police News*, July 16, 1870, 2.

Boulton.”¹⁴ Pairing the letterpress’s description of Boulton’s and Park’s “feminine” features and “beautiful” attire with an accompanying illustration that emphasizes their elaborate dress (fig. 2), the *IPN* emphasizes Boulton’s and Park’s abilities to pass as women. If we read generously, this emphasis on Boulton and Park’s abilities to pass as women reads as a potential attempt on the part of the *IPN*’s to affirm their feminine identities. More likely, the *IPN*’s emphasis on their ability to pass as women betrays the newspaper’s attempt to pique readers’ interests through Boulton and Park’s fashion, reproduce the illustrations’ level of visual detail in the letterpress, and encourage readers to empathize with Mundell, who claimed he was deceived by Boulton’s and Park’s dress, believing them to be “natural” women.¹⁵ Historian Judith Rowbotham has argued that “male cross-dressing had become threatening by the mid-Victorian era,” informing court suspicions toward cross-dressers, Boulton and Park foremost among them.¹⁶ However,

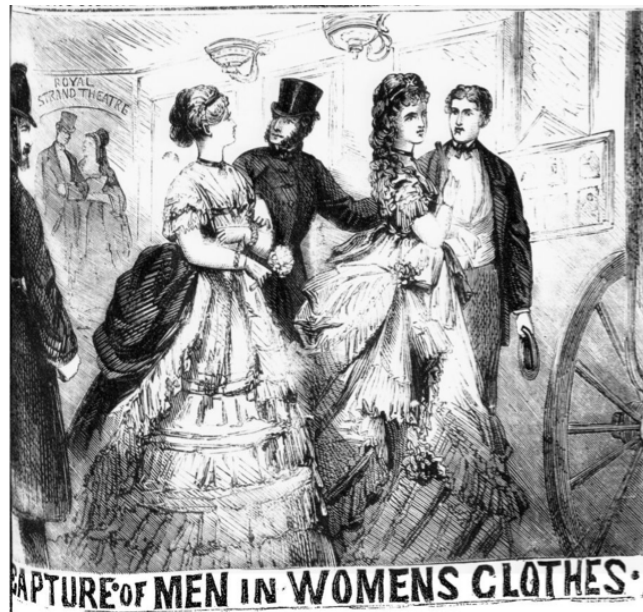


Figure 2. “Capture of Men in Womens Clothes,” *Illustrated Police News*, May 7, 1870, 1.

¹⁴ “Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women,” 2.

¹⁵ “Charge against Gentlemen Personating Women,” 2.

¹⁶ Judith Rowbotham, “A Deception on the Public: The Real Scandal of Boulton and Park,” *Liverpool Law Review* 36 (2015), 126.

the *IPN*’s relatively positive portrayal of Boulton and Park’s femininity in its detailed coverage of their feminine attire reflects the fact that neither the Victorian periodical press nor the Victorian public necessarily understood the act of cross-dressing itself as a criminal offence.

Though the *IPN* was relatively positive in its portrayal of Boulton and Park’s women’s costume, it implied that frequent cross-dressing might indicate the wearer’s criminal nature. The solicitor representing Boulton and Park, a Mr. Abrams, claimed that their cross-dressing was not itself illegal and that Boulton and Park were guilty merely of a “lark.”¹⁷ By contrast, the *IPN* reasoned that the degree and extent of their cross-dressing may indicate more sinister crimes. “An examination of the articles discovered in the house No. 13, Wakefield-street, ... and in the lodgings of two of the prisoners, rather increases than removes the doubts belonging to the case.”¹⁸ Here again, the *IPN* was extremely detailed in its description of articles found at the apartment:

When brought together there were found to be between thirty or forty silk and other dresses, all of fashionable patterns, and some elaborately trimmed with lace, furs, &c.; a large ermine cloak, well stocked female glove boxes, more than a score of different wig- and head dresses, chiefly of the prevailing golden hue, and some of them having plaited hair rolls from twenty to thirty inches in length attached, a great number of girls’ hats variously trimmed, ladies’ white kid boots, Balmoral walking boots richly embroidered, a large quantity of bizarre jewellery [sic], with some bracelets and necklaces of a better class, caps, feathers, garters, &c.¹⁹

The copious description of their clothing and accessories reasserts the visual appeal of the periodical, on the one hand, and belabours the extensiveness of Boulton’s and Park’s cross-dressing on the other. The vivid image of their “bizarre” wardrobe therefore positions Boulton and Park’s extensive history of cross-dressing as evidence of their guilt: “if, as the magnitude of their feminine wardrobe ... indicate[s] ... that they have made the acquaintance of strangers, and ... have inveigled them to keep appointments, the charge may certainly assume a totally different character.”²⁰ Thus, while cross-dressing itself did not immediately indicate Boulton and Park’s criminality, the *IPN* nevertheless viewed their history of frequent cross-dressing as suspicious, perhaps even incriminating.

While the *IPN* viewed Boulton and Park’s frequent cross-dressing as suspicious, it portrayed their status as middle-class cross-dressers

¹⁷ “Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women,” 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

as particularly scandalous. The initial report of their arrest notes that Boulton was “the son of a stockbroker” and that Park was a “law student,” establishing their middle-class backgrounds.²¹ That same article implies with incredulity that, based on “an elegantly fitted photographic album,” found in the Wakefield Street apartment, Boulton’s and Park’s sexual partners were all of middle- or upper-class standing. The album, according to the *IPN*, was “filled with portraits of young men apparently of good birth, and bearing the appearance in many cases of university men and other personal property denoting a fair amount of good breeding.”²² Unlike the relatively sympathetic portrayal of their cross-dressing, the *IPN*’s emphasis on Boulton and Park’s middle-class status shows how their class, more than their cross-dressing itself, shocked the Victorian public. Indeed, as Charles Upchurch explains, while the British middle-class enjoyed performances of lower-class cross-dressers on stage, the same toleration was not given to middle-class cross-dressing.²³

The Times was even more explicit in its critique of Boulton and Park for transgressing normative middle-class gender presentation, attempting to distance white middle-class British civility from their gender bending and class transgressions: “we have been accustomed to associate such offences with the sensuous civilization of antiquity, and with the barbarism or demoralization of certain races in our own day. But we are not prepared to find even the suspicion of them attaching to the youths of respectable family and position.”²⁴ Boulton and Park themselves seem to have played with class-boundaries, as female servants’ clothing was found in among their wardrobe at Wakefield street, which the *IPN* detailed in its report: “Amongst all this property there are not more than one, or at most two, costumes bearing any affinity to a masquerade or fancy dress. All the remainder are articles of female attire, and with the head gear have been found an assortment of white net caps, neatly trimmed with fancy ribbons, as worn by household servants.”²⁵ Therefore, protecting class boundaries was more important to the Victorian periodical press than the strict distinction between gender boundaries, and Boulton and Park’s betrayal of their class by cross-dressing in public, when it was only fit for lower-class actors on the stage, was more shocking than their feminine attire.

The *IPN* appears to have been more concerned with class boundaries than gender presentation. The periodical nevertheless remained preoccupied by Boulton and Park’s gender transgressions, and complicated

its portrayal of their femininity by tying it to same-sex desire. Charles Upchurch has argued that the “New Journalism” of the late-nineteenth century, of which the *IPN* forms a prime example, “changed the rules for reporting sex between men” through its implications of sodomy.²⁶ In its coverage of the trial, the *IPN* speculated on the reasons why Boulton and Park would don women’s clothing, subtly implying that they were practicing sodomy: “It was unnecessary at the present to suggest what exact shape the case might assume; whether of the very worst possible character or of a less unfavourable aspect; viz., that they did this for the purpose of extorting money.”²⁷ Here, a crime of the “worst possible character” likely does imply sodomy. Later, medicolegal testimonies were given by Dr. Richard Barwell, a Charing Cross Hospital surgeon treating Park, and Dr. Paul, an E Division Police surgeon who performed a magistrate-ordered invasive examination of Boulton and Park to determine if they had engaged in anal sex. Reporting on the doctors’ testimony, the *IPN* redacted mentions of sodomy: “The witness [Paul] here described the result of his examination, which, like the evidence of Dr. Barwell, is totally unfit for publication, all of which, however, went to substantiate a most serious charge against both prisoners.”²⁸ Despite the omission of any direct reference to anal sex, the redactions of Barwell’s and Paul’s testimonies sensationalized the case by implying rather than explicitly stating the potential of Bolton’s and Park’s sodomy.

The *IPN*’s implications of sodomy indicate a burgeoning awareness of the link between male cross-dressing and sodomy. Indeed, as Angus McLaren explains, in late-nineteenth century Britain, “homosexuality and transvestism were inseparable” in the popular imagination.²⁹ However, Morris B. Kaplan complicates McLaren’s claim, arguing that before Boulton and Park’s case, “cross-dressing was not established in the public mind as an indication of same-sex sexual desire,” but that the prosecutors of their case “undertook to establish that link” by charging them with two crimes: “conspiracy to commit the felony” (of sodomy) and “offense against public decency.”³⁰ George Chauncey similarly argues that, by the 1890s, gender presentation “governed the interpretation of sexual practices,” at least across the Atlantic in New

21 “Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women,” 2.

22 Ibid.

23 Upchurch, “Forgetting the Unthinkable,” 141.

24 “The Men in Women’s Clothes,” *Times*, May 31, 1870, 11.

25 “Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women,” 2.

26 Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde*, 130.

27 “Charge against Gentlemen Personating Women,” *Illustrated Police News*, May 14, 1870, 2.

28 “Men in Female Attire,” 2.

29 Angus McLaren, *Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 217.

30 Morris B. Kaplan, “‘Men in Petticoats’: Border Crossings in the Queer Case of Mr. Boulton and Mr. Park,” *Imagined Londons*, edited by Pamela K. Gilbert, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 48–49.

York City.³¹ Indeed, the link between Boulton and Park's cross-dressing and homosexuality was firmly in place by the publication of *Sins of the Cities of the Plain, or Confessions of a Mary-Ann* (1881), an early work of homosexual pornographic literature in English that adapted Boulton and Park's cross-dressing case as erotica.³² Therefore, because the *IPN* implies but does not definitively link cross-dressing to sex between men, its coverage of the Boulton and Park marks a transition period between an earlier nineteenth-century abstraction between gender and sexual practice and the late-nineteenth century conflation of the two.

The *IPN*'s coverage of the Boulton and Park case therefore reveals how, while Victorians became increasingly concerned with sexuality and sexual practices, Boulton's and Park's class and gender coding were more immediately legible to its readership. The *IPN*'s emphasis of Boulton's and Park's feminine attire reveals how cross-dressing as a practice was not itself threatening to Victorian middle-class ideals, except for in cases of excess. However, Boulton and Park's identities as part of the middle-class made that cross-dressing shocking and intolerable. Moreover, the ambiguous allusions to anal sex in the *IPN*'s coverage shows how gender presentation developed as a signifier of sexuality in the late-nineteenth century. The *IPN*'s sensational coverage of Boulton and Park therefore shows how their case challenged Victorians' understandings of identity, paving the way for a greater late-nineteenth-century interest in the intersections between class, gender, and sexuality.



Bibliography

- Brady, Sean. *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861–1913*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- “Capture of Men Dressed Up as Women.” *Illustrated Police News*, May 7, 1870, 2.
- “Charge against Gentlemen Personating Women.” *Illustrated Police News*, May 14, 1870, 2.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*. New York: Perseus, 1994.
- Joyce, Simon. “Two Women Walk into a Theatre Bathroom: The Fanny and Stella Trials as Trans Narrative.” *Victorian Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2018): pp. 83–98.
- Kaplan, Morris B. “‘Men in Petticoats’: Border Crossings in the Queer Case of Mr. Boulton and Mr. Park.” In *Imagined Londons*, edited by Pamela K. Gilbert, 45–68. State University of New York Press, 2002.
- McLaren, Angus. *Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870–1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- “Men in Female Attire.” *Illustrated Police News*, May 28, 1870, 2.
- “The Men in Female Attire,” *Illustrated Police News*, July 16, 1870, 2.
- “The Men in Petticoats.” *Illustrated Police News*, June 11, 1870, 2.
- “Men in Women’s Clothes.” *Illustrated Police News*, May 28, 1870, 1.
- “Men in Women’s Clothes.” *Illustrated Police News*, June 16, 1870, 2.
- “The Personation of Women.” *Illustrated Police News*, July 2, 1870, 2.
- Rowbotham, Judith. “A Deception on the Public: The Real Scandal of Boulton and Park,” *Liverpool Law Review* 36, no. 1 (2015): pp. 123–145.
- Stratmann, Linda. *Cruel Deeds and Dreadful Calamities: The Illustrated Police News 1864–1938*. London: British Library, 2011.
- Upchurch, Charles. *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain’s Age of Reform*. University of California Press, 2009.
- Upchurch, Charles. “Forgetting the Unthinkable: Cross-Dressers and British Society in the Case of the Queen vs. Boulton and Others.” *Gender & History* 12, no. 1 (April 2000): 127–157.
- “‘The Worst Newspaper in England’: An Interview with the Proprietor of the ‘Police News,’” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Nov. 23, 1886, 2.

31 George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Perseus, 1994), 127.

32 Kaplan, “Men in Petticoats,” 98.

“Biological Soldiers”:¹ War and the Nazi Euthanasia Killings

—
Makayla Scharf

This essay argues that, by marrying the ideological with the pragmatic, World War II justified existing pre-war stigma surrounding the disabled, and motivated that hatred to genocidal ends. The war also provided the cover needed for the Nazi state to murder hundreds of thousands of institutionalized or medical care-reliant people without stirring public ire and to produce arguments that justified those murders to the medical community. By instilling the medical community with a militarized mindset, the line between healing the sick and killing patients dissolved—killing became the way of cleansing the nation of people whose ailments were supposedly doing the nation great harm. In this essay, I track the development of these tragic eugenic ideas in the wake of World War I and delve into the causes, effects, and results of the Nazi medical community’s personal battlefield.

In the winter of 1938, the Chancellery of the Führer received a euthanasia request from a new father.² The Knauers’ child was born blind, with two malformed limbs, and had been diagnosed an “idiot” by his doctors.³ Typically, this word meant that the child was perceived to have mental disabilities. Knauer had asked that the child be euthanized. Such actions still being illegal in Germany, the child’s doctors had refused him. Now, the father appealed directly to Hitler. Hitler’s personal physician, Dr. Karl Brandt, was sent to observe the child. Brandt was informed that he and other medical staff had Hitler’s personal permission to kill the boy if he were found as described. Brandt confirmed the report and the Knauer

child became “the first known victim of the Nazi euthanasia program.”⁴

Though the Knauer boy’s fate has reached academic notoriety—likely due to his discussion by Drs. Brandt and Catel at the Nuremberg Trials—the boy was only one of many children killed by Nazi euthanasia, a program that officially began in the summer of 1939.⁵ Historian Suzanne E. Evans finds that between 5000 and 25,000 disabled and mentally ill children were murdered between 1939 and 1945.⁶ In autumn of 1939, the euthanasia program was further expanded to include adults. The T4 program killed 70,273 people,⁷ mostly in special carbon monoxide gassing centers, before the program officially ended in 1941. Alone, the killing site Hartheim gassed three to four hundred people a day.⁸ Following T4’s shutdown, the Nazis implemented Aktion 14f13: inmates at concentration camps who were disabled or too weak to work were transferred to former T4 killing centers and gassed, killing as many as 40,000.⁹ In the Nazis’ remaining four years, “wild euthanasia” continued across the German territories.¹⁰ Provided for from the state’s central medical organs but without official sanction, groundbreaking euthanasia historian Henry Friedlander describes wild euthanasia as a “chaotic” action that took place nearly at random across German-occupied territories.¹¹ Evans notes that 100,000 people were murdered at the Kiev Institute in the occupied USSR, and that Kiev is just one *documented* episode.¹² Due to the Nazis’ partial success in destroying any record of the killings, concrete numbers are impossible to confirm. In total, the number of dead produced by all the Nazi euthanasia programs was perhaps as few as 200,000, but the programs more likely killed as many as 750,000 people.¹³

For the Third Reich, the battlefield for the ideal German nation began at the hospital bed. People who were institutionalized or dependent on medical care were vulnerable to Nazi euthanasia. In the language of the time, the victims were characterized as “weak-minded

1 Michael A. Grodin, EL Miller, and JI Kelly, “The Nazi Physicians as Leaders in Eugenics and “Euthanasia”: Lessons for Today,” *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 1 (2018), 53.

2 A note on terminology: euthanasia is commonly taken to mean “the good death.” Such deaths were meant to be an informed escape from insurmountable and untreatable suffering, administered at the behest of the patient. Nazi euthanasia fits none of these criteria. However, “euthanasia” is the term most commonly used in the historiography and in the period. Hence, the term will be used to describe the murders committed by Nazi doctors in this paper.

3 Susan Benedict, Linda Shields, and Alison J. O’Donnell, “Children’s “Euthanasia” in Nazi Germany,” *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 24, no. 6 (2009), 507.

4 *Ibid.*, 508.

5 Suzanne E. Evans, *Forgotten Crimes: The Holocaust and People with Disabilities*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 22.

6 *Ibid.*, 26.

7 The program was code-named after Tiergartenstrasse 4, the coordination building in Berlin that the program ran out of with the height of discretion.

8 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 57.

9 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 93.

10 *Ibid.*, 67.

11 Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 165.

12 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 69.

13 *Ibid.*, 94.

and insane,” or sometimes simply described as “the idiots.”¹⁴ Children, adults, and the elderly were all killed without mercy. These murders relied on the Second World War. Building on prejudices intensified by the First World War, the following war enabled the Nazis to better conceal the killings, provided utilitarian arguments to justify removing “useless eaters” from society, and instilled the militarized mentality and structure in the medical profession necessary to facilitate direct medical killings on a genocidal level.¹⁵ By marrying the ideological with the pragmatic, I argue that World War II justified existing pre-war stigma surrounding the disabled and motivated that hatred to genocidal ends.

Friedlander describes genocide as “the most radical method of excluding groups.”¹⁶ This final exclusion was the product of the last fifty years of eugenic science, which since the late nineteenth century had been increasingly medicalized, and ordered in a hierarchy that privileged white, able-bodied men with intelligence and physical traits like race and (dis)ability.¹⁷ Medical historian Lee Hudson corroborates Friedlander, detecting in 1920 a distinct shift in the tone eugenic discussions took toward the disabled. Why should the state support the “intellectually dead,” eugenics researchers Karl Binding and Albert Hoche asked in their two part argument *Permission for the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life*, while able young men were sacrificed in the First World War?¹⁸ The theories outlined in Binding and Hoche’s work gained interest and devotion in the interwar period, given the war made palatable for the first time to the mainstream the idea that lives that drew too many resources from the society were damaging to that society and should thus be dutifully eliminated by the society’s healthier members.¹⁹ Historian Robert Jay Lifton similarly observes that the study reflected a rising mentality in Germany after the war.²⁰ In more detail, Friedlander argues that the shift in opinion developed specifically because Germany’s fresh experience with military defeat,

14 Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, “Hartheim Euthanasia,” War Crimes Investigation—The Charles H. Dameron Report, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/euthan/dameron.html> (accessed 14 November 2018). Please note that the full document is kept at the US National Archives at College Park but was inaccessible at that location.

15 Rotzoll, “Extermination Crime,” 19. Terms borrowed only.

16 Friedlander, *Origins*, 21.

17 Ibid.

18 Lee Hudson, “From Small Beginnings: The Euthanasia of Children with Disabilities in Nazi Germany,” *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* 47, no.8 (2011): 509.

19 Ibid.

20 Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 47.

socio-economic trouble, and political turmoil had radicalized the professional classes.²¹ The First World War’s brutality had left devastation in its wake: attitudes toward perceived weakness and wastefulness turned violent in consequence. Suggesting the power of this reaction, “the 3-person panel deciding whether a patient should be killed” described in Binding and Hoche was actually realized by the medical bureaucracy to decide patients’ fates in the Nazi euthanasia killings.²²

Another distinction should be made. Before the Nazis gained power, Binding and Hoche’s theories were still held by only the minority in the German medical fields.²³ The Nazi government, however, run by the most radical party in the “völkisch” movement, sought to answer the demands of the disenfranchised Germans public with a “race hygiene utopia.”²⁴ To establish this utopia, Hitler would have to cleanse German society of the hereditarily unfit. This task could, according to Friedlander, only be accomplished “once domestic and foreign restraints were removed.”²⁵ By 1933, more than half of the German medical profession had joined the Nazi Party. With this enthusiasm, much of the domestic restraint had been loosened.²⁶ For the Nazis’ eugenic mission, the final liberator arrived in 1939. While July 14, 1933 had seen the implementation of the “Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring,” a policy that forced sterilization on those deemed hereditarily unfit, the euthanasia killings took a while longer to follow. This delay persisted because, as Karl Brant testified at Nuremberg, “the Führer was of the opinion that such a problem would be easier and smoother to carry out in wartime.”²⁷ It was only following the Polish campaign, Brandt added, that Hitler stated he “wanted to bring about a definite solution in the euthanasia question.”²⁸

Hitler’s apparent strategy was to construct the euthanasia killings as a consequence of war. This interpretation is supported by Hitler’s backdating of his order to begin the killings. The secret missive declared that “Reich Brouhler and Dr. Brandt” would be responsible for extending “the powers of specific doctors in such a way that [...] those suffering from illness deemed to be incurable may be granted a mercy death.”²⁹ Given in October of 1939, the order is signed for September 1, 1939. This slight-of-hand, as noted by Evans, clearly suggests Hitler’s desire

21 Friedlander, *Origins*, 31.

22 Grodin, “The Nazi Physicians,” 54.

23 Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, 48.

24 Friedlander, *Origins*, 36.

25 Ibid.

26 Grodin, “Nazi Physicians,” 53.

27 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 24.

28 Ibid.

29 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 42.

to have the euthanasia killings perceived as “a necessary wartime measure.”³⁰ As Lifton argues, Hitler created this façade to pacify “expected religious opposition” to the euthanasia killings.³¹ What medical historian Maike Rotzoll distinguishes as the “outer war,” meaning the Second World War, was meant to serve as a distraction from the “inner war,” meaning the violence conducted by the Nazis against unwanted German citizens.³² Additionally, Hitler was said to characterize war as the ideal time for “the elimination of the mentally ill.”³³ Hitler reportedly opined that war “generally diminished” the worth of life overall in the public perception, meaning that even less concern would be given to those already heavily stigmatized in the public consciousness.³⁴ These conditions made war a fertile soil for mass killing the mentally ill and disabled.

The euthanasia killings also relied on the Second World War for utilitarian justification. While Hitler used war’s tumultuous nature to turn away unwanted gazes and to forestall protest, pragmatic arguments for the euthanasia killings also arose from wartime. Susan Benedict argues that the war created an economic scrutiny that questioned the value of keeping people who were unable to work alive during wartime; this scrutiny, Benedict affirms, laid the foundation for the killings.³⁵ Racial hygienists argued that the disabled and mentally ill were “useless eaters,” thriving off the nation’s productions but never contributing any labor.³⁶ In 1935, Gerhard Wagner, Führer of the National Socialist Physicians’ League, claimed that Germany spent one billion reichsmarks on the “genetically disabled,” a number that dwarfed the amounts spent on the police or other government institutions.³⁷ The Nazi answer to the purportedly exorbitant burden placed on working Germans was to kill these ‘useless’ individuals. But, this argument did not originate with the Nazis. Proctor summarizes Hoche and Binding’s arguments as: “If the healthy could sacrifice their lives in time of war, then why should not the sick do the same?”³⁸ With World War II’s advent, the argument became a Nazi favorite. While at a meeting to plan the killings in 1939, Historian Phillip Bouhler asserted that not only did health concerns motivate the doctors’ actions, but also the need to “free up hospital beds and personnel for the coming war.”³⁹ Evans agrees,

30 Ibid.

31 Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, 50.

32 Rotzoll, “Extermination Crime,” 18.

33 Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, 50.

34 Ibid.

35 Benedict, “Children’s ‘Euthanasia,’” 507.

36 Rotzoll, “Extermination Crime,” 19.

37 Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 181.

38 Ibid., 182.

39 Ibid.

arguing that the Nazis’ murderous motivation was partially found in the need to ration scarce medical resources.⁴⁰ Economic documents found at the Hartheim killing center following the war summarize the Nazi economic justifications of the T4 program: by the end of 1941, 93,521 hospital beds had been “freed up” and 880 million RM saved.⁴¹ The euthanasia killings also contributed financially to the German war effort.⁴² After death, victims’ families were deceived into paying fees as though their relatives were still alive.⁴³ Additionally, gold or otherwise valuable personal possessions were stripped from their owners upon arrival at a killing center. This grim, economic pragmatism was derived from greed and the gross dehumanization of their victims. Yet, the Second World War provided the circumstances wherein these reactions to other human beings was accepted as reasonable, justifiable behavior.

But though the war provided justifications aplenty, the euthanasia killings relied on the German medical community in order to take full advantage of those justifications. Without a structure that allowed for the organized dissemination of orders and the discipline to keep those orders quiet, the euthanasia killings could not have been maintained. Highlighting this fact is the official termination of the T4 program, an end that only came about when public unrest surrounding the T4 killing centers threatened the Nazi regime’s public support.⁴⁴ Yet, this public unrest was primarily stirred by the near location of towns to the killing centers, such as at Hadamar, where even the town’s children took notice of the grey buses that deposited passengers but never took any away.⁴⁵ Reprisals came most notably from Bishop Clemens August Graf von Gallen, who publicly addressed his parishioners to declaim the killings.⁴⁶ However, protest largely did not come from within the medical community that had, by this point, been militarized both in structure and in mindset.

As Proctor observes, “the medical profession was *gleichgeschaltet*,” meaning coordinated or unified, “into a single, hierarchical structure responsible to a vertical chain of command.”⁴⁷ In this strictly disciplined structure, commands came down from the National Socialist Physicians’ League, who were subordinate only to the National Socialist Party.⁴⁸ The inextricable relationship between medicine and

40 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 86.

41 Ibid., 184.

42 Ibid., 86.

43 Ibid.

44 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 67.

45 Ibid., 64.

46 Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 65.

47 Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 70.

48 Ibid.

politics in Nazi Germany demanded that doctors not just stand in line with party policy, but take an active role in its administration. Lifton also gestures to the demand aimed at the Nazi medical community. Citing an “influential manual” by Rudolf Ramm, Lifton uses Ramm’s words to propose that doctors were no longer caretakers of the “Volk;” rather, the Nazi doctor was “an alert biological soldier.”⁴⁹ These doctors were not caretakers or healers, but the state’s line of domestic, medicalized defense. Grodin purports a similar characterization, arguing that:

A series of recurrent themes arose in Nazi medicine as physicians undertook the mission of cleansing the State: the devaluation and dehumanization of segments of the community, medicalization of social and political problems, training of physicians to identify with the political goals of the government, fear of consequences of refusing to cooperate with civil authority, bureaucratization of the medical role, and the lack of concern for medical ethics and human rights.⁵⁰

Grodin describes medical professionals less like Hippocratic doctors and more like soldiers: they delineate themselves from an opponent, accomplish government aims, are disciplined, and above all, they follow orders, even at the cost of personal morals. His reading is supported by Evans, who also indicates the high level of discipline, loyalty, and adherence to orders demanded specifically by the childrens killing program: “Everyone involved in the program, from nurses and midwives to chemists and physicians, was required to sign loyalty oaths and vow never to speak to anyone about the killings.”⁵¹ Those who transgressed faced the Gestapo, then imprisonment or death. These measures were necessary to prevent information about the euthanasia operations from reaching the civilian population.

Medicine’s militarization is most strongly indicated, however, by how often in the course of the euthanasia killings soldiers’ and doctors’ work crossed over. According to Rotzoll, German and Polish patients in institutions were executed by SS task forces soon after the war began.⁵² These killings took place in the German provinces of East Prussia and Pomerania, and in Poland. Additionally, the SS and security service mass-murdered patients during the war in Soviet territories.⁵³ While the euthanasia killings in much of the Reich proper, Austria, and the annexed territories of Czechoslovakia and Slovenia

were handled by a partially state-run organization, in Eastern Europe soldiers could administer Nazi euthanasia when doctors were not available or inconvenient to rely on.⁵⁴ With these commonalities in mind, we can see that the Nazi euthanasia killings were not just dressed in war’s trappings. Rather, as Rotzoll contends, the killing “was a literal war” on the disabled and mentally ill.⁵⁵ A war that could not be waged without the militarization of medical structures and mentalities that took place before and during the Second World War.

The final known victim of Nazi euthanasia was four-year-old Richard Jenne, murdered on May 29, 1945. The US army had occupied the area for the last thirty-three days, but had not realized that Nazi-ordered killings were continuing in the hospital Jenne was admitted to.⁵⁶ In 2018, the seventy-year anniversary of the Doctor’s Trial at Nuremberg stirred new interest in the Nazi euthanasia killings. However, largely these murders are treated as a warning for future medical practitioners or as a beginning place for studying the larger concentration camp system. This essay has sought instead to illuminate the reliant relationship between the euthanasia killings and the Second World War. Primarily, Hitler used the war to divert public attention, and especially that of the religious community, away from the killings. The war also provided utilitarian arguments, further rationalizing the racist rhetoric of the killings. Finally, the killings were reliant on the militarization of the medical community, a process that synchronized doctors with the Nazi party’s ideology and created a hierarchical structure that paralleled the army. Together, these elements coincided to create soldier-doctors whose moral compunctions against doing harm did not extend to those patients the Reich had deemed unworthy of life.

◇

⁴⁹ Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, 31.

⁵⁰ Grodin, “Nazi Physicians,” 53.

⁵¹ Evans, *Forgotten Crimes*, 31.

⁵² Rotzoll, “Extermination Crime,” 19.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Suzanne Ost, “Doctors and Nurses of Death: A Case Study of Eugenically Motivated Killing Under the Nazi ‘Euthanasia’ Programme,” *Liverpool Law Review* 27, no. 1 (2006), 14.

Bibliography

- Benedict, Susan, Linda Shields, and Alison J. O'Donnell. "Children's 'Euthanasia' in Nazi Germany." *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 24, no. 6 (2009): 506-516.
- Evans, Suzanne E. *Forgotten Crimes: The Holocaust and People with Disabilities*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004.
- Friedlander, Henry and Inc ebrary. *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Grodin, MA, EL Miller, and JI Kelly. "The Nazi Physicians as Leaders in Eugenics and 'Euthanasia': Lessons for Today." *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 1 (2018): 53-57.
- Hudson, Lee. "From Small Beginnings: The Euthanasia of Children with Disabilities in Nazi Germany." *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* 47, no. 8 (2011): 508-511.
- Lifton, Robert Jay. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Ost, Suzanne. "Doctors and Nurses of Death: A Case Study of Eugenically Motivated Killing Under the Nazi 'Euthanasia' Programme." *Liverpool Law Review* 27, no. 1 (2006): 5-30.
- Proctor, Robert. *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Rotzoll, Maike, Paul Richter, Petra Fuchs, Annette Hinz-wessels, Sascha Topp, and Gerrit Hohendorf. "The First National Socialist Extermination Crime: The T4 Program and its Victims." *International Journal of Mental Health* 35, no. 3 (2006): 17-29.

The 'Sickly Boy' and the 'Real Man': Kennedy, Castro, and Competing Masculinities

—
Mira Engelbrecht

John F. Kennedy was a profoundly insecure individual. Throughout his life, he struggled with illness and a toxic environment created by the male members of his family, including an intense sibling rivalry with his older brother. This caused him to be indefinitely focused on proving himself and his masculinity for the duration of his life, up to and including his presidency. His obsession with appearing masculine in the public eye proved intrinsic in his 1960 presidential victory over Richard M. Nixon, and when the "real man" Fidel Castro emerged from the Cuban Revolution as the leader of a state potentially in the Soviet sphere of influence, Kennedy felt the need to prove that he was capable of besting Castro through the power of his newfound presidential position.

The tense relationship between John F. Kennedy and Fidel Castro was anything but secret. In his short time in office, Kennedy clashed with Castro multiple times, culminating in the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy, who had argued in favour of befriending and supporting Castro, felt deeply and personally betrayed when, in April 1961, Castro announced the Cuban Revolution to be a communist one, as there were no attempts from the Castro government to connect with the newly elected Kennedy administration despite Kennedy speaking openly about envisioning a positive relationship with the revolutionary government.¹ This feud between Kennedy and Castro was not just a matter of communism versus capitalism, but a conflict with profound gender implications. Castro, portrayed by the media as a "real man", was a threat to Kennedy's already dismal self-image which stemmed from his failure to adopt the typical 1950s masculine model of maturity, sexual containment within marriage, and the role of men as toiling breadwinners for the family, along with chronic health issues which he struggled with throughout his life.² These health issues caused him to be rejected

¹ Kennedy, "A New Attitude in Latin America"; Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 82-108.

² Blair D. Woodard, "Real Men: U.S. Popular Images of Cuban Revolutionary

from the army's Candidate Field School and left him feeling in a constant state of weakness. His insecurity was bolstered by the media's portrayal of him as "thin, slender, and almost boyish."³ Kennedy, the youngest elected president in United States history, who had won the popular vote by a mere 118,000 ballots, felt the need to 'prove' himself by undermining Castro.⁴ He would attempt to do this in the Bay of Pigs invasion, an attempt to reverse Castro's communist revolution. The invasion was a humiliating failure for Kennedy, who took full responsibility for it.⁵ Kennedy's profound insecurity and a deep-seated need to prove himself to the world were major factors that shaped the actions he took against the Castro regime in Cuba.

From a young age, Kennedy struggled with spastic colitis, a chronic lower-back illness. Though he was diagnosed at the age of seventeen, his health issues started when he was just three years old, and he spent much of his childhood indoors due to various ailments.⁶ The colitis never improved throughout his life, despite multiple surgeries and hospitalizations. His physicians opted to give him steroids as treatment, which can be damaging if used long-term. From these treatments, Kennedy developed Addison's disease, making his back issues even worse.⁷ By 1950, he could not put on socks or climb stairs properly and was almost completely immobile, dependent on others for basic actions. He underwent a high-risk low-reward surgery, from which an infection developed. The infection was so serious that he was given his last rites by a Catholic priest.⁸ Remarkably, he recovered within six months, but he remained susceptible to illnesses and infection for close to two years.⁹ Kennedy's health problems were a closely guarded secret, known only to his immediate family and his doctors. He was heavily reliant on painkillers, even during his presidency. These health issues left Kennedy in a constant state of vulnerability and pain. They were the reason he was rejected by the United States Army's Officer

Masculinity, 1957-1965," (unpublished paper, May 25-26, 2012), 8-9; Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 170-179.

3 Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, 12.

4 Robert Dallek, *John F. Kennedy* (New York: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2011), 18.

5 John F. Kennedy, "News Conference 10" (Kennedy Library, News Conferences Archive, 21 April 1961) Accessed December 4th, 2019.

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-press-conferences/news-conference-10>.

6 Ibid., 8.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

Candidate School in 1940. He was able to join the Navy in 1941, but only because his father had a relationship with the director of the Office of Naval Intelligence in Washington.¹⁰ The fact that Kennedy needed his father to intervene in and influence his naval application was likely detrimental to his self-image, which was already damaged by his ceaseless illness and struggles to engage in basic movements.

Kennedy's insecurity was only amplified by his relationship with his older brother, Joe Kennedy Jr., whom Kennedy felt was the favourite of his parents. Joe was "strong, bright, dutiful, and athletic—everything one would hope for in a son," whereas Kennedy was "not only frail and sickly but also underachieving and dilatory."¹¹ Their sibling rivalry was worsened by the attitude of his father who insisted that "winning was everything."¹² Every aspect of Kennedy's relationship with his brother was rooted in competition, from school grades to white blood cell counts.¹³ Following Joe Jr.'s death in combat in August 1944, Kennedy became the new legacy-maker of his father, who used his influence and wealth to prop up Kennedy's political career. In his death, Joe Jr. 'won' his sibling rivalry with Kennedy in perpetuity. His strength and brightness were immortalized in his noble death. Kennedy could never live up to his brother, but he spent the rest of his life trying to prove himself to his parents and those around him.

Shortly after Kennedy's election to the U.S. Senate in 1953, the Cuban Revolution began. The revolutionaries did not see victory over the dictatorial Fulgencio Batista until the final day of 1958, while Kennedy was planning his presidential campaign for 1960. The United States reaction to the Cuban revolution began with overwhelming public support for Castro and his rebels. The revolutionaries were portrayed as "real men," fighting for freedom against an oppressive regime.¹⁴ Castro himself was described as the epitome of manliness, due to his thick beard, muscular build, preference for wearing military fatigues, and his signature cigar. His masculine image was marketed to American children, who purchased comic books bearing Castro's face and dressed up as "rebel fighters" in green military fatigues for Halloween.¹⁵ The commercialization of Castro demonstrated that to the American public, Castro was an "acceptable masculine role model" for children.¹⁶ As the Revolution took a more leftist turn in January 1959 with the agrarian

10 James N Giglio, "Growing Up Kennedy: The Role of Medical Ailments in the Life of JFK, 1920-1957," *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 4 (2006): 370.

11 Ibid., 360.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 362, 365.

14 Woodard, "Real Men."

15 Ibid., 8-9.

16 Ibid., 9.

land reform laws, however, the media swiftly changed tactics to portray Castro's masculinity as a threat rather than something admirable.¹⁷

While Kennedy's senatorial career was focused primarily on domestic affairs and foreign affairs in Southeast Asia, there were several occasions where he felt the need to comment on the state of Latin America, especially the state of Cuba. At a democratic dinner in San Juan, Puerto Rico in December of 1958, Kennedy delivered a speech in which he voiced opinions on Latin America that contradicted the policies he would implement come his presidency in 1961. In this speech, he emphasized that Latin American countries should not be regarded "patronizingly" as being in the United States' "back yard," only worthy of attention in times of emergency, upon which marines would be dispatched to intervene.¹⁸ He argued that "if [The United States] persist[s] in believing that all Latin American agitation is Communist-inspired – that every anti-American voice is the voice of Moscow... then the time may come when [Americans] will learn to our dismay that our enemies are not necessarily their enemies and that our concepts of progress are not yet meaningful in their own terms."¹⁹ He specifically acknowledged Cuba, citing the brutality of the Batista regime which the United States government and private sector helped to "sustain."²⁰ He denounced the U.S. government's policies in Cuba stating: "our policy of non-intervention was not only a fiction, but it was also weighted in favour of an oppressive regime whose persecutions and brutalities far exceeded the retributions of the Castro regime."²¹ He called for aid to be sent to Latin American countries in political turmoil in order to keep them away from Soviet influence while maintaining positive relationships with the United States.

Despite Kennedy asserting his eagerness to keep American influence in Cuba through slightly more liberal and aid-driven means, Castro was becoming increasingly anti-American in the final stretch of the Eisenhower administration. Castro realized that too much of Cuba was reliant on the United States and implemented land reforms to target this issue. He began cutting diplomatic ties to the United States in 1960.²²

During the 1960 presidential campaign between himself and Vice President Richard M. Nixon, Kennedy denounced the Eisenhower administration's treatment of Cuba, blaming Castro's Soviet shift on

them and their "softness."²³ Despite Kennedy's insecurities, his campaign was very much focused on bringing masculinity and youth back to the office of the president.²⁴ Though he was physically weak and ill, his campaign advertised the power of his intellect in an attempt to draw the public eye away from his sickly appearance. There was also a ruthless campaign against Nixon to show the public that Kennedy was going to be tough and effective in dealing with opponents, whether they be domestic or foreign. The campaign against Nixon and the Republican Party was based on their supposed femininity and responsibility for "infantilizing" the United States on the world stage.²⁵ Kennedy's campaign aimed to construct an emergency out of a perceived downfall of masculinity in Washington that the campaign argued was leading to faltering power and respect abroad, especially in comparison with the power and respect afforded the Soviet Union.²⁶ To prove that his administration would be different, Kennedy surrounded himself with culturally masculine figures to prop himself up and strengthen the gendered aspects of his campaign.²⁷ By doing this, Kennedy created a public persona whose strength was rooted in stereotypical masculine gender roles of "toughness", intellect, and "vigor."²⁸ In private, however, his life was far outside the normal 1950s American 'masculine' model. He didn't identify with this model privately, but publicly he felt it greatly important that he align his persona with that of the average American male. He married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier at the age of thirty-seven despite enjoying single life. He did so because, as he told a Senate staffer: "I was thirty-seven years old, I wasn't married, and people would think I was queer if I weren't married."²⁹ For politicians, optics are very important; however, Kennedy's devised public persona was so different from himself that it becomes difficult not to argue that his deep-seated insecurity was the reason for him choosing to publicly act as someone else.

In the fourth presidential debate on October 21, 1960, Kennedy robustly proclaimed: "even though [the U.S. ambassadors to Cuba, Arthur Gardner and Earl E. T. Smith] ... warned of Castro, the Marxist influences around Castro, the Communist influences around Castro, both of them have testified ... that in spite of their warnings to the American

17 Ibid., 10.

18 John F. Kennedy, "A New Attitude in Latin America."

19 Kennedy, "A New Attitude in Latin America."

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 82-108.

23 Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 169-170.

24 Ibid.

25 Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 169-170.

26 Ibid.; John F. Kennedy, "Opening Statement" (Debate Speech, New York, 21 October 1960), ABC News.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN8F1FGZfzA>.

27 Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 170.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 179.

government, nothing was done.”³⁰ He said this despite being briefed prior to the debate that a plan was being created by the Eisenhower administration to eliminate the Castro regime.³¹ Kennedy’s efforts as a senator to aid the Cuban Revolution were ignored by both the United States and Cuban governments. Castro hadn’t been overlooking Kennedy and not listening to his calls for goodwill. Kennedy interpreted this as a personal slight. This is evident in the drastic shift in his rhetoric towards Cuba, as he spent the rest of the campaign advertising the same policies he had denounced in Puerto Rico in 1958: interventionism, sanctions, and placing emphasis on how close Cuba was to the United States, effectively adopting the “back yard” sentiment he had previously criticized.³²

Following election night 1960, the vote was so close that Nixon did not concede until noon the next day.³³ As the youngest elected president, Kennedy had to prove that he was capable of running the country with the set of skills he acquired over three terms in the House of Representatives and only one term as a senator. He would do this by primarily focusing on foreign policy, determined to fight the Cold War with a new “toughness” and masculinity not seen by the previous administration.³⁴

Kennedy entered the office of the president on January 20, 1961 with his sights set on Cuba. He began officially planning the Bay of Pigs invasion on January 22, less than 48 hours after becoming president.³⁵ Though the Bay of Pigs invasion was a mission inherited from the Eisenhower administration, Kennedy fast-tracked the planning when he took office. The reasons that he chose Cuba as the first place for his administration to proceed with a covert operation were clear: the presence of a communist regime 90 miles off the coast of Florida was flagrant in the shadow of the United States; his desire to show his competence with foreign policy promptly; and, finally, he wanted to assert his dominance over Fidel Castro, the man described as the epitome of masculinity.

30 Kennedy, “Opening Statement.”

31 Jason Colby, “From Sputnik to Cuba” (Lecture, University of Victoria, 7 October 2019).

32 Kennedy, “Opening Statement”; Kennedy, “A New Attitude in Latin America”; Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are* (New York: Verso, 1993), 7.

33 Dallek, *John F. Kennedy*, 18-19.

34 Thomas Brown, *JFK: History of an Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 52.

35 “Memorandum From the Assistant to the Deputy Director (Plans) for Covert Action (Barnes) to Director of Central Intelligence Dulles” (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Cuba Program, 21 January 1961), Accessed 29 November 2019.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10>;

The meeting was at 10 AM on January 22nd. John F. Kennedy became president on January 20th at 12 PM, less than 48 hours before the meeting.

Since the mission was planned so quickly, in just three months, many of Kennedy’s top officials questioned the likelihood of a successful invasion and there was intense division between the departments of State and Defense.³⁶ Robert McNamara, Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense “questioned whether such a small force could really achieve a worthwhile objective,” to which Admiral A. Burke, Chief of Naval Operations for both Eisenhower and Kennedy replied that the plan would be effective if there was sufficient support for the guerillas. McNamara asserted that “CIA should be told that their plan is not considered to be a good one,” and asked that a new plan be developed.³⁷ In the following months, several plans were introduced and thrown out by Kennedy. Despite the CIA ensuring him on several occasions that even if their plan failed an anti-Castro revolution in Cuba would be sparked, the President remained unsure. The CIA based this information on a report from February of 1961 that cited “diminishing popular support for the Castro government,” and estimated that “fewer than twenty percent of people” supported Castro, and that the majority assumed he would soon fall.³⁸ It is unclear where the information on the report came from, and the accuracy is questionable.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was an astounding failure for the United States, and, perhaps more frustratingly for Kennedy, a massive success for Castro’s Cuba. Within just three days, the invading forces launched from Guatemala and Nicaragua were soundly defeated. The invasion failed for many reasons: the limiting of U.S. air support to half of what was planned; the refusal to deploy American reinforcements; and, perhaps most importantly, the fact that only conceptual elements of the operation were committed to writing, while the details were only discussed orally, leading to disastrous miscommunication during the invasion.³⁹ Kennedy and his “loyalists” were furious.⁴⁰ They blamed the CIA for giving them false information and bad advice, which we now know to be accurate.⁴¹ What we see when we consider the failure of

36 Peter Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 285.

37 Naval Intelligence for the Director of Naval Operations, “Editorial Note: Review of record of proceedings related to Cuban Situation,” (28 January 1961. Bumpy Road Materials, Area Files. Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., United States) Accessed 29 November 2019.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d32>

38 Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, 294-295.

39 Don Bohning, *The Castro Obsession: U.S. Covert Operations Against Cuba, 1959-1965* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2005), 51, 255.

40 Ibid., 51; Bohning cites Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Theodore Sorensen as the “Kennedy loyalists.”

41 Bohning, *The Castro Obsession*, 51.

the Bay of Pigs invasion is Kennedy's unwillingness to accept responsibility should the operation fail. During planning he wanted it to look as if the United States had no involvement in the invasion so that in the event of failure it could not be traced back to them. When the invasion did fail, he still shifted blame onto others, even though he had not been confident in the invasion plans but approved them anyway. The CIA gave him inaccurate information, which Kennedy evidently sensed during the planning, but he had every opportunity to delay the invasion until a plan with a greater chance of success was introduced. He was simply impatient to overthrow Castro and assert that a young president was capable of being tough and competent in foreign affairs. Instead, he proved his incompetence and isolated an officially communist Cuba which was now more hostile than ever.

On April 21, 1961, Kennedy took sole public responsibility for the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Despite his attempts to keep the United States' involvement in the invasion as little known to the press and public as possible, it was not covered up well. In a news conference, Kennedy made this famous statement:

There's an old saying that victory has 100 fathers and defeat is an orphan...I've said as much as I feel can be usefully said by me in regard to the events of the past few days. Further statements, detailed discussions, are not to conceal responsibility, because I'm the responsible officer of the government, but merely because I, and that is quite obvious, but merely because I do not believe that such a discussion would benefit us during the present difficult situation.⁴²

The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion destroyed what little self-esteem Kennedy had when he entered the office of the president. The United States, one of the two global superpowers, was bested by a country a fraction of its size. Kennedy was unable to overthrow Castro, a man who epitomized strength and masculinity. Like his brother Joe, Kennedy found in Castro a rival whom he could never seem to beat.

Operation Mongoose, a CIA operation commissioned by the Eisenhower administration and authorized by Kennedy in late 1961, aimed to assassinate Castro in order to cause an internal revolt in Cuba, to undermine his regime.⁴³ This operation also failed in most aspects,

⁴² John F. Kennedy, "News Conference 10."

⁴³ Fabian Escalante, *The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959-62* (New York: Ocean Press, 2004), 98-109; "Memorandum from President Kennedy" (30 November 1961. Top Secret, Security, Cuba, Countries Series, President's Office Files. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, United States) Accessed 5 December 2019. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d278>

as Castro was seemingly always one step ahead of the Americans. The Bay of Pigs and the introduction of Operation Mongoose led to increased tensions between the two nations until they finally reached a head in October of 1962 when a U2 spy plane discovered ballistic missile positions for intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba.⁴⁴ On October 22, Kennedy ordered a naval blockade to go into effect on October 24. The United States was under the impression that missiles were not yet on the island and took provisions to keep them away. It came as a relief to the rest of the world when Khrushchev and Castro agreed to remove all missiles and strategic weapons from Cuba on October 28.⁴⁵ Publicly, this looked like a victory for the United States. Secretly, however, Kennedy had promised Khrushchev that he would remove American missiles that were stationed in Turkey at the time. The resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis was actually a stalemate, but Kennedy was allowed to claim victory. In taking responsibility for the victory of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy was finally able to best Castro publicly. Castro's government was still communist and close by, and Kennedy tried to topple the regime until his death, but overall, he was more concerned with his public reputation than Castro's nearby presence. For a moment, Kennedy was victorious over Castro, the epitome of 1950s masculinity. He believed he had singlehandedly stopped nuclear war.

Kennedy's obsession with proving himself by besting Castro came to pass from a multitude of different reasons: from his lifelong illness keeping him physically weak, from his father insisting that "winning was everything," from his inability to best his older brother Joe Jr., and from his slim electoral victory over Richard Nixon. These experiences made Kennedy obsess over masculine gender roles and they became an integral part of his presidential campaign and his public persona. He admitted that he would have remained unmarried if it was socially acceptable for a man to do so. His campaign against Nixon was rooted in creating an emergency out of masculinity being absent from the White House. When Castro, a "real man" became an opponent of the United States despite Kennedy's efforts to befriend him, he saw in Castro an opportunity to prove that he was tough and masculine enough to defeat him. Kennedy immediately began planning for the Bay of Pigs invasion after his inauguration, which ended as a colossal failure. Following this, the CIA continuously attempted to eliminate the Cuban leader in Operation Mongoose. After nearly a year of the CIA achieving nothing, tensions amped up and the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred. Kennedy's public victory over Cuba and communism was

⁴⁴ Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 177.

⁴⁵ Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 181.

enough of a victory to ease tensions for a time. He would never fully defeat Castro, however, as he was assassinated on November 22, 1963. Following Lyndon B. Johnson's swearing-in, Operation Mongoose was scrapped and, though the U.S. and Cuba wouldn't rekindle their diplomatic relationship until 2013 under the Obama administration, the relationship between the two countries coexisted relatively uneventfully, making the Cuban-American conflict uniquely Kennedy's.



Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Bundy, McGeorge. "Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Kennedy." 8 February 1961. Security, Cuba, Countries Series, President's Office Files. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, United States. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d39>
- Kennedy, John F. "A New Attitude in Latin America." Speech, San Juan, 15 December 1968. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/san-juan-pr-19581215>
- Kennedy, John F. "News Conference 10." 21 April 1961. News Conference Archive. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, United States. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-press-conferences/news-conference-10>
- Kennedy, John F. "Opening Statement." Debate speech, New York, 21 October 1960. ABC News. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN8F1FGZfzA>
- McNamara, Robert. *The Fog of War*. Directed by Errol Morris. New York: Sony Pictures Classics, 2003.
- "Memorandum from President Kennedy." 30 November 1961. Top Secret, Security, Cuba, Countries Series, President's Office Files. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, United States. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d278>
- "Memorandum from the Assistant to the Deputy Director (Plans) for Covert Action (Barnes) to Director of Central Intelligence Dulles." Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Cuba Program, 21 January 1961. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10>

"Memorandum No. 2 From the Cuba Study Group to President Kennedy." 13 June 1961. Secret, Taylor Report, Subjects, Cuba, Countries Series, National Security Files. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, United States. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d232>

Naval Intelligence for the Director of Naval Operations, "Editorial Note: Review of record of proceedings related to Cuban Situation." 28 January 1961. Bumpy Road Materials, Area Files. Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., United States. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d32>

Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Secondary Sources

- Bohning, Don. *The Castro Obsession: U.S. Covert Operations Against Cuba, 1959-1965*. Washington: Potomac Books, 2005.
- Brown, Thomas. *JFK: History of an Image*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Colby, Jason. "From Sputnik to Cuba." Lecture, University of Victoria, 7 October 2019.
- Dallek, Robert. *John F. Kennedy*. New York: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2011.
- Dean, Robert D. *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.
- Escalante, Fabian. *The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959-62*. New York: Ocean Press, 2004.
- Giglio, James N. "Growing Up Kennedy: The Role of Medical Ailments in the Life of JFK, 1920-1957." *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 4 (2006): 358-385.
- Gleijeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: the Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1955*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Gosse, Van. *Where the Boys Are*. New York: Verso, 1993.
- Kornbluh, Peter. *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba*. New York: The New Press, 1998.
- Schoultz, Lars. *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Woodard, Blair D. "Real Men: U.S. Popular Images of Cuban Revolutionary Masculinity, 1957-1965" (unpublished paper, May 25-26, 2012).

Laying Bare the War: Responses to the My Lai Massacre and the Trial of Lt. William Calley in American Public Opinion

—
Jordan Smith

This paper investigates the responses to the 1968 My Lai Massacre, and the subsequent trial of the atrocity's chief perpetrator, Lieutenant (Lt.) William Calley. The focus of this inquiry will be centered on the reactions to the massacre and trial within contemporary American public discourse. To this end, the paper relies predominantly on the ways in which the responses to the massacre and trial were represented within the national press. These responses will be shown to highlight the divisions within American society that characterized the final years of the Vietnam War. Utilizing these sources, a substantial segment of this paper's analysis will be dedicated to revealing the ways in which a divided American public responded to the details of the massacre after they became widely known. Finally, this paper will address the Calley trial and argue that it was the unique political and cultural realities of the time that allowed the majority of the American public to serve as apologists for the disgraced Lieutenant – regardless of whether they condemned or defended the conflict in South East Asia.

Introduction

The massacre of over 500 men, women, and children that occurred in the sub-hamlet of My Lai in Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam, on March 16, 1968, represents the greatest atrocity committed by American troops during the Vietnam war, both in scale and notoriety.¹ Not only did the incident trigger investigations, inquiries, and trials by both the US Army and Congress, but it also forced a generation of Americans to reflect on the role that the United States would play in the world. Furthermore, those alive at the time struggled with how they would react to the intense brutality that characterized the event and what

1 Allison, William Thomas. *My Lai: An American Atrocity in the Vietnam War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 1; Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

this cruelty suggested about the moral character of the nation.² As historian Howard Jones argues, “My Lai had laid bare the war” for many Americans, and in doing so became an intensely politicized “lightning rod” for both those who supported the war in Southeast Asia and those who opposed it.³ This paper will be addressing the tragedy at My Lai with a particular focus on reactions in American public discourse. To truly understand the public response, the My Lai fallout must be investigated at every stage, from its initial disclosure to the US public by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh in the fall of 1969, to the aftermath of the trial of Lieutenant (Lt.) William Calley, the massacre’s most notorious perpetrator, in the spring of 1971.⁴ The methodology of this investigation relied heavily on how these events were represented in the nation’s newspapers, how the American people responded to them, and what rhetoric was employed as they attempted to reconcile how “America the Good” could be responsible for such depravity.⁵ When investigated in this fashion, it becomes clear that the American public responded to the initial revelations of what occurred at My Lai through backlash towards the media, denial that the incident occurred, and outrage towards the war in Vietnam. Furthermore, the reactions to the court-martial of Lt. Calley specifically were characterized by an unexpected consensus between pro-war and anti-war Americans; both of whom argued that Calley was being scapegoated by the Army and the United States government. There were, however, some who dissented against this consensus, foremost among them being the prosecutor of the Calley case – Captain (Cpt.) Aubrey Daniels.

Background

On the morning of March 16, 1968, Lt. William Calley led 1st Platoon of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment into the Vietnamese hamlet of My Lai, a sub-hamlet of the larger Son My village.⁶ The stated objective on that day was to take action against the 48th Viet Cong (VC), which intelligence suggested had a base camp near Song My.⁷ Prior to March 16, which was to be the unit’s first experience with

2 Jones. *My Lai*, 3.

3 Ibid; Allison, *My Lai*, 1.

4 Allison, *My Lai*, 84.

5 Young, Marilyn B. *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 244.

6 Milam, Ron. *Not a Gentleman’s War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). 130. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvic/detail.action?docID=475198>.

7 Borch, Fred L. “My Lai at Fifty: A History of Literature on the ‘My Lai Incident’ Fifty Years Later.” *Journal of Military History* 82, no. 2 (April

combat, Calley and his men were led to believe that resistance would be substantial, given that Vietnamese guerillas had exercised considerable control in the area for over 20 years.⁸ Further contributing to the apprehension of the troops was the trauma of losing a popular sergeant in their company to a booby trap two days previous.⁹ Despite what the intelligence had suggested, when Charlie company troops piled out of their helicopter at 0730 hours they were met with no resistance.¹⁰ Little to their knowledge, the 48th VC had dispersed over the previous nights.¹¹ Following the orders of the company's commanding officer, Captain Ernest Medina, Charlie company progressed toward My Lai.¹²

Upon entering the hamlet, the 1st Platoon continued to be unsuccessful in finding any enemy combatants and instead stumbled upon villagers preparing their morning rice.¹³ Despite the lack of resistance, tension among the American troops remained high as they prepared for potential traps or sniper fire from the dense banana trees that surrounded the village.¹⁴ Thus convinced, American troops moved through My Lai with combat intensity, throwing grenades into huts, killing livestock, and shooting down any villagers that fled.¹⁵ As the chaos heightened, Lt. Calley ordered his platoon to gather the remaining villagers into large groups.¹⁶ As this objective was undertaken by the 1st Platoon, Calley's immediate superior, Cpt. Medina demanded to know why progress through the village had been delayed. After hearing that the villagers were delaying progress, and fearing the mission was in jeopardy, Medina reprimanded Calley over a shared radio and, Calley would later testify, ordered him to "waste all those goddamn people!"¹⁷ Humiliated by his commander's anger, Calley committed himself to move out of the village as quickly as possible.¹⁸ He proceeded to order a young Private First Class, Paul Meadlo, who was guarding a large group of unarmed peasants, to execute his prisoners.¹⁹ Meadlo would

later state in an interview with CBS that he and Calley killed "men, women and children" alongside "babies."²⁰ After he finished firing, Meadlo began to weep openly.²¹ After this act of brutality, the violence committed by Charlie company in the village escalated significantly as peasants were rounded into groups, or forced into ditches, where they were summarily executed.²² Furthermore, American cruelty was not only limited to physical violence. As historian William Allison recounts, "by midmorning, members of Charlie Company had killed hundreds of civilians and raped or assaulted countless women and young girls."²³ All this even though no weapons were uncovered in the village.²⁴

A sufficient recounting of what occurred on March 16 cannot be truly complete without touching on the most famous act of American humanity on the behalf of the Vietnamese – that of Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson.²⁵ On the day of the My Lai incident, Thompson and his flight crew had been flying helicopter patrol over the Son My village and became progressively confused and disquieted by increasing numbers of dead Vietnamese peasants they saw strewn along the trails and trenches of the area.²⁶ This being despite the fact that there was no evidence of any enemy combatants. Thompson and his crew's unease grew into shock and outrage when they witnessed a Captain, later identified as Medina, executing a wounded Vietnamese woman.²⁷ This bewilderment increased after the recon crew witnessed soldiers, including Calley, shooting into ditches filled with at least 100 Vietnamese.²⁸ Eventually, Thompson elected to take action by setting his chopper down on the path between a bunker filled with Vietnamese women and children and approaching American soldiers.²⁹ After instructing his gunner to

20 "Transcript of Interview of Vietnam War Veteran on His Role in Alleged Massacre of Civilians at Songmy" *New York Times*, November 25, 1969.

Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35YafuJ>.

21 Olson, James S., and Randy Roberts. *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 1998). <http://tinyurl.com/y4fqeyto>.

22 Borch, *My Lai at Fifty*, 554.

23 Allison, *My Lai*, 43.

24 Ibid.

25 Jones, *My Lai*, 87.

26 Allison, *My Lai*, 43; Hugh Thompson testimony, April 17, 1970, Hearings of the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. 226. Retrieved from: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015039890580;view=1up;seq=234;size=125>

27 Jones, *My Lai*, 88; Thompson testimony, *House Armed Services Hearing*. 226.

28 Allison, *My Lai*, 42; Thompson testimony, *House Armed Services Hearing*. 228.

29 Thompson testimony, *House Armed Services Hearing*. 228.

2018). 552. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=128577712&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Allison, *My Lai*, 33.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Borch, *My Lai at Fifty*, 552.

14 Allison, *My Lai*, 35.

15 Ibid., 40.

16 Ibid., 41.

17 Calley testimony, Feb 24, 1971, Calley court-martial transcript, 3984, as cited in Jones, *My Lai*, 67.

18 Jones, *My Lai*, 67.

19 Borch, *My Lai at Fifty*, 553.

“cover” him, presumably from the American since there were no Viet Cong, Thompson exited the aircraft and persuaded the Vietnamese to come out of their bunker.³⁰ According to historian William Allison, the villagers “surely would have been killed had Thompson not been there.”³¹ Despite Thompson’s efforts on behalf of this small group, by the end of the day, over 500 Vietnamese civilians lay dead at My Lai.³²

Despite the degree of violence that occurred at My Lai, the initial army investigations into the incident proved deeply inadequate.³³ After an outraged WO Thompson reported the incident to his superiors, the investigation eventually fell into the hands of Colonel Oran Henderson.³⁴ Ignoring considerable evidence to the contrary, Henderson erroneously concluded on March 20, 1968 that there was no substance to the claims of mass killings of civilians by American troops.³⁵

My Lai Revealed

The initial response to the events of March 16 by the American public was, quite ironically, positive. Although the operations of Charlie company in Quang Ngai province made no national headlines, those that reported it retold the official army narrative and made no mention of the unreported massacre.³⁶ In fact, one paper instead spoke of a “running battle” wherein 128 Viet Cong were killed.³⁷ It is likely that these reports would have remained the only information that the American public ever received about what happened in My Lai, had it not been for the actions of a single American soldier – Specialist (Spec.) Ron Ridenhour.³⁸ It was Ridenhour who, after hearing rumours from several friends in the army that a “dark and bloody” event had taken place in “Pinkville,” a term for the area around Song My village, began penning a letter to over thirty officials in Washington, DC,

30 Ibid; Carson, Mark D. “F. Edward Hébert and the Congressional Investigation of the My Lai Massacre.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 37, no. 1 (1996): 66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233262>.

31 Allison, *My Lai*, 44.

32 Borch, *My Lai at Fifty*, 551.

33 Allison, *My Lai*, 62.

34 Ibid., 65.

35 Borch, *My Lai at Fifty*, 555.

36 Jones, *My Lai*, 125.

37 *Peers Inquiry*, 3: Exhibits, book 4, Misc. Doc., M-58. 1968. Retrieved from: https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-IIIBook4.pdf

38 Cookman, Claude. “An American Atrocity: The My Lai Massacre Concretized in a Victim’s Face.” *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 154–62, <http://tinyurl.com/y6mylxxv>.

including President Nixon, detailing his concerns.³⁹ On March 29, 1969, over a year after the incident occurred, Ridenhour sent his letter.⁴⁰ The thoroughness of Ridenhour’s report, which included such disturbing anecdotes as the claim that Vietnamese villagers were rounded up and slaughtered “like so many sheep,” motivated immediate inquiries from Congress to the Pentagon and spurred the investigations that would eventually bring the horrors of My Lai into the national spotlight.⁴¹

The immediate repercussions of Ridenhour’s letter, and indeed the letter itself, were initially unknown to the American public and consisted of an internal investigation by the US Army.⁴² It was not until this investigation by the US Army Criminal Investigation Division was underway, and Lt. Calley already implicated and subsequently charged, that the story of what happened at My Lai began to enter the newspapers.⁴³ Initially, reports were brief and consisted of a back page announcement of court-martials of officers for the murder of non-combatants.⁴⁴ The story of what occurred at My Lai reached a national audience through three crucial pieces of journalism. The first was an article by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh which was published on November 13, 1969 and included the first published interview with Calley. The second, was the notorious publishing of army photographer Ron Haeberle’s colour photographs, which he had taken of the dead and wounded Vietnamese in My Lai as the massacre took place, on November 20 in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and on December 5 in *Life*.⁴⁵ Lastly, the third event came with the airing of an interview with Pvt. Paul Meadlo by CBS on November 24 in which the visibly traumatized veteran admitted to a national audience that he and his comrades had killed women, children and babies.⁴⁶ With these three events, the massacre at My Lai was now firmly implanted in the collective consciousness of the nation, and as more details emerged backlash, denial and outrage would come to characterize the reaction of the public.

39 Ridenhour, Ron. “Ridenhour letter”. March 29, 1969. Retrieved from: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour_letter.cfm; Allison, *My Lai*, 78.

40 Ridenhour, *Letter*.

41 Ridenhour, *Letter*; Allison, *My Lai*, 78; Carson, “Congressional investigation,” 66.

42 Allison, *My Lai*, 78.

43 Allison, *My Lai*, 84.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., 85.

46 Ibid., 85; “Interview transcript”, *New York Times*.

Responses to My Lai

The initial response to the journalism that revealed the My Lai massacre was characterized by substantial backlash. Most prominent were those that suggested that Hersh, Ridenhour, and Haerberle, and by extension *CBS*, and *Life* were “part of the leftist antiwar movement.”⁴⁷ Reactions to Haerberle’s photographs were exceptionally intense, as displayed by the cross-section of opinion provided by *Life* magazine. Some readers expressed concern that the piece in *Life*, which contained the gruesome images, might serve to undermine the peace process by igniting increased hatred among the Vietnamese. This fear was exemplified by the comments of a reader from Ogden, Utah who argued that the *Life* My Lai piece had set back the Nixon administration’s peace efforts and would thus “be responsible for many more deaths among our boys.”⁴⁸ Many also appealed to the recent comments of Vice President Spiro Agnew, who, in a March 14 speech, had railed against the national media for its perceived liberal bias and “querulous criticism” of the Nixon administration’s policies.⁴⁹ Another response criticized *Life* for playing into the hands of the nation’s enemies by falling victim to “a new communist tactic” that relied on reports of “so-called tragedies.”⁵⁰ This perspective was demonstrated more explicitly by another reader who simply demanded “whose side are you on?”⁵¹

Reactions to Paul Meadlo’s CBS interview took on a similar defensive and critical tone. Despite the fact that Meadlo openly admitted to killing dozens of Vietnamese with point-blank automatic rifle fire, many who knew him managed to avoid placing any blame on the young private.⁵² As a November 26, 1969 *New York Times* piece on Pvt. Meadlo’s hometown of New Goshen, Indiana concluded “nowhere... was anyone inclined to blame [Meadlo].”⁵³ Some even demanded to know how the newspapers could justify placing any blame on the young man because, “after all, he had his orders.”⁵⁴ The only criticism of Meadlo in the town centred around his decision to go to the press. As a Korean War veteran argued to the *Times*,

47 Jones, *My Lai*, 211.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid; “Transcript of Address by Agnew Criticizing Television on Its Coverage of the News”, *New York Times*. November 14, 1969. Retrieved from: Retrieved From: <https://nyti.ms/2tZvMpA>.

50 “Americans Speak out on Massacre,” *Life*.

51 Ibid.

52 “Interview transcript”, *New York Times*; Jones, *My Lai*, 211.

53 “Meadlo’s Home Town Regards Him as Blameless”, *New York Times*. November 26, 1969. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2QV3FRi>.

54 Ibid

Meadlo’s only mistake was “talking about this to everyone on television” because “this sort of thing should be kept classified.”⁵⁵ Although these interviews represent a small sample size, they still reveal the mechanisms that Americans used to reconcile the events at My Lai.

Those Americans who did not respond to the revelations of what occurred at My Lai with immediate backlash toward the media often coped with them through denial.⁵⁶ As Claude Cookman argues, this response to the violence at My Lai was “understandable given the cherished myth of the perfectly balanced American warrior.”⁵⁷ American defence of this myth led many to simply conclude that the violence at My Lai was either grossly exaggerated or simply did not occur.⁵⁸ This reality was represented by one survey of citizens in Minnesota in which 49 percent of respondents believed that the My Lai story was false.⁵⁹ This desire to defend American exceptionalism was clearly active in the minds of many Americans as the details of the massacre emerged and some proved capable of denial even in the face of overwhelming evidence.⁶⁰ Denial of what occurred on March 16 was also widespread among American G.I.s who were still serving in Vietnam during the fallout of the incident.⁶¹ As one G.I. argued, even if the massacre did take place, it was possible that those killed at My Lai were not in fact non-combatants because “a lot of VC dress up like villagers.”⁶² Other soldiers argued that, although the massacre was troubling, it simply represented a response to the reality of combat in Vietnam. This argument largely revolved around the blurring of the lines between civilian and soldier and the lumping of all Vietnamese into a single racialized category. As one Private dryly commented to the *Times*, “you get your buddy next to you blown away, you ain’t gonna love the Dinks.”⁶³

Alongside the criticism and denial that persisted in American public discourse after the massacre was revealed was a massive outcry of moral outrage. This anger was particularly prevalent among the anti-war groups who felt that the brutality displayed at My Lay

55 Ibid.

56 Cookman, *American Atrocity*, 160.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Oliver, Kendrick. “Atrocity, Authenticity and American Exceptionalism: (Ir)Rationalising the Massacre at My Lai.” *Journal of American Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 265. www.jstor.org/stable/27557330.

61 “G.I.’s Near Songmy Doubt Any Massacre”, *New York Times*. December 1, 1969. Retrieved from: <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1969/12/01/89386816.html?pageNumber=12>.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

vindicated their position on the war.⁶⁴ By late 1969, both the army and the war itself seemed to be on trial in the court of American public opinion.⁶⁵ Many believed that the barbarity displayed by American troops demonstrated how the war had corrupted the moral fabric of the nation and led to the “death of American moral authority.”⁶⁶ The *Wall Street Journal*, for example, claimed that the nation was plagued “by fears that its national sense of morality has been deteriorating.”⁶⁷ The conversion of honourable young men into cold-blooded killers seemed to demonstrate that the war was having a severely deleterious effect on American soldiers. Some blamed the Army specifically, a notable example being Paul Meadlo’s mother who tearfully demanded to know “why did they have to take my son and do that to him?”⁶⁸

Others blamed the horror of war more broadly for demeaning the country’s moral standing. As a Kansas City policeman commented to *Life*, “I don’t know who is to blame... just the war itself.”⁶⁹ Also present in these anti-war sentiments was the notion that the war in Vietnam had made My Lai a practical inevitability. A Chicago man quoted in *Life* echoed these sentiments when he stated: “if you give guns to 500,000 men, things like this are going to happen.”⁷⁰ These debates surrounding what My Lai meant for the nation’s involvement in Vietnam would not die off, nor be settled, in the months and years following the revelation of the massacre to the American public, but would instead come to be centred around the individual who was most personally associated with the event – Lt. William Calley.

Responses to Calley’s Trial

The conviction and sentencing to life in prison of Lt. Calley in March 1971 for “murdering no fewer than twenty-two Vietnamese civilians at My Lai” was met with immediate public backlash from an American public that overwhelmingly supported him.⁷¹ In fact, a Gallup poll at the time found that only 11 percent of Americans supported the

verdict, while 79 felt it was unjust.⁷² The public support for Calley can be seen as being divided into two broad categories; those on the political right who argued that he had been convicted for doing his duty and was right to follow orders, and those on the left who argued that the conviction of Calley represented gross hypocrisy and claimed that the real problem was the government and military policy that had enabled My Lai in the first place.⁷³ As William Allison states, “both hardcore hawks and peaceniks viewed Calley as a martyr.”⁷⁴

For those Americans that supported the US involvement in Vietnam, William Calley was elevated to near hero status.⁷⁵ During the course of the trial and in its immediate aftermath, Calley acquired an “absurd celebrity” that even earned him a personal visit from Alabama governor George Wallace.⁷⁶ This belief from the political right that Calley had become a martyr for an unpopular war was so widespread that James Reston sarcastically suggested in an April 4, 1971 *New York Times* column that “for a while it almost looked as if somebody were going to propose giving Lieutenant Calley the Congressional Medal of Honor.”⁷⁷ Specifically, support for Calley was particularly strong in the Deep South where both federal and state politicians found their offices bombarded by letters and telegrams advocating on Calley’s behalf.⁷⁸ Importantly, the opinions of Southerners also held increased sway in the White House, given the region’s support for the war and central role in Nixon’s election victory.⁷⁹ Many who protested the Calley conviction espoused the familiar rhetorical line that the lieutenant had been convicted for “doing his duty.”⁸⁰ The notion that a soldier was obligated to obey orders and could not be held morally culpable for the consequences of his actions was so prevalent that a December 1971 survey conducted by Harvard and reprinted in the *New York Times* found that “two-thirds of those questioned would shoot unarmed civilians if ordered to do so.”⁸¹

64 Jones, *My Lai*, 211.

65 Ibid.

66 Allison, *My Lai*, 86; “The American as blind giant unable to see what it kills: My Lai”, *New York Times*. June 14, 1970. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2sxCa7e>.

67 “War and Guilt”, *Wall Street Journal*. March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/133617666?accountid=14846&pq-origsite=summon>.

68 “Meadlo’s Home Town”, *New York Times*.

69 “Americans Speak out on Massacre”, *Life*.

70 Ibid.

71 Allison, *My Lai*, 110, 111.

72 Ibid., 111.

73 Jones, *My Lai*, 272, 292.

74 Allison, *My Lai*, 112.

75 Allison, *My Lai*, 111; Beidler, Philip. “Calley’s Ghost.” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 79, no. 1 (2003): 47, <http://tinyurl.com/yf2ftkv>.

76 Ibid., 47.

77 Reston, James. “Calley: Symbol of Vietnam”, *New York Times*. April 4, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/30oN7Em>.

78 “Mail on Calley, Especially from South, Takes on Emotional Tone”, *New York Times*. April 3, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35W0llr>.

79 Jones, *My Lai*, 291.

80 “Mail on Calley”, *New York Times*.

81 “67% in Survey on Calley Say Most People Would Shoot Civilians if Ordered”, *New York Times*. December 28, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35SR049>.

The response from active members of the US Army was characterized by similar indignation. As one soldier posted in Saigon stated to the *Times*, “it is wrong for a man to be tried for murder when we are in this conflict.”⁸² Another commented in reference to Calley’s conviction, “he does his job whether it is write [sic] or wrong and he gets hung for it.”⁸³ Feelings among veterans and active soldiers were so potent that Representative John R. Rarick of Louisiana even reported to the *New York Times* that “I’ve had veterans tell me that if they were in Vietnam now, they would lay down their arms and come home.”⁸⁴ Taken together, it is clear that those who supported the war in Vietnam were deeply troubled by the apparent notion that an American soldier could be held responsible for actions taken while serving his country – even if those actions consisted of mass murder.

For those who opposed the American involvement in South-East Asia, the trial and conviction of Lt. Calley were equally outrageous, most blatantly because it seemed to excuse high ranking members of both military and the federal government. This drew particular ire from those who argued that the United States was practicing hypocrisy in refusing to invoke the so-called “Yamashita principle,” which had been applied by the Americans to the Japanese after World War II and held high ranking military officers responsible for crimes committed by their soldiers.⁸⁵ This suggested to some Americans, including Fred Graham of the *New York Times*, that the Pentagon had no interest in holding high ranking officers culpable in the My Lai case.⁸⁶ It appeared that the nation’s generals were cynically attempting to protect their own, regardless of the moral issues involved.⁸⁷

Other Americans argued that Calley was being used as a scapegoat to avoid having to ask potentially difficult questions about US policy more generally. For example, anti-war Democrat George McGovern argued that the American public should focus on changing American foreign policy instead of punishing low ranking officers like Calley through war crime trials.⁸⁸ Related to this argument was the consistent claim that Calley had been made a “scapegoat” by his superiors

to avoid potential criticism of the nature of the conflict itself.⁸⁹ As columnist James Reston surmised after Calley’s conviction, the officer’s fate represented a response to “a war without glory or nobility and a symbol for a time of moral confusion.”⁹⁰ As Reston also noted, it seemed absurd to many Americans to blame Calley personally without also blaming the architects of the policies that were responsible for putting him in My Lai in the first place.⁹¹ Like Reston, many Americans argued that the far greater crime was the continuation of the war. As one *New York Times* columnist argued in April 1971, “must we not condemn the whole wicked engine of death?”⁹² Notable among these voices were the so-called “Winter Soldiers,” Vietnam veterans who petitioned Congress to investigate what they perceived to be a pandemic of war crimes in Vietnam and insisted that Calley had unjustly been made a scapegoat.⁹³ In response to the outrage from both sides of the aisle, President Nixon ordered that Calley be kept under house arrest, instead of in prison, until his defence team had exhausted all avenues of appeal – at which time the President would review the case personally.⁹⁴ The fact that even the President was influenced by the political pressures of the “free Calley bandwagon” demonstrates the prevalence of the view that the lieutenant had been treated unjustly.⁹⁵

One notable voice of dissent against all those who argued the injustice of the Calley conviction came from the man who had prosecuted that case against the disgraced Lieutenant – Cpt. Aubrey M. Daniel.⁹⁶ After Nixon stated his intention to review the case, the Army’s prosecutor expressed concern for both the independence of the law and the moral standing of the country.⁹⁷ In his letter to the President, Daniel conveyed his dismay and bewilderment at the reaction from the United States public.⁹⁸ Specifically, Daniel was shocked that so many Americans were willing to pardon Calley even after being made aware

82 “Saigon G.I.’s Indignant Over Calley Ruling”, *New York Times*. March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2soL8Dw>.

83 Ibid.

84 “Many in Nation Perturbed By Conviction of Calley”, *New York Times*. March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/3aikM7B>.

85 “Impact of Calley Trial”, *New York Times*. March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2RiSeB7>.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Jones, *My Lai*, 292.

89 “Saigon G.I.’s Indignant”, *New York Times*.

90 “Calley: Symbol of Vietnam”, *New York Times*.

91 Ibid.

92 “The Cry of America”, *New York Times*, April 5, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2FWza7a>.

93 Jones, *My Lai*, 293.

94 Allison, *My Lai*, 113.

95 Ibid., 112.

96 Greenhaw, Wayne. *The Making of a Hero: The Story of Lieut. William Calley Jr.* (Louisville, Kentucky: Touchstone Publishing Co., 1971). 197.

97 Daniel, Aubrey. “Letter Written by Capt. Aubrey M. Daniel to President Nixon”. April, 1970. Retrieved from: <https://famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1623-daniels-ltr>.

98 Aubrey. “Letter Written by Capt. Aubrey M. Daniel to President Nixon”.

of the depravity of his crimes.⁹⁹ Daniel also observed that, despite the outrage, Calley had been given a fair trial and had been convicted beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of men who were themselves combat veterans and had faced death threats for their decision.¹⁰⁰ The prosecutor also expressed disgust that so many politicians were willing to pander to public opinion while so blatantly ignoring the moral issues involved.¹⁰¹ For Daniel, the case was simple, “it is unlawful,” he argued to Nixon “for an American soldier to summarily execute unarmed and unresisting men, women, children, and babies.”¹⁰² In the face of the mass outrage that the Calley verdict catalyzed in US public discourse, Daniel argued that perhaps the war itself was to blame for numbing the nation’s moral instinct.¹⁰³ If it was the case that so many were willing to elevate Calley to hero status, or defend him as a scapegoat, and demand his release, “then the war in Viet-Nam has brutalized us more than I care to believe, and it must cease,” Daniel determined.¹⁰⁴ In his conclusion, the young Virginian expressed deep regret that, in an effort to appease the public, politicians were willing to “compromise such a fundamental moral principle as the inherent unlawfulness of the murder of innocent persons.”¹⁰⁵ Despite the strong bias that Daniel doubtlessly possessed, his letter to Nixon nonetheless represents a powerful expression of the opinions of those Americans who were bewildered by the sympathy that so many of their compatriots possessed for a man convicted of such a heinous crime.

Conclusion

When reviewed, it becomes clear that the way that American public opinion responded to the violence that characterized the 1968 My Lai massacre was expressed through several rhetorical motifs that arose from their broader ideologies regarding the justice of the war in Vietnam. Crucially, these arguments were recurrent and demonstrated at every stage of the event’s aftermath, from its initial disclosure to the US public in the fall of 1969, to the conviction of Lt. Calley in the spring of 1971. Specifically, when the gruesome details of what occurred at My Lai were revealed through the journalism of Seymour Hersh, Ron Haebler’s photographs, and Paul Meadlo’s interview in late 1969, Americans can be clearly seen as responding through either

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

backlash toward the media, denial of the truth of the reports, or outrage at the immorality of the war in Vietnam, depending on their pre-existing political stance. Furthermore, in the months and years after the massacre was revealed to the American public, the focal point of debates around My Lai became increasingly centred on the trial of Lt. Calley. After his conviction in March 1971, responses to Calley among the American people had reached relative consensus and settled on the “scapegoat” narrative. This view was expressed by both war hawks and anti-war activists who saw Calley as either a dutiful soldier or a martyr for an immoral war, respectively. Despite this consensus, there were those who dissented against the nation’s sympathy for Calley, as demonstrated by the letter that Capt. Daniel penned to President Nixon. Taken together, the American people clearly coped with and responded to the trauma of My Lai much in the same way that they coped with the trauma of the war more broadly – some expressed patriotic righteousness, some moral disgust, and others were left with the unshakable feeling that the nation had been led horribly astray.



Bibliography

Primary Sources

“Americans Speak out on Massacre,” *Life*. December 19, 1969.

Retrieved from: https://books.google.ca/books?id=n1AEAAAAM-BAJ&pg=PA4&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q=my%20lai&f=false.

Daniel, Aubrey. “Letter Written by Capt. Aubrey M. Daniel to President Nixon”. April, 1970. Retrieved from: <https://famous-trials.com/mylaicourts/1623-daniels-ltr>.

Greenhaw, Wayne. *The Making of a Hero: The Story of Lieut. William Calley Jr.* Louisville, Kentucky: Touchstone Publishing Co., 1971.

“G.I.’s Near Songmy Doubt Any Massacre” *New York Times*, December 1, 1969. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/30ok1Fj>.

Hugh Thompson testimony, April 17, 1970, Hearings of the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. 226. Retrieved from: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015039890580;view=1up;seq=234;size=125>.

- "Impact of Calley Trial" *New York Times*, March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2RlSeB7>.
- "Mail on Calley, Especially from South, Takes on Emotional Tone" *New York Times*, April 3, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35WOLLr>.
- "Many in Nation Perturbed By Conviction of Calley" *New York Times*, March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/3aikM7B>.
- "Meadlo's Home Town Regards Him as Blameless" *New York Times*, November 26, 1969. Retrieved From: <https://nyti.ms/2QV3FRi>.
- Peers Inquiry, 3: Exhibits, book 4, Misc. Doc., M-58. 1968. Retrieved from: https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-IIIBook4.pdf.
- Reston, James. "Calley: Symbol of Vietnam" *New York Times*, April 4, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/30oN7Em>.
- Ridenhour, Ron. "Ridenhour letter". March 29, 1969. Retrieved from: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/ridenhour_letter.cfm.
- "Saigon G.I.'s Indignant Over Calley Ruling" *New York Times*, March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2soL8Dw>.
- "The American as blind giant unable to see what it kills: My Lai" *New York Times*. June 14, 1970. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2sxCa7e>.
- "The Cry of America" *New York Times*, April 5, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/2FWza7a>.
- "Transcript of Address by Agnew Criticizing Television on Its Coverage of the News" *New York Times*, November 14, 1969. Retrieved From: <https://nyti.ms/2tZvMpA>.
- "Transcript of Interview of Vietnam War Veteran on His Role in Alleged Massacre of Civilians at Songmy" *New York Times*, November 25, 1969. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35YafuJ>.
- "War and Guilt" *Wall Street Journal*, March 31, 1971. Retrieved from: <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/133617666?accountid=14846>.
- "67% in Survey on Calley Say Most People Would Shoot Civilians if Ordered" *New York Times*, December 28, 1971. Retrieved from: <https://nyti.ms/35SRo49>.

Secondary Sources

- Allison, William Thomas. *My Lai: An American Atrocity in the Vietnam War*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012.
- Beidler, Philip. "Calley's Ghost." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 79, no. 1 (2003): 30–50, <http://tinyurl.com/yyf2ftkv>.

- Borch, Fred L. "My Lai at Fifty: A History of Literature on the 'My Lai Incident' Fifty Years Later." *Journal of Military History* 82, no. 2 (April 2018). 551-564, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=128577712&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Carson, Mark D. "F. Edward Hébert and the Congressional Investigation of the My Lai Massacre." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 37, no. 1 (1996). 61-79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233262>.
- Cookman, Claude. "An American Atrocity: The My Lai Massacre Concretized in a Victim's Face." *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 154–62, <http://tinyurl.com/y6mylxxv>.
- Jones, Howard. *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Milam, Ron. *Not a Gentleman's War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvic/detail.action?docID=475198>.
- Oliver, Kendrick. "Atrocity, Authenticity and American Exceptionalism: (Ir)Rationalising the Massacre at My Lai." *Journal of American Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 247–268. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/stable/27557330>.
- Olson, James S., and Randy Roberts. *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 1998. <http://tinyurl.com/y4fqeyto>.
- Young, Marilyn B. *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.

Unbuckling Purity Culture's Chastity Belt

Danielle Latour

Many Christians in the United States are taught from an early age the importance of remaining sexually 'pure' for God, their future spouses, and their families. This emphasis on sexual morality emerges out of a movement immersed in the biblical doctrine of purity. "Purity culture" is the term used for evangelical movements that promote a biblical view of 'sexual purity' by discouraging 'traditional' forms of dating, promoting virginity before marriage, and supporting only heterosexual, married, and monogamous forms of sexual activity. This paper explores how purity culture emerged in the United States as evangelical reaction to the 'sexual immorality' of free love, pro-choice, and birth control activism during the Sexual Revolution, as well as how the movement has been successful in implementing abstinence programming in public schools and reforming sexuality in the United States. Furthermore, it argues that the messages and signals of purity culture being sent to youth via the purity, abstinence-only education in institutions, and mass appeal of purity culture in popular culture has produced a system in which virginity is made real and tangible. Therefore, this paper ultimately argues that purity culture has successfully attached itself to the idea of virginity to make it serve a political purpose.

When Becca Andrews told her boyfriend “don’t” in his Tennessee college dorm room, he still did anyway.¹ She knew what had happened to her was wrong, but she could not admit it to herself. Since Becca’s understanding of sex and sexuality was informed by her Methodist upbringing and her experience in a ministry during university, she saw her role as a woman to be that of a “sexual gatekeeper”—God burdened men with “insatiable lust”—making her responsible for the sexual assault.² Many Christians, particularly evangelicals like Becca, are taught from an early age the importance of remaining “pure” for God, their future spouses, and their families.³ These teachings, however, are not limited to the fundamentalism of evangelical-Christianity

alone. Rather, they are present in culture at large, manifesting in abstinence-only public-school sex education as well as the slut/virgin dichotomy. This emphasis on sexual morality emerges out of a movement immersed in the biblical doctrine of purity known as “purity culture.” To understand how purity culture influenced Becca to believe that her sexual assault was her own fault, it is necessary to explore purity culture’s history, political traction, and pervasion of popular culture.

“Purity culture” is a term applied to Christian-evangelical movements that attempt to promote a biblical view of ‘sexual purity’ by discouraging ‘traditional’ forms of dating, promoting virginity before marriage, and supporting heterosexual, married, and monogamous forms of sexual activity. Biblical scripture supports the Christian-evangelical movement’s understanding of ‘sexual purity’ often citing “lust”—a sexual craving of something forbidden by God—as a primary problem.⁴ Remaining ‘pure’ is not only abstaining from sexual activities, but from sexual thoughts as well. For some evangelicals, the consequences of falling victim to lust via sexual immorality range anywhere from disappointing God to marriage problems, drug use, prostitution, becoming a sexual predator, and death.⁵ Virginity, therefore, is seen as something to be protected and valued in the face of sexual immorality—saving one’s self for marriage being of utmost importance in ensuring sexual purity, morality, health, and safety. Thus, the culture puts emphasis on prevention of sexual immorality and the protection of virginity through abstinence-only sexual education programs, including tools and practices such as “purity pledges,” “purity rings,” and “purity balls,” as well as different forms of popular media to get their followers to commit to sexual purity.⁶

Teachings of sexual purity and practices that put sexuality in the face of God and the family lead to the emergence of common themes such as “the belief that sex devalues women; men and women were created for different, complementary purposes; sex should only be for procreation; women are responsible for sexual violence that men perpetrate; women should expect and accept sexual violence as a normal part of life; and women who are not submissive should be derogated.”⁷

4 Kailla Edger, “Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts,” *Journal of Religion & Health* 51, no. 1 (March 2012): 164, doi:10.1007/s10943-010-9338-7.

5 Ibid., 164.

6 Elizabeth Gish, “Producing High Priests and Princesses: The Father-Daughter Relationship in the Christian Sexual Purity Movement,” *Religions* 7, no. 3 (March 2016): 3, doi:10.3390/rel7030033.

7 Kathryn Klement and Brad Sagarin, “Nobody Wants to Date a Whore: Rape-Supportive Messages in Women-Directed Christian Dating Books,” *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 1 (March 2017): 205, doi:10.1007/s12119-016-9390-x.

1 Becca Andrews, “Sins of Submission,” *Mother Jones* 43 no.5 (September 2018): 58, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=131040662&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

2 Ibid., 58.

3 Ibid.

People who encounter this belief system are led to believe that women are responsible for men's sexual sin and should not have sexual desire or enjoy sex as much as men. In addition, bodies are seen as something to be ashamed of, virginity is thought to be the only thing of worth in people, and sexual abuse is regarded as being the equivalent of sex before marriage. This belief system raises an important question: who would willingly participate in a culture that is scientifically inaccurate, psychologically distressing, and is generally toxic to broader society? The answer rests with evangelical-Christians and their efforts to make people unknowingly and unwillingly participate in this belief system.

In the United States, evangelicalism refers to an umbrella group of Protestant Christians.⁸ As Kailla Edger outlines, evangelical-Christians participate in “dozens of different denominations, some of which even oppose each other.”⁹ Subsequently, she argues that “the denomination of evangelicals does not exist . . . because evangelicalism is a movement that has no formal constitutional guidelines for faith and practice.”¹⁰ Yet, other theorists, such as Paul F. Knitter, Douglas A. Sweeney, Alister McGrath, and David V. Barrett, outline characteristics that are typically understood to be “universal” within evangelical-Christianity, such as the “absolute authority of the Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and how to live a Christian life . . . [and] the need to evangelize both individually and as a church.”¹¹ By adhering to these principles, purity culture emerges out of evangelical-Christianity as a literal interpretation of scripture about sex and sexuality as well as a movement dedicated to proselytizing a message of sexual purity to those who are not Christian converts. It is important to note, however, that since there is a variety of evangelical-Christianity movements and various practices and disciplines within each sect, one cannot conclude that all evangelical-Christians either practice, adhere to, or even believe in purity culture. Rather, the messages of purity culture resonate throughout churches and broader society in general in different shapes and forms—even in many progressive Christian communities.

In the same way that there is no one church that can be attributed to creating and implementing purity culture, there is no one time period that can be attributed to its creation. Rather, there have been many different forms of biblical sexual regulation and virginity sanctification

throughout history in various cultures, religions, and traditions.¹² What Western societies have come to know as purity culture today, however, can be traced back to the rise of evangelical-Christians and the “Christian Right” in 1960s and 1970s America.¹³ In her article, Edger discusses how the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s shaped and reshaped America's culture, including the evangelical belief system, by challenging the value and sanctity of religious institutions, theological traditions, and belief systems in general.¹⁴ She argues that purity culture was ironically born out of the sexual revolution of the 1960s—an evangelical reaction to the ‘sexual immorality’ of free love, pro-choice, and birth control activism.¹⁵ While these secular movements tried to broaden sexuality beyond the confines of marriage and religion, evangelicals fought back with their views about the deep meaning of sexual acts, the importance of keeping them within the context of marriage and heterosexuality, and the idea that monogamy is intended by “God's divine purpose.”¹⁶ As a result, purity culture and its subsequent movements arose out of evangelical circles as a reactionary response to the rapidly changing views of sex, marriage, and identity in an increasingly modern society.

Although it emerged out of the sexual revolution, purity culture was able to attach itself to other issues that arose after the 1960s sexual revolution, including the issue of abortion during *Roe v. Wade*, the anti-pornography feminist activism of the 1970s, the pedophilia and child pornography scares, as well as the HIV/AIDS crisis in the context of LGBTQ+ activism during the 1980s. To this, theorist Sara Moslener argues that “evangelical Protestants have sought cultural and political influence by asserting sexual purity in the face of national insecurity, namely [in] threats of civilizational decline and race suicide” by jumping on themes of sexual immorality and a loss of innocence in the 1960s sexual revolution, as well as themes of juvenile delinquency emerging from a budding post-WWII youth culture within fundamentalist and later neo-evangelical circles.¹⁷ Purity culture can then also be attributed to various moral panics and the morality politics born out of the post-Cold War era—bred out of fears of national decline from

8 Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 3, https://books.google.ca/books?id=Wxm-LDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

9 Edger, “Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts,” 163.

10 Ibid., 163.

11 Ibid.

12 Hanne Blank, *Virgin: The Untouched History*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), <http://readsbookonline.com/virgin-the-untouched-history-f>.

13 Edger, “Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts,” 164-165.

14 Ibid., 164.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Sara Moslener, “It's Like Playing with a Nuclear Bomb,” *Theology & Sexuality: The Journal of the Institute for the Study of Christianity & Sexuality* 18, no. 3 (September 2012): 254, doi:10.1179/1355835813Z.00000000018.

post-war fundamentalism.¹⁸ Morality politics pertain to personal and private issues such as abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, and pornography, with the policy conflict being moral rather than material.¹⁹ Moral policies born out of morality politics specifically attempt to change individuals and their behaviors using either financial incentives, legal sanctions, or societal norms.²⁰ Purity culture and its movements play on these very ideas by making appeals directly to parents and adolescents about the need to teach abstinence within their communities.²¹ Through piggybacking their ideas of sexual purity on the various moral panics and morality politics of each decade, purity culture asserted itself into the dominant culture by attaching itself to current issues.²²

In terms of achieving political success by using momentum from various moral panics, politics, and national identity issues, Gayle Rubin argues that “[r]ight-wing opposition to sex education, homosexuality, pornography, abortion, and pre-marital sex moved from the extreme fringes to the political center stage after 1977, when right-wing strategists and fundamentalist religious crusaders discovered that these issues had mass appeal.”²³ Evangelicals then tied issues of sexuality purity and abstinence to broader social concerns, linking it to ‘family values,’ anti-abortion, and birth control issues.²⁴ As a result, over the years, the evangelical movements that support purity culture have been successful in advocating abstinence-only sex education in public schools as well as creating and implementing single-issue organizations dedicated to promoting abstinence and reforming sexuality in the United States.²⁵

As outlined by Jean Calterone Williams, supporters of purity culture campaigned to promote abstinence as a form of birth control and began to gain political leverage in the United States in the 1990s.²⁶ These efforts saw significant national legislative success in 1996 as a part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity

Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) with a \$250 million grant for abstinence-only sex education.²⁷ This funding became known as “Title V” funding, which increased by over \$200 million between 2000 and 2009, and went towards programs like The Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) and Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).²⁸ These programs have supported and funded the teaching of abstinence-only sex education in public schools, youth groups, and to teens across the United States through both live and web-based programs.²⁹ Purity culture was thus cemented as a legitimate form of social control and as a management system in which moral panics could be quelled.

Purity culture’s recent “boom” can be attributed to the accumulation of educational acts, “Title V” funding, and emergence of organizations such as *True Love Waits*, *Silver Ring Thing*, and *Focus on the Family*, in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These organizations have specifically targeted teenagers and young adults into participating in abstinence-based programs by inserting purity culture and beliefs into mainstream formats. Realizing purity culture could be a lucrative endeavour, these groups launched rallies, concerts, events, and merchandise³⁰ to “literally sell sexual purity.”³¹ Thus, in recent years, many books, movies, and TV programs have been created about the subject, including *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* by Joshua Harris and *Sex, Purity, and the Longings of a Girl’s Heart* by YouTubers Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal of *GirlDefined*. This commodification of purity culture has, in a way, oversaturated the market with a wealth of materials. It is only logical that some of these materials would break out of the confines of the fundamentalism and fringes in which they were born and make their way into broader, more mainstream society since they are being promoted and legitimized by an education system that also actively supports their ideas. Therefore, purity culture’s piggybacking on the social issues of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to achieve funding for abstinence-only sexual education, the implementation of abstinence-only sexual education in schools in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the commodification of such issues in recent years has led to its pervasion into the standards and norms of mainstream American culture.

The messages and signals of purity culture that are sent to youth via the religious indoctrination of purity, abstinence-only education in institutions, and popular culture produced a system in which virginity

18 Ibid., 254-255.

19 Jean Calterone Williams, “Battling a ‘Sex-Saturated Society’: The Abstinence Movement and the Politics of Sex Education,” *Sexualities* 14, no. 4 (August 2011): 420, doi:10.1177/1363460711406460.

20 Ibid., 420.

21 Ibid., 421.

22 Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” in Carole Vance (ed.), *Pleasure and Danger* (1984): 3-18, https://coursespaces.uvic.ca/pluginfile.php/2077036/mod_resource/content/1/02_Rubin_Gayle_ThinkingSex.pdf.

23 Ibid., 8.

24 Williams, “Battling a ‘Sex-Saturated Society’: The Abstinence Movement and the Politics of Sex Education,” 422.

25 Ibid., 417.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 417-418.

29 Ibid., 418.

30 Andrews, “Sins of Submission,” 58.

31 Gish, “Producing High Priests and Princesses: The Father-Daughter Relationship in the Christian Sexual Purity Movement,” 3.

was made real and tangible—as something to be protected morally and materially. Thus, for many people—even those outside of evangelical circles—morality becomes synonymous with virginity. For example, Maura Kelly outlines that in popular teen drama TV programs, themes surrounding virginity loss such as “virginity as a gift,” “the positive consequences for maintaining virginity,” “the physical, mental, and social dangers of sex,” “virginity as a rite of passage,” “emphasis on ‘appropriate’ virginity loss,” as well as the “positive consequences when sex is ‘appropriate’ and the negative consequences when the sex is ‘inappropriate’” are prominent.³² Since these themes are presented in educational institutions, popular culture and media, as well as in the attitudes of people and society, virginity and purity have become one and the same. The effect that this equation has had on people can be seen in Becca Andrews’ story.

Becca Andrews believed she had done something fundamentally wrong when she was raped; she thought she had engaged in sexual activity before marriage, and, therefore, had compromised her sexual purity. An indoctrination of biblical purity during childhood and adolescence, education based in sexual abstinence, and immersion into a culture that devalues people for having premarital sex bring a lifetime of shame and guilt to people like Becca. Pain and suffering have been the result of an idea—not something tangible and material. How does society change this? Providing an answer to this question, Becca stated, “I cannot count on the culture that enabled my assault to change in a way that satisfies me, but maybe if I scream loud enough I can use my pain to protect others.”³³ It can be a daunting task to begin to change a culture that has been so deeply ingrained into the psyche of its inhabitants. Real, concrete societal change may perhaps start with the sharing of stories, acceptance of others’ experiences, and the building of a supportive community. Becca’s story does not have to be the story of so many people. If we can expose purity culture for what it is, who is behind it, and how people have been unwilling participants, society can build a reactionary movement to its pervasiveness, toxicity, and trauma.



Bibliography

- Andrews, Becca. “Sins of Submission.” *Mother Jones* 43, no. 5 (September 2018): 57–60. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=131040662&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Blank, Hanne. *Virgin: The Untouched History*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007. <http://readsofonline.com/virgin-the-untouched-history-f>.
- Edger, Kailla. “Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction: Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts.” *Journal of Religion & Health* 51, no. 1 (March 2012): 162–78. doi:10.1007/s10943-010-9338-7.
- FitzGerald, Frances. *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017 https://books.google.ca/books?id=WxmlDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- Gish, Elizabeth. “Producing High Priests and Princesses: The Father-Daughter Relationship in the Christian Sexual Purity Movement.” *Religions* 7, no. 3 (March 2016): 1–22. doi:10.3390/rel7030033.
- Kelly, Maura. “Virginity Loss Narratives in ‘Teen Drama’ Television Programs.” *Journal of Sex Research* 47(5) (2010): 479–489.
- Klement, Kathryn, and Brad Sagarin. “Nobody Wants to Date a Whore: Rape-Supportive Messages in Women-Directed Christian Dating Books.” *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 1 (March 2017): 205–23. doi:10.1007/s12119-016-9390-x.
- Moslener, Sara. “It’s Like Playing with a Nuclear Bomb.” *Theology & Sexuality: The Journal of the Institute for the Study of Christianity & Sexuality* 18, no. 3 (September 2012): 253–69. doi:10.1179/1355835813Z.00000000018.
- Rubin, Gayle. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” in Carole Vance (ed.), *Pleasure and Danger* (1984): 3–18. https://coursespaces.uvic.ca/pluginfile.php/2077036/mod_resource/content/1/02_Rubin_Gayle_ThinkingSex.pdf.
- Williams, Jean Calterone. “Battling a ‘Sex-Saturated Society’: The Abstinence Movement and the Politics of Sex Education.” *Sexualities* 14, no. 4 (August 2011): 416–43. doi:10.1177/1363460711406460.

³² Maura Kelly, “Virginity Loss Narratives in ‘Teen Drama’ Television Programs,” *Journal of Sex Research* 47(5) (2010): 482.

³³ Andrews, “Sins of Submission,” 60.

Discovering Our History: Late Twentieth Century Feminist Organizing in Victoria, British Columbia

—
Seth Reimer

Victoria, BC has a thriving community of feminist activists that are quite visible within the city today, but it also has a rich history of feminist organizing that seems to have largely disappeared from the landscape of the city. Instead, this history lives in archives, like the University of Victoria Archives, where I found collections relating to the Everywomans Books Collective and the Victoria branch of Women Against Pornography (WAP). By tracing how these organizations that operated at the end of the 20th Century navigated issues like sex work, pornography, and outreach and education of other women, we as feminists are able to see where the work we do came from and what is still left to do. This paper connects the work of these organizations to work that is currently being done in Victoria and Vancouver in the hopes that building these connections will allow us as activists to better chart future actions and to remind us that these issues are not new and we are not the first ones to attempt to tackle them.

As a feminist living, working, and participating in activism on the land colonially named “Victoria,” I had no idea about the wealth of activist history that existed in this city until I began to look for it. What I found was a history that is important, not just for the validation of seeing what those who have come before me did, but also because much of the work feminist organizers are doing now is part of a legacy of work that the women I discovered in the archives were doing including educating and uplifting one another and advocating for the rights of sex workers. Before I move forward with any discussion of this activism, I want to acknowledge that my activism, the writing of this paper, and the activism that this paper explores all take place on the unceded, colonially occupied lands of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ peoples. This acknowledgement is especially important given that the organizations I am writing about dealt heavily with issues of consent, while non-consensually occupying Indigenous lands, as I continue to do.

In this paper, I will be looking primarily at the activities of the Victoria branch of Women Against Pornography (WAP) and the Everywomans

Books Collective¹ using collections and records housed at the University of Victoria Archives that include the organizations’ negotiation of sex work and pornography and their focus on education about issues that impact women. I will discuss the activities of WAP with an emphasis on their activism on behalf of sex workers and their anti-pornography advocacy and will connect those activities to feminist action that is ongoing, such as feminist and collectively run bookshops and the work of organizations like PACE and Peers, which advocate for the rights of sex workers and provide services to former and current sex workers. I will look at the Everywomans Books Collective as an act of political feminism and as a resource for other feminists and women’s organizations across the continent. I will also study the ways that Everywomans Books negotiated its stance on pornography and connect this stance to other bookstores in British Columbia that operated contemporaneously as well as ones which continue to operate in the twenty-first century.

Women Against Pornography (WAP) was an organization born out of the work of New-York-area feminist opposition to the sex industry that had developed in Times Square in the late 1970s.² As the anti-pornography movement grew among feminists, branches of WAP were established in different cities, including Victoria.³ The Victoria branch of WAP described itself as “a feminist collective whose aim [was] to defend the rights and dignity of all women ... and break down the barriers that divide women” by working “toward the elimination of pornography, through education, awareness, and grass-roots activism.”⁴ The Victoria branch was active throughout the 1980s and focused on educational work, supporting prostitutes in British Columbia, lobbying for their cause, and legal advocacy.

WAP had what may seem like a contradictory set of ethics around

1 Hereafter referred to as “Everywomans” or “Everywomans Books.” “Everywomans” is the correct spelling, though it is unclear as to why that spelling was chosen. Deborah Yaffe, “Feminism in Principle and in Practice: Everywomans Books,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 21, no.1 (1996): 156.

2 George R. Kirkpatrick and Louis A. Zurcher, Jr., “Women Against Pornography,” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 3, no.4 (1983): 12

3 Hereafter, “Women Against Pornography” and “WAP” will refer specifically to the Victoria branch of the organization.

4 “Women Against Pornography Pamphlet,” nd., AR197-1997-100 Box 1, Folder 1, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada ; “Women Against Pornography Manifesto,” n.d., AR197-1997-100, Box 1, Folder 9, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

sex work. They were “against pornography and for the rights of prostitutes,” seemingly separating out two groups of people who might now be collectively referred to as sex workers based on the specific type of work they engage in within the sex industry.⁵ The distinction they made between pornography and prostitution was that women involved in prostitution had some autonomy over their interactions with customers, while women who worked in pornography were controlled by producers and lacked the autonomy over their work that prostitutes had.⁶ In addition to their anti-pornography work, WAP also put a lot of effort into supporting and helping prostitutes, including publishing a regular pamphlet called “Bad Trick Sheet,” which encouraged prostitutes to call in and report “abusive or violent clients.”⁷ WAP then published the descriptions and licence plate numbers of these so-called “bad tricks” in “Bad Trick Sheet” in order to warn other women against taking them as clients. The sheet also encouraged prostitutes to call in and report police crackdowns on solicitation and on “keeping a common bawdyhouse,” again as a warning to other prostitutes.⁸ “Bad Trick Sheet” was also a medium for disseminating other information, such as information about STIs and STI prevention, news of current legislative motions regarding prostitution and trials of women charged with crimes related to prostitution, as well as educational information about male violence.⁹ WAP also organized self-defence workshops, advertised in “Bad Trick Sheet,” aimed at teaching prostitutes how to protect themselves if they did come across a “bad trick.”¹⁰ However, “Bad Trick Sheet” was not just a sombre source of information: it was also a community-focused publication that expressed a defiant and humorous attitude to the issues it covered through comics that put power back in the hands of women, such as one that states “for feminine protection every day, use ... a hand grenade!”¹¹

Publishing “Bad Trick Sheet” was not the end of WAP’s activism.

5 “Bad Trick Sheet,” 1984, AR197-1997-100 Box 1, Folder 1, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Because of this separation, and because it is the language which the records use, I will be using “prostitute” and “prostitution” throughout the paper instead of the more current language of “sex worker” and “sex work.”

6 “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” May 1984, AR197-1997-100 Box 1, Folder 4, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

7 “Bad Trick Sheet”

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

They submitted two reports to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution¹² in 1984, one dealing specifically with prostitution and the other with pornography.¹³ The Fraser Committee provided WAP an opportunity to potentially influence a report from which some recommendations would be passed into law, and the organization put forward its ideas about both pornography and prostitution.¹⁴ In these reports, WAP made clear that its analysis of prostitution and pornography were informed by women with lived experience of prostitution and pornography.¹⁵ The Fraser Committee had put together three proposed strategies for revising Canadian law: criminalization, decriminalization, and regulation.¹⁶ WAP laid out their positions on these strategies, and it preferred decriminalization because it would remove the legal stigma from prostitution, remove the power of police officers to harass prostitutes, and give women the most freedom and autonomy to conduct their business how they pleased, as opposed to regulation (or legalization), which placed regulations on prostitutes and prostitution encounters. This would restrict a prostitute’s autonomy and would allow police to retain the power to harass prostitutes.¹⁷

In the brief dealing with pornography, WAP laid out their case arguing that pornography was dangerous and potentially a form of hate literature.¹⁸ They argued that because there is “an institutionalized, and thus legitimized, third party who profits from” pornography: unlike in prostitution, the performers have no control over the distribution of their image, which creates a system of inequity.¹⁹ WAP thought that pornography reinforced heterosexual relations of male domination and thus was so dangerous to all women that it could be considered hate

12 The Fraser Committee was established to study pornography and prostitution in Canada in order to inform revisions to Canadian law dealing with those subjects.

13 “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” January 1984, AR197-1997-100 Box 1, Folder 3, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada ; “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” May 1984.

14 James Robertson, “Prostitution,” *Library of Parliament*, 2003, 10.

15 “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” January 1984.

16 Robertson, “Prostitution,” 8.

17 “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” January 1984.

18 “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” May 1984.

19 Ibid.

literature.²⁰ Part of WAP's anti-pornography work included corresponding with Ann Hansen, a member of Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, about her trial for the firebombing of several locations of Red Hot Video, a pornographic video store.²¹ Members visited her while she awaited trial and supported her in preparing her case.²²

In order to buffer their anti-pornography stance, WAP also had to define what it considered to be pornography. A slideshow that WAP created entitled "Erotica: A feminist Exploration" reveals how they began to work through the differences between pornography, which they were against, and erotica, which they supported. WAP posed erotica as an alternative to pornography, and defines the erotic (as opposed to the pornographic) as including "mutuality, respect, commitment, and a concern for one another's wellbeing."²³ Erotica, argued WAP, highlighted sensuality and challenged beauty standards by including older bodies, fat bodies, disabled bodies, and bodies of colour.²⁴ Above all, erotica was a way for women to take "positive delight in [their] bodies; seeing [themselves] as whole, powerful, and lifegiving," as opposed to pornography, which was not produced for women to look at, but rather for men to look at women as though they were furnishings in a fantasy.²⁵

Both the anti-pornography and prostitute-rights work that WAP was doing in the 1980s continue to be undertaken by feminists today. Organizations such as Peers Victoria and the PACE Society in Vancouver offer services and programs for sex workers, including a way to report "bad dates" and to have that information shared with other sex workers. They also offer a drop-in wellness centre, outreach programs that provide sex workers who work on the street with meals, safer sex supplies, information about sex workers' legal rights, and public education programs that are informed and presented by people with lived experiences of sex work.²⁶ Many organizations now also serve sex workers who are not women, which WAP did not.²⁷ There is also ongoing advocacy for the decriminalization of sex work in Canada, as the laws

passed based on the Fraser Committee's report are still in effect, and aspects of sex work remain illegal, which continues to put sex workers in danger.²⁸ The anti-pornography work that WAP was doing still exists, but an evolution of feminist conversations about pornography has led to movements toward the definition and production of "feminist porn," which has many parallels with what WAP described as erotica: it is produced by and for women, and focuses on women's desire and pleasure, as well as "connectedness, tenderness, passion ... and longing."²⁹ The work that WAP was doing is still being done today, and being able to trace that legacy allows the people doing that work to historicize and contextualize it and better envision what still needs to be done.

The Everywomans Books Collective was a feminist bookstore that opened in 1979 as a non-profit organization staffed entirely by volunteers with the mission to provide access to feminist literature that was not available in other bookstores at the time.³⁰ During its operation, from 1979 to 1997, it functioned as a space for disseminating feminist information, hosting feminist events, building community for women in Victoria, and as a resource for other organizations and feminist bookstores across the continent.

Everywomans Books made information that was not available in mainstream bookstores accessible, not just to women who could physically get to Victoria, but also to women across the province through their mail-order catalogue, which allowed women to purchase the books Everywomans offered even if they could not make the trip into the store.³¹ The comments and suggestions book that the store kept for customers to request books shows just how integral this service was for so many different types of women.³² In the book, there are requests for specific books by specific authors, requests for books discussing theories of feminism or race or sexuality, requests for children's books that promoted non-sexism, as well as requests for books of practical information that women could not find elsewhere about menopause, ageing

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Letter from Ann Hansen to members of WAP" 1984, AR197-1997-100, Box 2, Folder 1, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

²² Ibid.,

²³ "Erotica: A Feminist Exploration" nd., AR197-1997-100, Box 4, Folder 2, Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Peers Victoria Resource Society.

²⁷ Peers Victoria Resource Society ; PACE Society ; "Women Against Pornography Manifesto".

²⁸ "Decriminalizing Sex Work," Pivot Legal Society.

²⁹ Robert Scott Stewart, "Is Feminist Porn Possible?" *Sexuality & Culture* 23, no.1 (2018): 266.

³⁰ "Incorporation of Everywomans Books," 1979, AR050-1995-050, Box 3, File 23, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

³¹ "Mail Order Catalogue," 1989, AR050-1995-050, Box 4, Folder 3, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

³² "Comments and Suggestions," n.d., AR050-1995-050, Box 3, Folder 21, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

sexuality, and living as a lesbian.³³ The correspondence that the store saved provides a window into how important the store was in the lives of women. There are letters of thanks and gratitude, letters presumably sent in with catalogue orders that express the difficulty women had finding the materials they were ordering locally, as well as Christmas letters sent to the store for years, even after the sender had moved out of the country.³⁴ The grateful, affectionate words in these letters demonstrate the importance of community spaces like Everywomans and the access to information it provided. The archived correspondence of the store also sheds light on its significance to other organizations in Victoria and across the continent. There are letters from Planned Parenthood Alberta inquiring about the book of local resources for women that the store kept as they were looking into making one for their own community, from the Okanagan Women's Coalition inquiring about informative literature for the women's resource centre they were planning in Kelowna, and from other feminist bookstores across the continent looking to keep up to date with what other feminist bookstores were doing.³⁵

Everywomans was also a political endeavour with the aim of furthering feminist thought and women's writing. Feminist bookstores provided a market for women's writing and for independent feminist publishers, who in turn were able to produce more content to stock these stores throughout the latter third of the twentieth century.³⁶ This symbiotic relationship made operating one of these bookstores a deliberate, political act of making space for women's writing and creating opportunities for women's writing to be published, allowing their ideas to reach other women.³⁷ Everywomans hosted and sponsored readings and book signings of authors travelling through Victoria bringing further attention to their thoughts and creating more opportunities for women in Victoria to engage with the works of those authors.³⁸ Even

33 Ibid.

34 "Correspondance," n.d., AR050-1995-050, Box 3, Folder 23, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

35 "Letter from Planned Parenthood Alberta to Everywomans Books," 17 October 1990, AR050-1995-050, Box 3, Folder 24, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada ; "Letter from Okanagan Women's Coalition to Everywomans Books," 7 January 1985, AR050-1995-050, Box 3, Folder 23, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. ;

36 Kathryn McGrath, "Pushed to the Margins: the Slow Death and Possible Rebirth of the Feminist Bookstore," *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources* 24, no.3 (2014): 4-5.

37 Ibid., 5

38 "Correspondence," n.d., AR050-1995-050, Box 3, Folder 24, Everywomans Books Fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British

the way that the organization was structured was a feminist, political act. The collective was run not-for-profit, and any money that the store earned on sales went into paying rent and ordering the next run of books.³⁹ All of the staff were unpaid volunteers who did not even receive discounts on purchases at the store.⁴⁰ Deborah Yaffe, who was a member of the collective for many years, says that the decision-making in the collective was "decentralized and deliberately anarchic" in order to minimize the power imbalances that hierarchical decision-making creates within a group.⁴¹ Having an organizing structure that deprioritizes hierarchy and actively resists a capitalist, profit-focused power structure is an inherently political, and feminist, act.

Like WAP, though not as intensely, Everywomans Books had to define its relationship to pornography and erotica. They defined this relationship as "anti-pornography ... while being in favour of erotic representation of women, by women, for women," which seems to be analogous to WAP's definition of erotica as well as to the goals of those producing feminist porn today.⁴² Everywomans was pushed towards making this statement in the midst of conflicts with Canada Customs over the importation of material deemed to be "obscene," which was seized at the border.⁴³ This conflict with border agents was a shared experience between independent bookstores in Canada that imported materials about sexuality, especially queer sexuality, regardless of their missions or organizational structures. This conflict story was made most visible by Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium, a gay and lesbian bookstore in Vancouver, through their Supreme Court challenge in 2002, after Everywomans had already closed. As Everywomans was a non-profit bookstore, it did not have the money to challenge the state the way that a for-profit store like the infamous Little Sister's did.

Though Everywomans closed in 1997 due to financial difficulty, that was not the end of independent, activist-focused bookstores in British Columbia. As mentioned above, Little Sister's continues to operate in Vancouver, providing a space for queer community and information. In

Columbia, Canada.

39 Yaffe, "Feminism in Principle and in Practice: Everywomans Books," 154.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 155

42 "Statement on Pornography and Censorship," n.d., AR050-1995-050, Box 4, Folder 10, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

43 "Mail Order Catalogue," 1989, AR050-1995-050, Box 4, Folder 3, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; "Statement on Pornography and Censorship," n.d., AR050-1995-050, Box 4, Folder 10, Everywomans Books fonds, University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Victoria, Camas Books & Infoshop has operated since 2007 as a “tool for social transformation, community building ... and the ongoing development of radical alternatives.”⁴⁴ It is a collective run entirely by volunteers, like Everywomans was, and it uses its space to host workshops, book signings, and readings, including a book launch for Ann Hansen’s book *Taking the Rap* in 2018.⁴⁵ Though Camas is not an explicitly feminist space or a women’s space, it is a space that carries books that are relevant to modern feminist work: books that focus on the experiences of Indigenous people, queer and transgender people, and people of colour. The focus on anarchist thought also offers different perspectives on how to move forward with feminist activist work.⁴⁶ Another Victoria-based initiative that is not necessarily a bookstore but carries similar content with a similar mission is the UVic Pride Collective’s library. The UVic Pride Collective, which is the student organization that provides space and resources to the queer community on UVic’s campus, is collectively run, avoiding hierarchy like Everywomans, and their free library carries queer literature, non-fiction, zines, and even films that members of the collective and visitors to the space are free to browse and borrow. These spaces are all doing the same work as Everywomans—disseminating alternative and radical information that would be hard to find in mainstream bookstores and giving members of the community access to information that impacts their lives and ways of thinking.

Activist history is not always easy to find, especially for organizations that no longer operate and thus cannot tell their own histories. Finding these histories serves more than just the purpose of knowing they exist. It allows us as activists to trace the histories of our ideas, which, in turn, allows us to better chart our future actions. It allows us to see the work that was left unfinished and to work towards finishing it. Being able to trace sex worker rights advocacy and anti-pornography advocacy through WAP and feminist information distribution and community space creation through Everywomans Books in Victoria in the late twentieth century allows us to historicize the work we do and refocus our efforts on finishing that work.



Bibliography

- “About Us.” Camas Books & Infoshop. <https://www.camas.ca/about-us> (accessed 12 March 2019).
- “Decriminalizing Sex Work.” Pivot Legal Society. http://www.pivotallegal.org/decriminalizing_sex_work (accessed 12 March 2019).
- Everywomans Books fonds, AR050-1995-050. University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- Kirkpatrick, George R. and Louis A. Zurcher, Jr. “Women Against Pornography.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 3, no. 4 (April 1983): 1–30.
- McGrath, Kathryn. “Pushed to the Margins: the Slow Death And Possible Rebirth of the Feminist Bookstore.” *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women’s Studies Resources* 25, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 4–9.
- PACE Society. <http://www.pace-society.org> (accessed 12 March 2019).
- Peers Victoria Resource Society. <https://www.safersexwork.ca/> (accessed March 12 2019).
- Robertson, James. “Prostitution.” *Library of Parliament*. 2003. <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR-e/822-e.pdf>. (accessed 12 March 2019).
- Stewart, Robert Scott. “Is Feminist Porn Possible?” *Sexuality & Culture* 23, no. 1 (August 2018): 254–270.
- Women Against Pornography, Victoria Branch Fonds, AR197-1997-100. University of Victoria Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- Yaffe, Deborah. “Feminism in Principle and in Practice: Everywomans Books.” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 21, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 154–157, <http://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/4138>.

⁴⁴ “About Us,” Camas Books & Infoshop, <https://www.camas.ca/about-us> (accessed 12 March 2019).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

