The Rhodes Historical Review

Volume 11 Spring 2009

Essays by

- Allie Garris
- Daniel Williford
- Graham Gordon
- Andy Crooks

The Rhodes Historical Review

Published Annually by the Alpha Epsilon Delta Chapter of
Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society
Rhodes College
Memphis, Tennessee

The Rhodes Historical Review showcases outstanding undergraduate history research taking place at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. Phi Alpha Theta (The National History Honor Society) and the Rhodes History Department publish *The Rhodes Historical Review* annually. *The Rhodes Historical Review* is produced entirely by a four-member student editorial board and can be found in the Ned R. McWherter Library at the University of Memphis, The Benjamin L. Hooks Central Public Library of Memphis, and The Paul J. Barret Fr. Library at Rhodes College.

Submission Policy: In the fall, the editors begin soliciting submissions for essays 3,000-6,000 words in length. Editors welcome essays written for any department and from any year in which e the author is enrolled, however, essays must retain an historical focus and must be written by a student currently enrolled at Rhodes College. Submissions are reviewed in December, with a premiere date set in April.

The Rhodes Historical Review

CONTENTS

A Culture of Fear: Atomic America

Allie Garris

On August 6, 1945, the atomic bomb demonstrated its power to change the world as the aircraft the *Enola Gay* dropped it on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.[1] Three days later another mushroom cloud erupted over the city of Nagasaki, killing a vast portion of its inhabitants via the blast, intense heat, and toxic radiation levels.[2] The massive destruction caused by these two bombs differed from any seen in previous wars and forced the Japanese to surrender, ending World War II in the Pacific.[3] These American displays of nuclear power and corresponding damage not only changed the concept of warfare but they also impacted American society and culture. While the creation of the atomic bomb ended World War II, it started another war with the Soviet Union. The Cold War began as the Soviet Union emerged from World War II more powerful than ever. The U.S.S.R. aimed to surpass the nuclear power of the United States, asserting its

1. Lindy Biggs, James Hansen and William Trimble, *Readings in Technology and Civilization*, Vol. 2. (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2005), 253.

2. *Atomic Cafe,* video, directed by Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty and Pierce Rafferty (New York: Thorn Emi Video, 1982).

3. Biggs, *Readings in Technology and Civilization*, 253.

strength and ability.[4] In September of 1949, the Soviet Union successfully detonated an A-bomb and entered the "atomic club."[5] With another country holding the key to fission, American scientists hurried to produce a more powerful weapon. In 1952, the United States created the hydrogen bomb.[6] The Soviet Union followed with the construction of their own hydrogen bomb a year later, causing American citizens to fear the apocalypse.[7] The Cold War, the nuclear arms race that began with the creation of the atomic bomb produced a culture grounded in hysteria, an atomic culture.[8] Fear consumed the United States as civil defense organizations, newspapers, magazine articles, and books repeatedly emphasized the nuclear threat, encouraging a duck and cover mentality, the fleeing of Americans to the suburbs, and the return of women to traditional gender roles. This fear penetrated all levels of society as children and adults mobilized; preparation and survival became essential components of American life.

The material presented in this paper affirms that the culture of Cold War America demonstrated a nation living with atomic hysteria. Newspaper and magazine articles, civil defense programs, and media coverage, explained the horrifying effects of radioactive materials, scaring the public. Schools and the federal government placed preparation for an atomic war not only on adults, but also on children.[9] Women reverted back to traditional

4. Gary Cross and Rick Szostak, *Technology and American Society: A History*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 297.

5. Ibid., 298.

6. Ibid.

7. Paul Boyer, "*The Bomb as a Harbinger of Cultural Transformation*," in *Problems in American Civilization: The Nuclear Age*, ed. Shane J. Maddock (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 39.

8. Shane J. Maddock, ed., *Problems in American Civilization: The Nuclear Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), xxv.

9. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 109.

roles with a new purpose. They now had the responsibility of preparing their family members and their home for the possibility of nuclear invasion. Books and magazine articles continually covered the concept of nuclear war and helped in initiating the popularity of fallout shelters and the dispersal of Americans to the suburbs. The common perception that the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb could eliminate all those living in the United States, caused Americans to adjust their lifestyles accordingly.

The media built upon this terror, publishing articles that confronted the nation's fear of mass destruction. On March 6, 1950 *Time* magazine published an article titled, "Hydrogen Hysteria," examining the likelihood of the U.S. and Soviet Union creating hydrogen bombs. The article illustrates the panic and uncertainty Americans felt in regards to the production of another destructive nuclear weapon. It mentions a radio show broadcasted a week earlier by Associate Professor Harrison Brown at the University of Chicago, in which he stated on national radio,

> The blast effects of hydrogen bombing will only be the beginning…Hydrogen explosions will fill the air with fiercely radiating isotopes…The bombs could be exploded in the Pacific, 1,000 miles west of California. Their radioactivity, drifting eastward, would lawnmower the whole U.S., reaching and sterilizing New York in about five days.[10]

While the article goes on to claim that scientists express doubt regarding the creation of a bomb with enough radioactive material to allow radiation to be carried uniformly across the country, the fear present in the article is noticeable.[11] The article ends

10. "Hydrogen Hysteria," *Time*, 6 March 1950, 1, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,858694,00.html.

11. Ibid.

with the statement, "the prevailing atmosphere of fearful secrecy makes it almost impossible for the full facts to be known."[12] This article foreshadows how the fear of atomic and the notion of the hydrogen bomb first created an atomic culture. Atomic hysteria spread across the country at the same rapid pace Americans feared radioactive fallout traveled. They lived everyday uncertain of what the technology the United States created could really do, and those uncertainties changed the culture of America, starting at the beginning of the 1950s.

As Americans became more uncertain of their future, time became precious. With the creation of nuclear weapons, survival no longer seemed possible and time seemed to be running out. A *Time* article written on October 1, 1950, "The City Under the Bomb" began with the statement,

> Time was when a small American who got vaccinated and looked both ways before crossing streets had a reasonable chance of outliving his boyhood. But a new complication to survival has been added…"Can Junior fall instantly, face down, elbow out, forehead on elbow, eyes shut? Have him try it tonight as he gets into bed." Junior could probably do the trick all right. A little practice and an understanding of the situation might save the life of a small boy born into the Atomic Age.[13]

After reading the beginning of this article it is evident that the author is trying to explain that time is of the essence in Cold War America. When alluding to the duck and cover tactics taught to children, the phrase, "Junior could probably do the trick all right," indicates that if Junior does not start practicing and learning how to

12. Ibid., 2.

13. "The City Under the Bomb," *Time*, 2 October 1950, 1, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,8816,813408,00.html.

protect himself quickly, a bomb might be dropped before he learns, and not knowing means death or severe bodily harm. The same *Time* article continues including a section titled, "The Horrendous Hypothesis" which stated,

> Suppose that on an overcast, autumn morning, a Russian bomber carrying an atomic bomb the equivalent of 50,000 tons of high explosives swept through the stratosphere above New York and dropped its missile. Suppose that the bomb was timed to explode half a mile in the air over Union Square…Whole sections would be obliterated.[14]

How could a nation not be terrified of immediate death upon the detonation of an atomic bomb after reading this article? This statement places the hypothetical event created in the article within the time period in which the article was released, a fall morning on October 2, 1950. The picture that this "Horrendous Hypothesis" creates stresses American's lack of time and impending doom. Articles such as these appeared frequently throughout the early 1950s, reminding Americans that little time existed to learn the protective measures needed to be taken in order to survive a nuclear attack. This continual reinforcement of dread and death placed an importance on action.

One course of action consisted of learning how to duck and cover. Several civil defense campaigns specified the value of knowing how to duck and cover in order to avoid being hit by debris during a nuclear attack. These campaigns played a vital role in the construction of the duck and cover mentality. Fallout shelters and bomb drills became common components of the atomic culture as citizens learned how to hide underground and under desks in preparation for a nuclear explosion. Historians

14. "The City Under the Bomb," *Time*, 2 October 1950, 2, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,8816,813408,00.html.

Allan M. Winkler and Margot A. Henriksen discuss the wave of civil defense that slowly expanded as the Cold War era progressed. They indicate that the interest placed on the development of civil defense programs only increased Americans fear of the bomb as preparation campaigns served as a constant reminder of what could happen. Consequently, the duck and cover programs did a better job of teaching fear than creating awareness.

Parents did not shield their children from this hysteria; kids experienced the duck and cover mentality of the atomic culture on a regular basis. Winkler and Henriksen emphasize the "Duck and Cover" campaign aimed to teach children how to survive in the case of a nuclear explosion with the help of Bert the Turtle and school evacuation drills, children learned that nuclear war and radioactive fallout presented a real fear.[15] The civil defense video and comics, starring Bert the Turtle originated as an entertaining tool to alert children of the importance of ducking and covering to prevent physical harm in the case of a nuclear blast. The comic strip boasted the statement, "Bert ducks and covers. He's smart, but he has a shelter on his back. You must find a shelter. In a bus or auto, duck down behind or under seats. Do it instantly…Don't Stand and look. Duck and cover!"[16]

The film version, produced in 1951, appears in the 1982 documentary, *Atomic Cafe* directed by Kevin and Pierce Rafferty. The documentary, a compilation film composed entirely of clips from the 1940s and 1950s, portrays how the atomic culture of fear originated. The film displays clips from the 1950s of nuclear bomb tests, army defense videos, speeches, and civil defense campaigns,

---

15. Allan M. Winkler, "The "Atom" and American Life," *The History Teacher* 26, no. 3 (1993): 326, http://www.jstor.org/stable/494664. ; Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 108; *Atomic Cafe*, directed by Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty and Pierce Rafferty.

16. Allan M. Winkler, "The "Atom" and American Life," 326.; *Atomic Cafe*, directed by Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty and Pierce Rafferty.

all material the American public watched on a regular basis during the Cold War, images that demonstrated the destructive abilities of nuclear weapons. The clip of Bert the Turtle ducking and covering in his shell to avoid the flash and blast as dynamite explodes right next to him, confirmed to children the significance of ducking and covering as an essential component of survival.[17] The Bert the Turtle campaign depicts the length the Federal Civil Defense Administration took to produce campaigns that applied to children. Children living in Cold War America had to grow up quickly, fully understanding that the defense strategy the campaigns taught could save their lives.

School bomb shelter drills reinforced the defense strategies taught through the civil defense campaigns. Ann Mary Garris, born in 1955, and her younger sister Marita, born in 1962, remember the impact the duck and cover mentality of the Cold War era played on their childhood. Marita recalled a conversation she had with her older sister Maureen, born in 1951, regarding the school bomb drills designed to teach children how to react if a nuclear bomb fell on the United States. She explained that the drills caused them to fear the possibility of a Soviet attack on a regular basis. Ann Mary described how an alarm would sound twice and everyone would get up quickly and make their way to the fallout shelter located underneath St. Paul's Church. They recalled not being able to speak and having to press their bodies up against the walls. If they did not make it to the shelter quickly enough, they curled up in a tight ball position on the ground.[18] Children living in the atomic culture of Cold War America believed that the end could come at any time, making preparation important. Henriksen references Todd Gitlin who recalled his childhood bomb drills stating, "Whether or not we believed that hiding under a

17. *Atomic Cafe*, directed by Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty and Pierce Rafferty.

18. Marita Deery and Ann Mary Deery, phone interview by author, November 16, 2008.

school desk or in a hallway was really going to protect us from the furies of an atomic blast, we could never quite take for granted that the world we had been born into was destined to endure."[19] Children fearing for their lives became the cultural norm in Cold War America as they ducked in corners, fallout shelters, and beneath desks in classrooms.

While parents and adults did not learn to duck under desks and were not targeted by campaign cartoons such as Bert the Turtle, they still experienced the duck and cover mentality of the Cold War era. Historian Paul Boyer discusses civil defense posters and ads illustrating the steps Americans should take to increase nuclear survival rates. One poster, endorsed by the Federal Civil Defense Agency, titled Survival Secrets for Atomic Attacks explained three easy steps to avoid losing your head should a nuclear bomb be dropped. The steps included, "try to get shielded," "drop flat on the floor," and "bury your face in your arms," in order to prevent "flash burns, temporary blindness and keep objects out of your eyes."[20]

Posters such as this created alarm among Americans because the posters reminded them that if they wanted to protect themselves they needed to take an active role. His display of numerous civil defense posters indicates that while the posters created fear because they reminded the public of the threat, they also existed to alleviate anxiety.[21] The Federal Civil Defense Administration, through promoting campaigns that stated simple tasks such as burying your face in your arms could save your life, mass panic was avoided even though fear existed. Boyer also references how people living in the early Cold War era feared

19. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 110.; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties Years of Hope*, *Days of Rage* (New York: 1987), 22-23.

20. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, 310.

21. Ibid.

nuclear radiation even more after reading the book, *No Place to Hide*, written in 1948 by Dr. David Bradley, the physician who observed the effects of radiation on the people affected by the atomic tests performed around the island of Bikini.[22] In his book Bradley explains the effects of radiation released from an atomic bomb on the body, he states,

> Once absorbed into the body –via cuts, or breathing, or by eating –these substances are hard to remove. They tend to be deposited into the bones where they either wreck the blood producing marrow so that the person dies from lack of blood, or they stimulate the formation of fatal bone tumors… The danger with radiation, like the danger from sunburn, snake poison, strychnine…is merely one of degree…Thirty six ten-millionths of a gram, would almost certainly be fatal. It is predicted that the radiation to be born in the Bikini explosions will be equivalent of tons of radium.[23]

Bradley felt it would be difficult to convince people of the dangers of radiation, and while he didn't think anyone would take heed of the dangers, he felt obligated to write of them. Dr. Bradley later acknowledged that the truth did the opposite, on the back cover of his book he stated, "The truth about the nuclear energies of the atom has instead made us less free, more interdependent and has threatened to enslave us all in a frantic and foredoomed race for military power."[24] Bradley's book and others like it increased American's fear of the bomb and its side effects, the facts caused the public to construct underground shelters that would keep

22. Ibid., 91.

23. David Bradley, *No Place to Hide* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 9-10.

24. Ibid., back cover.

radiation out.

The fact that fallout shelters in homes and cities became common illustrates the fear Americans felt regarding atomic radiation. When already frightened people read how radiation poisoning causes a person to die "from lack of blood" or the "formation of fatal bone tumors," protection is the first thought that comes to mind. Since the possibility of nuclear war existed every day in the minds of Americans living in the 1950s all extremes needed to be taken in order to ensure safety. Winkler draws attention to the methods used by society to make fallout shelters appealing to adults. He cites America's fascination with fallout shelters through the use of a mid 1950s *Life* magazine that highlighted an "H-Bomb Hideaway."[25] The title illustrates how the media and civil defense programs tried to make fallout shelters the new trend, causing citizens to build one out of fear and societal pressure. Henriksen references Dr. Kurt Fantl's advice given in the *Science News Letter* in January of 1951, indicating his suggestion that having a bomb shelter built and prepared prior to a nuclear attack could prevent a greater level of hysteria. Dr. Fantl claimed that should Americans find out that an atomic bomb was pointed at the United States, "Panic may be prevented before disaster strikes by providing adequate shelters and lighting them with flashlights, and education…Informing the public of dangers without a master plan…may actually create panic."[26] Henriksen points out that in many cases this is exactly what happened. While mass panic did not ensue, material explaining the risks of nuclear war often times alarmed the American population instead of placing them at ease.[27] Americans uncontrollable fear of the U.S.S.R. dropping a bomb

25. Allan M. Winkler, "The "Atom" and American Life," 326.; "H-Bomb Hideaway", *Life*, 23 May 1955, 169-170.

26. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 96.; "Mental First Aid," Science News Letter, 27 January 1951, 53.

27. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 97.

on the United States made it virtually impossible for civil defense programs and articles written regarding preparation for an atomic war not to cause atomic hysteria.

As the media hypothesized possible locations for Soviet nuclear attacks, the 1950s witnessed an exodus of Americans from urban cities to the suburbs. It soon became a common belief that cities no longer provided a safe haven for American citizens. Historian Kristina Zarlengo discusses the concept of "urban dispersal" and how the fear that cities provided a prime target for Soviet attack caused Americans to move outside the city limits.[28] Henriksen addresses the removal of Americans from urban cities to the suburbs in response to articles such as the December 18, 1950, edition of *Life* magazine. It contained an article stating that should a nuclear war occur between the United States and the Soviet Union, large U.S. cities provided the best targets.[29] The article "How U.S. Cities Can Prepare for Atomic War" explained, "The particular vulnerability of big American cities to atomic weapons stems from a combination of two factors: the intense congestion of the cities and the immense destructive power of the bomb."[30] This article made people in America think of the panic that could ensue should a nuclear bomb hit a populated urban city. Articles such as this increased the popularity of Norbert Weiner's idea of "life belts" and "safety zones," which helped encourage a move to suburbia.[31] An image depicting the layout of Weiner's ideal city filled the pages of the *Life* magazine. [32]

---

28. Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women," Signs 24, no. 4 (1999): 933, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175598.

29. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 95.; "How U.S. Can Prepare for Atomic War," *Life*, 18 December 1950, 77.

30. Ibid.

31. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 95-96.; "How U.S. Can Prepare for Atomic War," *Life*, 79.

32. Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American

He proposed that the city be surrounded by eight lane life belts, containing hospitals and extra amenities in case there happened to be a nuclear attack and survivors needed a place to go. These safety zones, areas outside the blast range included, parks large enough to shelter nuclear blast refugees, supermarkets, businesses, hospitals, and suburban communities. Weiner's design operated on the theory that these safety belts could function independently of the city and support any survivors.[33] This article and the new form of civil defense it created with Weiner's design for an atomic urban city exhibits the level Americans took to insure a concrete bomb plan existed. In a *Life* magazine article published on February 27, 1950, a page included a real estate ad from the Wall Street Journal with the caption, "Flee the city!"

The ad entitled "Secluded 15 Acre Estate" placed the greatest emphasis on the location of the home in upstate New York, the owners boasted "good bomb immunity" in the ad as the prime selling point.[34] In 1951, President Truman set up the Office of Civilian Defense Mobilization and in an issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Donald and Astrid Monson, who worked with the Detroit Housing Commission, expressed their opinions related to "urban dispersal."[35] They explained that the Office of Civilian Defense and Mobilization intended to move military production facilities to remote areas, relocation and construction of armaments contracts to small cities capable of handling plants, creation of more satellite towns in order to ensure exits from the urban cities to the suburbs in an orderly fashion, creation of more interstate

---

Women," 934.

33. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, 96.; "How U.S. Can Prepare for Atomic War," *Life*, 79.

34. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, 311.

35. Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women," 933.; Donald and Astrid Monson, "A Program for Urban Dispersal," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 7, no. 9 (1951): 246.

highways, and population reduction of large cities.[36] The major initiative behind balancing populations between the suburbs and the city was fear, "fewer casualties in case of attack."[37] The fear of nuclear invasion that persisted caused the suburban population to double between the years of 1950 and 1970, and Mintz and Kellogg claimed that 64% of the U.S. population growth occurred in the suburbs.[38] Many Americans welcomed the chance to move to the suburbs if it meant they could still access the city easily and be out of the nuclear target zone.

Zarlengo claims that the move of families to suburbs created a new role for women, shifting cultural ideas of femininity. She mentions the move of Americans to the suburbs and the important role women played in preparing the suburbs to function properly should it act as a refuge during a nuclear war, stating, "The American housewife inspired a whole cannon of propaganda since the rhetoric of civil defense taught that the household was a bunker where women's expertise and competence were vital to a nation at risk –providing refuge from the incipient war zone."[39] Zarlengo explains the expectations placed on women during the Cold War era when she states,

> The American household, run by housewives, had become an agency of the nation, patriotism a domestic duty, and housework a civic obligation with grave consequences…A housewife's ability to maintain a dust-free environment could be interpreted as her potential to protect her family

36. Ibid., 246.

37. Ibid., 245.

38. Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women," 936.; Susan Kellog and Steven Mintz, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 183.

39. Ibid., 940.

from harm.[40]

She portrays the housewife created by the atomic culture as the policing force of suburbia, the enforcer of the fallout shelters in the basements of all homes, and the person placed in charge of being prepared in the event of a nuclear disaster with the Soviet Union.[41] Cold War women worked hard to minimize atomic hysteria and prepare their new suburban communities.

During the United States' four year involvement in World War II, women took on a more independent role in the name of patriotism. With the majority of young male Americans fighting in Europe and in the Pacific, American women flocked to the workplace in order to fill the countless vacant positions left by American males. When comparing the roles women played during the World War II era to those held during the atomic age it is evident that cultural opinions regarding women's roles changes. The constant apprehension felt by Americans, both male and female, caused a shift back to traditional gender roles; this shift is increasingly during the Cold War era. In a 1959 article published in *The Family Life Coordinator* entitled "Preparing for Marriage in This Atomic Age," author Thomas Poffenberger identifies the difference between the atomic age and those that came before in regards to marriage. Poffenberger states,

> Marriage today is expected to meet individual needs and is based upon the companionship of husband and wife. This is quite different from times past in our society when the purpose of marriage was essentially an economic one…In our uncertain age, the need for love and affection, security, and recognition is of paramount importance to each

40. Ibid., 941.

41. Ibid.

of us.[42]

The words that stick out the most in this statement are "in our uncertain age," highlighting the fears driving the atomic culture. One of the reasons why women reverted back to traditional roles, Poffenberger also identified as the reason couples married for love, fear that the apocalypse approached. As money and security no longer raised an issue in a society that felt the end could come at any time, love and happiness took precedence.

The fear that shaped the culture of the atomic era caused a return of women to the incredibly traditional role of homemaker because of a renewed emphasis placed on values. Willard Waller is quoted by May as stating, "The greater social freedom of women has more or less inevitably led to a greater degree of sexual laxity, a freedom which strikes at the heart of family stability…"[43] She also references Charles Walter Clarke, a Harvard physician and executive director of the American Social Hygiene Association, discussing his concern that the atomic bomb would cause sexual chaos. Therefore, with people like Clarke fearing an outbreak of increased promiscuity, May suggests that the emphasis placed on women's civic responsibility also meant to control "sexual order in the atomic age."[44] Therefore moral values and family stability received equal attention during the Cold War, both regulated by the women. Women staying at home and being the moral compass for her family as she prepared them for the possibility of a nuclear attack became a civil duty, just as the call of women to the work force had been during World War II.

---

42. Thomas Poffenberger, "Preparing for Marriage in this Atomic Age," *The Family Life Coordinator* 8, no. 1 (1959): 11.

43. May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,*103.; Rueben Hill and Howard Baker, eds., *Marriage and the Family* (Boston: D.C. Health & Co., 1940), 587-588.

44. Ibid., 93.

Civil defense campaigns took advantage of these new cultural standards expected of women in their promotion of bomb shelters. Fear of not having a place to hide should a bomb hit created the concept of bomb shelters, and the campaigns made it evident that good American women should want to protect their families.

The Grandma's Pantry campaign endorsed by The Federal Civil Defense Administration placed importance on women to not only have a bomb shelter and keep it stocked, but also to make it homey, and add a womanly touch.[45] This is evident through observing the ad, which depicted a kitchen stocked and prepared. These posters reinforced the fear of a nuclear attack, encouraging good wives and mothers to create well stocked fallout shelters. The *Time* article "Atomic Cave," published on September 11, 1950, reinforced this idea:

> Mrs. Kathleen MacDonald had read a lot about the atom bomb, and it made her uneasy. Said she: "Being a widow, there's so little you can do [for protection]. It's different when you have a man to lean on." But one thing Widow MacDonald could do: build a bomb shelter for herself and her twelve-year-old son.[46]

The passage implies that if Mrs. MacDonald, a widowed woman with a son can afford to build a bomb shelter, any woman can. Women needed to maintain areas of protection and teach protection at the same time. Jean Wood Fuller worked as a female on the Federal Defense Administration and she encouraged women to remain calm and act as a guiding force, teaching their family how to survive in the fearful atomic age, stating, "We must teach

45. May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,*106.

46. "Atomic Cave," *Time*, 11 September 1950, 1, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,813168 ,00.html.

our children protection…A mother must calm the fears of her child. Make a game out of it: Playing Civil Defense."[47] These statements illustrate how the new role women took on during this era as patrons of civil defense and preparation merged with the nurturing role of being a wife and mother. Fear caused women to do whatever society expected of them to protect themselves and their family from nuclear destruction.

When the atomic bombs detonated on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the weapon the United States created caused a terrifying power struggle. The Cold War, which started over the Soviet Union's desire to match the United States nuclear potential differed from other wars. Paul Boyer quoted journalist Robert Manoff's statement, "Nuclear weapons have not and never will be an inert presence in American life. Merely by existing they have already set off chain reactions throughout American society and within every one of its institutions".[48] This quote describes the atomic culture that consumed the early Cold War era, explaining that nuclear weapons did not just exist, they invaded every component of American life, just as Manoff predicted. This war did not have battle fields containing trenches with men fighting for their lives, the United States acted as the battle field and all Americans, even children became soldiers. Psychological trauma replaced bullet wounds as Americans altered their lives, constantly fearful, preparing for an end that could come at anytime. This fear of possibility ushered in a new American Culture, a culture revolving around civil defense and action, creating an anxious unity that evolved and endured. The citizens of America, while

47. May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,*104.; Jean Wood Fuller, "Wisdom Is Defense," address before the state meeting of Women in Civil Defense , Richmond Hotel, Augusta Ga., 10 November 1954, 2-4 and 6-8.

48. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, xv.; Robert Karl Manoff, "The Media: Nuclear Security vs. Democracy," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 1984, 29.

panicked, prepared in any way they could to protect themselves and their nation. Children and adults learned how to duck and cover, families fled to the suburbs, and women reverted back to the home and encouraged moral values. During the fear period of the Cold War, America learned the value of national unity and hard work. Through this time of struggle, doubt, and terror Americans prepared and survived, making the nation stronger.

Culture of Power: Defining an Elite Identity in Post-Revolutionary Haiti

Daniel Williford

In many ways, the identity of Haiti's largely mulatto upper class had already begun to develop by the time the island declared independence from France in 1804. During the colonial period, a propertied class composed mostly of mulattos but including some free blacks positioned itself culturally and socially between Saint Domingue's white rulers and the enslaved masses. In his study of the Haitian Revolution from 1791 to 1804, C.L.R. James portrays the *gens de couleur* (people of mixed race) as a distinct faction that eventually sided with the island's revolting slaves against the French.[1] Many mulattos managed to maintain their traditional privileges in the aftermath of the western hemisphere's largest slave rebellion by assuming the roles of the former French elite as the political and intellectual leaders of the island. They were joined by previously enslaved military commanders who rose through the ranks during the series of violent struggles that preceded Haitian independence.

This new upper class set about defining its boundaries by constructing an identity to distinguish itself from the Haitian lower classes. While many aspects of this identity were rooted in

1. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, rev. ed. (1963; repr., New York: Random House, 1989), 354-359.

the European connections of the *gens de couleur*, the island's new rulers also adapted their public image to reflect the colossal shifts in the power structure brought on by the Revolution. Haitian elites combined an affinity for Western culture, symbols of the former French authority, a vague sense of African heritage, and a legally enforced distance from the masses to create a unique class identity. They engaged in this process rhetorically through poetry, learned prose, and government proclamations; through laws designed both to benefit their class and facilitate its separation from the larger populace; culturally through dress, custom, and verbal art. The egalitarian themes that permeate early Haitian prose and poetry pose a difficulty to understanding how such rhetoric facilitated class definition. David Nicholls has argued that the vast majority of Haitian writers, whether black or of mixed race, "[portrayed] Haiti as a symbol of African regeneration and of racial equality."[2] This essay will attempt to demonstrate how such portrayals served as concessions to the formerly enslaved masses and ultimately fostered rather than diminished class distinctions.

It is difficult to discern the exact nature of the elite's attachment to Western culture before the French recognition of Haiti in 1825. During this period, both the southern republic under Alexandre Pétion and the northern monarchy under Henri Christophe maintained a cautious diplomatic distance from the former metropolis. National discourse was still dominated by outward expressions of hostility, such as those that permeated Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre's Declaration of Haitian Independence.[3] White observers, though perhaps predisposed to perceive an

2. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier:Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 5.

3. Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, "The Haitian Declaration of Independence," in *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Laurent Dubois and John D. Garriqus, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 188-191. Boisrond-Tonnerre's declaration is notable for its rhetorical virulence and its condemnation of all things even remotely French.

\attachment to their own institutions among elites, offer some evidence to suggest that the upper class's condemnation of European barbarity did not extend to art, literature, dress, and dance. When an unusually powerful hurricane struck Port-au-Prince in 1816, the Quaker missionary Stephen Grellet was present to witness both the destruction and the response of the mulatto-led government to the disaster. Grellet recalls how "his [Pétion's] first inquiry was, 'Is the library safe?' Being told it was, 'Blessed be the Lord…' He had lately placed in it a considerable number of valuable books."[4] Though based on hearsay, this account proves that there existed at least a perception of mulatto elites as preoccupied with the physical symbols of European culture. Other witnesses attested to the impressive volume of the book trade in Port-au-Prince, which was maintained primarily through the purchases of educated administrators.[5] The fact that the vast majority of texts sold in the capital were written in French, a language that most commoners could not speak, much less read, made this association with the trade a valuable means of self-definition for the upper class.[6] However, assuming the positions of former colonial elites as patrons of the arts was only one of the ways that Haiti's new rulers mimicked their predecessors. High ranking civil and military officials also incorporated many of the more tangible symbols of the deposed colonial power into the image of their distinct class.

The British consul, Charles Mackenzie, visited Haiti shortly after Pétion's successor, Jean-Pierre Boyer, had consolidated his power over the entire island in 1822. The diplomat noted with interest that the Republic's administration had adopted many of

4. Stephen Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labors of Stephen Grellet*, ed. Benjamin Seebohm, (Philadelphia: Book Association of Friends, 1870), 176-182.

5. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made During a Residence in that Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 43.

6. Mackenzie, 43.

the trappings of the older colonial authority. For example, he found the president residing in the *Palais du Gouvernment*, the former home of the French governor-general.[7] On meeting the chief executive, he comments that his manners "had been formed on a good French model,"[8] and mentions (with perhaps a touch of jealousy) Boyer's preference for the French consul general.[9] In describing the fashions of high status Haitians, he observes that "the toilettes of the ladies closely resemble that on the eastern side of the Atlantic."[10] Such affectations served to distance members of the upper class from the masses, in much the same way that white colonials had once differentiated themselves from the *gens de couleur*.

Education also played a significant role in the creation of a unique identity among the political elite. In Mackenzie's opinion, the Haitian upper class was defined not so much by its racial makeup as by the level of learning its members had attained.[11] By this period, however, the boundaries of the upper class were fully formed, and the government generally took precautions to discourage education among agricultural laborers. One military commander, Borgella, made several remarks to Rev. S.W. Hanna on the imprudence of "[bestowing] the boon of education upon those whose station in life is that of labour and dependence."[12] Another observer, James Franklin, noted that, though many in the capital had access to rudimentary schooling, those in the countryside were left in "darkest ignorance."[13] Designed

7. Mackenzie, 3.

8. Mackenzie, 5.

9. Mackenzie, 23.

10. Mackenzie, 35.

11. Mackenzie, 29.

12. Rev. S.W. Hanna, *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti Jan. Feb. 1835* (London: R.B. Seeley & W. Burnside & L.G. Seeley, 1836), 136.

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti, (Saint Domingo,): with Remarks*

to perpetuate the already present divisions within society, the educational system also reflected the elite monopoly in the subjects deemed relevant for instruction. Though Port-au-Prince was known to contain at least one school of military science,[14] the majority of institutions were modeled after the French *lycée* with curriculums based around logic, rhetoric, ethics, mathematics, physics, Latin, and French.[15] An English ecclesiastic, John Candler, calculated that approximately 1000 pupils were currently receiving instruction in Port-au-Prince. Though this number represented only a fraction of the city's youth, Candler remarked that "the proportion of black children, unhappily, is still smaller."[16] This system of education allowed Haitian elites to maintain their cultural connections with the former metropolis (despite the existing political hostility between France and the island) while reinforcing their privileged status within society.

After France granted recognition to the Republic in 1825 in exchange for reparations to former planters, elites were able to throw themselves headlong "into the orbit of French culture."[17] It was in this new climate of reconciliation that Jean-Baptiste Romane composed the "Hymne à l'independence*"* for the anniversary of Haitian independence. With its ironic refrain, "Long live Haiti! Long live France!"[18] celebrating both the victor and the defeated, the poem is an excellent example of how elites

---

on its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, etc. etc. (London: John Murray, 1828), 397.

14. Franklin, 398.

15. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti: With its Condition, Resources, and Prospects* (London: Thomas Ward & Co. and Charles Gilpin, 1842), 74-76.

16. Candler, 76.

17. Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 202.

18. Jean-Baptiste Romane, "Hymne à l'indépendance," in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 15.

drew closer to their former colonizers while at the same time outwardly stressing their nationality. Romane, like other patriotic poets, uses the palm tree as a symbol for Haiti, but interestingly he refers to "Haiti mixing the lily [symbol of the Bourbon monarchy] / with the palms…."[19] This image suggests more than simply a reconciliation between the two countries; it indicates a synthesis. By blending their French heritage with a burgeoning patriotism and a sense of "Haitianness," elites like Romane were consciously selecting their cultural associations**.** However, for many upper class intellectuals the exact nature of their relationship with white Europeans and their rationalist and artistic traditions was anything but clear. Defining this connection would involve a complex process of negotiation for the new nation's leading thinkers.

The meditations of mulatto intellectuals such as Pompée Vastey and Julien Raimond on the subject of racial prejudice are particularly revealing of how educated elites conceived of themselves in relation to Western culture and thought. Vastey's *Réflexions sur les Noirs et les Blancs* begins with a philosophical debunking of contemporary theories of racial inequality, which the author asserts are the products of the ex-colonists of Saint Domingue.[20] Interestingly, Vastey admits to relying on the works of "enlightened Europeans" to support his views on African equality and lavishes excessive praise on the "immortal philanthropists of Europe."[21] He not only pays the customary respects to Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and other British abolitionists, but openly admires "the immortal Montesquieu" even while challenging "this great [man's]"

19. Romane, 15.

20. Pompée Valentin Vastey, *Réflexions sur les Noirs et les Blancs, la Civilisation de l'Afrique, le Royaume d'Hayti, etc.* (Cap Haïtien: L'imprimeur du Roi, 1816), 4-9.

21. Pompée Valentin Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites,* W. H. M. B. trans. (London: J. Hatchard, 1817), 20.

presumption of African inferiority.[22] Rousseau, Voltaire, and other Enlightenment thinkers also feature prominently in Vastey's paean of Western thought.

In contrast, Vastey is openly critical of white former planters as a group, referring to one as a quadruped.[23] By juxtaposing the ex-colonists with the philosophical powerhouses of early modern Europe, he expresses not only an affinity for but a sense of kinship with the latter. He echoes the calls of French antislavery intellectuals of the previous generation such as the Abbé Raynal and the Marquis de Condorcet who proclaimed that "although I am not the same color as you [the enslaved blacks], I have always regarded you as my brothers."[24] Furthermore, his willingness to critique the views of European intellectuals shows that the French educated mulatto considered himself a contributor to the conversations of the Enlightenment. By depicting the argument over racial equality as a struggle between those who uphold the tenets of rationalism and those ex-colonists and journalists[25] who engage in sophistry, Vastey takes on the role of a defender of Enlightenment tradition.

While Vastey situates himself within the republic of letters, where he sees fit to dismiss racial inferiority as an inconsequential and fabricated concept, Raimond is overwhelmingly concerned with the specific nature of his racial identity. He defines a mulatto as "the product of a white man with a black woman."[26]

---

22. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 29

23. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 23.

24. Marquis de Condorcet, "Dedicatory Epistle to the Negro Slaves," in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Lynn Hunt (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996 [1781]), 56.

25. Pompée Valentin Vastey, *Réflexions politiques Sur Quelques Ouvrages et Journaux Français Concernant Hayti* (Sans-souci: L'imprimeur du Roi, 1817), vi.

26. Julien Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine et les progrès du préjugé des colons Blancs contre les hommes de couleur* (Paris: Belin, 1791), 1.

Such an explanation, though rooted in an awareness of the pre-Revolutionary power structure, reveals the author's conception of the mulatto position in Haitian society. According to Raimond, mulattos attained their enviable (to both blacks and whites) status as result of the education they received through their white fathers.[27] He further depicts white prejudice as nothing more than jealousy of the superior qualities that those of mixed race were thought to possess.[28] In Raimond's assessment, these qualities entitle mulattos to stand on equal footing with whites.[29] However, implicit in this argument is the belief that the right to rule derives from certain characteristics that can be broadly applied to a specific class. Thus, while guaranteeing equality with whites, such an assertion presupposes the superiority of people of color to blacks in order to justify mulatto control on the basis of that group's perceived merits.

Vastey, writing in a fundamentally different political climate than Raimond, was more hesitant when it came to asserting his status as an *homme de couleur.* As a nobleman at the court of Henri Christophe, where a tradition of linking race to citizenship (which included the definition of all Haitians as black in the 1805 constitution written under Jean Jacque Dessalines)[30] made emphasizing his European parentage politically hazardous, Vastey was compelled to put his affinity for Western culture in purely intellectual terms. Though he mentions possessing

---

27. Julien Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine et les progrès du préjugé des colons Blancs contre les hommes de couleur*, 7.

28. Julien Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine et les progrès du préjugé des colons Blancs contre les hommes de couleur*, 13-14.

29. Julien Raimond, *Véritable origine des troubles de S.-Domingue, et des différentes causes qui les ont produits* (Paris: L'imprimerie du Patriote François, 1792), 3.

30. "The Second Constitution of Haiti May 20, 1805," *New York Evening Post*, July 15, 1805, Articles 13-14.

a sense of his "Africanness,"[31] the mulatto thinker primarily focuses on highlighting his "Haitianness" as an alternative to a strict race—or class—based association.[32] This represents the type of compromise mulatto elites were often driven to effect in constructing their public image. By substituting a politically prudent national identity for a vaguely African or an unpopular European one, the ruling class attempted to diffuse conflict between itself and its subjects.

Elites incorporated a sense of African heritage into their identity in far subtler ways than they did European cultural traditions. By the 1820's, the island's official status as a haven for blacks had already prompted the immigration of small groups of African-Americans backed by the American Colonization Society.[33] At least a few native Africans also made their way to Haiti during the nation's formative years. Both of these groups, however, were largely outside the boundaries of the upper class. It is difficult to infer whether or not elites were aware of how apparent faint Africanisms were to European visitors. In order to determine how elites integrated African traits into their distinct class identity, it is first necessary to discuss what constituted "Africanness" in the minds of elite administrators and intellectuals.

Often members of the Haitian upper class, many of them educated in European institutions, viewed Africa through a decidedly Western lens. Vastey falls back on classical allusions to Dido and Carthage to refute European perceptions of African barbarism.[34] He also uses ancient Egyptian civilization as proof

31. Pompée Valentin Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites,* W. H. M. B. trans. (London: J. Hatchard, 1817), 32.

32. Pompée Valentin Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites,* 32; Vastey, *Le système colonial dévoilé* (Cap Haïtien: L'imprimeur du Roi, 1814), i-vi.

33. Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 44-55.

34. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 34.

that advanced societies could spring from Africa's womb.[35] By relying on examples that would have been familiar to Europeans, Vastey attempts to vindicate Africa in the eyes of French who, as William Cohen and James Le Sueur have pointed out, still based the majority of their ideas about "the dark continent" on classical Latin and Greek texts.[36] However, the mulatto writer seems to have agreed that the "inhabitants…of Benin, of Zanguebar, and of Monomotapa"[37] were ignorant savages possessing scarcely any culture at all. He nevertheless reflectively remarks, "As for myself, descended from an African stock, I am, I imagine, sufficiently identified with the Africans."[38] It is unclear how exactly Vastey has culturally indentified with Africans. The poet Antoine Dupré betrays a similarly generalized understanding of his African heritage in *Le dernier soupir d'un Haïtien*. The poem begins with an appeal to the "Sun, God of my Ancestors"[39] and then proceeds to address a deity remarkably close to the Judeo-Christian conception:

Oh thou whose warmth
Causes all beings to exist,
Opus of the Creator,
Your life's work nearly finished[40]

---

35. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 33-37.

36. William B. Cohen and James D. Le Sueur, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 5-6.

37. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 34.

38. Vastey, *Reflections on the Blacks and Whites*, 32.

39. Antoine Dupré, "Le Dernier soupir d'un Haïtien" in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 2.

40. Dupré, "Le Dernier soupir d'un Haïtien." In this translation I have tried to communicate as closely as possible the sense of the original French. I used the English "thou" to correspond to the French second person informal pronoun

Despite the fact that Dupré and Vastey conceive of Africa in somewhat obscure terms, both writers experience some personal connection to the mother continent.

Not all elites were necessarily interested in trumpeting their African ancestry. Still, quotidian remnants of African cultural practices were visible even in the highest ranks of the civil service. A British visitor notes in confusion that "all the invitations I received for the first six months of my residence were to funerals,"[41] not recognizing this as a West African custom.[42] Even at formal state occasions with scores of European onlookers, Haitian elites allowed rays of African influence to pierce through the façade of Western dress and manners. Women at these events wore a type of headdress said to resemble a turban, which when wrapped with white-colored cloth indicated a disinclination to dance that particular evening.[43] The image of a mulatto bureaucrat's wife, *habillée* in European fashion with African-influenced accessories, performing French courtesies most likely with a Creole accent, serves as visual representation of the synthesis involved in elite identity creation. However, the Haitian upper class had to define itself not only in relation to outside influences, but also in reference to the overwhelmingly black majority excluded from national politics. Though elites partially used their European connections to highlight this distinction, they also employed legal and even coercive means to enforce the boundaries of their caste. At the same time, political leaders and patriotic poets stressed unity and "Haitianness," harnessing the rhetoric of nationalism to suggest that Haitian society was free from discrimination and division. This contradiction necessitates a

41. Mackenzie, 15.

42. Fred T. Smith, "Death, Ritual, and Art in Africa," *African Arts* 21 (1987): 28; Marleen De Witte, *Long Live the Dead: Changing funeral celebrations in Asante, Ghana* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2001), 9.

43. Mackenzie, 35.

closer look at how political factors affected the development of an upper class identity in Haiti.

The relationship between Haitian political elites and peasant laborers greatly contributed to the fabrication of a national identity by members of the upper class. While the state continued to practice a form of "agrarian militarism"[44] and patriotic rhetoric rarely represented the political realities of the time, the fact that mulatto and black members of the ruling class felt compelled to emphasize their "Haitianness" over their distinct class identity served as a form of compromise with the laboring backbone of their society. Also, by selecting specific, socially acceptable traits to represent the Haitian nationality, elites propagated a moral code that reinforced their control over the masses.

The mostly mulatto elite primarily made rhetorical and symbolic, rather than real economic, concessions to the lower classes. The coercive agricultural system, which originated under the revolutionary general Toussaint l'Overture and shared several features with colonial slavery, was the main source of tension between elites and the lower classes. One of the more demonstrative pieces of quasi-oppressive post-Revolutionary legislation, *Le code rural* of 1826, underscores the Haitian economy's continued dependence on plantation-style cultivation. Sparked by economic underperformance, *Le code* called for the creation of new rural estates with civil and military officials acting as their proprietors.[45] Unsurprisingly, property fell increasingly into the hands of mulattos who continued to hold the majority of the posts in Boyer's government. Analysis of *Le code* also provides a view into the inner workings of an economic system that strangled the possibility of social advancement by heavily

44. Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 270.

45. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti, (Saint Domingo,): with Remarks on its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, etc. etc*. (London: John Murray, 1828), 332.

restricting geographic and occupational mobility.[46] The use of force to bind Haitian laborers to their estates was certainly not limited to this period of the nation's history. One European observer noted, however, that Boyer was considerably more lenient in his treatment of agricultural laborers than the island's first two black rulers, Toussaint and Dessalines, had been, to the detriment of Haitian exports.[47] His predecessor Pétion, known as *Papa bon ké* (Father with a good heart) among the lower classes,[48] may also have hesitated when it came to instituting a repressive labor system. Some scholars have discussed the possibility that because of their positions as mulattos ruling over the black masses, Pétion and Boyer were forced to be more accommodating to the interests of Haitian laborers than were darker autocrats such as Dessalines and Christophe.[49] However, the brutal measures embodied in *Le code rural* of 1826 largely dispel this theory, at least in reference to Boyer. The clearest evidence of elites attempting to widen their appeal to the masses comes instead in the politically charged rhetoric of Haitian nationalism.

In the immediate aftermath of independence, the island's black generals expected mulattos to prove their loyalty to the nascent state by displaying disdain for the French. Dessalines was said to have forced one mulatto elite to kill a French friend in order to lay claim to his rights as a Haitian citizen.[50] Even mulattos in the highest positions of authority were sometimes expected to express their fidelity in similar ways. Contemporary witnesses

46. *Rural Code of Haïti; in French and English* (London: B. McMillan, 1827).

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti, (Saint Domingo,): with Remarks on its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, etc. etc*. (London: John Murray, 1828), 328-334.

48. Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 270.

49. Fischer, 270.

50. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made During a Residence in that Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 8.

of the Haitian political system during Boyer's twenty-five year term as president testified to the influence the masses could exert on elite administrators. The British Consul, Charles Mackenzie, saw the prohibition on white property ownership as an instance of "enlightened chiefs…[deferring] to the prejudices of the many."[51] Another traveler, Dr. Jonathan Brown, commented on the racial dynamics at play in the process of negotiation between the rulers and the ruled:

> [Control] resides in the jealousy existing between the two colors; as the mulattos, to preserve the sceptre [sic] of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringements on his dignity.[52]

In the eyes of European observers, the racial identity of a Haitian *homme politique* was inseparable from his political role and his relationship to the masses. Since the majority of the laboring class was excluded from the electorate, government officials and property holders, mostly mulattos, effectively monopolized the democratic process.[53] Not that local or even national elections had a great deal of meaning in a system that concentrated nearly

---

51. Mackenzie, 26; The prohibition of white property ownership, was often simply a formality and did not necessarily constitute a real political concession to the masses. Rev. Hanna recounts how whites, presumably wealthy merchants, live in large and luxurious houses which are legally owned by their mistresses and pseudo-wives. Rev. S.W. Hanna, *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti Jan. Feb. 1835*, (London: R.B. Seeley & W. Burnside & L.G. Seeley , 1836), 97.

52. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia: William Marshall and Co., 1837), 259.

53. Brown, 259-261.

absolute power in the hands of the chief executive.[54] In such a repressive context, those excluded from voicing their opinions through political avenues sought alternative means of expression and received in turn not political but rhetorical concessions from elites.

Following the breakdown of negotiations between Haiti and France in 1816 over the question of recolonization, Pétion issued a proclamation containing his correspondence with Louis XVIII. This calculated piece of demagoguery forcefully rejects all possibility of a return to French rule while at the same time placing the power to spurn such offers in the hands of the people.[55] Pétion alludes to the ever present threat of slavery's reinstatement, the strength and authority of the masses, and their never dying "will to be free and independent."[56] Since the vast majority of urban and agricultural laborers were denied an electoral voice, and military oppression limited other means of protest, the "authority" of the masses that Pétion refers to was little more than a politically useful fiction. This is an example of the type of rhetorical recognition elites were willing to grant the lower classes, which along with symbolic laws such as the denial of white property rights established a connection with the masses while maintaining the "sceptre [sic] of power"[57] in their own hands. Haiti's rulers met challenges to this fabricated image of society with characteristically violent retaliation.

When an African immigrant known as Darfour founded a newspaper, *L'Eclipse*, to protest the exclusion of blacks from high office, he was quickly run out of business, court marshaled (though

54. Brown, 259-261.

55. Alexader Pétion, "Republic of Hayti Proclamation," *Niles Weekly Register*, January 4, 1817, 308.

56. Pétion.

57. Brown, 259.

a civilian), and executed by Boyer's government.[58] The main threat that Darfour posed to the Haitian state was a rhetorical one. His publications directly contradicted the standard line of mulatto elites: that Haitian society was free from racial discrimination. In his study of the influence of race on Haitian politics, Nicholls discusses how mulatto-run newspapers, such as *Le Républicain* and *L'Union*, could openly criticize the policies of Boyer's government.[59] However, contributors to these journals tended to avoid issues of class and race altogether.[60] For this reason, their critiques proved less damaging to the government's fictionalized portrayal of race relations than those of Darfour.

In one of his more perceptive moments, Mackenzie noticed that "the government asserts that all feelings and prejudices… on the subject of colour…have been absorbed by an intense patriotism."[61] This omnipresent devotion to the *patrie* was, of course, largely the invention of Haiti's elite community. In general, discussions of the divisions between blacks and mulattos were absent from the national discourse during this period. However, a few elite poets mentioned the separation in order to emphasize how the Revolution had bound the two groups together in a kind of national brotherhood. Pierre Faubert in his "Aux Haitiens" refers to "Yellows [mulattos] and Blacks, burning a heroic flame."[62] Later in the same poem, he categorizes blacks and mulattos as essentially the same race, a race which has made Haiti, "a motherland with [its] blood." This attempt to downplay

58. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in that Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 27-28.

59. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier:Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 74.

60. Nicholls, 74.

61. Mackenzie, 26.

62. Pierre Faubert, "Aux Haïtiens," in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 10-11.

associations based on skin color and to put in their place a single national identity goes as far back as Dessalines' original 1805 Constitution. In its thirteenth and fourteenth articles, the document states that all Haitians are to be legally considered blacks, even those Germans and Poles who have been naturalized by the government.[63] The Constitution's framers have in effect co-opted the formerly racial category of "black" and transformed it into a nationality.

Though Dessalines' provision did not make its way into future constitutions, the upper class continued to stress the importance of a unifying national identity in the place of one that was divisive and class-based. In these later documents, definitions of citizenship were based on adherence to socially accepted norms of behavior. Elite framers were thereby able to infuse the concept of Haitian nationality with the set of traits they believed would be most conducive to maintaining their privileged status. Although its prime focus was the extension of executive power, the 1816 Constitution for the Republic of Haiti included a description of the ideal citizen in line with the state's fabricated conception of "Haitianness." Article twenty of the document states that the duties of all Haitians derive from two key principles: "Do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you, do always unto others all the good you would want to receive from them."[64] Other articles emphasize fulfillment of familial obligations and religious observance of the law as requirements for citizenship.[65]

---

63. "The Second Constitution of Haiti May 20, 1805," *New York Evening Post*, July 15, 1805, Articles 13-14.

64. *Révision de la Constitution Haïtienne de 1806* (Port-au-Prince: L'Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1816), article 20. The cited quotation is my own attempt at a nearly literal translation of the original document. The English proverb "do unto to others as you would have them do unto you" communicates better the cultural connotations of the original phrase in French.

65. *Révision de la Constitution Haïtienne de 1806*, articles 22-23.

While lawmakers linked socially desirable characteristics to legal status, patriotic poets added a related set of ideal qualities to the concept of a Haitian nationality. Images of the free and warlike revolutionary abound in patriotic poetry. Words like "valiance," "honor," and "prosperity" appear frequently in reference to the island's inhabitants. Many poets chose to contrast the humanity of Haitians with the barbarity of European tyrants.[66] Others offer an idealized narrative of the Revolution in which blacks and mulattos come together to combat their oppressors with virtue and intelligence.[67] In a few cases, poets even endow the Revolution with global significance. Antoine Dupré's "Hymne à la liberté" suggests that Haiti "[shows] to tyrants of the earth, / Man free, man unrestrained."[68] Often poets explain the connection between Haitians and the state using the language of familial relations. In "l'Union," Jules Solime Milscent states bluntly "The Republic is our mother, / Let us show ourselves to be her dignified children."[69] Here he stresses both the depth of citizens' bond to the nation and the social duties they are expected to uphold in that relationship. By promoting the Republic as the natural heir to the ideologies of the Revolution and underscoring the importance of fulfilling obligations to the state, elite poets engaged in the process of constructing a unifying national identity that both justified and helped support their continued rule.

By monopolizing political power, elites retained the right to delineate the boundaries of their caste. Lack of a political

66. Antoine Dupré, "Le Dernier soupir d'un Haïtien" in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 2.

67. Pierre Faubert, "Aux Haïtiens," in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 10-11.

68. Antoine Dupré, "Hymne à la liberté" in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 2.

69. Jules S. Milscent, "L'Union" in *Panorama de la poésie Haïtienne*, Carlos St.-Louis and Maurice A. Lubin ed. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 4-5.

voice, restricted mobility, and economic backwardness severely disadvantage a populace still coping with the transition from slavery to freedom. In such an environment, it is unsurprising that the mulatto dominated administration gradually closed its doors to outsiders during Boyer's quarter-of-a-century in office.[70] Not until 1843 did a coup led by a rival faction within the mulatto community finally depose the President.[71] After Boyer's overthrow, the now established elite handpicked a series of black authoritarians who ruled the nation for the next half century. Several of these sought political endorsement from the masses by criticizing the privilege and authority of the upper class that had installed them. Ironically, elites were vulnerable to attacks by black demagogues because of their long-enforced separation from the rest of Haitian populace.

During the early years of Haitian independence, the island's ruling caste defined its boundaries by way of its cultural affinities with Europe, its assumption of many former colonial customs, its obscure sense of "Africanness," and its legally enforced distance from the predominantly black masses. This group accomplished the last of these feats partially by rhetorically maneuvering within the ideologies of the Revolution. Elite poets and administrators stressed platitudes such as national fraternity, liberty for all, and equality of opportunity when even these amorphous concepts were obviously false characterizations of the political situation. Also, by limiting the access of the lower classes to education, the government reinforced the dominance of those already occupying high status positions. While an odd mixture of European and African affectations set them apart from both white outsiders and average Haitians, members of the upper class were prepared to point out their similarities to either group depending on the

70. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier:Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 69-73.

71. Nicholls, 69-70.

context. By the middle of the nineteenth century, elites had firmly laid the foundations for their singularity as a class. As a distinct force, they would ultimately leave a dramatic imprint on a nation coping simultaneously with independence and emancipation.

"O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord!": Puritans, Nature, and God in New England

Graham Gordon

Bespread with Roses Sommer 'gins take place with hasty speed,
Whose parching heate Strawberries coole doth moderation breed.
Ayre darkening sholes of pigeons picke their berries sweet and good,
The lovely Cherries birds entice to feast themselves in woods.[1]
(Edward Johnson, "Good News From New England")

If the scholarship of many reputable colonial and environmental historians is accepted, then a Puritan could not have written the preceding lines. The Puritans' view of nature has predominantly been characterized as harsh or exploitative, yet in this poem Puritan Edward Johnson describes the coming of summer with celebratory language. And Johnsonís poem is only a small part of a wealth of primary sources depicting the Puritan attitude toward nature as respectful and benevolent. Seemingly ignoring such evidence, historians frame the discussion of Puritans' attitude toward nature around two concepts: the Puritans' belief in a "transcendent God" and the Puritans' belief in their God-given

1. Edward Johnson, "Good News From New England," (1648), lines 162-165, quoted in Robert S. Daly, *God's Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978), 142.

dominion over nature. As a result of these two beliefs, many colonial and environmental historians have concluded that Puritans encouraged a disrespectful attitude toward nature and subsequently abused the environment. A close examination of Puritan literature, from theology to poetry to personal correspondence, however, reveals that Puritans could express a positive characterization of nature that encouraged them to use the land in moderation and preserve it for future generations. By reexamining Puritan views about the existence of God in nature and the Puritan approach toward the land, this paper seeks to expand an underdeveloped and often misinterpreted aspect of Puritan life.

There has been a great deal of historical literature on Puritan's belief in a "transcendent God" as completely removed from the earth. Rhys H. Williams claims, "Puritan thought insisted on the total otherness of a transcendent God." The Puritans saw themselves as separated from an "awesome Creator and Judge" by a "huge gulf."[2] Ruth H. Bloch describes 17th century Protestantism as the belief in "the omnipotence and stern judgment of a transcendent God." She contrasts this with the 18th century belief that "God had gradually grown more dependable, more forgiving, and more accessible."[3] The image of a "transcendent God" is depicted in even harsher terms by Max Weber who argues that the God of the Puritans was "a transcendental being, beyond the reach of human understanding, who with His quite incomprehensible decrees decided the fate of every individual." According to Weber, the Puritan concept of a "transcendent God" caused them to view "everything pertaining to the flesh" as wholly corrupt and to have a "disillusioned and pessimistic" disposition.[4] These three

2. Rhys H. Williams, "Visions of the Good Society and the Religious Roots of American Political Culture," *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 1 (1999): 10.

3. Ruth H. Bloch, "Untangling the Roots of Modern Sex Roles: A Survey of Four Centuries of Change," *Signs* 4, no. 2 (1978): 249.

4. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* trans. Talcott

historians describe Puritan beliefs in negative terms, and Weber in particular does not hesitate to harshly criticize Puritan concepts of nature and God. In summary Puritans believed that God had separated himself from a corrupt world, viewed this same world with intense judgment, and held himself beyond the possibility of comprehension. According to Williams, Rhys, and Weber, these characteristics of God were a direct result of the Puritans' belief in the transcendence of their God.

The ideology of transcendence, historians argue, did not merely affect the psyche of individuals but had a deleterious effect on the environment. Robert Michaelson expresses this view when he writes, "Christianity arose out of a tradition which was intimately tied to a particular land, but the followers of Jesus of Nazareth gradually separated themselves from the land…Land became instrumental; the earth became the stage for acting out the redemptive drama." All this Michaelson attributes to Christians' belief in a transcendent God.[5] Because God was apart from the world, he argues, humans used land as an "instrument" in the ever-present struggle between good and evil. In a similar manner J.J. Mol argues that the Puritan belief in a transcendental God emphasized a "world to be mastered rather than to be sanctified." God was completely removed from nature, and Puritans were justified in treating the land as a resource that completely lacked "sanctifying" qualities.[6]

Caroline Merchant moves the discussion of transcendence into a particularly New England context by contrasting Puritan beliefs with Native American beliefs. She argues that the spirit-filled world of Native American religion was displaced by the

---

Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 105.

5. Robert S. Michaelson, "American Indian Religious Freedom Litigation: Promise and Perils," *Journal of Law and Religion* 3, no. 1 (1985): 60.

6. J. J. Mol, *The Breaking of Traditions,* (Berkeley: The Glendessary Press, 1968), 12.

spirit-lacking world of the colonists. Merchant writes, "An ethic of moral obligation between human and God replaced the ethic of reciprocity between human and animals. While the older (Indian) practices…continued, they ceased to function as a restraining environmental ethic."[7] The Puritans' exploitation of the New England environment was made possible by their belief in a God who was separated from the natural world. Puritans felt no obligation to respect an object that had no spiritual qualities. Historian Alan Taylor echoes Merchant's argument when he writes, "Belief in a transcendent God enabled educated Europeans to disenchant the world, to treat it as purely material…The Christian alienation of spirit from nature rendered it supernaturally safe for Europeans to harvest all the resources they wanted from nature."[8]

Because of Puritans' belief in a transcendent God, scholars conclude that God's perceived absence from nature caused Puritans to believe that humans must be in charge of the environment. Many historians who discuss ecology in colonial America argue that the belief in a transcendent God and the belief in humans' dominion over nature were inexorably linked. They credit the exhortation in Genesis 2:26-28, which speaks of God's decision to give man dominion over the earth, as shaping Puritans' views on the environment. [9] Wilbur R. Jacobs writes, "the white man, with his Judeo-Christian ethic stressing man's dominance over nature, had no religious scruples about exploiting the wilderness."[10] A

---

7. Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England,*

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 60.

8. Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*, (United States: Penguin Books, 2001), 20.

9. See Merchant pages 91, 100, and 203; Taylor pages 20-21; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 63 and 73.

10. Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Dispossessing the American Indian,* (New York: Charles

God-lacking nature must be controlled by humans, and historians argue that the Puritans' belief in their God-given control caused them to exploit the environment.[11]

Based on all the previous arguments it is possible to come up with a lengthy definition of the term "transcendent God" for the Puritan New England context. The Puritans' "transcendent God" was entirely removed from the natural world and viewed the world through a judgmental lens. Because God was apart from nature, Puritans viewed the natural world merely as an instrument, a resource, or a thing to be mastered. The God-given mandate to subdue the earth and the belief that the earth was devoid of God worked in tandem to provide justification for exploitative environmental practices on the part of the Puritans.

This definition is unsatisfactory. The term ìtranscendent Godî oversimplifies the Puritansí understanding of both God and nature. The Puritans perceived God as existing in close proximity to them because he both manifested himself in nature and exhorted Puritans through nature. As a result, Puritans were often unreserved in their praise of creation and formed ethics of land use that centered on improvement and moderation. Historiansí insistence that Puritans exploited nature is not only unduly judgmental for scholarly work but also anachronistic because Puritans lacked the modern concept of environmental responsibility. While these

---

Scribner's Sons, 1972), 20.

11. Interestingly most of the historians cited take for granted Puritans' exploitative enironmental practices and fail to provide specific examples of how Puritans abused nature. Carloyn Merchant is one exception, and she describes the Puritan abuse of the land as deforestation, excessive hunting, and a general overworking of the land. She also argues that the disruption of Native American communities by Europeans prevented the New England environment from receiving the beneficial husbandry provided by Native Americans. See Merchant, "Animals into Resources," in *Ecological Revolutions.* Determining whether the Puritans actually abused or manipulated the environment is not my main concern. I am interested in discovering whether Puritans' attitudes and intentions toward nature were as harsh as depicted by many historians.

historiansí arguments are based in good research, they neglect a substantial body of primary sources that provides much-needed nuance in the discussion of colonial land use. An examination of these sources calls into question the established definition of the term ìtranscendent Godî and its accompanying connotations which are found in the preceding paragraph.

Setting aside for a moment environmental considerations, how "distant" was the Puritan's God? If he was completely removed from the natural world, then would not he also be removed from humanity? While Puritans believed that God was incomprehensibly superior to them, they did not equate this with separation. Instead they believed in a God who was capable of living with them, as John Winthrop writes, "the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us."[12] John Hooker describes the nearness of God in very physical terms by comparing the relationship between God and man to parent and child. He writes, "The child holds the father, not because it hath any power of it selfe, but because the father holds him, so we hold the Lord Jesus Christ because we are holden of him."[13] God is not a distant concept but a being close enough to hold humans. Moreover Puritans believed God's presence was a result of his undeniable pursuit of them. Thomas Shepard, for example, acknowledges that humans are not worthy of the attention of God; however, he marvels that God desires relationship with humans by writing, "The Lord can never get near enough to His people…and therefore unites and binds and fastens them close to himself."[14]

---

12. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry.* Garden City, (NY: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 83.

13. John Hooker, "The Soules Ingrafting," quoted in Babette M. Levy, *Preaching in the First Half Century of New England History,* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1945), 111-112.

14. Thomas Shepard. "The Covenant of Grace," in Miller, ed., *The American Puritans,* 145.

Interestingly Puritans often employed sexual metaphors to describe their relationship with God. Thomas Hooker describes a Christian as "so joined unto the Lord, that he becomes one spirit: as the adulterer and the adulteress is one flesh."[15] There is no closer physical connection between two people than intercourse. Edward Taylor makes use of the same imagery, but is more subtle: "Together joyn'd in Him that's Thou, and I./ Flesh of my Flesh, Bone of my Bone."[16] Taylor is referencing the creation of Eve from Adam's rib in the book of Genesis. After Eve's creation, she became Adam's mate, and Taylor believes that the individual Christian and God are united in the same way as Adam and Eve. In another poem Taylor describes an equally if not more provocative metaphor for God and humans. Drawing from a passage from Song of Solomon which describes the breasts of a woman, Taylor asserts that these are God's breasts filled with spiritual milk for God's children. After making this connection Taylor writes, "Lord put these nibbles then my mouth into/ And suckle me therewith I humbly pray."[17] The abstract imagery of child and parent to describe God's relationship with humans is not unusual in Puritan writing; however, Taylor moves out of abstraction and into the very tangible image of a mother breastfeeding her child. Obviously the Puritans did not believe in a wholly distant God. Though he differed in nature from humans, Puritans' belief in God's spiritual proximity was so fervent they could only describe it in terms of physical contact.

Puritans' descriptions of the natural environment are also filled with images of God's presence. Cotton Mather's book *The*

---

15. Thomas Hooker, "The Soules Union with Christ," (1638), quoted in Robert S. Daly, *God's Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978), 26.

16. Edward Taylor, "The Experience," *The Poems of Edward Taylor,* in Donald E. Stanford, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 8-9.

17. Edward Taylor, "Meditation. Cant. 7.3. Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twins," in Stanford, 354.

Christian Philosopher is a good example of how Puritans spoke about God, nature, and the connection between the two. In his introduction Mather writes,

> The works of the Glorious GOD in the *Creation* of the World, are what I now propose to exhibit; in brief essays to enumerate some of them, that He may be glorified in them…*Chrysostom*, I remember, mentions a twofold Book of GOD; the Book of his *Creatures,* and the book of the *Scriptures*…We will now for a while read the *Former* of these *Books*, 'twill help us in reading the *Latter.*[18]

Nature is God's revelation to humanity in a similar manner as the Bible. While Puritan respect for scripture is widely recognized, Mather reveals that Puritans had a similar respect for the revelatory power of nature. Mather's introduction exemplifies two main ways in which Puritans discuss the natural world: Nature reveals the existence of God, and nature reveals characteristics of God that elucidate praise from humans.

Since Puritans believed God created the earth, would it not seem reasonable that the creator could be seen through his creation? In his essay "That God is" John Preston makes this very argument. He writes, "By the very things we handle and touch, we may know that there is a God…There is enough in the very creation of the world to declare Him unto us."[19] For Preston, the order that is evident in nature is proof that a God exists. He argues that "the sweet consent and harmony" of the creatures of the earth is an explicit demonstration of God's existence. His discussion of nature also reveals his awe of the created world. He marvels at the "skill and workmanship" evident in creatures and describes God's

18. Cotton Mather, *The Christian Philosopher,* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 17-18.

19. John Preston, "That God is," in Everett H. Emerson, ed., *English Puritanism from John Hooper to John Milton.* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968), 243-244.

act of creating the world as a sculptor forming a statue or a painter fashioning a work of art.[20] Preston praises the beauty of the world and makes no attempt to separate God from the world. His reverence for the created world stems from his firm belief that God is an active participant in nature. Preston does not degrade nature but affirms its dignity as a revelation from God.

Nature not only shows the existence of God but also reveals that he actively uses his creation to bless his people. Edward Johnson wrote *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence* in order to reveal God's participation in the settling of New England. Johnson cannot describe the progress of settlement without giving credit to God's hand in New England, and he occasionally singles out God's use of nature as evidence of God's favor toward New England. He describes a drought that "began to scorch the Herbs and Fruits" of the colonists. After an intense time of community prayer Johnson writes, "The Lord showred down water on their Gardens and Fields," and the people received "the rich mercies of Christ."[21] A process of the natural world strengthened these Puritans' faith in God. Not only did God exist, but he also heard the cries of his people and answered them through his creation. Nature served as an affirmation to Puritans of the existence and benevolence of God.

Puritans also praised God for the blessings bestowed on them in nature. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the mercy of God was shown to the Puritans in the form of drought relief, and they praised him for it. However, it did not always take such a dramatic event for Puritans to praise God. Often Puritans saw very ordinary objects and could not help but glorify their creator. Cotton Mather includes a chapter on vegetables in his book *The Christian Philosopher*. His effusive praise for the vegetable radiates from his writing and leads him to honor his God. He begins the chapter

20. Ibid, 244-245.

21. Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence 1628-1651,* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 86-87.

by writing, "The Contrivance of our most Glorious Creator in the VEGETABLES growing upon this Globe, cannot be wisely observed without Admiration and Astonishment. We will single out some Remarkables, and glorify our God!"[22] Mather's affinity for vegetables is undeniably contagious and neither harsh nor exploitative. At one point he claims that a man cannot look at a vegetable "without some wishing, that if a Metamorphosis were to befall him, it might be into one of these."[23] How can anyone read this and still conceive of Puritans' attitude toward the natural world as harsh and exploitative?

Throughout the chapter Mather marvels at certain vegetables, their composition and use, and writes that anyone who does not see the beauty in vegetables is "sunk into a forlorn pitch of Degeneracy, and stupid as a Beast."[24] The term "beast" is an indicator of what Mather, and by extension, many Puritans, thought was an inappropriate response to the natural world. A "beast" or an animal only sees the produce of the earth as something to eat, purely utilitarian; however, Mather derives spiritual meaning from the vegetable and exhorts others to do the same. Humans are differentiated from animals because they acknowledge that the beauty and usefulness of the vegetable are a reflection of a wonderful creator. Mather concludes the chapter by writing, "The herbs and flowers, by their fragrance, beauty, and variety of colors, show forth the might and wisdom of their Maker…They call upon mankind…to praise and glorify God."[25] Mather has not "disenchanted the world" or made it "purely material" as Alan Taylor would argue. Instead he has imbued the world with spiritual significance, and he has made his argument with vegetables.

In addition to providing evidence of God's existence,

22. Cotton Mather, 129.

23. Cotton Mather, 140.

24. Cotton Mather, 133.

25. Cotton Mather, 150.

Cotton Mather and Edward Johnson's descriptions of the natural world reveal characteristics of the Puritan God. For Johnson, the mercy of God is displayed through rain. For Mather, the might and wisdom of God are shown through vegetables. Nature reveals the existence of God but also teaches the Puritans about their God. John Preston writes, "If you look to all particular things else you shall see that they have an end, and if they have an end it is certain there is one did aim at it and did give those creatures those several fashions which those several ends did require."[26] Preston's wording is slightly convoluted, but he is claiming that the relationship between the design of animals and the function of animals is evidence of a God who is purposeful. God does not act randomly. The design and order of nature testifies to the sovereignty of the Puritan God. Animals have a specific function. As Preston writes, "a horse was made to run…the oxen to plow, and a dog to hunt."[27] When animals fulfill their functions, they reveal that God's purposes are accomplished. For a group of people who were attempting to live in an unfamiliar land, the belief in a purposeful God must have been comforting.

In the event of natural phenomena, nature could simultaneously make known qualities of the divine and warn Puritans of sin. Samuel Sewall writes, " I remember the Earthquake of 1662/3 and my being shaken by it, as I sat in my Father's house at Newbury in a jam of the chimney. Oh that I could learn to fear the Lord and his Goodness!"[28] The earthquake serves as a reminder to Sewall of the power of his God. Furthermore, because Sewall survived the earthquake, he is reminded of the goodness of God. Nature functions as an instrument of divine reproof, and while Sewall's survival proves he is not being directly

26. Preston, 247.

27. John Preston, 247.

28. Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall,* vol. 2, *1709-1729* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973), 1055.

punished, the earthquake reminds him of the awe-inspiring nature of God. Sewall experiences another earthquake in 1727 and writes, "considering the Terrible Earth-Quakes we have had, shaking all our Foundations, it behooves us to walk humbly before our God."[29] Again a process of the natural world provides spiritual instruction for Sewall. Though Sewall does not explicitly state it, he is also made aware of the character of God. By desiring to "walk humbly" before his God, Sewall is acknowledging the power of God. God's power is not separated from nature; rather it is a power that is undeniably evident in the earthquakes Sewall experienced. Cotton Mather also writes about earthquakes but unlike Sewall, does not relate a personal experience with an earthquake. Mather is concerned with how earthquakes occur; however, during his discussion he states that an earthquake should cause men "to tremble before the Justice of God."[30] Once again nature reveals the character of God. One of Mather's final comments on earthquakes summarizes one function of earthquakes, and nature in general, in Puritan culture: "I take *Earthquakes* to be very *moving Preachers* unto *worldly-minded Men:* Their Address may be very agreeably put into the Terms of the Prophet; *O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord!"*[31] God did not just create the world and then stand back from it. Puritans' understanding of earthquakes depicts a God who uses nature to earnestly speak to his people. Nature is not a spirit-less resource, but a transmitter of the word of God. While historians have argued that Puritans thought of land as an instrument in their hands, in the case of earthquakes Puritans perceived nature as an instrument in God's hands rather than in human hands. Far from being detached from the earth, the

29. Samuel Sewall, Samuel Sewall to the Pastors and brethren of the South Church, assembled 27 Feb. 1727/8, in Judith S. Graham, *Puritan Family Life,* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 198.

30. Cotton Mather, 108.

31. Cotton Mather, 110.

Puritans' God provided, through earthquakes, tangible evidence of his involvement in the earth.

Puritans were also quite capable of making simple remarks on the beauty of the natural world without mention of God. Samuel Sewall, for instance, mentions rainbows over twenty-five times in his journal and uses descriptions such as, "very glorious," "perfect," "large and fair," and "very noble."[32] Only one time does he connect a rainbow with some biblical concept. During the winter of 1640, after describing the heated events of a court case, John Winthrop is struck by the beauty of a snowflake: "In this winter, in a close, calm day, there fell divers flakes of snow of this form *, very thin, and as exactly pointed as art could have cut them in paper."[33] Clearly he was smitten by the form of a snowflake, even drawing the snowflake in his journal, and his description of the snowflake is as delicate as the snowflake itself. Shortly after Edmund Browne arrived in Massachusetts, he sent a description of New England to a Sir Simonds D'Ewes who was still living in England. He does not refrain from speaking honestly about the unpleasantness of the environment; however, he finds room to describe a few things he does enjoy about New England. He mentions "most delectable" melons, the "fatness" of the mackerel, and an "abundance" of such animals as deer, rabbits, partridges, and duck.[34] His descriptions are very simple yet reveal a pleasure taken from nature without regard to the "hand of God."

Other Puritans relate an affection for nature that many historians overlook. Samuel Sewall, for example, provides one of the most charming descriptions of New England by a Puritan in his

32. Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 663, 665, 765, 692.

33. John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop: 1630-1649,* Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 321.

34. Edmund Browne to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, September 7, 1638 in Everett Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*: *The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629-1638*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 227-228.

book *Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica ad Aspectum Novi Orbis configurata.* The title is frightening, and Perry Miller describes the book as "an attempt, amid a staggering array of pedantry, to calculate the place of America in the future drama of history."[35] However, in the middle of Sewall's discussion he unexpectedly launches into lavish praise of Plum Island where he played as a boy:

> As long as any salmon or sturgeon shall swim in the streams of Merrimac, or any perch or pickerel in Crane Pond…, as long as any sheep shall walk upon Old Town Hill, and shall from thence pleasantly look down upon the river Parker and the fruitful marshes lying beneath…, as long as any free and harmless doves shall find a white oak or other tree within the township to perch or feed or build a careless nest upon…, as long as nature shall not grow old and dote… :so long shall Christians be born there.[36]

He is enamored with Plum Island and hopes that future generations will be able to enjoy the beauty of his childhood romping ground. Miller fittingly writes that Sewall's love for Plum Island was "as passionate as that which he held in reserve for the heavenly kingdom."[37] Sewall's desire to preserve the environment for posterity shatters the notion that Puritans viewed the natural world merely as an extractable resource.

The connections Puritans made between God and nature reveal that Indian and Puritan attitudes toward the land were not as polarized as many historians argue. The primary argument supporting the polarization of the two groups depends on the spirit-filled world of the Indians contrasted with the spirit-less world

35. Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry,* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 213.

36. Samuel Sewall, "Phaenomena" in Miller, *The American Puritans,* 214-215.

37. Miller, *The American Puritans*, 213.

of the Puritans. While Puritans did not believe that individual spirits inhabited plants or animals, they did believe that God was evident in nature. But God was more than just evident in nature; by working through nature, his spirit was present in the world. Whether it was through an earthquake or a vegetable, God was continually using nature to reveal himself to the Puritans. Furthermore, nature was not just valued because it was God's teaching tool, as a product of God's creative power, nature was given significance simply because God made it.

Since the natural world was so clearly connected to God, the Puritans had specific beliefs governing their use of both land and animals. In "The Example of Adam and Eve" William Whately uses the story of the Garden of Eden to encourage proper behavior in his audience. He writes, in regard to Adam and Eve, that God gave them "dominion over all creatures, planting so excellent a place for them as Paradise,…and putting on them so pleasant a service as that of dressing and keeping the garden."[38] Many historians have interpreted the Puritans' belief in their God-given dominion over the earth as evidence for exploitative environmental practices. However in this instance dominion leads simply to "dressing and keeping the garden." Dominion over the earth did not give Puritans the right to exploit the earth; it gave them the responsibility and pleasure of using the earth. While their use of the land might not match modern environmental sensibilities, the Puritans' did not believe their "God-given dominion" justified an exploitative extraction of resources.

Edward Johnson condemns both overindulgence and underindulgence of the land's produce. He writes, "Yet are there here…some that use these good creatures of God to excess, and others, to hoard up in a wretched and miserable manner…and

38. William Whately, *"*The Example of Adam and Eve," in Everett H. Emerson, ed., *English Puritanism from John Hooper to John Milton,* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968), 269-270.

not tats of the good creatures God hath given for that end."[39] Johnson argues that there is an appropriate use for the things of the natural world. Puritans could condone neither the abusive use of creation nor the inability to enjoy creation. Rather they strove for moderation. In a similar manner John Winthrop writes that new colonists are welcome to Massachusetts Bay, but "people must come well provided and not too many at once."[40] While Winthrop is probably more concerned with the possibility of food shortage than the potential environmental damage caused by overpopulation, he is still aware of the limits of the land. Because he is trying to establish a permanent settlement, he realizes that future generations rely on his generation's ability to use the land in moderation.

A vital concept governing Puritan land use was "improvement." For land to be owned, a farmer had to show he was improving it. John Eliot describes how New England is being governed and claims, concerning land, that men can "have what they can improve."[41] Improvement could involve grazing cattle, raising crops, or fertilizing the land among other things. An anonymous Puritan relates the difficult growing conditions in New England then writes, "I do believe that if we had marl, lime, or other manure, this barrenness might in part be cured."[42] This writer is not concerned with extracting what he can from the land and moving on to a new location. He is attempting to improve the land for permanent settlement and better crops. In order to establish a plantation, Edmund Browne advises Sir Simonds D'Ewes to send

39. Edward Johnson, 211.

40. John Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jr., July 23, 1630, in Emerson, *Letters from New England*, 50.

41. John Eliot to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Sept. 18, 1633, in Emerson, *Letters from New England,* 105.

42. Letter by an anonymous Puritan, early 1637, in Emerson, *Letters from New England*, 214.

over "able men in agriculture" and several head of cattle. He also claims that the soil is relatively fertile but can be made "exceeding good with manure."[43] Puritans' intent for the land was to make it productive. Though their improvements altered the environment of New England, most say for the worst, Puritans did not doubt they were making proper use of the land.

Puritans interpreted their use of the land as an attempt to regain the original purpose of the natural world. William Hubbard writes, "It was order that gave beauty to this goodly fabric of the world…Order is as the soul of the universe, the life and health of things natural."[44] The order evident in a successful harvest revealed beauty and stimulated the praise of God. Samuel Hieron wrote three mealtime prayers which portray Puritans as thankful recipients of God's gifts in the form of harvested food. One prayers begins, "Sanctify, O Lord, unto us the use of these Thy creatures."[45] Hieron clearly praises God for the produce of a harvest, but he also gives a tremendous amount of respect to nature by asking God to make him worthy of what he is about to eat. Cotton Mather expands the Puritans' respect for nature by writing, "The earth praises God when it is fruitful and multiplying."[46] In this instance humans are not required for the praise of God. Puritan respect for nature must have been substantial if they believed it could praise God by itself.

For Puritans, nature was tangible evidence of God. God both manifested himself in nature and exhorted Puritans through nature. Consequently Puritans perceived God as existing in

---

43. Edmund Browne to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Sept. 7, 1638, in Emerson, *Letters from New England*, 225 and 227.

44. William Hubbard, "The Happiness of a People," in Miller, *The American Puritans*, 117.

45. Samuel Hieron, "A help unto devotion," in Emerson, *Letters from New England*, 186.

46. Cotton Mather, 150.

close proximity to them. In order to use the land as they believed God intended, they sought to bring order to the environment of New England. While they altered New England, they did so out of a desire to improve the land and preserve its use for future generations. Though it has been argued, with ample supporting evidence, that Puritans had a harsh view of nature, it is also true that their attitude toward the natural world could be tender, respectful, or even wildly enthusiastic. Perhaps the mischaracterization of the Puritansí view of the natural world has been created by the stereotypes of stodginess and joylessness that have hounded the Puritans since their arrival in the New World. Hopefully Matherís vegetables and Sewallís Squirrel Island, along with other charming examples, will help erode both of these characterizations.

Berdache Identity and "Third Gender" Ideology

Andy Crooks

Scholarship pertaining to berdache Indians has evolved significantly throughout the past century as North American historians have struggled to identify the concept of a "mixed gender" or "third gender" ideology. Labeled as homosexuals or transvestites by a majority of 19th and early 20th century Euro-American anthropologists and missionaries, berdaches were Native American men and women who adopted, typically from a very young age, the dress and lifestyle of the opposite sex. The term "berdaches," which was coined in the 16th century by French-Canadian fur traders, originates from the French language and literally translates into "man woman" or "would-be woman." Contemporary scholars believe that the first witnesses of third gender identity labeled berdaches in this manner due to their adoption of women's dress and social duties.[1] It is important to note that while berdaches assumed all mannerisms of the opposite sex, including sexual relations with members of their same biological sex, they were not deemed "homosexual" in the Western sense of the term, by their tribes. They were seen, rather, as being part of a separate gender, or third gender.

1. Charles Callendar and Lee Kochems, "The North American Berdache," *Current Anthropology,* (August-October 1983): 443

The seemingly simple task of defining the term "berdache" has led to disagreement amongst scholars. In attempts to locate an English synonym for the word, assimilation-era anthropologists often used the terms homosexual, transvestite, hermaphrodite, or transsexual to describe berdache identity in conditions recognizable to Western cultures.[2] Such attempts served no valuable purpose because they assumed binary and essentialist ways of thinking in regards to gender and sexuality.

As Western influence on North American tribes increased during the nineteenth century, Euro-Americans became alarmed by the presence of berdaches in various tribes across the continent. Seen through the eyes of missionaries and agents as "abominable" or "evil", berdaches quickly became a primary target in Euro-American policies of assimilation.[3] Inherently challenging in the study of berdaches is the absence of an equivalent being in Western society. Berdaches were unique to Native American cultures and signified a gender structure completely foreign to that of the Euro-American world. There is little historical evidence regarding the presence of berdaches in North America, and the material that survives is largely tainted by Western perceptions of homosexuality. The value in uncovering the essence of Native American berdaches lies, therefore, not only in their absence from the historical record, but in the necessity to honor them with a historically unbiased assessment rather than one based on preconceived Western mores and judgments. This essay attempts to provide balanced analysis to berdache history by not only evaluating the impact of Western influence on sexual minorities, but by relaying the diversity of berdache acceptance through in-depth surveys of tribal customs and individual berdaches.

Early research pertaining to berdaches often implies that homosexuality connotes barbarism and savagery. In 1937,

2. Callendar and Kochems, 443.

3. Ibid., 453.

anthropologist George Devereux presented a hypothesis equating berdaches to homosexuals. Devereux used the two terms interchangeably, arguing that North American Mohave Indians recognized berdache status to protect homosexuals, while also creating advantages for Mohave society. In requiring homosexuals to dress in women's clothing, he argues, the Mohave prevented the possibility of berdaches misrepresenting themselves in order to seduce and recruit unsuspecting heterosexuals.[4] Devereux's flawed analysis, in which he comments solely on the physical and sexual elements of berdaches and portrays homosexuals as uncontrollable and animalistic beings, exemplifies one instance of Euro-Americans misinterpreting third gender ideology due to their own preconceived notions pertaining to sex and gender.

Many questions posed by scholars regarding berdaches, such as their roles in society and their integration from man or woman to mixed gendered, are rather difficult to assess on a grand scale due to the influences of time and space. Cultural and geographical differences among various tribes across the continent account, in part, for the disparities in berdache acceptance and behavior in the many tribes. Furthermore, tribes were influenced by the Western world at different times and to various degrees allowing some tribes to maintain traditional customs and ideologies longer than others.

Western influence and the history of Euro-American relations with Native American tribes have also aided in explaining the diversity in attitudes toward berdaches.[5] In some tribes, berdaches were widely accepted and they held a prominent social status. In others, they were frowned upon.[6] As Western contact increased and policies of assimilation began to alter tribal dogmas and social attitudes, acceptance of berdache decreased, and

4. Callender and Kochems, 454.

5. Ibid., 447.

6. Ibid., 453.

consequently, so did their visible presence in tribal society. While berdaches are known to have existed in all corners of the continent at one time or another, they became rare and absent from many tribes, suggesting growing discomfort and rejection towards them.

The discrepancies in berdache acceptance and treatment have posed a challenge in Western research and scholarship of a third gender ideology. Many early scholars were quick to assume an analysis of one berdache or tribe to be representative of all Indian tribes and berdaches. Consensus among contemporary scholars however, points to the more plausible theory that disapproval or rejection of berdaches did not begin to develop until the arrival of Euro-American settlers. In what is considered a revolutionary essay on berdache identity in North America, Charles Callendar's and Lee Kochems' article "The North American Berdaches" attempts to emphasize the diversity of berdaches across North America by highlighting the varying views of mix gendered beings and the influence Western mores had on Indian social customs:

> The attitudes toward berdaches reported for North American cultures varied from awe and reverence through indifference to scorn and contempt. We contribute this diversity to declining esteem, influences by Western views…Attitudes toward berdaches may have varied in the past. …We hold that statements ascribing low status to berdaches generally represent shifts away from older and very different views.[7]

Callendar and Kochems contend that the social status of most berdaches was respectable, especially in pre-contact Indian

7. Callender and Kochems, 453.

societies. Similarly, Anthropologist William Willard Hill, citing the Winnebago as an example, observes that, "most informants felt that a berdache was at one time a highly honored and respectable person, but that the Winnebago had become ashamed of the custom because the white people thought it was amusing or evil."[8] Further adding to the scholarship on Winnebago berdaches is researcher Nancy Oestereich Lurie, who also blames inner-tribal disapproval on Euro-American influence. She suggests:

> Most informants felt that the berdaches was at one time a highly honored and respected person, but that the Winnebago had become ashamed of the custom because the white people thought it was amusing or evil. By the time the last known berdache attempted to fulfill the role, his brothers threatened to kill him if he 'put on the skirt'[9]

Lurie acknowledges the impact Western policies of assimilation had on tribal customs and ideologies, suggesting that berdaches became unpopular in Winnebago society only upon the presence of Western influence.

In his article "That is my Road: the Life and Times of a Crow Berdache," Will Roscoe illustrates the impact Western influence had on berdache acceptance and status in his account of Finds Them and Kills Them, otherwise known as Woman Jim, a Crow berdache. As Roscoe describes him, Woman Jim was biologically and sexually a man but socially a woman: he was "a man who specialized in women's work, wore women's clothing, and formed emotional and sexual relationships with non-berdache

8. William Willard Hill, "The Status of the Hermaphrodite and Transvestite in Navaho culture," *American Anthropologist*, (1935): 273-279 (As cited in Callendar and Kochems, 453).

9. Nancy O. Lurie, "Winnebago Berdache," *American Anthropologist*, (1953) 55: 708-712.

men."[10] Similarly, Roscoe describes Woman Jim's and other Crow bedaches' struggles against Western agents of assimilation. Agents and missionaries often disapproved of the acceptance and status of third gender beings, and some attempted "to crush the viciousness" through physical violence.[11] Following preliminary attempts to physically rid the Crow Indians of their berdaches, Euro-American agents unleashed a "campaign of morals" to mete out all "moral sins". Woman Jim was not able to escape assimilation, and agents tried to force him to wear men's clothing, but the Crows resisted, claiming that it was "against his nature."[12]

In contrast with the Winnebago, Woman Jim received support from his Chief and fellow tribe members throughout the process of assimilation. The Crows continued to view berdaches as "integral, even necessary members of their society." The tribe passionately believed that it was a chief's duty to protect his tribe's berdaches.[13] It is easy to understand from the case of the Crows and of Woman Jim how Euro-American agents and missionaries were often able to turn a tribe against their berdaches. After all, Indian victims of assimilation were taught that gender and sex were binary and essentialist categories that could not be altered or transformed.

To this day, scholars remain divided regarding the question of how an individual became berdache. Anthropologists have hypothesized two views regarding this journey: one secular and the other religious.[14] The secular view suggests that children

---

10. Will Roscoe, "That is my Road: The Life and Times of a Crow Berdache," *Montana; The Magazine of Western History* 40:1 (Winter 1990): 47.

11. Roscoe, "That is my Road," 54.

12. Robert H. Lowie, "Social Life of the Crow Indians," *Anthropological papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 9(2) (1912): 226. (As cited in Roscoe, "That is my Road," 54).

13. Roscoe, "That is my Road," 54.

14. Callendar and Kochems, 451.

became berdaches when they showed interest in the occupations and lifestyles of the opposite sex, spent most of their time with them, and were accepted by them as members of their social group. The religious view suggests that berdaches took a supernatural role and were formally confirmed as berdache in a "vision-quest" ceremony, which allowed for the tribe to officially recognize the transformation of the berdache into a "third gender" category.[15] Both views contend that berdaches were formally integrated into society as young children and usually became third gender by choice rather than by force.

Many tribes had unique ceremonies and attitudes concerning integration of berdache into tribal society. One unique and rare integration technique is seen among the Papago Indians, who used a formal test to determine whether a young boy who took interest in women's work was fit to become a berdache. The Papago would put the child in a disclosed setting containing both basketry material and a bow and arrow. By choosing the basketry material, the boy ensured his future as a berdache.[16] What is important are not necessarily the integration techniques themselves but the social implications linked with the particular ceremony or test a tribe used to integrate berdaches. The social status and tribal acceptance of a berdache could often be determined by analyzing the integration process: those integrated through religious ceremonies were usually highly regarded, while those integrated through secular ceremonies usually had to prove they merited a place in society.

Tribes that used the religious view often held their berdache in high esteem and regarded them as supernatural beings. In his article, "The Berdache and the Illinois Indian Tribe," Raymond Hauser relates accounts given by European explorer Father Jacques

15. Raymond Hauser, "The Berdache and the Illinois Indian Tribe during the Last Half of the Twentieth Century," *Ethnohistory*, (1990): 47.

16. Callender and Kochems, 451.

Marquette concerning the Illinois berdaches and their seemingly supernatural roles in society. In his attempt to describe berdaches, Marquette strongly implies that they received visions and were seen to have a supernatural role in society. He declares: "they pass for Manitous - that is to say, for Spirits."[17] According to Marquette, the Illinois held berdaches in high regard. For example, they were often given special duties at religious ceremonies because they were considered to have supernatural powers. [18] Noting that several other tribes considered berdaches to have supernatural powers, Hauser suggests that tribes who adhered to the religious view of berdache integration placed their berdaches in high esteem and often accredited them with powerful traits, and therefore, powerful positions in tribal society. Berdache integration policies often signified a tribes' perceived relationship with the berdaches in their society.

The more fruitful and effective studies of Berdaches have come from close, intimate analyses that avoid generalizations. Some contemporary scholars of berdaches, including Will Roscoe and Claude Schaeffer, have excelled at implementing this method of studying berdaches. Their extensive research focuses primarily on the individual berdache. Roscoe studied We'Wha of the Zuni and Schaeffer studied Watter-Sitting Grizzly of the Kutenai. For Roscoe and Schaeffer, comprehending the mentality of a berdache is the most efficient way to understanding what third gender identity truly entails. We'Wha and Water-sitting Grizzly do not represent all berdaches, and the Zuni and Kutenai treatment of third gender beings does not represent how all Indian tribes treated berdaches; nevertheless, intimate, extensive research, as opposed to generalized and stereotypical accounts, has produced a more accurate and meaningful understanding of what it meant to be berdache in America.

17. Hauser, 47.

18. Ibid.

While the majority of scholarship and correspondence regarding berdaches has focused on male berdaches, the preponderance of Indian societies who acknowledged berdache identity as a "third gender" status accepted it for both men and women. One unique but popular case of a female berdache is recalled by several scholars, including Beverly Hungry Wolf and the aforementioned Claude Schaeffer. Water-sitting Grizzly became a well-known berdache in the Kutenai tribe, which was located just west of the Rocky Mountains. Eventually she became one of the more famous Indian women of the era.[19] In 1808, Water-sitting Grizzly encountered David Thompson, a one-time member of the Hudson's Bay Fur Trading Company and a Western explorer, and his servant Boisverd. After establishing a relationship with the servant, Water-sitting Grizzly and Boisverd married and were taken in by Thompson. Upon marriage, Water-sitting Grizzly became widely known as Madame Boisverd. After only a short time, Madame Boisverd's behavior uncharacteristically radicalized, prompting Thompson to send her back to her people, subsequently ending her marriage to Boisverd.[20] Upon returning to her tribe, Madame Boisverd quickly informed her community that her husband had transformed her into a man through an operation unknown to Indians. In recounting the story to her relatives, she is credited as saying, "I'm a man now. We Indians did not believe the white people possessed such power from the supernaturals. I can tell you that they do, greater power than we have. They changed my sex while I was with them. No Indian is able to do that."[21] Following her return, Madame Boisverd began to adopt a

19. Beverly Hungry Wolf, *The Ways of my Grandmothers* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980) p. 69.

20. Claude Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache: Courier, Guide, Prophetess, and Warrior," *Ethnohistory*, (1990): 196.

21. David Thompson, "David Thompson Papers" (Ontario Archives, Toronto, 1807-1811) (As cited in Schaeffer, 197).

man's lifestyle by dressing in men's clothing, carrying a gun, and even choosing another woman as her wife. Interestingly enough, Madame Boisverd was accepted as a berdache by her tribe and became highly regarded as an esteemed guide and peacemaker, allowing her to avoid the sedentary role of women in Kutenai society.[22] While in some Indian tribes berdaches were seen as outcasts and were scorned for their sexual and gender preferences, Madame Boisverd and the Kutenai exemplified the diversity of reactions to berdache among North American Indian tribes. The Kutenai held Madame Boisverd in very high esteem. They marveled at her abilities as warrior and peacemaker, and they believed in the supernatural tendencies she claimed to have due to her status as berdache.

In his book *The Zuni Man-Woman*, Will Roscoe recalls the story of We'Wha, and in so doing, presents one of the most extensive and meaningful studies of a berdache yet generated. In prefacing his book, Roscoe acknowledges his extensive use of the research and field notes of Matilda Coxe Stevenson, the wife, and later widow, of James Stevenson, the official leader of an anthropological expedition aimed at unmasking the Zuni tribe.[23] Before attempting to analyze We'Wha's lifestyle and thus comprehend what it meant to be a berdache, Roscoe had to unravel Stevenson's story and her peculiar relationship with We'Wha throughout her adult years.[24] It is due to Stevenson's primary source accounts that such an all-encompassing portrayal of We'Wha has been made possible.

The product of a middle-class Washington D.C. family,

22. Schaeffer, 197.

23. Will Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 8.

24. While We'Wha would have been referred to as a man in the Western sense of the term, his tribe viewed him as neither a man nor a woman. Nonetheless, his tribe referred to him using feminine pronouns. I refer to We'Wha using feminine pronouns out of respect to his true identity.

Stevenson was one of few nineteenth century women fortunate enough to receive a formal education. Cognizant of her husband's research regarding the Zunis, Stevenson became one of the leading authorities on the tribe after the death of her husband in 1888.[25] As a widow and childless anthropologist, Stevenson was a rare breed in the American west because she defied gender role expectations. Consequently, she was treated as though she was a man by several Zunis. In her field notes, Stevenson described an occasion during a religious offering in which the Zunis presented prayer sticks as offerings to their ancestors. The men were to offer prayer sticks to the sun, while the women would offer prayer sticks to the moon, but Stevenson was instructed to do as the men did. She recalled the Zunis telling her "though you are a woman you have a head and a heart like a man, and you work like a man, and you must therefore make offerings such as men make."[26] Stevenson's unique status among the Zunis allowed her the opportunity to form a profound relationship with the Zunis' most highly regarded berdache, We'Wha.

Stevenson's acceptance of We'Wha was certainly the exception in the 1890's, not the rule. Alexander Stephen, an anthropologist who lived among the Hopis in the 1890's, noted in his journal in 1893, "We'Wha is a man, but of the abominable sort known to the Hopi as *ho'va*, to the Navaho as *nutlehi*, to the Zuni as *lah'ma* i.e. hermaphrodite."[27] Furthermore, Western agent and school-teacher Mary Dissette labeled We'Wha "a creature," while another Euro-American observer saw her as "one of those unspeakable professional perverts connected with the Phallic

25. Roscoe, 9.

26. Matilda Coxe Stevenson, "Zuni Indians: Their Mythology, Esoteric Fraternities, and Ceremonies," (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904) 119. (As cited in Roscoe, 9-10).

27. Alexander M. Stephen, *The Hopi Journals of Alexander M. Stephen*. Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, vol. 23. (New York, 1936) 276. (As cited in Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 25)

ceremonies in primitive cults."[28]

In the 1890's, the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs began to strengthen its policy of assimilation; one of the objectives of this policy was to alter Zuni values and mores regarding gender and sexuality.[29] While We'Wha remained a valued member of the Zuni community, pressure from the outside challenged the Zunis' and Stevenson's perceptions of berdaches. Throughout her friendship with We'Wha, Stevenson never pressured her to conform to western binary views of sexuality; in fact, she expressed approval and understanding of We'Wha by always referring to her using female pronouns. Stevenson's relationship with We'Wha signified the unlikeliest of friendships; during a decade of intense assimilation and Americanization, We'Wha and Stevenson established a bond that undermined gender, race and sexual customs of the era, thereby paving the way for a rare intimate portrait of a 19th century berdache.

Stevenson sheds nothing but positive light on "the Zuni girl", leading many scholars and observers to suggest, without proof or substance, that Stevenson and We'Wha had an intimate relationship.[30] Her observations of We'Wha are intriguing in that they portray her as a superior being in many aspects of life, including physically, intellectually, socially, and religiously,

> She was perhaps the tallest person in Zuni; certainly the strongest, both mentally and physically…She possessed an indomitable will and an insatiable thirst for knowledge…Owing to her bright mind and excellent memory, she was called upon by her clan when a long prayer had to be repeated or a grace was to be offered over a feast. In fact she was the chief personage

28. Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 194

29. Ibid., 98.

30. Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 49.

> on many occasions. On account of her physical strength all the household work was left for her . . . [31]

According to Stevenson, We'Wha was a valued member of society; her physical and intellectual strengths were put to good use, whether dealing with domestic labor or religious rituals. Judging by the depiction of We'Wha by both Roscoe and Stevenson, the social rank of berdaches in Zuni society, and particularly that of We'Wha, was elevated. Berdaches were valued members of society in that they were raised according to the Zuni understanding of a third gender being- one who was physically strong, intellectually superior, and spiritually advanced.[32] Further evidence of the approval and appreciation of berdaches, and especially of We'Wha, presents itself in Stevenson's account of the Zunis' reaction to We'Wha's death in1896.

> We'Wha's death was regarded as a calamity, and the remains lay in state for an hour or more, during which time not only members of the clans to which she was allied, but the rain priests and theurgists and many others, including children, viewed them. When the blanket was finally closed, a fresh outburst of grief was heard, and then all endeavored to suppress their sobs, for the aged foster mother had fallen unconscious to the floor.[33]

The reaction to We'Wha's death by her tribe is significant

31. Stevenson, "Zuni Indians", 310-311. (As cited in Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 47-48).

32. Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 52.

33. Stevenson, "Zuni Indians," 312-313. (As cited in Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 123).

not only of the respect and acceptance she garnered, but also of the success the Zuni gained in resisting policies of assimilation. While We'Wha was able to maintain her social status in Zuni society, American contact and subsequent policies of assimilation had an enormous impact on the presence of berdaches in Native American tribes and ultimately led to the virtual disappearance of berdaches.

While analyses of Native American berdaches in recent scholarship have focused primarily on the implications of life as a berdache, research pertaining to berdache identity has not always focused on unraveling the roles and customs of this unique third gender being; rather, early scholarship often consisted of misunderstandings and oversimplifications. It has become apparent through in-depth research of Berdaches that mixed gender beings were widely accepted throughout North America prior to Western influence. The presence of berdaches in America slowly disintegrated as Euro-Americans moved westward and the federal government implemented policies of assimilation. Upon the close of the frontier in the last decade of the 19th century, berdaches had all but disappeared from Native American tribes.

Scholarship pertaining to Native American berdaches has been transformed since the close of the frontier and the end of Euro-American policies of assimilation, but there continues to exist a sense of discomfort regarding the subject of sexuality, and of homosexuality in particular. While scholars have come to reject the notion of essentialist and binary categories of gender and sexuality, there remains an unwillingness to accept sexual minorities as equal members of society. American relations with Native American tribes have also been transformed significantly, and Native Americans, who still struggle to gain a proper place in society, are nonetheless protected under the law as free and equal citizens of America. Contrastingly, homosexuality remains stigmatic and the federal government, through the implementation of laws such as "don't ask don't tell" and "Proposition 8," continues to relay the message that homosexuals are not fully welcome in American

society. Berdaches' history highlights the struggle for acceptance and equality in America and suggests reluctance on the part of Euro-Americans to accept sexual minorities as equals. The study of berdachehood offers not only valuable insight into the mores and ideologies of individual Indian tribes before Western contact, but offers also an important instrument for uncovering the core of American identity during the decades of westward expansion and Indian contact.

About The Editors:

Taylor Barnes is a senior History major and Gender and Sexuality Studies minor from Saint Louis,MO. Currently, she is finishing her honors thesis, "An Unprecedented Conversation: The Limits of President Clinton's Advisory Board on Race." After graduation, she will be attending Marquette University Law School in order to pursue a career in family law.

Lars Nelson is a Senior History and Religious Studies double major from Shreveport, Louisiana. During his time at Rhodes, Lars has enjoyed his involvement with the ultimate frisbee team, his fraternity and the Honor Council. After Rhodes Lars will teach sixth grade social studies at Freedom Preparatory Academy through Teach For America.

Dougal Cameron is a senior history major and math minor with interests in finance. Outside of classes, he is involved with Rhodes Outdoors and various internships. Over the last four years, he has fcused on U.S. history and recently has become interested in U.S. economic history.

Jane Metters is a senior History major. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta honors society and Alpha Omicron Pi women's fraternity. She serves Rhodes College as the current Media Board Commissioner, as well as a part-time stage manager and production assistant in the McCoy Theatre. She plans to pursue graduate studies in library and archival science.

About The Contributors:

Allie Garris is a junior history major from Narragansett, Rhode Island. This past summer she worked at a camp as a behavior specialist, aiding children with mental and physical disabilities. After graduation she plans on taking a year off to volunteer through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps before entering applying for graduate school.

Daniel Williford, class of 2011, is a French and history double major from Memphis, Tennessee. He is the vice president of the Rhodes College French Club, a participant in the Search Advisory Council, and a member of Phi Alpha Theta. He was also a presenter at the recent Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference hosted by Austin Peay University in Clarksville, Tennessee. Outside of the Rhodes community, Daniel is a volunteer for the Memphis Acoustic Music Association. This summer he will be working as a research fellow for the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies. In addition, Daniel will be spending his junior year at the University of Poitiers in Poitiers, France as a Buckman Scholar.

Graham Gordon is a Senior History major at Rhodes College. If he is not doing homework, he enjoys woodturning, photography, playing the piano, playing any sport, or just playing in general. After he graduates, he plans to go to Uganda with his grandparents and anyone else who wants to go with him. The only other plan he has for the future is growing a really good tomato.

My name is **Robert Anderson Crooks Jr**. I am a senior double major in history and French. Originally from Portland, Oregon, I currently reside in New Haven, Connecticut. I am an active member of Phi Alpha Theta and am also the current president of the French Club on campus. This year has been especially fulfilling thanks to my research partnership with Professor Jeffrey Jackson. I recently presented my research pertaining to berdaches Indians at the biennial Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) Gender and Sexuality Studies Conference. After graduation this spring, I hope to attend law school. But first, I will take a year off from academics to spend time with my family and to recuperate.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Professors Gail Murray and Jeffrey Jackson, who have provided me with tremendous encouragement and moral support throughout my experience at Rhodes. I also need to acknowledge my sisters, because without their support, I would have never been able to write this essay. Thank you for loving me for who I am.

A Culture of Fear: Atomic America
by Allie Garris

The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 changed the world, and more specifically, American Culture. The United States assertion of nuclear supremacy caused a power struggle with the Soviet Union, known as the Cold War. This paper examines the development of the atomic hysteria that consumed Americans during the Cold War, and created a culture based on fear. Through the analysis of newspaper and magazine articles, and civil defense campaigns it is evident that atomic hysteria penetrated every level of American society, beginning in the 1950s.

Culture of Power: Defining an Elite Identity in Post-Revolutionary Haiti
by Daniel Williford

This paper examines how the Haitian elite community, especially mulatto elites, developed a unique cultural identity after independence as a result of its intermediary position between the Haitian rank and file and the outside world. This group combined a fabricated sense of nationality with an affinity for French art and literature in an environment permeated by African influences. Attempting to balance these three cultural components of their society (the Haitian, the French, and the African), elites relied on them all in order to maintain hegemony. The Haitian upper class also used legal and frequently violent means to define its boundaries. Rigid occupational codes officially restricted social mobility while the elite monopoly of education reinforced class division. However, the process of creating an elite identity also involved distinguishing these new elites from their European counterparts by emphasizing their uniquely "Haitian" characteristics and occasionally their African origins. Evidence that the Haitian upper class was gradually solidifying in the years following independence can be found in constitutions, government decrees, treatises by Haitian intellectuals, poetry, and travel accounts written by outsiders.

"O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord!": Puritans, Nature, and God in New England
by Graham Gordon

The ecological sensibility of Puritan settlers in North America is not generally seen in a favorable light. Many historians depict environmental degradation as a result of the Puritans' religious beliefs focusing in particular on the Puritan concept of a "transcendent God." The term "transcendent God" suggests the absence of God in the natural order; however, Puritan belief was more nuanced than this and allowed for the manifestation of the divine in nature. Though Puritans undoubtedly changed and manipulated the environment in which they settled, there is evidence that Puritans respected and even praised the natural order. Hopefully the interpretation of this evidence will provide balance to a discussion of Puritan life that has too often been judgmental.

Berdache Identity and "Third Gender" Ideology
by Andy Crooks

Berdaches were Native American men and women who adopted the dress and gender roles of the opposite sex. Viewed as "third gender" or mixed gender" by their tribes, berdaches were labeled as homosexuals by Western observers. While my research focuses primarily on the attempts of Euro-Americans to denounce berdache identity and to assimilate Native Americans into Western society, a portion of the research is dedicated to comparing the treatment of berdaches during the nineteenth century with overall attempts by Americans throughout the more recent decades to reject homosexuality through violent acts and the denial of equal rights. The fact that homosexuals remain outcasts in contemporary society, and that the topic of homosexuality continues to be met with discomfort and controversy, suggests that the treatment of berdaches by Western agents and missionaries in the 19th century was not completely foreign to the present-day relationship between the American government and the gay and lesbian community.

The value in uncovering the essence of Native American berdaches lies not only in their absence from the historical record, but in the necessity to honor them with a historically unbiased assessment rather than one based on preconceived Western mores and judgments. My essay attempts to provide balanced analysis of berdache history by not only evaluating the impact of Western influence on sexual minorities, but by relaying the diversity of berdache acceptance through in-depth surveys of tribal customs and individual berdaches.