

The background of the cover is a painting of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, there are large, light-colored rocks with tide pools of dark blue water. The middle ground shows a sandy beach with more tide pools. The background features a body of water and a sky filled with large, dramatic clouds in shades of grey, blue, and yellow.

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Artist Statement ~ Lydia Segal

“Ocean Meditations” is based off of a scenic hike my family went on in La Jolla, CA. Originally painted solely for its beauty, I have found new meaning in this piece during quarantine. I see the work as a way to transport the viewer outside of confinement, focusing on the calming waves and divine sunlight rather than the same, mundane rut we face nowadays. “Ocean Meditations” represents both the past and the future. It reflects on a time when we were allowed to embrace the outside world while looking towards a brighter future where we respect all that used to be taken for granted. Through this oil painting, I am able to feel freedom and tranquility in a time that necessitates restrictions and isolation. While it isn’t much, I hope that through art, we are all able to experience some shred of calmness amidst the chaos.”

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Foreword

The Drew Review, Drew University's annual research journal for the undergraduates of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), publishes undergraduate student research from the previous calendar year.

This year, we recieved a total of forty-one submissions and have published ten. Those interested in submitting their work in the future will require a faculty nomination, which must include the author's name and paper title. Alongside the paper, this nomination must be emailed to drewreview@drew.edu, with the author CC'ed on the email.

As we are a double-blind, peer-reviewed journal, all submissions must be emailed without any identifiable information, such as the student's name or the name of the professor for whom the paper was originally written. All images will be published in black and white, and that it is the author's responsibility to ensure that the images are permissible for reproduction under copyright law. All students who submit should expect requests for revisions prior to the board's final decisions for publication.

As always, we are beyond grateful for our faculty advisors, Dr. G. Scott Morgan of the Psychology Department and Dr. Jens Lloyd of the English Department. Their help and support is what ensures The Drew Review's success each year.

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**Zombies, Octopuses, and Qualia: The Quest For a Viable
Theory of Mind**

David Nesterov-Rappoport (CLA 2022)

Abstract

My goal in this paper is to convince the reader that naturalistic dualism is the strongest theory of mind. This will be achieved in three parts. Firstly, I will demonstrate why naturalistic dualism and functionalism are the strongest dualist and physicalist theories, respectively. Next, I will pit the two theories against each other, exposing their weaknesses, strengths, and practical applications, while establishing the stronger theory in the process. Lastly, with naturalistic dualism now established as the strongest theory of mind, I will expand on the theory and offer some of my personal thoughts.

Introducing Naturalistic Dualism and Functionalism

Naturalistic dualism is a branch of epiphenomenalism which postulates that consciousness is a fundamental property of the physical world that cannot be reduced to anything simpler. Pioneered by David Chalmers, the theory's main goal is to revise our conception of the natural world in order to incorporate consciousness as one of its fundamental features. The premise behind this line of thinking is that a viable theory of mind must propose a solution to two distinct, but related problems. First is the question of how cognition is altogether possible - how do our minds acquire, process and generate information in a meaningful way? This is called the "easy" problem of consciousness because there does not seem to be any mystery as to how these processes could be possible within a physical system. In other words, although scientists have not accomplished it yet, there are no conceptual issues with the objective mechanisms of cognition eventually being fully explained with the tools already available to us. However, our mind is not limited to its computational processes. There also exists this qualitative, subjective aspect - how it feels for the subject to be conscious. This is what Chalmers calls the "hard" problem of consciousness - why are the objective mechanisms of cognition accompanied by conscious experience?

Naturalistic dualism is designed with these problems in mind - it acknowledges the clearly physical nature of brain functionality while keeping the mysterious nature of conscious experience in mind. Naturalistic dualists propose that in order to explain consciousness, a "true theory of everything" must be developed. This theory would incorporate two types of fundamental laws - physical, to explain the behavior of physical systems, and psychophysical,

to explain how these systems relate to conscious experience. Chalmers has proposed his view of what primary psychophysical laws could be. His proposal is built on the double-aspect view of information, as put forward by Claude E. Shannon of MIT, who proposed that information in its simplest form is a "set of separate states with a basic structure of similarities and differences between them" [1]. Any given bit of information has an associated physical pattern, and for that information to be contained in something, it must be encoded in that particular fashion. Furthermore, Chalmers proposes that information has two basic aspects - a physical one and an experiential one. On one hand, the physical aspect describes how the information is encoded in physical systems - what basic structure of similarities and differences is needed for this information state to arise. The experiential aspect, on the other hand, is the epiphenomenal state that arises from that particular structure and makes our experience of consciousness possible.

Consequently, the main merit of naturalistic dualism when compared to competing dualist theories is its fundamental agreement with the scientific view of the natural world. Whereas substance dualism, parallelism, and other major dualist theories have to appeal to beyond the physical in order to explain consciousness, naturalistic dualism avoids that drawback. Rather than propose a fundamentally different model of the world, naturalistic dualism simply expands our current understanding within the constraints of the scientific framework. This is not without a historical precedent either, as, in fact, something similar happened in the 19th century. Electromagnetic charge had to be introduced as a new fundamental entity because it could not be explained in simpler terms. Naturalistic dualism does not entail a conflict with the scientific view of the world, thus avoiding the most common pitfall of dualism. This firmly sets the theory aside as

the best of the dualist camp.

Functionalism is the theory of mind which holds that mental states can be explained solely in terms of their causal and dispositional relations to the subject's perceptual input, behavioral outputs, and corresponding internal states. Although functionalism is an umbrella term which refers more so to an intellectual movement than a unified theory, all functionalists share the general belief that minds are defined in terms of the conjoined functionality of their components rather than any specific substance or structure. For this reason, functionalism is the most popular theory of mind amongst cognitive scientists. As succinctly put by David Cole, "functionalism is attractive because it solves certain ontological problems of identity theory while at the same time satisfying the intuitions which made some behavioral analyses of mental states possible" [2].

In other words, functionalism builds on the legacy of behaviorism and succeeds where identity theory fails. Functionalism is similar to behaviorism because both theories focus heavily on the importance of external behavior when studying mental phenomena. Both take mental states out of the subjective, private sphere and allow for them to be studied from the objective, scientific point of view. However, functionalism goes beyond behaviorism and characterizes mental states in terms of their roles in producing behavior, thus granting them the causal efficacy that our intuition demands [3]. Also notable is how functionalism overcomes the chauvinism of identity theory. Since identity theory associates the mind with the human brain, it naturally follows that no other physical structure is capable of hosting a mind. Functionalism avoids that by postulating that mental states are multiply realized, meaning that anything can possess a mind, as long as it is capable of the necessary cognitive feats.

Furthermore, it becomes clear why functionalism is

the strongest of physicalist theories. The main merit of this philosophical framework is its applicability to a wide variety of phenomena. While other physicalist theories end up being too reductive or chauvinistic in their characterizations of the mental, functionalism proposes a definition that strikes a balance between common sense and objective validity. By holding that mental states are multiply realized and characterized in terms of their causal and relational properties, functionalists have developed a simple and useful definition of mental phenomena that is highly attractive to researchers. Although identity theory remains a strong contender, its inapplicability to hypothetical phenomena such as artificial and extraterrestrial intelligence severely limits its usefulness. Functionalism does not face these difficulties and has the additional merit of providing a simple way of testing if something can be said to constitute a mind - something that few other theories of mind have been able to achieve. Through the virtue of its high applicability and simple definitions, functionalism reigns as the best of the physicalist camp.

Comparing the Two Theories

Before we can begin assessing which of the aforementioned theories is stronger, we have to formally outline the benchmark for comparison. I propose the following criteria for deciding how viable a theory of mind is. First, how effectively does the theory explain mental phenomena currently known to us, namely ourselves? Secondly, does the theory allow for hypothetical mental phenomena like artificial intelligence? Third, how conducive is this theory to the objective study of the mind? Fourth, how vulnerable is this theory to thought experiments? And lastly, are there any latent contradictions or inconsistencies within

the theory? In other words, a truly strong theory of mind must (1) adequately explain known mental phenomena, (2) not be chauvinistic, (3) allow for mental phenomena to be studied from a scientific point of view, (4) be conceptually sound, and (5) be internally consistent. Therefore, the theory which satisfies these criteria better than the other will be judged to be the stronger theory.

To begin with, let us compare how effectively naturalistic dualism and functionalism approach existing mental phenomena. According to naturalistic dualism, human and animal brains meet the structural requirements needed for giving rise to information states that produce conscious experience. One flaw we can note about naturalistic dualism is its lack of a solid definition for how a given bit of information has to be encoded. Octopuses, for example, have a unique nervous system that, while being completely alien in its structure, is still capable of many of the same cognitive feats as humans. With three-fifths of the octopus nervous system contained in their tentacles, each arm can be said to constitute an individual mind that is nonetheless fully integrated into a single “self”. The question is - how does naturalistic dualism account for such structurally different minds? If information must be encoded in a highly specific manner for it to give rise to specific information states, then one would expect a general trend in the physical structure of cognitively advanced animals. Octopuses thus stand as a relative outlier, although perhaps when neuroscientists have a better understanding of human and octopus nervous systems, the perceived difference will turn out to be much less drastic than it seems at first glance.

Functionalism does a better job at a shallow level, as its simple definition of mental phenomena adequately covers any being which demonstrates advanced levels of cognition. Octopuses do not pose much of a threat to functionalism,

as despite their neural structure being different, their functionality is the same. The great nemesis of functionalism, however, is qualia - the subjective feeling of being conscious. By approaching the problem of mental phenomena from a shallow perspective, functionalism does not tackle the hard problem of consciousness. This is where naturalistic dualism triumphs over functionalism. By leaving out the subjective feeling of conscious experience, functionalism leaves itself vulnerable to philosophical zombies. These zombies are hypothetical beings that on an external level are identical in their behavior to a human, but lack all associated conscious experience. This zombie would, for example, act as if its in pain when stabbed, but not actually feel the feeling of pain. By the functionalist definition, these beings would constitute a mind, while in reality, they would lack the entire experiential aspect of things. Therefore, the functionalist definition does not seem to capture the entire range of mental phenomena, as it leaves out its qualitative aspect.

At the same time, naturalistic dualism seems to lack an explanation for one of dualism’s worst enemies - mental causation. The issue, recognized since the days of Descartes’s “animal spirits,” is that whenever arguing for a dualist theory of mind, one needs to explain the mechanism through which the physical and the mental interact. Experiences are understood to be an emergent result of physical processes, such as the qualitative feeling of having a nice cup of tea emerging from your nervous system. That, however, does not explain how these qualitative experiences can then have a causal relation to physical actions. If drinking tea produces the epiphenomenal happy feelings which I so vividly associate with it, then how can that feeling cause me to make another cup? For the physicalist camp, the issue of mental causation, something we partake in daily, is much more serious than that of science fictional “zombies.”

This issue, however, is easily explained as simply being a disagreement on definitions. One of the physicalist premises is that all physical effects have physical causes. And if one defines the physical as simply meaning “non-mental,” then it naturally follows that physical effects cannot be caused by mental actions. Naturalistic dualism fundamentally disagrees with this, as it considers mental phenomena to be very much physical in nature. The mental is thus irreducible in the same way that other fundamental forces are, such as electromagnetism. If the physicalist does not demand that electromagnetism be explained in terms of something simpler, then demanding the same of mental phenomena would be unfair. Naturalistic dualism, in fact, accounts for mental causation better than physicalism does, as it still leaves open the possibility of free will. Under the functionalist framework, there is no mental causation at all as mental events are simply caused by physical ones - which is the very definition of determinism. Naturalistic dualism, however, can potentially explain free will as being a feature of mental forces. This does the work functionalism can never achieve, as it explains both the physical and experiential aspects of the aforementioned tea drinking, while also explaining how to bridge the gap between the two. While the functionalist avoids the issue by ignoring the hard problem of consciousness altogether, naturalistic dualism accounts for it and proposes an explanation for how the bridge between the mental and the physical works. Thus, naturalistic dualism accounts for existing phenomena better than functionalism.

When faced with hypothetical phenomena, both theories perform relatively the same and, in fact, their approach to these phenomena reveals enormous similarities in the foundational beliefs of these theories. Although the point of this paper is to compare the two, one cannot make that comparison without acknowledging the similarity between

the theories. All hypothetical mental phenomena are covered sufficiently by both functionalism and naturalistic dualism, as both agree that mental phenomena are multiply realized. This is a consequence of both theories agreeing that cognition can be simplified down to its atomic components with the only difference being what those components are. Machine-functionalism, in particular, can be argued to be almost identical in that sense to naturalistic dualism. Machine-functionalism is a subclass of functionalism, which holds that “functional states [of cognition] are states of some finite-state automaton, or equivalently, of some Turing machine” [4]. In other words, all cognition can be simplified to a Turing machine - the simplest version of a computer. This is effectively how naturalistic dualists define information states in their simplest form - a set of similarities and differences encoded in a physical structure. Furthermore, the two theories are more similar than it may seem at first glance and the similarity of their approach to hypothetical phenomena reveals that.

Next, we have to assess how conducive the two theories are to the objective study of mental phenomena - in other words, how practically useful they are. In this category, naturalistic dualism simply cannot compete, because the theory lacks a concrete scientific theory to support it. The “theory of everything” which naturalistic dualism requires has not been developed yet. However, if that theory is developed at any point in time, then naturalistic dualism would cement itself as the single “true” theory of mind. In the meantime, however, as functionalism is backed up by the scientific community, and is highly conducive for the objective study of the mind, we have to acknowledge it as the more practically useful of the two theories. At the same time, functionalism makes many intellectual sacrifices for the sake of procedural efficiency, and this has its consequences. It is true that

naturalistic dualism lacks a concrete scientific backing, but where it sacrifices in scientific soundness, it gains in internal consistency. Regardless, functionalism is the better theory of mind for studying the mind from an objective viewpoint. However, this advantage could disappear in an instant if naturalistic dualism puts forward a genuine scientific theory to back up their philosophical foundation.

As was noted above, functionalism makes many sacrifices for the sake of being more useful as a theory of mind. These sacrifices have enormous consequences in the conceptual soundness of the theory, and this is revealed through a number of thought experiments. Most

notable of these are Frank Jackson's "Mary's Room" [5] and the inverted spectrum [6] thought experiments. Both strike at the same weakness of functionalism - the fact that physical accounts explain at most the structure and function of something, which is insufficient when trying to explain consciousness, as it does not capture the qualitative aspect of conscious experience. Furthermore, as no physical account can fully explain consciousness, it cannot, therefore, be a strictly physical phenomenon. Consider Mary, a cognitive scientist, who spends her life in a black and white room studying the cognition of color. After years of hard work, she learns virtually everything there is to learn about how our brains perceive and process colors down to the specific neural processes that occur when a particular color is seen. At the same time, she herself has never seen a color. The argument is that if Mary were to leave her lab, she would not be able to identify which color is which, because she has never felt the sensation of the very thing she spent her life studying. The physical research still has not taught the qualia of color - how it feels like to see one. The inverted spectrum thought experiment illustrates the same point. The argument is this - functionalism leaves the possibility that the qualitative states

of the same cognitive functions could be drastically different between different people. For functionalism, it does not matter if one person sees the qualia of blue and the other the qualia of red, as long as they act as if they are seeing green. However, the two people would have drastically different experiences of the color even if the function is the same. From these thought experiments, it can be seen how physical accounts of minds do not seem to cover their phenomenal aspects and, therefore, mental phenomena cannot be reduced to their outward function. Naturalistic dualism does not face any of these difficulties because of the very same sacrifices the theory made in terms of its objective soundness. The theoretical foundation of naturalistic dualism dictates that the study of the mind must be done from two fronts - the physical and the phenomenal. Consequently, naturalistic dualism is more conceptually sound than functionalism, and is notably less vulnerable to thought experiments.

Furthermore, the biggest advantage of naturalistic dualism when compared to functionalism is its internal consistency and conceptual soundness. This comes at the price of sacrificing a great deal of objective validity, and puts a lot of weight on a hypothetical theory that has not been developed yet. Regardless, the theory gains immensely in its ability to describe the entire range of known mental phenomena. By splitting mental phenomena into their physical and phenomenal parts, naturalistic dualism has created a theory that has the real potential of one day fully explaining the mystery of consciousness. Functionalism is not without its merits, as currently, it is the best theory for the objective study of consciousness. However, functionalism is more of a stepping stone than a full-fledged theory. It does an amazing job of providing a useful framework for today's researchers, but it simply does not suffice as a true theory of mind. The same is true of behaviorism. Functionalism is

an intellectual tool for getting closer to solving the mystery of consciousness, but not the final solution itself. At the same time, naturalistic dualism is still in its infantile stages and the theory must be developed further for researchers to start taking note. Regardless, naturalistic dualism is the philosophically stronger of the two theories and given time it may very well become the first true theory of everything.

The True Scale of Minds

I would like to outline some of the intellectual problems I believe exist in conventional philosophy of mind approaches. It is my belief that these problems have not been properly acknowledged by mainstream theories of mind and yet they are crucially relevant to the issue at hand.

The first problem is the rationally unfounded belief that cognitively advanced systems exist as self-contained, isolated entities. I believe that it is severely misguided to postulate that a mind is an individual. For example, each human mind is seen as an isolated entity, whose cognitive processes are limited to the person. This is a very understandable belief, as Western culture is largely built on the notion of individuality and personal agency. However, just because a belief is held by many does not mean it is true. Thus, I would argue that there is no rational foundation behind the belief in mental individuality. Consider these facts if this seems like an unreasonable claim. First, humans do not truly become “humans” unless properly socialized. There have been a number of documented cases of children being raised by animals. Those of them that were in the wild when they were young and were not socialized by humans during their crucial developmental phases never recovered and could not be integrated into society. These children, although human biologically, were not actually human because they

lacked a crucial component of humanity - a connection to the larger collective. Because of this, they were not capable of any of the cognitive feats that are commonly associated with humans. Interestingly enough, all animals that exhibit advanced levels of cognition (apes, elephants, dolphins, and crows to name a few) are highly social animals with a complex communal structure. Another fascinating trend seems to be that the more advanced the animal is cognitively, the more linguistic capacities it exhibits. In other words, there seems to be a strong connection between collective cohesiveness and cognitive capacity. It seems as if minds do not exist in isolation, with sociability and language being necessary prerequisites of advanced cognition. The belief in mental individuality is thus misguided and false. To accurately capture the nature of mental phenomena one has to acknowledge that they never exist in isolation.

The second problem is a continuation of the first. The premise for this problem is the fact that both functionalism and naturalistic dualism entail the extended cognition theory [7]. This theory is the belief that cognitive processes extend outside of one’s head. In other words, we think not only with our brain but with the things around us. For example, using a calculator is a literal expansion of your cognitive faculties because, while you are using it, the calculator is a part of your cognitive network. In functionalist terms, the calculator becomes a functional component of your cognition. In naturalistic dualism terms, the calculator is temporarily a part of the information state that gives rise to your cognition. Consequently, cognitive processes are not factually contained to the individual, yet mainstream philosophers of mind still consider the individual the focal point of their inquiries.

Let us reconcile this idea with the problem that was outlined earlier. The strongest physicalist and dualist theories both imply extended cognition as a part of their theoretical

framework. This means that minds expand outwardly, using their environment as facilitators for cognitive processes. Next, it is a clearly observable trend that cognitively advanced animals are also highly organized socially. Lastly, we know that Earth's most cognitively advanced species, ourselves, never achieves high levels of cognition if isolated from the larger human collective. The conclusion I draw from this is that we do not think as individuals - we think as a collective. Our brains are parts of a larger network, the scale of which is simply incomprehensible from our viewpoint. However, this becomes obvious when one looks at the behavior of large human collectives. Cities, for example, behave as intelligent entities, whose agency is not dictated by any individual but rather by the cumulative cognitive processing of all its members. As per the functionalist and the naturalistic-dualist definition, each city is, in fact, a mind. If an individual human is akin to a single neuron, language is the equivalent of the connections between neurons. Without that connection, the single cell cannot achieve anything - only when connected to the rest of the network does it assume its expected cognitive functionality. The same is true of humans - although we credit ourselves with being highly rational and capable of great cognitive feats, in reality, we cannot achieve great cognitive feats by ourselves. We exist as parts of a larger entity and most of our cognitive abilities are consequences of that. Humans are a lot more similar to ants. Each of us lives a dream where they are the central player, one making their own choices and thinking for themselves. But the harsh reality of it is that we are a part of an enormous cognitive network that spans billions of other humans and we are, never minding the cheesiness of the line, just cogs in a machine. Consequently, to accurately capture the nature of our mental faculties, we must acknowledge our place in a larger-than-ourselves cognitive network and stop viewing minds as self-

contained entities. To view minds as isolated and individual is misguided and creates an understanding of the mind that does not accurately reflect reality.

Furthermore, I believe that the study of mental phenomena up to this day has grossly ignored the social and cultural aspects of cognition, seeing them as results of cognition rather than their foundation. Sociability, culture, and language are not the product of cognition - they are the very foundation of it. Our brains are indeed capable of individual cognition, but only if properly socialized and supplied with the information necessary for that cognition. Our minds only truly become minds when they are a part of a larger cognitive network. Currently, philosophers of mind are studying a single neuron (the individual) while ignoring the brain (larger collective). Only when researchers acknowledge the importance of collective thinking, cultural cognizing, and extended cognition, will the true picture of mental phenomena start coming together.

Modeling Reality

Another big problem with mainstream theories of mind is their seeming lack of focus on how cognition actually works. This partly makes sense because these theories are largely metaphysical in spirit, but, regardless, I do not think that one can adequately study the mind without digging deeper into the processes that make it possible. The best attempt at this was done by Immanuel Kant. While his view is rarely acknowledged by philosophers of mind. Kant's transcendental doctrine of the elements is a rough sketch of how cognitive entities function [8].

The split between sensibility and understanding is a valid and relevant way of looking at how a mind functions. The argument I want to make in light of the previous section

is that Kant has left out one crucial detail in his framework - the third transcendental source of knowledge, which I will be calling sociality.

In my view, sociality accounts for ninety percent of the information available to us on a daily basis, if not more. Consider how many of the notions you believe to be true have been acquired through your personal experience and how much of it was given to you by your environment. Therefore, sociality is a crucially important aspect of our cognition. Understanding and sensibility account for how our brain functions in an individual sense, but we have already made it clear that the individual perspective is not sufficient. Sociality is what connects us to the larger collective and allows us to cognize at a scale that would be impossible otherwise. Language is the primary tool of sociality. Understanding uses categories to conceptualize things, sensibility uses space and time to perceive the external world, and sociality uses language to connect our cognitive faculties to the social cognitive network. Connecting to that network is what enables all high-level cognition through virtue of supplying our minds with the following things. First, it grants us access to the knowledge accumulated by humanity in the past. Secondly, it allows us to quickly test our hypothesis against other cognitive agents. Third, it expands our cognitive faculties to incorporate the people around us, giving our minds more computing power to solve problems. Without these things, our minds would simply be too limited to achieve all the cognitive feats we readily associate with humanity. Culture is a crucial component of our cognition and its importance must not be underplayed.

To summarize my thoughts, this is the view of mental phenomena that I propose. To begin with, there are three levels to cognition. The first level is the physical structure that makes the physical processes of cognition possible. In

human terms, this is our neural structure. The second level is the individual scale, or in other words, the brain. The brain is an emergent structure that is more than the sum of its parts and it is capable of many computational processes. However, while isolated, the capabilities of a brain are restricted by the information it has access to and its own computational strength. The third level is the social cognitive network. The social cognitive network is an emergent structure composed of a large number of individual components and capable of intelligent action at a large scale. This network is capable of storing enormous amounts of information, organizing itself with incredible efficiency, and processing information at a scale impossible at the second level. This third level is made possible by sociality; the third faculty of our minds. Sociality is made possible by language and it is what is responsible for supplying our minds with “working assumptions” - facts about the world that allow us to effectively cooperate with others and contribute to social cognitive networks. Such networks are what has made things like the moon landing possible. No individual has ever designed a rocket or made a scientific discovery - all large-scale cognitive feats are conducted by cognitive collectives and not individuals. But what about Newton and Leibniz creating calculus all by themselves? Yes, individuals are capable of processing a lot of information by themselves, but consider the amount of resources and knowledge that were supplied to these thinkers by the society around them. Their achievement is no less impressive due to this fact, but it does provide a crucial perspective on how complex cognitive feats are made possible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have established a number of things. First, naturalistic dualism is the philosophically soundest modern theory of mind. Secondly, conventional theories of mind do not properly acknowledge the social aspect of cognition due to their misguided belief in mental individuality. Lastly, the cognitive faculty of sociality is what makes advanced levels of cognition possible by organizing cognitive agents and facilitating the flow of information through social cognitive networks.

Endnotes

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"Something Hidden": A Study of the Sacred Materiality of Sixth to Twelfth Century Byzantine Icons

Kirstin Waldmann (CLA 2020)

The theologian St. John of Damascus (675 – 749CE) wrote in his most influential treatise *On Holy Images*, that "every image is a revelation and representation of something hidden."¹ His words, written in the midst of a tumultuous battle over religious iconography, portray well the complex role that the image has performed within the Christian tradition. As debated a practice as it was maintained, the venerational use of imagery was a vital facet of Christian worship. Just as expressions of beauty were created by the devout to praise the unseen God from which they believed man was modelled, opponents viewed such expressions as harkening back to the days of paganistic idolization. In spite of conflict, imagery of the divine was pervasive. It permeated houses of worship and the home, along with the rest of the cultural environs. Believers would engage in intimate contact with such imagery, which prompted protest by other factions of the devout. With such a potent influence on human behavior, it would not be outlandish to suggest that throughout Christendom and its eventful history, the only thing to rival the believer's religious fervor was the fervid desire to depict the invisible almighty at which their ardor was directed. As the faith grew, many art forms developed and were appropriated to achieve this ambition, built upon influences carried by the Christian Church from its inception. Among these approaches, perhaps there

1 John of Damascus, "On Holy Images," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, *Fordham University*. Published originally and trans. by Mary H. Allies (London, Thomas Baker, 1898), 10–17. St. John of Damascus, or as he was also known, John Damascene, was a prominent biblical scholar and monk whose writings on behalf of the veneration of icons played an immense role within the theological debate of the Iconoclastic Controversy.

has not existed one so prominent or contested as that of the icon.

The icon, derived from the Greek ‘eikon,’ is a term most commonly associated in the Western art historical canon with images of religious figures, primarily Christ, immortalized in a variety of genres including portraits, scenes, and allegorical situations.² What we deem as the archetypal ‘Christian icon’ is seen as having originated within the Byzantine Empire as early as the fourth century CE.³ An amalgam of classical and regional artistic customs, the icon is seen to possess a performative quality in that it serves as a divine aperture, a portal granting access between the believer and the heavenly omnipotent — the “something hidden” to which John Damascene alluded.⁴ This spiritual gateway is facilitated primarily through the icon’s humanlike portrayal of the divine, as well as the medium in which the icon is executed. Christian art and tradition recognize a significant power in medium, and its metamorphic qualities.⁵ Despite the pro-

2 Annabel Wharton, “Icon, Idol, Fetish, and Totem,” in *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium (Studies presented to Robin Cormack)*, ed. by Anthony Eastmond and Liz James, Et al. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 4.

3 Robin Cormack, *Icons*. (London: The British Museum Press, 2007), 26.

4 John of Damascus, “On Holy Images,” *Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University*. Published originally and trans. by Mary H. Allies (London, Thomas Baker, 1898), 10-17.

5 Caroline Walker Bynum, “Explaining Transformation: Material Miracles with Caroline Walker Bynum,” February 2010, UC Berkeley, video, 58:41, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgGgX3znCy0>. In a lecture delivered to the UC Berkeley Graduate Council, Caroline Walker Bynum examined the intellectual theory regarding medieval Christian materiality, and the concept of the transformation miracle. Despite centering the majority of the lecture on the Late Middle Ages, Bynum introduces her topic with a discussion of ‘holy matter,’ sacred materials that are transformed or activated through ritualistic interaction, in which she references well-known icons from earlier Byzantine centuries, specifically panel

lification of specific genre-types of icon within Byzantium and onwards, the range of materials utilized in crafting these holy images was as diverse as the pictorial language they conveyed. Within this diversity grew a preference in luxury materials for the crafting of holy imagery. Enamel, precious metals, textiles, and classical painting techniques were all popular media employed in the creation of religious icons, their material value strengthening the icon’s agency in its interactive purpose.⁶ What granted these media their high value were intrinsic properties that ensured both their beauty and durability over time. Value was derived from a medium’s rarity, as well as its capacity to be manipulated and crafted. As a result of their intrinsic value, luxury materials circulated amongst the more privileged and powerful echelons of Byzantine society, most notably the Church and the state. Though more expensive materials were not as easily accessible to the greater public, they still held distinct cultural value, and were recognizable to the common Byzantine citizen. With such a strong influence over the empire as a whole, opulent materials greatly informed the creation and content of Byzantine icons, and despite their hefty financial value, all could access them spiritually. I intend to argue that the materials employed to create Byzantine icons (all those that fall geographically and chronologically under the aegis of the Byzantine Empire) were chosen for their intrinsically religious, political, and cultural value, so as to connect with the Byzantine people regardless of status. I will then argue that the use of these culturally valuable materials enabled and further enhanced the icon’s intermediary function. My discussion will detail the mediums’ relationship to the theological concept of anagogical ascent,

paintings.

6 Sarah Brooks, “Icons and Iconoclasm in Byzantium,” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (October 2001), https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/icon/hd_icon.htm.

as well as classical and imperial connotations employed to further relate to the Byzantine public.

The history of the icon is vast, with a chronological frame of reference stretching from the earliest centuries of Christian worship to the Late Middle Ages, and geographically traveling further west from the confines of Byzantium. Yet for the purposes of this paper, it seems appropriate to focus on a period of time extending between the sixth and twelfth centuries. This particular timeframe will provide a view of Byzantine icons in the time of their greatest production and use. These selected centuries encapsulate the early years of the Byzantine empire to its middle period, capturing such formative events as the icon production boom, the Iconoclastic Controversy and its aftermath. In having a precise timeline established, we can witness the production of the icon evolve from its classical influences, and observe its transition into becoming “the center of Byzantine art and life.”⁷ With said focus on the ‘center’ of Byzantine life, I will also keep my geographic scope within Constantinople, the capital of the empire. I do so because this is where we witness the largest application of luxury materials, understandably from a region of the empire that saw the most prosperity.

The icon was seen by the faithful as a divinely charged object, an object “imbued with charis, or divine grace.”⁸ This grace, viewed as being granted by God himself, established a direct line of communication between the believer and the holy figure depicted, accessed through interaction with the icon. This interaction became essential to Eastern Christian worship, constituting what scholar Mahmoud Zibawi describes as “an organic element inseparable from the Church.”⁹

7 Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

8 Bissera V. Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (December 2006), 631.

9 Mahmoud Zibawi, *The Icon: Its Meaning and History*. (Minne-

Icons received significant attention in the liturgical procession, as priests would kiss, incense, and prostrate before them, with members of the congregation following suit.¹⁰ For many, the icon even possessed a synesthetic quality. It engaged the body fully, invoking one sensory experience that then triggered another.¹¹ The combination of sight and touch during worship contributed to a heightened state of contemplation, as well as affirming a communion between the physical body of man and the physical body of Christ present in the icon.¹² To the devotee, the icon acted as a vessel, a necessary medium for channeling the divine, (which humanity could not observe with their mortal senses alone). Religious scholar Jaroslav Jan Pelikan elaborates on this interaction in stating, “Of course the soul could adore the one God, invisible and immaterial, but to do so it required the aid of visible means. Only through such means could one proceed to the worship in spirit and truth.”¹³ Pelikan primarily addresses sight in this interaction, yet other scholars like art historian Bissera Pentcheva elaborate on the interplay between touch and sight that allowed believers to truly ‘see.’¹⁴

Intimacy Through Accessibility

To foster the intimacy necessary for this spiritual connection, it was imperative for the icon to be approachable in its physical composition. I will examine The Blessing Christ, also known by its subject’s symbolic gestures as Christ Pantocrator, as my first study to expand upon this notion of accessibility.¹⁵ (Fig. 1) Perhaps the most renowned of the icon

sota: The Order of Saint Benedict Inc., 1993), 11.

10 Ibid.

11 Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” 631.

12 Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, 122.

13 Ibid.

14 Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” 631.

15 Solrunn Nes, *The Mystical Language of Icons*. (Michigan: Wm.

collection found at St. Catherine's Monastery at Sinai¹⁶, The Blessing Christ displays many of the archetypal features of Byzantine icons. Along with setting the standard for successive religious portraits, the physical attributes and techniques that comprise The Blessing Christ serve to emphasize the icon's function as a devotional vehicle. The work, measuring at almost three feet, is nearly life-size in proportion to the average individual. To be life-size or nearing life-size usually alludes, in the Western art historical canon, that a work is intended for public use. The cropping of the icon's panel, and continuous cropping as is evident by Christ's offset position within the icon, indicate more of a portable nature: an icon that is meant to travel and be interacted with within a public

B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 23. The motif of Christ *Pantocrator* (meaning the 'All-Ruler') is one of the most frequently used motifs in depicting the Son of God, for both icons and Christian art as a whole. The elements that constitute this motif are all demonstrated within the encaustic icon of Christ from Sinai: the hand held in a blessing gesture, a discernably authoritative gaze, and a codex in one arm. The blessing gesture has been interpreted to have specific dogmatic meaning, with his three touching fingers (the index finger, middle finger, and thumb) symbolizing the Trinity, while his two raised fingers represent his two natures.

16 Robert S. Nelson, Et al. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*. (California: Getty Publications, 2006), It should be noted that monasticism played a large part in the number of icons that we do possess in the modern day. Wont to exclude themselves from society and enter into a more ascetic lifestyle of isolation and prayer, monks were known to live in monasteries on the outskirts of civilizations, far from interference from more bustling metropolises. One in particular, that of St. Catherine's Monastery at Sinai, benefitted greatly from its far-off location. Established by Justinian, the monastery rested in Egypt, an area that would be lost to the Byzantine empire through Islamic conquest, and thus, out of Byzantine influence. When iconoclasm ran rampant throughout the empire, St. Catherine's sat unaffected, the distance protecting a stock of over a hundred icons, including some of the earliest ever crafted. Because of this unintended advantage, St. Catherine's Monastery at Sinai is one of the largest, if not the largest repository for Byzantine icons in the world.

devotional setting.¹⁷ Christ is shown from a frontal perspective, and his form fills almost the entirety of the icon's surface. This pronounced insertion into the foreground, as well as an indication of spatial depth behind Christ, facilitates a sudden intimacy with the viewer.¹⁸

Christ is rendered in encaustic, a technique that involves suspending pigment in wax. The technique harkens back to Greco-Roman panel paintings that would inspire early Christian depictions of the figure. These panel paintings were a hybrid of imperial and local influences, blending the mimesis of Greco-Roman art with the stylization of Egyptian funerary art. The encaustic approach gives a startlingly mimetic appearance to Christ, gifting him a flesh-like countenance, often described as "palpitating with life."¹⁹ White highlights indicate the oily, dimly reflective surface of the human face, and detailed shadowing marks crevices and bone structure, further providing a realistic nature to the face of the divine. To have such a mortal visage would have stressed to the faithful the humanity in Christ's dual nature, which was an avid topic of debate well into the sixth century. Showing such humanity further underscored Christ's role as intermediary, affirming the purpose of the icon panel. The depiction of his humanity would have also stressed Christ's presence in the physical world, a source of both comfort and admonition. The figure's right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing, a gesture that would remain constant for both the figure of Christ and the genre-figure of Christ Pantocrator throughout Christian art. The other hand holds a codex with a gilded and jewel-embed-

17 Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 528.

18 Ibid.

19 Manolis Chatzidakis and Gerry Walters, "An Encaustic Icon of Christ at Sinai," *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 49, No. 3 (September 1967), 198.

ded cover. Both the gesture and codex interrupt the viewer's space.

The facial features of Christ match the idealized standard for faces in the sixth century, a synthesis of several cultural styles and attributes, with Roman conquest, Hellenistic influence, and Byzantine Christianization among the catalysts.²⁰ The standard consists of large almond eyes, a long slender nose, and small closed lips that fit neatly underneath the nose. The unnerving asymmetry of Christ's face, however, is not often an element of that standard. Rather than soothe the viewer, his disjointed appearance spurs discomfort. The discomfort stems from the realization that this depiction of Christ is performing two different expressions simultaneously, which is more evident when one side of the face is obscured. This double-sided expression could be interpreted as conveying Christ's twofold role as benevolent healer and stern judge — a cautionary reminder to the devoted to uphold the morals of the faith. The difference in features can also be interpreted as a display of Christ's dual identities, with the softer expression alluding to his human nature, and the rigid one painting him as a severe omniscient entity.²¹ Another proposed intention of Christ's lack of symmetry mirrors the overall intention of the icon. Rather than repel, this off-putting appearance would have compelled the viewer to look closer at the icon, further pulling the faithful into pious contemplation. To gaze upon this asymmetry would be to give oneself to the "almost imperceptible animation" of Christ's disjointed countenance, and further be drawn into communication with the divine.²²

20 Zibawi, *The Icon: Its Meaning and History*, 81.

21 Kurt Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, the Icon*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 15.

22 Chatzidakis and Walters, "An Encaustic Icon of Christ at Sinai," 198.

Intimacy Through Spiritual Hierarchy

Possessing a mimetic countenance was not the sole means through which an icon could inspire intimacy with the viewer. Depicting the spiritual transportation of prayers performed within an icon was also a facet of the icon's approachability. The delivery of one's prayers by a holy intermediary was a transaction the devout firmly believed to occur when they prayed, and certain icons gave affirmation in depicting that transaction. A panel icon of The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels exhibits this well (Fig. 2). Discovered alongside The Blessing Christ at Sinai, this icon of The Virgin and Child Enthroned includes many of the same attributes as its contemporary. The icon, painted in an encaustic medium, displays the large eyes, slender nose, and small lips associated with the standard of beauty of its time. Once more, white highlighting and realistically rendered shadows permit a mimetic, flesh-like appearance to the figures of this work, allowing them to exist within the realm that humanity inhabits.

Yet there are distinctions of accessibility in this work. Depicting multiple figures rather than just one allows it to become more complex, both compositionally and metaphorically. Facial expressions differ between the figures, alluding to their varying levels of divinity. Mary's aloof gaze is focused off into the distance as is her son's, denying intimacy with the viewer and placing the pair beyond the human realm. Two foreground figures — often identified as Saints Theodore and George — stare forward at the viewer, directly engaging humanity and establishing communication to their mortal audience.²³ The two angels in the background stare upwards,

23 Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 75. There has been a good deal of debate regarding the identities of the two military saints, as neither of them are labelled. Most sources have decided that the one on the left is St. Theodore, and the one on the right is either St. George or St. Demetrios. This decision relies mainly on the style of imperial dress, as well as the

gazes purposely turned from our direction. They look towards God, represented in the form of a hand reaching down from a beam of light. Their focused gazes turned upwards and away from the viewer designate the angel figures as ethereal, and not at all attached to the mortal realm.²⁴ Positioning also has a great deal of significance within this icon, as it denotes not only divinity, but also the system of communication vital for the work's function. The two saints, or 'soldier saints' (based upon the imperial garments they wear), stand solid and rigid on either side of the Virgin, as two pillars of protection.²⁵ They have yet to be portrayed in the full warrior personas that they will acquire in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and instead here they stand in a far more approachable stance.²⁶ Their feet are placed more into the foreground than any other figure, bringing them closest to the viewer and initiating a sense of intimacy. The Virgin sits elevated on an imperial throne, her feet never touching the ground, thus never making contact with the plane on which the mortal viewer exists. A hierarchical chain begins with the two saints, who act as vessels for prayers, hence their proximity to the viewer. From there the prayers and desires are channeled into the angels, who will then deliver them to God. The Virgin and Child spectate and ordain this transaction. The soldier saints interact with us, while the angels are our true intermediaries, their forms existing between this world and the next. The eye is led upwards in the same direction as the communication travels, beginning with the two immediate saints, and settling on the hand extending from the heavens. The thick application of

rendering of the saints' faces and their archetypic iconography.

24 Weitzmann, *The Icon: Holy Images – Sixth to Fourteenth Century*, 42.

25 Ibid.

26 Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University State Press, 2006), 89.

impasto within the work also serves to distinguish the figures and their varying levels of divinity.²⁷ Quick, rough brushstrokes capture the motion of the angels' less than corporeal forms, and distinguish them from the more solid forms of the saints and the Virgin. They are constantly phazing between this world and the next, even as the viewer is interacting with them, as evident through the manipulation of the medium's surface.

The icon's mimetic representation of Virgin and Child engages the believer in another way — one that is based more in doctrine. It alludes to the greater theological system of thought contemporaneous to the icon's creation. As touched upon with *The Blessing Christ*, the portrayal of Christ as a fleshy, almost touchable human being served to continue the discourse on Christ's twofold nature, as both divine man and human. The icon of the Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels not only portrays Christ and his mother as fleshy and realistic, but it also alludes visually to this discourse. Depicting Christ in child form seated on the Virgin's lap, rather than as a grown man or an unnervingly aged infant, visually references the event of the Incarnation.²⁸ This event has a great deal of significance within the faith, as it is seen as the moment in which Christ's dual nature was realized, as he was born of the human Mary and conceived through both natural and divine means. This is described in the faith's central religious text as the incarnation of the Word, and the realization of God's majesty in the mortal world.²⁹ Despite being such a pivotal aspect of the Christian narrative, the outcome of that event would be debated fiercely. These theological

27 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 533.

28 Anna Cecilia Olovsson, *Envisioning Worlds in Late Antique Art: New Perspectives on Abstraction and Symbolism in Late-Roman and Early-Byzantine Visual Culture*, (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2019), 55.

29 John 1:14, NKJV.

arguments lasted decades and focused mainly on the question of the representation of Christ. Was Christ's humanity, and his humanity alone, to be shown in pictorial form? Or was his divinity to be prioritized? To portray Christ in the form of an icon, in an earthly manifestation, was seen to only separate Christ's dual nature, a dual nature which had been repeatedly argued over and the separations of which were deemed heretical.³⁰ Those who gazed upon the icon of the Virgin and Child Enthroned would have been familiar with this discourse, if not from scholarship then from the mouths of the clergy. Yet what did Christological debate mean to the average devotee? It is Christ's humanity that allows the intimate access received through the icon, an aspect which affirms a relation between the Son of God and the common man. It displaces the concept of Christ as an unattainable figure beyond human comprehension, contrasting the accessibility of his mortal presence with the elements of divinity he still possesses. The waxy pigment in which the figures of the icon are rendered allows the viewer to witness this balance directly.

Symbolism and the Quest for Beauty

Icons such as these did not have to rely entirely on the artistic handling of the face to permit the object's accessibility. Symbolism familiar to the Byzantine public also served to make icons more approachable. An icon of Saint Peter, rendered in the same medium, same century, and same geographical location as *The Blessing Christ and the Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*, is one such example.³¹ (Fig. 3) The icon displays Peter, the most prominent of

30 Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 87.

31 Nelson, Et al. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, 123. This icon was also discovered within the large collection at Sinai, although in poorer condition than *Christ Pantocrator* or the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*. The similar brushwork and architectural elements behind Peter have allowed scholars to date it to the sixth

Christ's apostles, with the gray short hair and trimmed beard typical to most of his depictions.³² He carries in one hand the cross that represents his martyrdom, another trope that will be employed repeatedly in depictions of the apostle.³³ From the inclusion of such archetypal iconography, one could assume that the believer would have seen this icon and recognized rather quickly the individual it was portraying. That sense of familiarity would have surely aided in the intimacy needed to interact with the icon. Like the icon of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, there exists a sense of hierarchy within the work, even if Peter appears easy to approach. Above Peter float three medallions, each with a figure circumscribed inside. The first figure is an unidentified youthful saint, who is commonly designated as Saint John the Evangelist in much of the scholarship on this work.³⁴ Beside him is Christ, followed by the Virgin Mother. Having such powerful figures hover overhead grants Saint Peter a sense of great authority, in both this earthly realm and the heavenly realm beyond. The keys to heaven clutched in the apostle's right hand further allude to such authority. The composition of Saint Peter's figure and the accompanying medallions present great power through their connotation of imperial rule. This format was appropriated heavily from the Byzantine government's portrayal of their consul, which consisted of a central figure monitored by medallions of higher-ranking individuals.³⁵ The artist that crafted this icon took care to 'de-secularize' the format, removing

century.

32 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 543.

33 Thomas F. Matthews, *The Dawn of Christian Art in Panel Paintings and Icons*, (California: Getty Publications, 2016), 175.

34 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 543. It has also been proposed that the clean-shaven youth is a depiction of Moses, yet there seems to be substantial evidence in favor of it actually being St. John the Evangelist.

35 Nelson, Et al. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, 123.

blatantly imperial iconography and presenting Peter as possessing a spiritual kind of authority, rather than political.³⁶ Along with the immediately familiar iconography for Peter's depictions, believers would have recognized this imperial touch, cementing the apostle's prestige.

Powerful as the familiar symbology is, it is primarily in the face of this icon that the viewer finds the most opportunity to connect. With the extent of mimesis that the encaustic medium allowed, expressions could be made to look very compelling. Rather than wear a mask of indifference typical of early Christian art, the apostle Peter maintains a composure that tingles with life as much as it remains dormant. Scholar Kurt Weitzmann describes this combined expression in stating, "Although the large eyes radiate calm and concentration, the whirling tuft of hair and the beard combed to one side reveal emotion and excitability."³⁷ Not unlike the conflicting expressions that we see with The Blessing Christ, there is a duality at play in the face of Saint Peter. Rather than disconcert the viewer however, this duality serves the same purpose as the icon's political imagery: to further assert the apostle's divine authority, appointing him as a "gifted, elegant Prince of the Church."³⁸ This show of power informs the viewer of Saint Peter's holy rank, and how his vessel shall serve to ferry the prayers of the faithful to those above him.

Aside from Saint Peter's spiritually expressive face, his icon bears great resemblance to the other two found at Sinai. Stylistically, compositionally, and in terms of medium the three encaustic icons are undeniably related; so much so, that they are constantly referred to in academia as the three most famous icons from Sinai.³⁹ One of their most notable shared

36 Ibid.

37 Weitzmann, *The Icon*, 54.

38 Konrad Onasch and Annemarie Schnieper, *Icons: The Fascination and the Reality*. (New York: Riverside Book Company, 1995), 19.

39 Weitzmann, *the Icon*, 54.

traits is the application of gold leaf. Greatly indicative of the Byzantine period, the use of gold leaf in icons would become a staple, as it was a reflective metal whose sheen evoked the idea of holy light. Christ's halo and codex, the halos of the Virgin, infant Christ, and saints, and Saint Peter's halo and accompanying medallions all glint with the warm yellow hue of gold. Unfortunately, the full majesty of this gilding does not translate well to photography, and therefore academia must often sacrifice capturing the experience of the image in order to obtain a clear view of it.⁴⁰ The greatest misfortune of this is that it dilutes the purpose behind gilding the icon in the first place. That purpose is the reflection and therefore harnessing of light. Light plays a grand role in Christian worship, and throughout its history has been "part of the celebration and manifestation of the divine."⁴¹ Airy, brilliant light was viewed as being beyond this world, and harnessing it through the implementation of reflective materials was seen as a way to invoke that which lay in the beyond. The metallic shimmer of gold was the closest that humanity had to imitating the gorgeous light that they believed enveloped the figures they worshipped. In utilizing this corporeal imitation of heavenly light, the Byzantines were participating in what would become one of the main goals of Christian art in centuries to come: the attainment of anagogical ascent.

The quest for anagogical ascent greatly incentivized the beauty and grandeur of the Byzantine aesthetic tradition, as made evident by the gorgeous detail and ingenuity found in such masterpieces as the Hagia Sophia. Able to be enacted on

40 Rico Franes, "All that is Gold Does Not Glitter," in *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium (Studies presented to Robin Cormack)*, ed. by Anthony Eastmond and Liz James, Et al. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 13.

41 Nelson, Et al. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, 25.

a much smaller scale, the concept of anagogical ascent within art stemmed from the theological belief that the material world possessed “a sacredly semiotic assemblage of vestigia: material traces of the divine.”⁴² In gathering those material traces, which manifested in the form of beautiful metals, ivories, and enamels, the faithful could then utilize their divine aesthetic potential to provoke a transcendental experience, and ascend into a higher state of worship. Through the sheer beauty of these materials, the Byzantine devotee was made present in the heavenly realm, the closest semblance to what they anticipated the afterlife to be. Already crafted to invoke a deeper sacred state of contemplation, icons like that of The Blessing Christ or the Virgin and Child Enthroned engaged this belief of ‘the spiritual through the beautiful’ in their gilded halos and ornate imperial thrones. When worshipping with the icon, the presence of luxury materials would inspire further reverence in believers, while also drawing them into further meditation with the icon. This spiritual transportation then better assisted the transfer of prayer between the faithful and the holy figure depicted; a visual and metaphysical communion.

Ornate Mediums: Gold, Silver, and Ivory

The allure of ornate mediums like gold not only lay in their allusion to holy light and assistance in anagogical ascent, but also in their inherent material value. The early Byzantine empire enjoyed a strong dominion over precious metal industries, providing them with an abundance of gold and silver, so much so that they could afford to frequently gift foreign leaders with gilded goods in exchange for good graces.⁴³

42 Conrad Rudolph, *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, second edition (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2019), 101.

43 Helen C Evans, “The Arts of Byzantium,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. Vol. 58, No. 4

Having an icon bear such opulent materials instantly brought forth an imperial connotation. And this imperial connotation served to heighten the authority of an already divinely authoritative object. Imperial imagery was prevalent throughout the production of icons, as evident by details such as the Virgin’s imperial purple maphorion in *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*, as well as the military posing and paraphernalia depicted in two works that will be discussed later in this essay: a cloisonné enamel icon of the Archangel Michael and an ivory icon depicting Saint Demetrios.⁴⁴

The luxury materials expended to craft icons were not just limited to gold-leaf. As mentioned earlier, the Byzantine industry for precious metals was a booming one, and in the later tenth and eleventh centuries, enamel and cloisonné work would be perfected by the Byzantines.⁴⁵ Ivory would join such distinction and become one of the most sought-after materials in the empire, its allure stemming from its smoothness, strength, and its ability to take a detailed carve.⁴⁶ Incorporating such regal and sumptuous materials into the creation of religious imagery would have immediately drawn an imperial association in the eyes of the devout, presenting the divine figures of Christ and his contemporaries on equal footing with the opulent emperors that ruled over Byzantium. And we are led to believe that those in political power were well aware

(Spring 2001), 32. Though this did not always end in perfect cooperation, (often tribes would go back on arrangements and raid the lands they had agreed to defend), this diplomatic gift-giving protocol was recorded as transpiring between the Byzantine empire and the nomadic warrior tribes of the Avars and various Germanic leaders. Whereas the Romans were quick to confront these ‘barbarian’ tribes when they drew near, the Byzantines invested more effort into allying with the peoples on their borders.

44 Weitzmann, *The Icon*, 42.

45 Cormack *Byzantine Art*, 115.

46 Edmund C. Ryder, “Byzantine Ivories,” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (October 2007), https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ivor/hd_ivor.htm.

of this association. Many works, such as the aforementioned cloisonné enamel icon of the Archangel Michael, are believed to have been imperially commissioned, based on the value of their materials and their generous size.⁴⁷

One of the icon mediums in which we see such political influence is silver. In its formative years, Byzantium controlled the silver industry, the second largest metal trade after gold. As a result, all imperial portraiture (from about the fifth century onward), monograms, and other official imagery were stamped in silver.⁴⁸ Silver gilding became the marker of sovereign patronage, an aspect that leaked into all facets of the empire, especially its religion. A work that illustrates this well is a silver plaque depicting Saint Paul the Apostle, believed to have been found in Syria, and dated between the sixth and seventh centuries.⁴⁹ (Fig. 4) The plaque follows many conventions known to the depiction of St. Paul in early Christian art: his aged face, pointed beard, and receding hairline that show him to be an older, wiser figure in the Church's hierarchy.⁵⁰ In his hands, Saint Paul clutches a book, a possible symbol referencing his authorship of many texts within the New Testament.⁵¹ His body seems quite stylized, primarily in the face and hands. Yet the drapery folds and slight outline of his leg that can be read in the fabric of his cloak carry remnants of Greco-Roman mimesis, a style heavy with imperial connotation. What lies behind Saint Paul gives the greatest imperial connotation of all. Erected behind the saint is a Roman style

47 Ibid.

48 Wall text, Byzantine Art, 1989.143, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York.

49 Charles T. Little and Timothy B. Husband, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Europe in the Middle Ages*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 31.

50 "Plaque with Saint Paul," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, n.d., <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/50.5.1/>.

51 Ibid.

arch supported by two acanthus-topped columns, framing the rather stiff figure within his space. This type of framing was common for the portrayal of saints, apostles, and other evangelical figures in early Christian art, and, as scholar Kurt Weitzmann affirms, derived heavily from imperial sources.⁵² Not only did icon production appropriate its mediums from the state, it also adapted their formal archetypes. The method in which the plaque was rendered is one found on the majority of Byzantine silverwork, that of repoussé.⁵³ This technique consisted of hammering figures and designs from the back of a silver sheet in order to create a prominent relief on the other side. This would have been the same kind of relief in which emperors such as Constans II were rendered.⁵⁴

The plaque's status as an icon is somewhat uncertain.⁵⁵ Its function has been surmised to be that of a book cover, possibly for the collected epistles of Saint Paul, or one panel that once connected to a larger icon. Both theories are supported by the existence of a second plaque, depicting Saint Peter in a similar fashion.⁵⁶ (Fig. 5) For the intent of my study, I choose

52 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 618.

53 Charles T. Little and Timothy B. Husband, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Europe in the Middle Ages*, 31.

54 Wall text, Byzantine Art, 1989.143, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York.

55 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 618. Scholars like Weitzmann often refer to the plaque solely by its connotation as a book cover, never once mentioning its possibility as a devotional image or part of a larger work. What drives many of the theories regarding the plaques' functions is the existence of holes on one side of the plaque, which occurs in both plaques. Many have surmised them to have either been intended for binding, or to secure panels together. Scholars Charles Little and Timothy Husband have even proposed that the plaques may have been part of a frieze that would have adorned some sort of liturgical furniture. For the most part, scholarship appears hesitant to confirm one theory or the other.

56 "Plaque with Saint Paul," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, n.d., <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/50.5.1/>.

to view the plaque as an icon, as it would appear to possess the visual potential to invoke a state of contemplation and therefore communication with the viewer. The first aspect that alludes to this potential is the effect created by the icon's use of repoussé. Jutting outward from a dimpled silver surface, the figure of Saint Paul intercepts the viewer's space. He and his arch lift from their background in a way that encaustic paint on wood, or any paint for that matter, could not. The smoothness of hammered silver contrasted with the intricate patterning that adorns the columns, peacocks, and vegetation surrounding Saint Paul almost encourages contact. It would not be difficult to imagine the devout rubbing their hands on this religious relief, praying fervently for divine assistance. The silver's natural luster, which corrosion has dulled considerably since the plaque's discovery, was speculated to have once appeared quite brilliant.⁵⁷ One could surmise that its glinting appearance would have connoted the concept of holy light to the viewer just as vividly as gold. Perhaps in the yellowish candle-lit atmosphere of a church setting, this plaque may have even appeared gold. One could imagine how surreal the worshipping experience or liturgical use with this plaque may have been, candlelight flitting across its metallic surface.

The silver plaque of Saint Paul also enacts an intimate connection with believers through its symbolic features, not solely through its aesthetic elements. The arch which stands behind Saint Paul is a particularly coded feature, its connotations reaching back to the visual language of the early Church. In its nascency, the Christian Church often referred to heaven in architectural terms, and eventually the arch became a means by which to represent paradise.⁵⁸ Therefore, we are not only viewing Saint Paul as interacting with our space, but witnessing him bridge our world and the next. The image of

57 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 618-619.

58 Evans, "The Arts of Byzantium," 22.

Saint Paul standing before the archway to heaven underscores his role as intermediary, as he is the closest relation to humanity with direct access to the divine. Similar to what is portrayed in the icon of the Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels, the viewer is able to observe the direction in which their prayers will travel. The eye takes in the figure of Saint Paul, the repository for prayer, then travels behind him to the arch, which symbolizes the heavenly realm in which Paul will enter to deliver said prayers.

Such details, both symbolic and physical, are permitted by the composition of the icon's medium. The malleability of the silver allows for clear detail to be forced outwards during the process of repoussé, a property surely admired by the Byzantines. Byzantine art, especially that of icons, operated on a system of symbols to identify those of heavenly provenance. For the average Byzantine Christian, having those symbols hammered in such detail would have been greatly beneficial to comprehension. And if one could understand the icon, they could worship through it all the better.

Silver, though highly celebrated, was not the only icon material valued for its crafting properties. As stated before, ivory saw immense popularity as a luxury material in the Byzantine empire for several reasons, the most prominent being how easily it took a detailed carve.⁵⁹ And its popularity was fairly constant. Ivory saw its greatest application as a luxury material during the fourth and sixth centuries, followed by a revival in the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁶⁰ Like silver, the medium's natural inclination to accept mark-making made it highly desirable for use in icons, as it allowed for a discernable and beautiful rendering of the holy figures to whom the devout offered their prayers. Its innate creamy color and

59 Ryder, "Byzantine Ivories," https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ivor/hd_ivor.htm.

60 Ibid.

smooth texture added to the appeal along with its wealth of detail, these qualities resulting in ivory being employed in both religious and imperial art.⁶¹

Like mimetic painting and silver repoussé, ivory held strong political connotations, both to past Antiquity and to the contemporary Byzantine government. Very much a spoil of Byzantium's dominion over and eventual trade relations with Egypt, ivory found purpose outside of the Church just as much as within it. It was used to craft book covers, regal portraiture, pyxides, and secular caskets, to name a few.⁶² And its use within the Church mimicked these secular applications as well. The most common mode in which the Byzantines crafted ivory was rectangular panels, which would either be joined to form diptychs or affixed to containers and caskets.⁶³ The diptych icons crafted in this way reflected consular diptychs commissioned by the imperial court at Constantinople.⁶⁴ Consular diptychs themselves were a custom inherited from the Roman empire, which lived on past the separation of the Western and Eastern factions.⁶⁵ All of this history carried on in the ivory's creamy, smooth surface, and in making icons of this material, the devout called upon such history to affirm the regal majesty of their beloved divine figures.

One particular work that exhibits this well is an ivo-

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Henry Maguire, "Other Icons: The Classical Nude in Byzantine Bone and Ivory Carvings," *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum*, Vol.

62, A Catalogue of Greek Manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum and Essays in Honor of Gary Vikan (2004), 9.

64 Ryder, "Byzantine Ivories," https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ivor/hd_ivor.htm. Consular diptychs performed a function quite evident in their name, and announced an individual's rank rising to that of consul. Like religious icons, these diptychs were ceremoniously processed, and their impeccable design was intended to reflect the status of the person depicted.

65 Ibid.

ry icon of Saint Demetrios, believed to have been made in the tenth century.⁶⁶ (Fig. 6) The panel icon, depicting one of the most popular military saints in Byzantium, is laden with imperial allusions.⁶⁷ The figure of Saint Demetrios is dressed in full Byzantine armor, including a chlamys, cuirass, spear (now fractured), and shield. His armored appearance matches that of a Byzantine soldier — those whom the public would have seen as defenders of the empire's domain.⁶⁸ Therefore, this depiction of Saint Demetrios presents its subject as ready for battle, and prepared to continuously defend the Christian faithful.⁶⁹ There is an undeniable military connotation to this icon, presented not only in the literal armor that Saint Demetrios wears, but also in the way his nearly nineteen-inch form is rendered. Out of all the icons discussed thus far, the icon of Saint Demetrios bears the highest relief in terms of how its ivory was carved. The figure of Saint Demetrios extends far off his panel, with areas under his arms, legs, and neck so undercut that the figure appears to almost lift off the smooth white background entirely.⁷⁰ Entering the viewer's space quite forcefully, the figure of Saint Demetrios may be highly stylized; yet its posing and ratio to the remainder of the icon provide such a strong disposition that the figure may as well be a corporeal being. Saint Demetrios' authoritative stance, as well as the fact that he fills up his frame to the point of nearly overwhelming it, grants a very assertive character to this Roman martyr, one that would have likely captivated the

66 "Icon with Saint Demetrios," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, n.d., <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1970.324.3/>.

67 Helen C Evans, "The Arts of Byzantium," 50.

68 Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 135.

69 Helen C Evans, "The Arts of Byzantium," 50.

70 Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, 135.

devout during worship.⁷¹ Like the warrior saints that reside within The Virgin and Child Enthroned icon, Saint Demetrios' military persona only strengthens his intermediary potential. By dressing him in imperial armor and presenting him in such an emphatic manner, those who created this icon assure the faithful that Saint Demetrios will ferry their prayers to the divine, and protect them fiercely.

There are certain features on this ivory icon that also suggest a military function that once went hand-in-hand with its purpose as an icon. Below the feet of Saint Demetrios there is a rather large cleft cut out, one too clean to be anything but deliberate. Scholars have mostly agreed that this gap was created so that the icon could be mounted on a standard and either carried into battle or processed in a liturgical ceremony.⁷² Just as we witnessed with the encaustic icon of The Blessing Christ, the visible cutting of this icon affirms its portable nature, an aspect important to its interactive purpose.

Another ivory work I wish to examine possesses an imperial connection as well; however, this connection is tied to its patronage more so than its formal composition. This icon, an ivory panel icon with the Archangel Michael (or a figure who is assumed to be Michael) made in Constantinople in the earlier part of the sixth century, makes reference to entities higher up on the Byzantine imperial strata than soldiers.⁷³

71 Ibid.

72 Helen C Evans, "The Arts of Byzantium," 50. The concept of the icon being attached to a standard seems to be accepted by most who write on this particular piece, while both the icon's prior and later use are more heavily debated. Some theorize that it was once part of a series of panels depicting saints that would have been mounted in a church. Others state that it may have later been repurposed as a book cover, a fate seemingly common for panel icons. These theories mostly revolve around the existence of four holes that pierce all four corners of the icon.

73 Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 536. The identity of this angel, apart from his being an archangel, is not entirely confirmed. Many scholars, such as Weitzmann, identify the panel as portraying 'an archangel,'

(Fig. 7) The first element that alludes to this work's imperial patronage is its impressive size. Generally, Byzantine ivory works were quite small — a necessity considering they often were used ceremoniously, and therefore needed to be portable.⁷⁴ This ivory work in particular is the largest of its kind to have survived, standing at about a foot tall.⁷⁵ Not unlike the silver repoussé rendering of Saint Paul, the archangel depicted appears to jut forward into the mortal realm while all the while staying immersed in his heavenly one. The angel, though rendered in relief, still retains a sense of incorporeality based on the fact that his feet do not seem to touch down on the steps behind him, giving an appearance of sliding down the steps. The fluctuation between high and low relief that mark areas of the angel's body further this state of incorporeality.⁷⁶ He is entering this mortal plane, yet he has no attachment to it. The sumptuous rendering of architecture behind the archangel, consisting of a glorious imperial archway and stairs, plants the figure in the faithful's reality. Yet the regal connotations and stylized aspects of the archangel himself

appearing reluctant to assign any identity to the figure depicted. This is most likely due to a lack of distinguishing evidence and the absence of any title accompanying the figure. Other scholars, such as Anthony Cutler and Marilyn Stoskopf, tend to refer to the work as an icon of the Archangel Michael, but seem to do so to follow others' example, rather than based on actual identifying features in the work. Elements of the icon that could be influencing this attribution to Michael are the figure's scepter and *globus cruciger*, common symbols used in the depiction of this particular archangel. Robin Cormack himself has acknowledged the preeminence of this dubious identification. Identity issues aside, the level of craftsmanship and specific style of the carving have allowed academia to attribute this icon to the workshops of Constantinople.

74 Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, "Ivory Panel with Archangel," Done in conjunction with SmartHistory, December 2011, The British Museum, video, 4:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7J0WQsajX8>.

75 Cormack, *Icons*, 49.

76 Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, "Ivory Panel with Archangel," video, 4:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7J0WQsajX8>.

remind the viewer that, though this figure appears human, it is anything but. We see once more the archetypal facial features of sixth-century icons, as well as the distant and non-engaging gaze shared with the Virgin from The Virgin and Child Enthroned and Saint Paul.

Despite displaying a grand debt to Greco-Roman heritage in the classical rendering of the figure, the archangel carries stylistic influence from Byzantium that may offset, or at times throw off the mimesis.⁷⁷ The most striking example of this are the feet of the archangel, as well as the abnormal size ratio of the figure to its frame. Though the archangel's feet are rendered naturalistically, their awkward positioning and shape allude to the popular Byzantine style for the body, exhibited in such works as the Justinian and Theodora mosaics at San Vitale. This work very much exists as a hybrid of styles, like much of earlier Byzantine art.⁷⁸ It is here that we witness the breaking down of the mimetic figure that occurs around this point in the Byzantine visual canon, mainly through the archangel's ambiguous placement within the space. Yet the devout would be familiar with both styles, and rather than detract from their pious contemplation, such a complex representation of the archangel would only inspire further reflection.

The grand size of the panel has led many to surmise it is one leaf of a larger diptych, which has led to further speculation that the icon was commissioned specifically for emperor Justinian, whose ascension to power coincided with its creation.⁷⁹ This theory is fueled by a lack of context for the

77 Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Art*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 68.

78 Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, "Ivory Panel with Archangel," video, 4:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7J0WQsajX8>.

79 Cormack, *Icons*, 50. The overall grandeur of the piece has led scholars to propose that this icon may have been crafted to celebrate the ascension of Justinian to power in 527 CE. Further theories that collaborate with this concept state that the 'missing' panel could have portrayed

angel figure, suggesting additional panels, as well as holes in the right border that suggest some mode of attachment.

It is through works such as these ivory icons, so potent with imperial connotations and intentions, that we may glimpse the political side of icons. Cultural integration thrived in late sixth century Byzantium, and as a result, the line between religion and government (already blurred during the reign of Constantine) was further obscured.⁸⁰ Therefore, in pieces such as the icon of Saint Demetrios and the panel icon of the archangel, there may exist an interesting tripartite dialogue between the devout, their heavenly intermediaries, and the government that endorses the behaviors of the devout. While witnessing sovereign influence blend with the religious visual vocabulary of icons seems quite logical, considering that we are viewing the development of a Christian empire, it still proposes a fascinating conversation regarding the reciprocation between faith and the state. The imperial rendering of icon figures not only served to affirm the divine authority of those whom the icons represented, but also allowed for the Byzantine aristocracy to appropriate what scholar Averil Cameron describes as "popular devotion," playing to the tastes of the masses for their own political benefit.⁸¹

Though laden with political connotations, these ivory works still retain great religious significance through both their imagery and their medium. Ivory was obtained through the harvesting of elephant tusks, and like bone (with which

Justinian receiving the scepter and cruciger from the archangel, mimicking the ceremony Justinian would undergo for his actual ascension. If this is the case, it would provide an intriguing instance where we can affirm the Byzantine government's appropriation of the cult behind icons, and their use of it to further their own agency.

80 Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium." *Past & Present*, No. 84 (August 1979), 24.

81 Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," 25.

ivory was often equated in crafting), ivory gave the connotation of what was once part of the body.⁸² In a faith that focused fundamentally on ritual materials representing the body (taking into consideration the concept of the Eucharist), it is logical to assume that the faithful would have preferred a work that could foster a physical connection with the divine just as much as a spiritual connection. Ivory was also much denser than wood, making it an ideal medium for portable icons that would be submitted to constant wear and tear.⁸³

Adopting luxury materials into their avid production of religious iconography, the Byzantines sought to create a sense of reverence and intimacy with the divine that would permit a type of spiritual communion when one prayed. Such has been greatly apparent in the icons already discussed. Yet in their ardor to connect to their invisible God, and to portray the entities whom they felt could facilitate this connection, the Byzantines' quest for intimacy grew too intense for comfort within the Eastern religious community. The discontent with this ardor would come to a head in the eighth century, commencing one of the most significant periods of iconoclasm in Western history. A near century of destruction left the Christian world with a diminished number of this once-precious genre of religious imagery, but also produced a new type of icon — one with impressive religious significance.

This was the concept of 'acheiropoietos,' or 'icons made without human hands.'⁸⁴ These icons were alleged to have appeared miraculously, as though they descended from heaven. The divine agency of their creation gave these icons authority, as they were argued to be the 'true icons' — true

82 Wall text, Byzantine Art, 17.190.239, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York.

83 Ryder, "Byzantine Ivories," https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ivor/hd_ivor.htm.

84 Sarah Brooks, "Icons and Iconoclasm in Byzantium," https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/icon/hd_icon.htm.

depictions of Christ and other religious figures. Acheiropoietos were known to the Byzantines long before the events of the Iconoclastic Controversy.⁸⁵ Yet this genre of icon became especially prominent when it was used as a defense for religious imagery. If God had created the icon, then it could not be blasphemous and therefore could not be destroyed. Once more, the Byzantines had stressed the concept of a sacred material within the icon, this one hailing from a place of origin much holier than the workshops of the common mortal. No longer could an icon just possess vestigia, these material traces of the divine, but it could also be a direct offering from the divine.⁸⁶ To the Byzantine faithful, acheiropoietos were further affirmation of the power behind the material.

The Legacy of Depicting "Something Hidden"

With the reinstallation of icon production in 843 CE, after a long and destructive period of iconoclasm, it became apparent that the faithful's returned fervor towards icons fueled not only production but also a desire for more decadence in the mediums employed. Enamored as ever with the sumptuary arts, the Byzantines began to utilize more opulent materials in their icon-making, a reflection of a prosperous empire and their renewed vigor in visually guided worship.⁸⁷ A work that boldly displays this renewed vigor is a lavish cloisonné enamel icon of the Archangel Michael, that today resides within the Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. (Fig. 8) Upon an initial glance, the work is extremely ornate, engaging the eye with cloisonné work, niello, intricate patterning, and precious stones set in multitudes. It is almost entirely gilded, save for the body of the Archangel, and the several medallions that orbit him with figures of Christ and

85 Ibid.

86 Rudolph, *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, 101.

87 Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Art*, 68.

other warrior angels. The gold and enamel work would have imbued the icon heavily with the concept of holy light, as there is not a single surface of the work that is not reflective. The abundance of precious metals and stones decorating the icon signal opulence, and have led academia to believe that it was an imperial commission.⁸⁸ The imperial affiliation is emphasized further in the representation of the Archangel Michael, dressed as a military general and raising a sword, in the same fashion as the icon of Saint Demetrios. Clutched in his other hand is a globus cruciger, an orb topped with a cross and a symbol of Christian authority. It expresses dominion over the earth and was often included in royal regalia throughout the medieval age.⁸⁹ Stationed around Michael are several pairs of fellow warrior angels, with shields and weapons at the ready, constantly vigilant. The expression on Michael's face is also vigilant, with tense lips and a wide-eyed stare. His gaze, like those of the angels in *The Enthroned Virgin and Child* icon, never meets that of the viewer, setting the archangel apart from humanity and above it. Despite this aloof gaze, the figure of the Archangel Michael is rendered in such high relief that he appears to encroach upon the mortal world, even more so than the figure of Saint Demetrios. Whether that encroachment be for the viewer's protection or a warning is for the viewer to decipher.

The intricate modelling of the face displays a medium once unfamiliar with the creation of icons, yet nevertheless a medium mastered in Byzantine art by the tenth century: enamel.⁹⁰ It was a well-established luxury material by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the periods between which this icon is

88 Warren T. Woodfin, "The Mock Turtle's Tears: Ersatz Enamel and The Hierarchy of Media In Pseudo-Kodinos," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2017), 55.

89 Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, 88.

90 Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 115.

dated.⁹¹ The molding of this glassy medium shows immense care and attention to detail. The enamel also serves to make the face appear rounder and more supple, giving an almost realistic visage. Despite the media of the icon changing, observers can still distinguish the facial features standardized for the icon before the sixth century, with large eyes, a slender nose, and a small mouth.

For my analysis of cloisonné and enamel as icon mediums, I have chosen to focus solely on this icon of the Archangel Michael. With the level of craftsmanship and opulence that this work exudes, having a second example would be almost excessive. This is not to say that the previous icons discussed were done so in pairs due to a lack of craftsmanship or appeal, but rather to show various facets of how the medium could be used in icon production. This icon of the Archangel Michael is so aesthetically succinct, so loaded with visual information, that it may be overwhelming to discuss more than one. With that in mind, the overwhelming nature of this work designates it as one of the best examples of an icon attempting to embody the ideal of anagogical ascent. As discussed prior, Byzantium's quest for anagogical ascent was one meant to both inspire greater reverence in the devout, while captivating them into deep religious contemplation. Beauty, especially that which invoked spiritual fulfillment, was the agenda.⁹² Because of the high value of its materials, there is a consensus that this icon of Archangel Michael most likely stayed within a church at the Great Palace of Constantinople for about a century, before supposedly being looted and brought to Italy in the thirteenth century.⁹³ During its stay in the church, one can only imagine the types of liturgical ceremonies in which

91 Bissera V. Pentcheva, "The Performative Icon," 632.

92 Nadine Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 212.

93 Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 116.

the icon played a part, and how its extravagant design enhanced worship during those ceremonies.

It is because of the rampant violence enacted against these icons' sumptuous design that so few early Byzantine icons survive today. The materials in which an icon was forged, or where the icon was located geographically were factors that frequently decided its fate.⁹⁴ Monasticism helped a good deal in the preservation of icons, as evident by the collection from Saint Catherine's Monastery at Sinai. Yet even with inadvertent assistance, some genres of early Byzantine icon scarcely exist in the modern day. When speaking about the intensity of destruction enacted on holy imagery within the reign of the Byzantines, author Robert S. Nelson remarked, "The fact that icons provoked the bitter violence of Iconoclasm is abundant witness to the powerful place they held in Christian life."⁹⁵ Only an aspect extremely crucial to Byzantine culture could warrant such an extreme act of violence, as it was so deeply ingrained into Eastern Christian life that attempting to remove it was no small feat. The Byzantines' fervor to depict the "something hidden" of which St. John Damascene wrote led them to employ the lavish materials they enjoyed to craft vessels that would permit them an audience with the divine.⁹⁶ In adopting the imperial styles that flourished around them and dictated status through lavish items, Byzantine Christians attempted to channel the divine through material goods, while also paying the divine the utmost respect by retaining their otherworldliness — not dulling

94 Sarah Brooks, "Icons and Iconoclasm in Byzantium," https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/icon/hd_icon.htm. Icons painted on walls were often whitewashed, while others were subjected to literal breaking, being smashed, or defaced.

95 Nelson, Et al. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, 41.

96 John of Damascus, "On Holy Images," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Fordham University.

it with a human façade. Though it led to the near destruction of a custom built upon centuries of classical and regional influences, the Byzantines' impassioned attitudes towards icons display a desire that pulsates throughout the whole of Christian art. That desire is to know the invisible almighty, and to connect to it in some way, the most immediate being through material goods. In taking resources that ranged from commonly used mediums to the rarest of luxury goods, the faithful of Byzantium sought to unlock a portal to the supernatural. In these objects garnered from the earthly plane, the Byzantines saw inherent wisps of divinity that could be manipulated as means of contacting the invisible almighty. Truly, St. John of Damascus struck upon the heart of Byzantine icon-making when he stated that "every image is a revelation."⁹⁷

97 Ibid.

Reference Imagery

Figure 1: The Blessing Christ (Christ Pantocrator). Constantinople, sixth century. Encaustic painting. Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, Egypt.



Figure 3: Saint Paul. Constantinople, sixth century. Encaustic painting. Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, Egypt.



Figure 2: Enthroned Mother of God with saints and angels. Constantinople, sixth century. Encaustic painting. Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, Egypt.



Figure 4: Plaque with Saint Paul. Antioch or Kaper Koraon, sixth to seventh century. Silver. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 5: Plaque with Saint Peter. Byzantine, sixth to seventh century. Silver. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 7: Ivory Panel of Archangel (Michael?). Constantinople, mid-sixth century. Ivory. The British Museum.

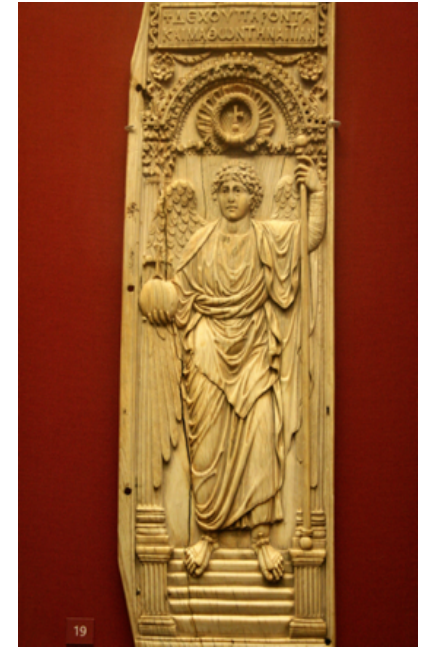


Figure 6: Ivory Icon with Saint Demetrios. Byzantine, tenth to eleventh century. Ivory. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 8: Cloisonné Enamel Icon of Archangel Michael. Constantinople, around 1100. Cloisonné, precious stones, gold, enamel, and niello. The Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco.

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Rainfall, Conflict, and Food Insecurity in Post-Succession Sudan and South Sudan (2013-2016)

Maïmouna Kante (CLA 2020)

Abstract

Introduction:

Past discussions of conflict in Sudan and South Sudan have proposed climate change as a causal factor in violence, but more recent descriptions consider a wider variety of circumstances to characterize these evolving, complex emergencies with more sophistication. This article explores the association of localized weather patterns, principally rainfall during the lean season, in relation to conflict, as a way to visualize disparities in weather-related trends.

Methods:

July precipitation anomalies from 2013–2016 for Sudan and South Sudan, which may have negatively affected agrarian populations during the lean season, were generated from NASA TRMM/TMPA 3P43 (Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission/Multi-Satellite Precipitation Analysis). These anomalies were then analyzed in relation to local population estimates (WorldPop), reported conflict events and fatalities (Armed Conflict Locations and Events Data Project), food security classification (Integrated Phase Classification, Famine Early Warning Systems Network), and other sources for measuring crop access to water (Climate Hazards Group InfraRed Precipitation with Station data).

Results:

The findings indicate that areas anomalous for lower rainfall tended to exhibit a higher density of conflict events (ranging from 0.10 – 3.85 events per 100km²); however, this did not

translate to higher densities of fatalities, which were distributed across regions with different deviations in rainfall patterns. Regions anomalous for higher than average rainfall tended to exhibit lower rates of conflict fatalities.

Discussion:

The possibility of a wetter than average Sahel may have a dampening effect on conflict fatalities in Sudan and South Sudan, if past trends extend into the future. However, urbanization may transform the influence of weather on conflict in states transitioning away from majority rural populations.

Background

The 2013-2016 period, continuing to the present, has been a time of violence and disruption for both Sudan and South Sudan. Independence of South Sudan in 2011 was followed by disagreements over oil ownership and distribution¹, then by civil war in 2013. Deteriorating economic conditions accompany acute food insecurity in the region.² In order to expand the literature investigating armed conflict, climate, and food security, this work begins by examining patterns in weather, demography, reported armed conflict, and measures of acute food insecurity. The purpose of this research is to observe geographic differences in weather anomalies over several years, and to explore how these differences correspond to the number of people affected by anomalies, armed conflict events, and classifications of food insecurity.

Sudan and South Sudan have been recognized for their fragility in relation to climate change.³ The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) Seasonal Calendar shows us what a typical year in Sudan and South Sudan would look like for agriculture and weather patterns.⁴ The rainy season runs from June to October and the first harvest in the Greenbelt and Hills and Mountains tends to take place between June and August. The lean season is from May to August, closely followed by seasonal flooding. This study explores July rainfall anomalies because they fall in the middle of the lean season, within the rainy season, and during a critical portion of planting time for farmers. It is also worth noting that July falls outside the seasonal grazing period in South Sudan, after wheat harvests in March, and before millet and sorghum harvests in November. The northern part of Sudan is often drier and tends to receive less rainfall than the southernmost part of South Sudan.

Data and Methods

Data for our project were acquired from a wide variety of sources. Described below are the original data sets and steps used to process the information on rainfall, food security, conflict and population. In many cases, data were converted to different formats, in order to compare sub-national variations. A 0.25-degree resolution grid cell was used as the unit of analysis.

Rainfall

TRMM

Rainfall data (1 month from the Tropical Rainfall Monitoring Mission in millimeters) were downloaded as GeoTIFF (raster) with a focus on July from 2000 to 2016.⁵ Natural Earth⁶ boundaries for Sudan and South Sudan were selected and used to extract the global rainfall data to the Sudan and South Sudan regions in ArcGIS 10.3. 2000-2010 rainfall data were gathered to calculate a baseline. The raster calculator tool was used to generate mean (Equation 1) and standard deviation values (per pixel, Equation 2) as cell statistics.

$$\text{Equation 1. } \underline{x}_i = \frac{\sum_{t=2000}^{2010} x_{i,t}}{11}$$

$$\text{Equation 2. } s_i = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{t=2000}^{2010} (x_{i,t} - \underline{x}_i)^2}{10}}$$

Figure 1 can be read as two sets of data. The average from 2000-2010 represents the baseline and serves as a means of comparison. By contrasting the baseline to more recent years, regions that experience higher or lower than average rainfall can be identified (2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016).

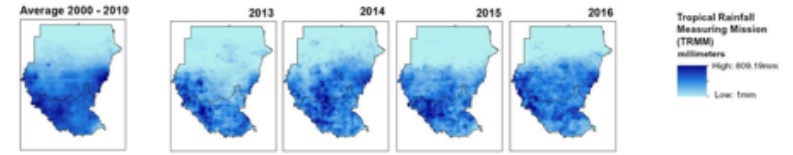


Figure 1. Rainfall in mm for Sudan and South Sudan the average from 2000-2010 and 2013-2016, TRMM NASA for the months of July.

Next, using conditional raster tests, pixels with the precipitation values for each year from 2013-2016 that fell above or below one standard deviation from the mean, or two standard deviations from the mean were classified as binary variables.

CHIRPS

Climate Hazard Group Infrared Precipitation with Station data (CHIRPS)⁷ provides information on global rainfall for the past 30 years. Satellite and station data are combined to provide details on rainfall, but also on anomalies in precipitation. The CHIRPS z-score values for July 2013-2016 can be compared with the TRMM values. Figure 2 illustrates the differences between the two data sets for 2016.

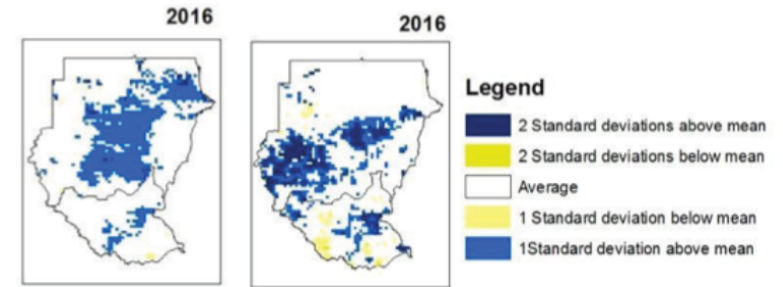


Figure 2. On the left is the z-score for identified locations with the standard deviation plus or minus 1 and plus or minus 2 above and below the mean for Sudan and South Sudan in 2016, CHIRPS for the months of July. On the right is a similar data representation from 2016, TRMM NEO for the month of July.

The figure above shows that CHIRPS data on the left side and the calculated standard deviation on the right. These are two very different models. Funk et al.⁸ acknowledge the potential for regional discrepancies, making some landscapes more prone to error.^{8,9} For CHIRPS, the areas that are one standard deviation above the mean are found in the central regions of Sudan, whereas the TRMM calculated z-scores are more prominent in western Sudan. The two data sets are consistent in their illustration of a generally wetter year for Sudan.

Using GeoDa software, correlation coefficients between the z-scores from CHIRPS and TRMM z-scores were calculated¹⁰. The association between CHIRPS and TRMM z-scores was found to be low to moderate. Table 1 outlines the differences in correlation between the two measures of rainfall anomalies overtime. 2015 exhibited the strongest correlation at 0.47 and 2014 showed the weakest, with a coefficient of 0.08.

Table 1. Correlation between TRMM and CHIRPS z scores for July, by year

Year	Correlation
2013	0.13
2014	0.08
2015	0.47
2016	0.23

These findings suggest that calculations for anomalies are very sensitive to the baselines that are used. In terms of understanding the impact of variations in rainfall over time for conflict, TRMM z-scores were adopted, because the 2000-2010 baseline provides a more recent memory of what farmers

experienced. However, it is possible for elders in communities to recall and narrate the relative experiences of past dry spells and famines over a much longer time period.¹¹

To produce a consistent unit of analysis, all subsequent data were transformed to the pixel extent of NASA NEO TRMM and CHIRPS moderate resolution data sets: 0.25 degrees. For Sudan and South Sudan, this translates into 3,335 pixels. ArcGIS 10.3 was used to generate a fishnet that matched TRMM pixel sizes. Raster data sets for 2013-2016 precipitation, the 2000-2010 baseline means and standard deviations, and 2013-2016 CHIRPS z-scores were converted to point features, and spatially joined to the vector fishnet. The result changes the data in raster format from GeoTIFF to an ESRI shapefile, and for each grid cell, rather than containing a single field, all attributes are included in the associated DBF table.

Food Security

Recent and historical data on acute food insecurity were obtained from the FEWS NET Data Center.¹² These data include shapefiles with Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)¹³ values indicating severity of food insecurity. When looking at food insecurity data in **Figure 3** we can see, especially in South Sudan, that there has been a marked increase in the severity of acute food insecurity. A significant expansion of regions identified as in crisis or emergency is visible. This change can be attributed to the prolonging of armed conflict, beginning December 2013.⁷

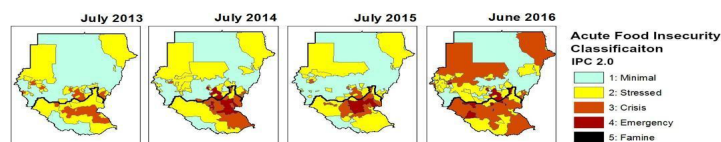


Figure 3. Food Insecurity Phase Classification (IPC) for Sudan and South Sudan from July 2013-2015 and June 2016, FEWS NET.

Conflict

ACLED¹⁴ information identifying conflict events in Sudan and South Sudan from July 2013 to July 2016 was selected and overlaid on precipitation anomalies. **Figure 4** illustrates the mean July rainfall from 2000-2010 to compare with regions that are above and below the average rainfall from 2013-2016. Looking at **Figure 4**, it is hard to articulate a direct correlation between conflict and the TRMM data in standard deviations, with the visualization alone.¹³

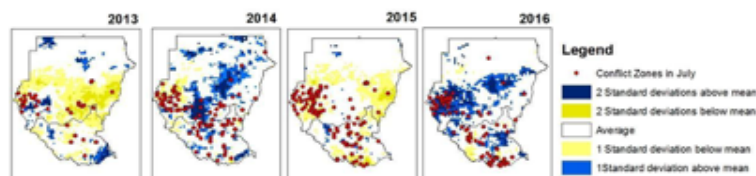


Figure 4. Identified locations with the standard deviation plus or minus 1 and plus or minus 2 above and below the mean for Sudan and South Sudan from 2013-2016, TRMM NEO for the months of July; paired with the zones affected by conflict from 2013-2016, ACLED month of July.

Additionally, spatial joins were performed to identify the minimum IPC values, total conflict events and total fatalities, and total population for each grid cell.

Population

Population is a difficult sub-national attribute to verify for Sudan and South Sudan over this time period. Significant conflict-driven displacement means that most sub-national estimates of population are incorrect. While future research might make use of IOM and UN OCHA local estimates of displaced persons, this project used WorldPop^{15,16} adjusted to UN World Population Prospects totals to calculate per pixel population values, using their 2015 100 meter resolution estimates as a reference point.

Findings

Once rainfall anomalies, food security classifications, conflict events and fatalities, and population were assembled in a combined data set, it was possible to identify some patterns among the variables. **Figure 5** illustrates the bi-national trends for Sudan and South Sudan. Overall, more July conflict events took place during the rainier years, 2014 and 2016. Conflict fatalities increased each year, from 744 in 2013 to 1,054 in 2016. Total July rainfall fluctuated back and forth between 2013 and 2016.

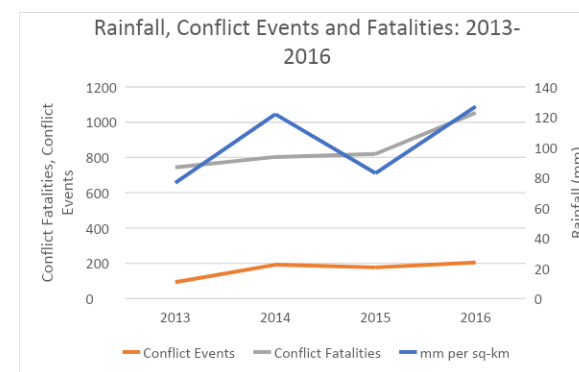


Figure 5. Combined national total for Sudan and South Sudan, July 2013-2016

Table 2 summarizes data for Sudan and South Sudan by rainfall anomalies for 2013-2016. Regions defined by rainfall anomalies one or two standard deviations below the mean have higher densities of conflict events than areas experiencing average or above average rainfall regions. However, this pattern does not translate to conflict fatalities. ACLED records a large variety of conflict types, and many conflict events have zero or no fatalities. This finding suggests some potential interpretations. First, climate as a ‘conflict magnifier’ may have some truth, particularly in that drier than average regions witness more conflict events; however, the events may not necessarily lead to more deaths.

Cross tabulations of the data reveal that in all four years of the study, the areas experiencing average rainfall patterns have more conflict than regions with anomalous rainfall. Nevertheless, while most conflict events are taking place in non-anomalous rainfall regions, the density of events, measured as events per square kilometer, is higher in areas two standard deviations below the mean. For the first three years of the study, the wettest anomalies (one or two standard deviations above the mean) had the lowest number of conflict events.

Further exploration demonstrates the variability of the association between conflict events and fatalities. Table 3 identifies correlations between conflict events and conflict fatalities in the data set. The correlations range between 0.36 (2015) and 0.93 (2016). The very high values are also sensitive to a small number of leverage points. Leaving out the data for two pixel areas in 2013 drops the correlation from 0.84 to 0.57. Similarly, leaving out one pixel in 2016 drops the association from 0.93, indicating an almost perfect correlation, to 0.48, which indicates a strong association. With regard to reported R^2 values, for 2016 the location of conflict events explains

2013 Anomalies in Rainfall	Area - km-sq	mm per km-sq	Conflict Events	Events per sq-km	Conflict Fatalities	Fatalities per sq-km	Fatalities per 100,000	Total Population
2 standard deviations below the mean	5,980	55.3	6	0.0010	30	0.0050	0.46	6,476,340
1 standard deviation below the mean	22,698	60.1	32	0.0014	167	0.0074	0.97	17,253,007
Around average	51,870	76.0	53	0.0010	539	0.0104	2.21	24,427,665
1 standard deviation above the mean	3,770	155.8	2	0.0005	8	0.0021	-0.50	1,584,510
2 standard deviations above the mean	2,392	171.0	0	0.0000	0	0.0000	0.00	799,545
			93		744			
2014 Anomalies in Rainfall	Area - km-sq	mm per km-sq	Conflict Events	Events per sq-km	Conflict Fatalities	Fatalities per sq-km	Fatalities per 100,000	Total Population
2 standard deviations below the mean	364	70.86	4	0.0110	5	0.0137	2.92	171,068
1 standard deviation below the mean	5,538	91.30	46	0.0083	77	0.0139	1.97	3,900,455
Around average	60,762	108.25	106	0.0017	518	0.0085	1.78	29,139,223
1 standard deviation above the mean	11,830	156.31	19	0.0016	104	0.0088	1.00	10,407,037
2 standard deviations above the mean	8,216	197.01	17	0.0021	99	0.0120	1.43	6,923,284
			192		803			
2015 Anomalies in Rainfall	Area - km-sq	mm per km-sq	Conflict Events	Events per sq-km	Conflict Fatalities	Fatalities per sq-km	Fatalities per 100,000	Total Population
2 standard deviations below the mean	2,444	87.38	10	0.0041	10	0.0041	0.50	1,980,378
1 standard deviation below the mean	18,408	66.67	35	0.0019	248	0.0135	1.66	14,977,130
Around average	64,246	84.37	131	0.0020	547	0.0085	1.67	32,809,014
1 standard deviation above the mean	1,430	208.76	1	0.0007	15	0.0105	2.30	650,776
2 standard deviations above the mean	182	175.09	0	0.0000	0	0.0000	0.00	123,770
			177		820			
2016 Anomalies in Rainfall	Area - km-sq	mm per km-sq	Conflict Events	Events per sq-km	Conflict Fatalities	Fatalities per sq-km	Fatalities per 100,000	Total Population
2 standard deviations below the mean	130	99.96	5	0.0385	50	0.3846	64.05	78,061
1 standard deviation below the mean	2,600	101.70	10	0.0038	39	0.0150	3.09	1,262,576
Around average	63,284	102.20	126	0.0020	692	0.0109	2.34	29,602,885
1 standard deviation above the mean	12,454	194.61	29	0.0023	206	0.0165	2.04	10,118,104
2 standard deviations above the mean	8,242	223.57	35	0.0042	67	0.0081	0.71	9,479,442
			205		1,054			

23 percent of the variation in conflict fatalities without the one leverage point, or 86 percent of the variation with all observations. Another interpretation of the significance of leverage points may have to do with the nature of conflict in urban areas, where conflict events are more tightly associated

with fatalities, and much higher for all other areas of the two countries. The single leverage pixel in 2016 was Juba, South Sudan. Once population is also considered, through the calculation of rates, the association between events and fatalities increases for 2013, but decreases substantially for 2014-2016.

Table 3. Correlations between Conflict Events and Conflict Fatalities

Table 3. Correlations between Conflict Events and Conflict Fatalities (Counts and Rates)

Year	ACLED Correlation: Events and Fatalities	Correlation absent leverage events	Number of leverage points	Correlation Coefficient: Rates	Correlation absent leverage events	Number of Pixels with non-zero events
2013	0.84	0.57	2	0.998	0.716	28
2014	0.44			0.228		82
2015	0.36			0.253		90
2016	0.93	0.48	1	0.170		71

Conclusions

While this paper is not able to explore associations between conflict and climate over such a brief time frame, it is possible to explore associations between weather anomalies and conflict events in two countries with largely agrarian populations and workforces. Regions that were drier than average during July months tended to have a greater density of conflict events (measured in number of events per square kilometer). However, wetter than average regions displayed an inconsistent association with conflict and fatality densities. Wetter than average regions had a lower density of conflict events, and in most cases had lower fatality densities and rates than areas with less than average or average rainfall.

de Waal expressed concern that an over-emphasis, even panic, regarding climate disruption and conflict undermines the prioritization of programs with known and evidence-based mechanisms for improving public health rural livelihoods:

education of women, improved access to basic care, development of democratic institutions, farm insurance, civic participation in decisions about land ownership and stewardship.² The securitization of climate change has no demonstrated benefits; in fact, extractive industry and counter-terrorism dollars seem to produce the opposite of peace.

Serious caution should be applied to spatial exploration of weather patterns, climate patterns and conflict. As the rich work completed by the Sudan Small Arms Survey¹⁷ demonstrates, the specific pathways to conflict can be explored, within historic and contemporary contexts, to better understand and predict where conflict is most likely. Future work should consider the geography of oil infrastructure and seasonal migration patterns. When better situated in relation to the motivation and sources of violence, resource extraction, not climate instigation, appears more relevant.

Beyond reading the cross-tabulations and associations discussed above, this paper suggests technical strategies for aggregating data from multiple sources, in multiple data formats, into a single database to share and analyze information. Use of vector fishnets serves to store multiple data sets containing a variety of attributes into a shared database. Information on internally displaced persons, by settlement, locations of oil infrastructure, and other weather measurements, such as land surface temperatures, could be integrated and assessed in future work.

Appendix

July rainfall, z-scores for precipitation, conflict events, and IPC values accompany this report, and are available through the [Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#).

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Identidad desaparecida: secuelas psicológicas de la apropiación de niños durante La Guerra Sucia argentina

(Katelynn Fleming, CLA 2021)

Hace menos de un año, Javier Matías Darroux Mijalchuk se convirtió en el niño apropiado número 130 en ser encontrado por las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo. Descubrió su origen biológico después de vivir 42 años de su vida con una familia adoptiva, a pesar de que su familia consanguínea lo buscaba después de que la junta militar argentina convirtió a él y a sus padres en desaparecidos durante la Guerra Sucia argentina entre 1976 y 1983 (“Javier Matías. . .”). Según *Nunca Más*, el informe publicado por la comisión de verdad establecida después de la dictadura, durante esta época la junta militar ordenó la desaparición de 10.000 a 30.000 personas con tendencias izquierdistas, de las cuales 0.82% eran bebés y 3% eran mujeres embarazadas (CONADEP 294). Los bebés secuestrados o nacidos en cautiverio normalmente se entregaron a familias militares o partidarios del régimen, con la idea de “lo que conviene a su salvación” (CONADEP 299). En realidad, era un esfuerzo sistemático para controlar la identidad e ideología de la próxima generación argentina. Las Abuelas, quienes se consideran activistas del derecho a la identidad,¹

1 Las Naciones Unidas aseguran el derecho de los niños a la identidad en el documento *La Convención Sobre los Derechos del Niño* (1989) en Artículo 8,

1. Los Estados Partes se comprometen a respetar el derecho del niño a preservar su identidad, incluidos la nacionalidad, el nombre y las relaciones familiares de conformidad con la ley sin injerencias ilícitas.

2. Cuando un niño se ha privado ilegalmente de algunos de los elementos de su identidad o de todos ellos, los Estados Partes deberán prestar la asistencia y protección apropiadas con miras a restablecer rápidamente su identidad. (Naciones Unidas 105)

Similarmente, Artículo 7.1 destaca el derecho de los niños y niñas “El

dicen que todavía les falta por recuperar más de 300 nietos y nietas, y cada año continúan restituyendo las identidades de múltiples personas, ahora adultos. Las Abuelas gozan de la ayuda de otras organizaciones civiles y departamentos gubernamentales establecidos con este propósito, como la Comisión Nacional por el Derecho a la Identidad (CONADI) y el Banco Nacional de Datos Genéticos, que mantiene un archivo de ADN de familiares de los desaparecidos (Argentina). Argentina lleva este pasado traumático en su identidad nacional actual. A finales del 2019, Argentina eligió a Cristina Fernández de Kirchner como Vicepresidenta de la nación después de que alcanzó su límite como Presidenta entre 2007 y 2015 (Goñi). Su administración se ha enfocado en la conmemoración y este año promovió otra vez el Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia, en el que miles suelen manifestarse con las Abuelas bajo una bandera con fotos de todos los desaparecidos (Kirchner). La práctica se celebra con gente de todas las edades y mantiene vivo los desaparecidos en la conciencia social argentina.

Sin embargo, descubrir su verdadero origen biológico es solo el comienzo de un largo proceso para restituir la identidad de los niños y niñas apropiados. La junta logró que crecieran con una identidad completamente diferente de la que hubieran desarrollado viviendo con sus familias biológicas. El proceso de intentar asimilar la identidad biológica en una identidad ya desarrollada es largo, difícil y doloroso. En

niño. . . tendrá derecho desde que nace. . . en la medida de lo posible, a conocer a sus padres y a ser criado por ellos” (Naciones Unidas 105). La República de Argentina ratificó este documento con reservaciones en 1990, el año en que se publicó, siete años después de la caída de la junta militar. Las reservaciones no retan a estos artículos y la única relevante es la de Artículo 1, por la cual Argentina define “niño” como todo ser humano desde concepción a la edad de 18 años. Esta definición asegura los derechos a bebés que todavía no han nacido, un grupo de edad que se apropiaba durante la Guerra Sucia (“Chapter 4. 11. Convention on the Rights of a Child”).

su ensayo sobre la apropiación de bebés durante La Guerra Sucia, el psicoanalista Armando Kletnicki representa la identidad falsificada como un daño irreparable en el niño o la niña porque no se puede reformar la identidad aún con la información de un verdadero origen: “It is illusory to think that a child’s subjectivity, that originated and was consolidated under improper circumstances, may be dissolved at a stroke . . . we need to confront the possibility that some effects are irreparable” (184). Así, este ensayo analizará dos películas, *La historia oficial* (1985) y *Cautiva* (2003), que muestran los efectos psicológicos irreparables señalados por Kletnicki desde dos perspectivas: la del apropiador y la del apropiado. *La historia oficial* ofrece la perspectiva de una madre adoptiva, Alicia, cuando se entera de que la niña que adoptó hace cinco años, Gaby, es hija de desaparecidos. Por otro lado, *Cautiva* trata de una adolescente, Cristina que se entera de que ha sido apropiada y la justicia argentina intenta devolverla a su familia biológica. El ensayo después discutirá las consecuencias que tiene el descubrimiento del origen verdadero en la familia adoptiva en ambas películas. A pesar de sus puntos de vista diferentes, las dos películas presentan el trauma que la apropiación inflige en la niña, directamente en el caso de Cristina y por inferencia con Gaby. A través de eso, hace un paralelo entre la desaparición física de los padres biológicos y la apropiación del bebé, la cual desaparece la identidad psicológicamente. Estas películas señalan que el legado de la dictadura perdura hasta hoy y que la justicia tiene una habilidad limitada para mejorar la situación porque el crimen es inherentemente emocional y subjetivo; la acusación les duele a las víctimas y la restitución también tiene secuelas.

Las niñas apropiadas sufren de una permanente falta de identidad independientemente de si la justicia interviene o no. Kletnicki dice que en el caso de la apropiación de bebés, “We add to the abduction and physical disappearance of the

child or the unborn baby, the sinister category of psychological appropriation, since the repressor who misappropriates the parental role provides the conditions in which individuals are constituted” (183). Así que, por la apropiación las niñas no solo se separan del entorno físico de la familia biológica sino también de su ambiente ideológico. En las películas, Cristina experimenta la fragmentación de la identidad más obviamente que Gaby porque sufre la desilusión al enterarse de la verdad durante la película. Con Gaby, solo podemos inferir mediante el simbolismo cuánto ella sufrirá cuando se entere.

Antes de enterarse, Cristina parece ser una adolescente feliz que quiere mucho a sus padres, quienes la han criado a ella como cualquier familia unida criaría a su hija. La identidad de Cristina se ha construido alrededor de esta raíz familiar. Cuando sus padres le admiten que es adoptada, le dicen que fue abandonada por sus padres biológicos y encontrada en una estación de tren. Entonces, ella sufre una grave desilusión cuando se entera de que en realidad sus padres biológicos son desaparecidos; su padre adoptivo formaba parte del régimen, y la recibió de un colega del régimen. Esto culmina en una confrontación con sus padres adoptivos en la que Cristina les acusa de apropiarla intencionalmente y hasta de ser responsables de la muerte de sus padres biológicos. Al acabar la discusión, el padre confirma, “Ni los conocí [a tus padres biológicos] ni les hice nada” y la madre se defiende de no haber indagado sobre su origen diciendo “¿Para qué quería saber?” (1:38:05-37). Por esta conversación, Cristina llega a comprender que sus padres no han sido completamente inocentes ni completamente culpables.

Más difícil de aceptar es que sus padres todavía no se arrepienten de su acto, ya que no creen haberse equivocado. Aunque es bueno saber que no le hicieron daño intencionalmente, Cristina todavía tiene que lidiar con la complicidad de sus padres adoptivos por su falta de acción, un tema muy

común en las obras que representan La Guerra Sucia. Además, el que el padre todavía defienda el régimen de la junta ilustra que la familia adoptiva de Cristina estaba opuesta políticamente a la familia biológica. Ya que el régimen secuestró a Cristina de su enemigo político y se la entregó a un partidario político, le han tratado a ella como un botín de guerra. Este concepto es deshumanizante para ella y complica su relación con sus padres adoptivos. Por estas realidades, su amor para sus padres adoptivos entra en conflicto irresoluble con la comprensión de su culpabilidad de crímenes en contra de su familia biológica y en contra de ella misma. Es algo con lo que ella tendrá que lidiar toda la vida.

Aún sin la comprensión de la culpabilidad de sus padres adoptivos, Cristina tiene que esforzarse para aceptar la verdad y reconciliar su doble identidad. En su ensayo, Kletnicki también habla de la crueldad de este tipo de apropiación de identidad: “They sought to negate and replace the child he or she should have been, to negate the child’s name, history, and expectations” (184). Similarmente, mucho tiempo después de la fase de negación completa, Cristina todavía siente la tensión entre su identidad actual y la niña que ‘debe haber sido’ como señala Kletnicki. En una escena que ejemplifica esta tensión, el juez invita a la abuela biológica de Cristina a presentarse, pero Cristina se niega totalmente la situación y huye de la sala rumbo a su casa y hacia la única familia que conoce como suya, sus padres adoptivos. De hecho, más tarde cuando la justicia la obliga a vivir con su familia biológica, todavía se siente cautiva allí; durante la mayoría de la película le cuesta aceptar la verdad de su relación con ellos y el que no se le permita regresar a su familia adoptiva cuando quiere. Este sentimiento es una manifestación de una consecuencia fundamentalmente no natural que resulta de la apropiación. Similarmente, aún meses después, todavía prefiere que los demás le llamen Cristina, el nombre con el que creció, en lugar de Sofia, el nombre que le puso su madre

biológica. En sí, esto representa la secuela irreparable de la apropiación; no sólo se le ha asignado una identidad que no es suya, sino que también ella misma ha internalizado esta identidad a tal punto que no puede dividirla de la identidad fabricada. Es permanentemente una niña parcialmente cautiva por el enemigo porque han infiltrado y alterado su naturaleza permanentemente en una época de la vida en que no se podía defender. En este sentido, el robo de su identidad es como un exilio permanente en el que Cristina se ha integrado en el mundo de la oposición política hasta integrar la identidad asignada por la oposición permanentemente en sí misma.

La crisis de identidad de Gaby en *La historia oficial* es menos obvia porque al final de la película, Alicia todavía no le ha contado la verdad. A pesar de la ignorancia de la niña, a través del simbolismo, la película presenta claramente desde el principio lo que será su destino. La metáfora más clara es la canción popular argentina que Gaby canta múltiples veces durante la película, “El país de no me acuerdo”, que representa la laguna de identidad causada por su secuestro. La letra, “En el país del no me acuerdo / Doy tres pasitos y me pierdo / Un pasito para allí, / no recuerdo si lo di / Un pasito para allá / ¡Ay, qué miedo que me da!” es un presagio de que Gaby va a perder todo concepto de seguridad porque las verdades fundamentales de su vida se revelarán como falsas (6:00-7:30). En su ensayo, “Mapping the Land of I Don’t Remember”, Emily Tomlinson inspecciona el simbolismo de la canción: “Gaby teeters, figuratively on a tightrope dividing palpable from impalpable, on-the-spot from disappeared” (221). Así, Gaby se convierte en una figura trágica de la inocencia destinada al sufrimiento por la identidad falsificada infligida por el régimen del cual sus padres son partidarios. Al igual que Cristina, un día Gaby tendrá que lidiar con el hecho de que su identidad actual no concuerda armoniosamente con su identidad biológica. Una discrepancia en un hecho tan simple como

la fecha de su cumpleaños es difícil de aceptar porque es algo que siempre se da por hecho, así que representa un elemento fundamental de la identidad. Cristina expresa el dolor que le da, mientras que, en el caso de Gaby, Alicia anticipa esta dificultad. En una conversación con su marido, dice que siempre se siente culpable que celebran el día que adoptaron a Gaby porque ni saben ni celebran su cumpleaños verdadero (40:00-40:20). Gaby sentirá esta pena amplificada muchas veces por cada uno de los hechos pequeños que descubrirá ser falsos.

Si es difícil aceptar una fecha de cumpleaños diferente, el hecho que los padres biológicos fueron asesinados por el régimen en que participaban los padres adoptivos debe de ser muchísimo peor. Así, la niña se convierte en una contradicción en sí: un producto de la oposición política y un producto del régimen, capturada y usada con el motivo político de inculcar una cierta ideología en la próxima generación. Igual a la idea de la niña como botín de guerra, este hecho es deshumanizante porque implica que la niña es un objeto que se usa para cumplir un objetivo político, en lugar de un ser humano con derecho a la identidad. Además, un niño o una niña que se siente feliz y seguro en su familia normalmente confía en y quiere a sus padres por encima de todo. Por eso, saber que ellos han participado en este abuso fundamental de sus derechos humanos deja una cicatriz psicológica muy fuerte. Alicia se da cuenta del abuso psicológico que está infligiendo en Gaby de este modo. La película lo muestra a través de la representación de Gaby como una sombra o un ser inconcreto, a punto de desaparecer. En una escena, Alicia saca la ropa infantil de Gaby y llora encima, como si estuviera de luto por la muerte de su niña (52:00-53:35). Esta escena fortalece la imagen de una Gaby inconcreta sin una identidad definida en peligro de perderse en el limbo. Por eso, según Tomlinson, “Alicia must countenance precisely the possibility that Gaby will soon be (living-) dead *to her*” (221). Así que,

Gaby se convierte simbólicamente en exactamente lo que son sus padres biológicos: desaparecidos, una señal que el abuso sistemático del régimen reverberará por generaciones. En sí misma, ella y su identidad actual existen en la sombra de lo que eran sus padres biológicos. Simultáneamente, prueba que ella es un producto de la ideología del régimen. Así que en su identidad hay dos elementos opuestos: el paralelo a los padres biológicos y la fundación ideológica de sus enemigos, los padres adoptivos. Por consiguiente, para sobrepasar su estatus de sombra, ella eventualmente tendrá que lidiar con estas identidades opuestas, un proceso que le hará padecer la misma desilusión que sufre Cristina. Otra posibilidad para las dos niñas es que no se encuentran capaces de negociar ambas identidades; podrían convertirse en una sombra de las dos, dos niñas diferentes, ambas perdidas por la incapacidad de reconciliarlas.

Las dos niñas tendrán que llenar la laguna en sus historias con algo. Lo que se encuentran es el testimonio: fotografías e historias de las personas que conocían a sus padres biológicos. Estas fuentes crean memorias de segunda mano, lo que Marianne Hirsch llama postmemoria: “Postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (103). Por la distancia de tiempo y falta de la perspectiva de los padres, la relación entre la niña y el trauma de la última generación es emocional y complejo. En un proceso que es fundamentalmente no natural, las niñas tienen que recurrir a fuentes secundarias para obtener un sentido emocional de quiénes eran sus padres biológicos, lo cual implica que están construyendo la postmemoria a través de la perspectiva de otra persona, por lo cual la postmemoria es problemática. El testimonio puede manifestarse de múltiples formas, pero ambas películas capi-

talizan en el testimonio oral y fotográfico.

Susana Kaiser representa un aspecto problemático del testimonio en su ensayo de descripciones de violencia en relatos de épocas traumáticas como *La Guerra Sucia*: “We have seen that what has been intergenerationally transmitted also seemed to concentrate on describing atrocities” (178). Esto es una cuestión muy relevante para los hijos de desaparecidos cuando están aprendiendo de las vidas de sus padres, porque inevitablemente hay que mencionar su desaparición y el nivel de detalle incluido puede determinar el trauma que les transmite. Se puede ver el dilema en *Cautiva* cuando Cristina está buscando más información sobre sus padres. Mientras investigando los centros clandestinos donde sus padres sufrieron encarcelamiento, Cristina ve fotos de hombres desechando cuerpos de desaparecidos (1:17:40-1:17:45). Rápidamente dobla la página, pero ella sabe que sus padres sufrieron estos mismos actos violentos. En cuanto al testimonio oral, Cristina se encuentra en secreto con una enfermera, Marta, que ayudó a su madre dar a luz. Marta le cuenta de la noche de su nacimiento en un flashback² narrado. Mientras lo está describiendo, Cristina intenta reprimir lágrimas, señalando que la postmemoria de la violencia que sus padres experimentaron le da pena profunda (1:22:32-1:31:00). Según Felman y Laub, esta pena es normal en personas que escuchan testimonio, “The listener to trauma comes to be a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself” (citado en Tomlinson 225). Esto explica la razón por la que, a través de las fotos y las historias, Cristina llega a sentir las emociones de

2 En esta escena vemos las memorias de Marta, y también a veces oímos su voz narrando. Los visuales son gráficos, por ejemplo, mostrando en el cuerpo de la madre la venda, una herida abierta de picana, y sangre, pero es ambiguo si se transmiten estos detalles gráficos a Cristina también; se supone que no puede ver la memoria de Marta directamente y la narración verbal no los incluye.

las personas que sufrieron: al escuchar, ella está compartiendo un poco en el trauma. Por eso, aún la postmemoria no relacionada a la violencia de La Guerra Sucia causa pena o por lo menos emoción fuerte. Por ejemplo, eventualmente, Cristina junta coraje y entra en la habitación de su mamá en la adolescencia, todavía preservada en la casa de su abuela. Cuando ve sus decoraciones y toca su ropa, se crea otro paralelo entre ella y su mamá: la edad, el lugar en la casa, y la personalidad. Cristina empieza a conocer a su mamá, pero no la hace feliz; al mismo tiempo que está conociéndola, está velándola. Simbólicamente termina la escena mirándose en el espejo, aparentemente buscando el parecido entre madre e hija en su cara y en su identidad (1:03:30-1:05:24). A pesar de la pena, en un momento muy corto, vemos un poco de esperanza: en la pared de la habitación está el poema “Oda al Presente” de Pablo Neruda. Este poema lleva el tema del presente como un tiempo de esperanza, “nada tiene [el presente] / de ayer irremediable, / de pasado perdido, / es nuestra / criatura” (1:04:18-1:04:21). Aunque parece muy difícil, este poema sugiere que, a pesar de todos los abusos, Cristina todavía es capaz de sobrepasar el pasado para vivir en el presente. Nos da esperanza en que la postmemoria junto con las condiciones del presente, como la familia biológica, permitirán que Cristina escape de la sombra y se recupere a través de tiempo.

Gaby también tendrá que aprender quiénes eran sus padres biológicos a través de los cuentos de los demás. Según las pistas al final de la película, suponemos que eventualmente Gaby se encontrará con su probable abuela biológica, Sara. Como Gaby es muy joven y se queda con su familia adoptiva, todavía no puede recibir el testimonio directamente, pero lo hará eventualmente. De momento, Alicia lo recibe a través de los cuentos y las fotos que le muestra Sara. Igual que en el caso de Cristina, Sara tiene que incluir la desaparición. Aunque habla bastante tranquila y no da mucho detalle gráfico,

sus palabras son fuertes, “No quedó nada, nada” (1:31:00-1:31:15). Como Cristina, Gaby tendrá a su abuela, los cuentos y las fotos, pero a diferencia de Cristina, no tendrá nada material que puede ayudarla a conocer a sus padres biológicos emocionalmente. De cierta manera simbólica, así Gaby pierde otra vez a sus padres y la manera más concreta de conectarse con ellos para reconstruir la identidad. La sumerge más profundamente en la sombra, haciendo otro paralelo a sus padres biológicos por otro elemento de su identidad que ha desaparecido. Además, la falta de recuerdos materiales hará el proceso de crear postmemoria y así lidiar con la división en su identidad aún más difícil. Así, vemos que mientras las niñas sufren diferentes niveles de pérdida, al fin y al cabo, ningún número de fuentes de postmemoria puede compensar por los padres y la oportunidad de ser criada por ellos.

A causa de esta violencia en la vida de sus padres, hay que considerar también la transmisión del trauma transgeneracional, un tipo de postmemoria traumática heredada de los padres a través de un entorno modificado directamente por el trauma que experimentaron ellos. En el caso de Gaby, la película representa este tipo de trauma como un espejo para la fragmentación de la identidad porque Gaby recibe el trauma en ambas de sus identidades. Además de su canción favorita, “El país de no me acuerdo”, mencionada anteriormente, hay una escena en que Gaby está jugando como madre de su muñeca cuando de repente sus primos la asustan. Ellos se tiran por la puerta con armas falsas, accidentalmente simulando un secuestro, causando que ella grite (36:00-38:00). Su miedo desproporcionado muestra que es más que un asombro normal; es una manifestación del trauma transgeneracional, ya que ha actuado como su mamá biológica hubiera actuado durante el secuestro real; aunque Gaby personalmente nunca experimentó esta realidad, de alguna manera ha heredado el trauma. Aún encima del trauma de su madre biológica, Gaby

claramente ha recibido también el trauma transgeneracional de Alicia. En su artículo, Tomlinson dice de esta escena, “The land of ‘*she-doesn’t-remember*’ – an anteriority where she might lose her self *pasito a pasito* – is her foster mother’s past, as much as her biological mother’s” (221). Aunque Alicia no es su madre biológica, ha criado a Gaby, por lo cual el trauma de Alicia de convertirse en huérfana y sentirse abandonada también se le transmite a Gaby. Eso se ilustra a través de una imagen recurrente: después de que sus padres murieron en un accidente de coches, Alicia se quedó en la mecedora en casa de sus abuelos preguntándose por qué sus padres la habían abandonado. Esta imagen recurre al final de la película cuando Alicia ha decidido separarse de su marido al descubrir su complicidad consciente en la apropiación de Gaby lo cual implica el derrumbamiento de la familia adoptiva. La escena final muestra a Gaby sentada en la mecedora en casa de sus abuelos, cantando “El país de no recuerdo”, un presagio de que ella sufrirá la misma confusión y pérdida que sufrió Alicia al perder a sus padres, y por encima el trauma de la multiplicidad de identidades (1:50:40-1:51:21). Al igual que Cristina, los padres adoptivos de Gaby son los únicos padres que conoce, en quienes se basa su identidad familiar. Así que la niña desdichada hereda el trauma de la destrucción de la familia de dos ángulos, la desaparición de sus padres biológicos y el derrumbamiento de su familia adoptiva encima del trauma que seguirá a la inevitable revelación de su origen. Así que la apropiación añade una segunda herencia traumática para sortear, la cual también se ha convertido en sombra. Por eso, la niña tendrá que navegar e intentar reconciliar múltiples identidades contradictorias e inconcretas. Incluso es probable que Gaby se entere de la verdad a una edad mucho más joven que Cristina, quizás sin la familia biológica para ayudarla, implicando que posiblemente no tendrá la madurez emocional o herramientas para lidiar con la situación.

La revelación del verdadero origen de las chicas tiene efectos dañinos más allá de la psiquis; en ambas películas, se ve el derrumbamiento de la familia adoptiva. Las dos películas transmiten la idea que las familias creadas por apropiación no pueden sobrevivir la verdad porque los padres cometieron una traición contra la niña negándole su derecho a la identidad. Ya que *La historia oficial* se cuenta desde el punto de vista de Alicia, se puede ver fácilmente la pena que ella sufre al enterarse de su complicidad. En lo que puede ser una metáfora de toda Argentina, al descubrir su complicidad cerca del final de la película, Alicia quiere saber todo lo que ha permitido pasar y hacer todo lo que pueda para rectificarlo. Es difícil decir si eso ayudará o lastimará más a Gaby; Alicia tendrá mucha información para ella cuando finalmente se entere de la verdad, pero mientras tanto, la niña perderá la estabilidad familiar, lo cual hubiera ayudado a establecer un psiquis fuerte y resistente para lo que viene.

Mientras el apoyo de Alicia puede beneficiar a Gaby luego, hay que preguntarse si Alicia es representativa de la mayoría de padres apropiadores. En realidad, los padres adoptivos de Cristina son más representativos, considerando que la mayor parte de los niños y las niñas apropiados siguen desaparecidos, por lo cual se puede interferir que la mayoría de padres no han admitido que adoptaron a sus hijos así. Los padres de Cristina están profundamente sumergidos en esta área gris por haber intentado ignorar su conocimiento o sospechas del origen de su hija adoptada. No sabían por seguro que era hija de desaparecidos, pero tampoco intentaron enterarse. En su caso, de cierta manera, la traición continúa porque no se arrepienten de tomarla ni de participar en el régimen que mató a sus padres. Como ellos no se arrepienten y ella no puede perdonarlos, no puede haber resolución. Al mismo tiempo, es obvio que quieren a Cristina: intentan protegerla, la echan de menos, y la consideran su hija, aunque la justicia les separó.

Eso presagia otra división consecuente de la restitución de identidad: si la chica intenta integrarse a la familia e identidad biológica, ha pasado a la oposición política de su familia adoptiva, y ahora se enfrenta al “exilio” de ellos. Si no escoge entre las familias, siempre habrá una tensión entre sus identidades, impidiendo un escape de la sombra de identidad.

Algunos dirían que no es ético presentar a los padres apropiadores mediante esta óptica ambigua porque se cree que es reduccionista. Después de lo que hemos visto, argumentaría que es más reduccionista hablar de blanco y negro porque, aunque han cometido un crimen de lesa humanidad, ellos no lo ven así y argumentarían que tomaron la decisión mejor en la situación real en que había consideraciones adicionales. Por ejemplo, el padre de Cristina le dice, “¿Pero estás contenta ahora, que te encontramos un lugar en esta casa? ¿Qué preferías, estar en un sitio de huérfanos o en la calle? ¿O qué pensás que iban a hacer con estos bebés?” (1:37:43-1:38:04). Aunque no les absuelve, las películas inspeccionan el área gris. Muestran la complejidad de reconciliar las identidades cuando ambas familias sostienen que merezcan la lealtad de la niña.

Así probado el daño irreparable en niños y niñas apropiados, es claro que la justicia no puede reparar la situación porque el problema es más complejo que la dirección y habitantes de la casa en que viven. Para restituir la identidad, la CONADI y las campañas de conmemoración de los desaparecidos pueden ayudarles a enterarse que eran apropiados, encontrar su familia biológica y desarrollar la postmemoria para comprender y aceptar lo que han perdido. Después, hacen falta recursos para lidiar con la turbulencia psicológica de intentar reconciliar las dos identidades. Entonces, hay que asegurar que los niños y las niñas reciban terapia, acceso a grupos de apoyo y otros recursos para ayudar a establecer de nuevo la estabilidad de la identidad y la vida tanto como se

pueda. Aún con todos estos recursos accesible, no es seguro el nivel de estabilidad alcanzable. Es posible que algunos rechacen una identidad completamente para evitar la contradicción, o que nunca reconstituyan un sentido de identidad estable. Claramente, para ellas, las secuelas de la dictadura perduran mucho más allá del final del régimen.

Aunque los niños y niñas que se encuentran hoy ya son adultos, todavía pasan por la crisis de identidad que sufrieron Cristina y Gaby. La otra nieta encontrada en 2019 fue Marcella Solsona Síntora, quien durante los seis años anteriores se había negado a hacerse la prueba de sangre que probaría su identidad biológica y que la reuniría con su padre, hermano y familia biológica. Después, no quiso asistir a la conferencia de prensa que reveló la restitución (“Marcella Solsona. . .”). Su reticencia muestra la dificultad de aceptar una identidad y una familia biológica que contradice la identidad ya formada. La desaparición de la identidad que sufren los personajes se relaciona a la identidad actual de Argentina, que muestra temor de convertirse en un país desmemoriado. Se encontró al final de la Guerra Sucia en el abismo de la complicidad por el genocidio de 30 mil personas. Ahora, teme olvidar y perder la identidad nacional como desaparecieron los 30 mil y sus bebés sin rastro. Las secuelas de la apropiación de niños perdurarán durante décadas. Se puede imaginar que los hijos de los niños y niñas apropiados algún día se harán la prueba de ADN y se enterarán que sus padres o madres eran apropiados. Las películas y los activistas argumentan que, aunque la verdad es dolorosa, hay que arriesgarse para encontrarla porque la única otra opción es preservar la comodidad del olvido y dejar vivo el legado de la dictadura.

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Deadly Geometry: The Rise of *Trace Italienne* Fortress Architecture

Vincent Costa (CLA 2020)

Abstract:

The development of mobile siege artillery ushered in a revolution of fortress architecture design in early modern Europe. Throughout the 15th century different architectural experiments contributed to the development of the *Trace Italienne*, or bastioned fortress. *Trace Italienne* designs were laid out utilizing mathematical principles to develop overlapping fields of fire and leave no dead ground. This design differed from the circular towers and high walls of fortress architecture from previous periods. The result was a fortification that could both withstand and deliver an artillery bombardment while deterring potential escalation. The effects of *Trace Italienne* building programs had a remarkable impact on the European landscape and state development, which is still easily seen today.

It is a sad truth that throughout history the impact of new military technology is not understood until used to shocking and devastating effect. When Hiram Maxim invented his machine gun in the 1880s, the world changing nature of this technology would not be truly recognized until it contributed to the slaughter of millions on the battlefields of World War One. To find another such example, one could look to the development of the *Trace Italienne* in 16th century Europe. The use of *Trace Italienne*, or bastioned fortification, to defend key areas embedded the whole of Europe with geometric and mathematical fortress architecture wholly unique to the Baroque period. This not only impacted strategic and political considerations for generations to come, but also transformed cities, urban spaces, and those who lived within them. Itself responding to new technology, the bastioned fortress is directly connected to the expansion of professional standing armies, the creation of stable defined borders, and the consolidation of state power and resources in the early modern period. As a result, it, like the machine gun or nuclear missile of later periods, ushered in a wholly new world.

By the 13th century, castle design in Western Europe had quite nearly achieved perfection in its goal: enabling a weaker force to withstand the attacks of a stronger one, thus securing key areas with minimal manpower. Medieval fortifications centered on the concept of round towers projecting from curtain walls. This allowed archery fire in all directions as well as stable platforms for the employment of counter siege instruments, such as trebuchets, which the curtain walls could not support (see fig. 1).¹ These designs created an effect that, as Christopher Duffy summarized: “as long as muscle-power and gravity offered the only propulsive force for missiles, the soaring walls of castle and city were capable of keeping out an enemy who was not prepared to devote weeks or perhaps months to the work of reducing them”.²

While medieval siege machines existed, their employment was slow and laborious. Even when holes were punched in a wall, the inconsistency with which their projectiles fell meant that breaches were not easily expanded, and could quickly be blocked up by defenders. Such was the experience of Baha al-Din at the siege of Jaffa, relating that “a cloud of dust and smoke arose from the fallen wall that darkened the heavens and hid the light of day...But when the cloud dispersed, it disclosed the wall of halberds and lances replacing the one that had just fallen”.³ In essence, nearly all methods of besieging a medieval fortress (predominantly storming a breach, counter-mining, or starving out defenders) were long, obstinate, and bloody (see fig. 2).

The introduction of gunpowder into Western Europe during the 13th century did not initially change this situation. Early cannons were extremely heavy, time consuming to load, wildly inaccurate, and expensive.⁴ Advances in metallurgy and carriage design would come quickly, and by the reign of Charles VIII (1483-1498), the French possessed a standardized artillery corps, resulting predominantly from the reforms of Jean and Jasper Bureau.⁵ The effectiveness of these new systems would be shown in Charles’s 1494 invasion of Italy, when, descending with truly mobile siege artillery (see fig. 3), his army would level walls within days that had withstood sieges of years in the medieval era.⁶ In the aftermath, nearly all major European powers imitated the French example for their artillery systems. As French Marshal de Tavannes would write during the Eighty Years War: “Nowadays the besieger has gained the upper hand, and the defense of fortresses has been so weakened that we can see that without the help of an entire army, and not just small detachments, they have no hope of holding out...the Spanish and Dutch officers have made the capture of towns an art, and they can predict the duration of resistance of a fortress, however strong, in terms

of days”.⁷ In a matter of years, the old nearly impregnable defenses of the medieval fortress architects had been rendered obsolete.

The Italians, the first and hardest hit, responded quickly to these developments in siege technology. A plethora of engineers in Italian cities experimented with ways in which fortifications could both mount and resist gunpowder artillery. An emblematic example comes from Niccolò Fontana Tartaglia, who would write to the Duke of Urbino in 1537: “I was going to give rules for the art of the bombardier...then I fell to thinking it a blameworthy thing...to study and improve such a damnable exercise...But now, seeing that the wolf is anxious to ravage our flock, while all our shepherds hasten to the defense, it no longer appears permissible to me at present to keep these things hidden”.⁸ Cities would first attempt to convert their older towers and walls into adequate fortifications, such as at Valenciennes, which starting in the 1520s, steadily cut the tops off its towers and filled its old gates with earth to form artillery platforms. Likewise they backed the curtain walls with earth ramparts and added to the city defenses with first a square bulwark, then a low, straight-sided artillery tower with a rounded end (see fig. 4).⁹ While an improvement, this style, dubbed the “reinforced castle” by modern historians, still had a fatal flaw: that of dead ground (see fig. 5).

The rounded towers of medieval castles, perfect when the mode of active defense was based on the principal of “merely dropping things on people”, created a space in its front which sheltered the enemy from incoming fire of the curtain walls and the other towers.¹⁰ Recognizing the potential of converging lines of artillery and small arms, the Italians would redesign their fortifications “on strictly mathematical lines- most notably the old towers were trimmed into four-sided angular works called bastions, which were so shaped as to eliminate any dead ground by which besiegers might have

approached the foot of the wall unscathed”.¹¹ The question then became how to incorporate the bastion into a system of defense which utilized these geometrically interrelated planes of cannon shot while also being able to withstand incoming fire and keep ground troops from scaling the walls. It was the development of a ground plan that combined all these elements that would be dubbed the *Trace Italienne*. As Mahinder Kingra writes, “the *trace italienne* met the three basic requirements of gunpowder-age fortifications: low-lying, spacious ramparts to serve as stable platforms for artillery and to withstand the blows of enemy shot; ditch and wall sufficiently formidable to deter escalade; and, a ground plan so arranged as to leave no blind spots or dead ground by which an enemy might reach the rampart unscathed” (see fig. 6).¹² The transformation over to this new system came quickly, as Niccolò Machiavelli would relate in 1521:

You may have heard, and these others can remember, how weakly things were built before King Charles of France crossed into Italy in the year one thousand four hundred ninety-four. The battlements were made a half arm length thin...Now from the French, we have learned to make the battlements wide and large, and also to make the bombardiers wide on the inside, and narrow it at the center of the wall, and then again widen it up to the outside edge: and this results in the artillery being able to demolish its defenses only with difficulty...¹³

In a similar manner, Francesco Guicciardini would write in 1562: “They have succeeded so well that they have fortified even their smallest towns with ramparts, ditches, flanks, outworks, and bastions. And so, being crammed with artillery...

the places have been rendered secure, for it is exceedingly hard to take a town fortified in such a manner”.¹⁴ In essence, the *Trace Italienne* system “reestablished and further entrenched the supremacy of defensive structures in European warfare which gunpowder weapons had temporarily undermined”.¹⁵ While the immediate benefits were easily seen, the adoption of this defensive structure would directly influence the military revolution and transform European war making and statehood.

From the mid 16th century, the *Trace Italienne* would quickly be adopted throughout Europe, evolving as military engineers instituted their own interpretations with varying degrees of success. Multiple designers, such as Blaise Francois de Pagan, Erik Dahlberg, and Menno van Coehoorn, would influence developments in the system, but it would ultimately be Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707) who would transform “all the previous notions of the attack and defense into something that approached a coherent science of engineering.”¹⁶ Born into lesser Burgundian nobility, Vauban (see fig. 7) would become the chief engineer of Louis XIV, designing around 160 fortifications throughout his career.¹⁷ Besides his physical works, much of his influence would result from his publications, such as *Manière de Fortifier de Mr. de Vauban* (1689), which codified his process of employing the *Trace Italienne*. In his work, Vauban developed a new and easier system (although influenced by Pagan) to divide the geometrical construction of the individual fronts of his bastions (see fig. 8).¹⁸ In his work, the engineer first settled on the salient points of his two bastions (A and B), and joined them by an imaginary line (A-B), which in Vauban’s ‘first system’ would be about 180 toises (360 yards) long. He then built up the outline of his bastions and the curtain on the inner side of this base-line. At the center (C) of this line he erected a perpendicular (C-D) thirty toises long. He connected points

A and D, and B and D to determine the alignment of the faces of the bastions. He then fixed the shoulder angles at points 50 toises from the respective salient (E and H). Now all he had to do was find the re-entrant angles (where the bastion flanks meet the curtain wall). With one point of a compass placed at shoulder joint E, and the other extended with the radius E-H, an arc was drawn inwards until it intersected the imaginary prolongation of the line A-D at G; the same being done at shoulder point H, with the radius H – E, and the arc intersecting the imaginary prolongation of B – D at F. Points E, F, G, and H were then joined by a heavy line to indicate the completed outline of the front (see fig. 9).¹⁹ The result were bastions mathematically arranged to provide flanking fire on a ‘razing system’ (which cleared the sides of the opposite bastions) rather than that of ‘lignes fichantes’, which were too well swept, and vulnerable to enfilade fire from surrounding bastions (see fig. 10).²⁰ Having created a Corps of Engineers, by 1697 France would possess 240 experts employing these schemes; and likewise being published, they were quickly disseminated to the whole of Europe.²¹

Vauban rose to prominence during the reign Louis XIV, which was a unique period; throughout Louis’ 77-year life, France would be at peace during only 17 of them.²² It was during this period that the French monarchy was heavily consolidating its state power, wars becoming directed by the king as progressive steps towards the creation of coherent and defensible boundaries.²³ Complementing this, the king directed Vauban to construct a ring of fortifications around France, the *Pré Carré* (literally ‘square meadow’), using his methods of the employing the *Trace* to provide “...a unitary strategic framework for the defense of Louis XIV’s newly defined France”.²⁴ This concept was revolutionary, as Paddy Griffith states:

We must remember that the *Pré Carré* represented an innovative way of thinking at a time when any given fortification had quite recently been seen as only a very localized matter, which might fit into a scheme of provincial defense at best, but not truly a national one. The whole idea of a centralized French state was itself relatively new in the 17th century, and the definition of its borders as running along the ‘natural frontiers’ of the Channel, the Bay of Biscay, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean coast, the Alps and the Rhine was newer still.²⁵

The reasoning behind this is explained in Philippe Maigret’s 1727 work *Traité de la Sûreté et Conservation des Etats par le Moyen des Forteresses*. To Maigret, a well sited fortress, or several acting in concert, could interpose a strategic barrier in the path of a powerful aggressor, which allowed a smaller force to hold its own against a stronger one.²⁶ Whereas old castles provided only static defenses, the larger *Trace Italienne* fortifications could offer refuge and rest for an army, secure pastureland from foragers, deny river crossings, lock the flank of an army outside its walls, or bolster one’s hold on an untenable province.²⁷

In a similar manner, as these geometric citadels could hold several thousand troops, they could not simply be bypassed by an invading force, as a garrison which sortied out could cut off supply and communication lines (thus isolating an invading army). This effectively ended the older style of invasions where an army rampaged through an enemy territory because, as Geoffery Parker writes, warfare became influenced by “the presence or absence of the *trace italienne* in a given area, for where no bastions existed, wars of manoeuvre with smaller armies were still feasible”.²⁸ Mathew Spring

likewise reiterates that “it was not practical to undertake operations inside territory that was covered by enemy-controlled fortresses, for field armies (which did not commonly exceed 40,000 men) were usually too small to detach screening forces to protect their lines of communication against sorties by enemy garrisons”.²⁹ Thus, as invasions had to deal with fortifications, in consequence the construction of them became statements as to what state boundaries and frontiers were. This is illustrated by the Quadrilateral Fortresses (Verona, Mantua, Peschiera, Legnano) which helped the Austrians maintain control of northern Italy until 1866, the fortifications of the Papal States, Florence, and Venice which pushed the theatres of Italian wars onto the Lombard plain and Alpine foothills of Piedmont, and most clearly in the frontier fortifications of France that held strong after the battle of Oudenarde in 1708 (and again in 1793-94 as the chaotic nature of revolutionary armies nearly left the road to Paris wide open).³⁰ Honoré Mirabeau would attest to their effectiveness, stating that:

without the help of the fortresses which studied the Netherlands, Louis XIV would never have escaped from the consequences of all the mistakes which his age and weakness led him to commit in the War of Spanish Succession. After seven years of endless blunders and misfortune this triple line of fortresses remain unpierced; it exhausted the patience and resources of the enemy, and by checking them at this final barrier, it earned the monarchy... a more tolerable peace than you would have expected from the deplorable state of France. By reasoning and by the examination of facts we may establish that... a certain number of well-arranged fortresses are indispensable for the defense of a great state.³¹

Because the *Trace* possessed the ability to perform both offensive and defensive operations, its establishment became an assertion of national boundaries and state power that could only be undone by the employment of a vast amount of military resources.

In essence, the *Trace Italienne* ushered in a new style of warfare that had a “gradualist strategy of conquest through methodical occupation and consolidation of successive base areas”.³² This heavily influenced the *Kabinettskriege* of the 18th century where “the main objectives of offensive operations tended to be the siege and capture of key fortresses, either as springboards for further operations or as tangible strategic assets to be retained or bargained away at the peace negotiations that terminated most eighteenth-century conflicts”.³³ Because of the rise of the “war of posts” through the preponderance of new *Trace* systems being built, states had to assemble ever larger standing armies to garrison and maintain them. For example, in 1632, of the 183,000 soldiers serving under Gustavus Adolphus, 62,000 were garrisoned in fortresses in Northern Germany, and of the 77,000 troops of the Spanish Army of Flanders, 33,399 served in garrisons in the southern Netherlands.³⁴ Even more striking, during the Nine Years War, Vauban claimed that 173,000 troops were swallowed up by garrison duties.³⁵ Indeed even in peacetime, the levels of French soldiers on garrison duty hovered around 132,000 men.³⁶ On the flip side, the number of soldiers used to besiege a citadel in the 17th century increased to meet these numbers, and typically ranged between 20,000-30,000 men.³⁷ Thus, the outcome of the prevalence of *Trace Italienne* style fortresses became ever-larger standing armies for European states, resulting in the need for economic restructuring to be able to pay, feed, and clothe these men, compelling states to develop institutions to better marshal resources to do so ade-

quately.³⁸

The *Trace Italienne* transformed warfare, borders, and concepts of statehood. Being the pinnacle of the employment of smoothbore gunpowder technology, it arguably helped European states consolidate power and cement a period of Absolutism that would not end until rudely smashed by the Napoleonic period. It also should not be forgotten that the citadels affected not just larger strategic considerations, but the lives of those who lived within them as well, as Christopher Duffy asserts:

Fortress towns were unable to expand through the deep and sterile zones of the defenses, and lacking the space to build sideways, citizens were compelled to pile up floor upon floor of apartments (see fig. 11). From this emerged the flat-dwellers of places like Paris or Vienna. But then there is the other side of the coin. If your home is not really your own, then in compensation you develop the habit of treating your city as a vast private ante-chamber. A favorite restaurant becomes your own dining-room, as in Vienna, or in a hotter climate you desert the narrow streets of the central city and stroll up and down some such avenue as the Ramblas in Barcelona. What we have here is a life-style which made conditions in a crowded town tolerable, and even agreeable...For city life, therefore, the siege cannon has turned out to be a creative force.³⁹

Today, the mark of the *Trace* are green areas arranged in beautifully geometric shapes all over Europe (see fig. 12). Monuments to technology that impacted everything from grander

strategic visions to the lives of common people. They are also sobering reminders of perhaps their most lamentable attribute: that humanity has never ceased to develop new ways and employ new technologies to slaughter their fellow creatures.

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Notes

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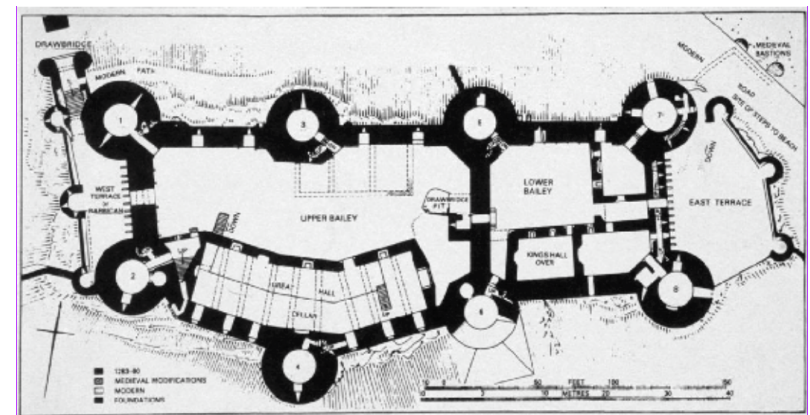


Figure 1: Conwy Castle, Wales. Example of medieval-style fortress architecture based on towering (albeit thin) curtain walls, and rounded towers. From Thompson, M. W. *Rise of the Castle*. (Cambridge University Press, 1991); p. 125, fig. 80.



Figure 2: Representative contemporary image illustrating the effective nature of medieval fortifications before the advent of mobile siege artillery. Shown here are various means of storming a castle, as well as siege equipment, all of which were laborious to construct and hazardous to use. (Italian School. 1460-70. *Siege of a Town*. painting. Place: Château d'Ecouen, Musée de la Renaissance. https://library.artstor.org/asset/ARMNIG_10313261538.)



Figure 3: Advances in metallurgy and carriage construction, as well as gunpowder refinement, created the first truly mobile siege artillery. The power of heavy shot could, in a matter of days, raze walls which had withstood sieges of months and years in the previous era. (Dated 1582. *Machines et ustensils de guerre*., whole page, Folio #: fol. 057r. Manuscript. Place: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>. https://library.artstor.org/asset/BODLEIAN_10310371924.)



Figure 4: Siege of Valenciennes, 1567. Typical of the monetary constraints faced by many early modern states, the city of Valenciennes responded to artillery advancements by attempting to convert their medieval-era fortifications (rounded towers and thin curtain walls) to something which could withstand a modern siege. They shortened their walls and towers, backed them with earthen ramparts, and endeavored to mount artillery atop them. (From Strada, Famiano: *De Bello Belgico Decades Duae* (reprint 1727). Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain Image)

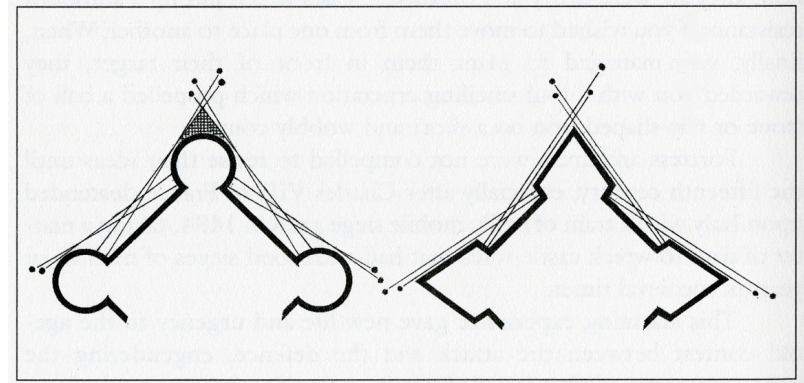


Figure 5: Illustration of “dead ground”, a key failing of rounded fortress layouts of the medieval period. As opposed to the bastioned ground plan (right), rounded towers (left) allowed a potential attack to shelter unscathed from enfilading fire of supporting towers, providing them cover and respite during a potential attack. (Duffy, Christopher. *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare 1660-1860*. London: David and Charles, 1975., 10)

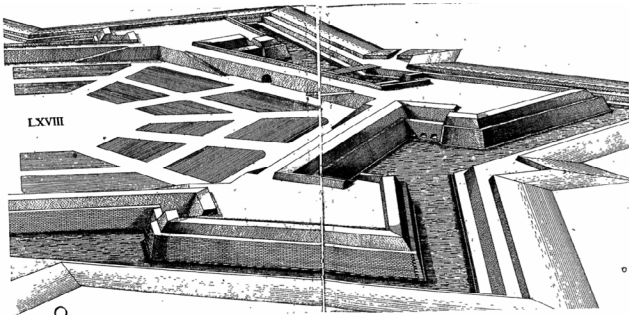


Figure 6: Typical layout of *Trace Italienne* fortress principals created by engineer Christoph Heidemann in 1673. Included in this ideal were: 1) low-lying, spacious ramparts to serve as stable platforms for artillery and to withstand the blows of enemy shot. 2) A ditch and wall sufficiently formidable to deter escalade. 3) A ground plan so arranged as to leave no blind spots or dead ground by which an enemy might reach the rampart unscathed. (Duffy, Christopher. *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare 1660-1860*. London: David and Charles, 1975., 14-15)



Figure 7: Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707). Designing around 160 fortifications throughout his career while serving as chief engineer of Louis XIV, Vauban's creation of a Corps of Engineers and subsequent publications codified the mathematical principals of *Trace Italienne* architecture for generations to come. (Louis Bernard after Francois de Troy, French. c. 1637 - 1740. Portrait of M. Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban. Print. Place: The National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Benedict. https://library.artstor.org/asset/ANGAIG_10313969523.)

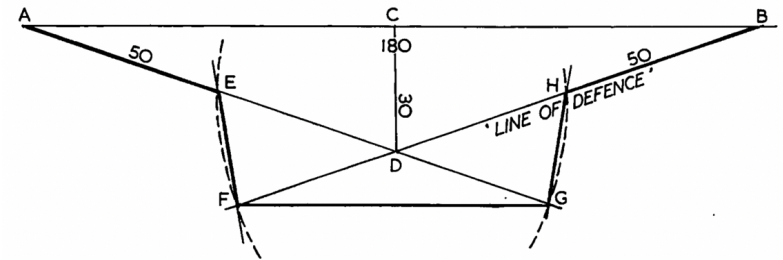


Figure 8: Geometrical construction of the front of a *Tres Italienne* fortification as codified by Vauban in his *Manière de Fortifier de Mr. de Vauban* (1689). (Duffy, Christopher. *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare 1660-1860*. London: David and Charles, 1975., 34)



Figure 9: Engineers with a finished outline of a fortress utilizing the Vauban Method. (Detail from: Prentmaker: anoniem, uitgever: Aa, Pieter van der (I), vermeld op object opgedragen aan: Lodewijk, dauphin van Frankrijk, vermeld op object uitgever: Fer, Nicolas de. 1715 - 1715. Titelprent voor prentwerk: Les Forces de l'Europe, Asie, Afrique et Amerique ... Comme aussi les Cartes des Côtes de France et d'Espagne (deel I), 1726, Introduction a la Fortification (titel op object), Les Forces de l'Europe, Asie, Afrique et Amerique ... Comme aussi les Cartes des Côtes de France et d'Espagne (serietitel op object). titelprent. Place: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. https://library.artstor.org/asset/AWSS35953_35953_23482411.)

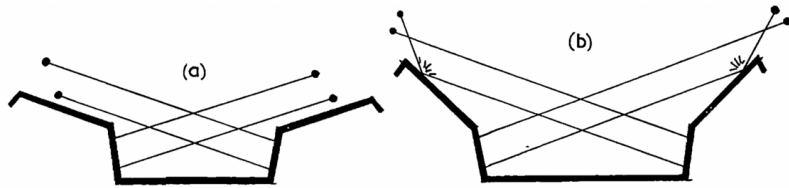


Figure 10: Bastion front with flanking fire on a “razing system” (a) versus a Bastion front with flanking fire by “lignes fichantes” (b). Vauban’s system utilized the “razing system” (a) which avoided the dangerous and deadly downsides of “lignes fichantes” (b). (Duffy, Christopher. *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare 1660-1860*. London: David and Charles, 1975., 57)



Figure 11: The 16th century Venetian Walls which surround Nicosia, the capital city of Cyprus. The need to keep the interlocking fields of fire clear for the city’s defenders forced the residents to build dwellings upward, rather than outward. This pattern would be repeated in countless cities throughout Europe as states built *Tres Italienne* systems to defend their holdings. (16th century, Image: 2007. Mula Bastion, Curtain wall west side, from Roccas to Mula bastions, Venetian Walls, Nicosia, Cyprus. Architecture. https://library.artstor.org/asset/ALANGDALEIG_10313899393)



Figure 12: Fort Bourtange, Groningen, Netherlands. Built in 1593, and used until 1851, Fort Bourtange is emblematic of the traces of *Tres Italienne* left on the European landscape. (“Fort Bourtange, Netherlands.” World Urban Planning, July 27, 2015. <http://worldurbanplanning.com/fort-bourtange-netherlands/>.)

The Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54:
Robert Schumann's Conception of the Romantic Piano Concerto
Dillan Comtois (CLA 2020)

Origins and the Romantic Continuance of the Piano Concerto

The genre of the piano concerto, a form of composition that features a keyboard soloist with an accompanying orchestra, has its origins in the Classical era. It has been a fixture of the tradition of Western classical music since the late 18th century, when composers such as Johann Christian Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven first experimented with and established the general form. Since then, the piano concerto has evolved continuously up until the 20th century with the advent of Romanticism, Impressionism, and Modernism. Composers of every era have contributed to the genre, and oftentimes have incorporated their own innovations and ideas of what the concerto should be.

The Romantic era in particular was, in many ways, a period of great musical innovation for the concerto. Acknowledging the impact of Beethoven, Romantic composers were left with both the creative freedom to utilize his legacy of musical ingenuity and the fear of forever remaining inferior to him. Thus, new ideas on the purpose of music, the role of the composer, and how to reconcile these two concepts began to emerge. With these endeavors in mind, Romantic composers initiated the process of transforming music into what we call "Romantic music" today. The invention of new compositional forms, in addition to the development of existing ones, was one way in which Romantic composers ushered in this new period. Elements of supernaturalism, exoticism, and individualism often inspired these forms, and cemented one of the most important musical Romantic ideals: the composer as a supreme artist and creator.

As an already existing form, the piano concerto was further expanded upon during the Romantic era by composers such as Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Schumann. Previously, Mozart and Beethoven firmly established a definitive, modern concerto form, consisting of orchestra and keyboard soloist. In fact, the concertos of both composers are still an important part of the piano repertoire and are frequently performed today. The general model they followed consisted of alternating orchestral tutti and solo sections, the presentation of thematic material, and the development of such material along the length of the work. It was this formulation of the concerto that was most familiar to the Romantics. But as much as the concertos of Mozart and Beethoven were admired and respected, they did not necessarily uphold the fashionable qualities of Romanticism. According to Claudia MacDonald, the composer Robert Schumann (b. 1810 - d. 1856) could only see in Beethoven's Fifth Concerto in E-flat Major, "...a fine but antiquated example of a bygone era" (MacDonald 14).

However, this is not to say that Schumann considered Beethoven's music to be insignificant or non-transformative. He merely believed that Beethoven's approach to the concerto form was outdated, and therefore could not be the type of music that represented the artistic values of the Romantic era. In this paper, I will address Schumann's philosophies on Romantic composition and the artist, and his application of these beliefs within the context of his Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 54. Through his experience as a pianist, composer, and music critic, Schumann was able to envision an ideal Romantic piano concerto. Accordingly, the A minor Concerto is an example of his own realization of the compositional and stylistic aspects such a work should encompass.

In his younger years, Schumann had tried and failed on a few occasions to write a full piano concerto. There is evidence in his writings of various attempts at composing a few concertos, but there are no surviving manuscripts or even musical sketches to show for them. There was a more serious effort made towards a Concerto in F major, but this project was eventually abandoned (Earle 8). As someone who worked towards becoming a piano virtuoso and who aspired to be a the genius composer, Schumann recognized the necessity of producing a piano concerto. But he did not want to just contribute to the genre; he wished to transform it, in the way that Beethoven did with the Classical legacy that Mozart and Haydn had established.

It was his work as a journalist and critic that gave Schumann ideas of where to start. Schumann was editor and co-founder of *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a magazine that gave reviews of the music and performances of the time (Geck 42-43). As both editor of the journal and budding composer, Schumann often took the opportunity to criticize contemporary concertos, remarking negatively on the supposedly empty virtuosity and mechanical displays of piano pyrotechnics that composers often employed (Earle 7). By listening to and analyzing the concertos written at the time, he was able to determine what he liked and disliked, what was being produced, and what had yet to be written. He especially criticized the pieces of the composer Henri Herz, considering them, "...no more than vehicles for technical display" (MacDonald 137). In his reviews, Schumann seems to have appreciated the concertos that were overall less technically exhilarating, but still demanded a necessity for grandeur and a balanced form. He therefore made a distinction between "transcendent" and "shallow" virtuosity, and ultimately viewed true Romantic

music as a proponent of the sublime (Stefaniak 437).

The concertos written by contemporaries such as Herz and others such as Thalberg and Moscheles, were just a few examples of what Schumann considered virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity. However, as a piano virtuoso himself, Schumann was certainly aware of the impact great keyboard technique had on the success of past compositions by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. But he disapproved of using virtuosity as a function of true expression within the concerto and other compositional genres, and did not see this practice as a feasible artistic endeavor (MacDonald 135-136).

In addition to his avoidance of excessive virtuosity, Schumann also desired to reach past the traditional application of the concerto form. In fact, the original draft of the first movement of his A minor concerto, entitled *Phantasie*, was meant to stand alone as a single work for piano and orchestra. Schumann himself described the piece as, "...more an instrumental fantasie with piano in concerto form than an actual piano concerto" (Earle 7). Furthermore, he maintained a strong belief that a concerto should meet two important standards: each movement should be well-rounded, and the orchestral-piano relationship should be equal. It was through these convictions that Schumann was able to compositionally express some of his ideas on Romanticism (MacDonald 166).

Beyond the compositional techniques he was developing, Schumann also had more abstract ideas about music. He certainly considered himself an artist and a virtuoso, and even aspired to be a genius, so he therefore endeavored in every way to produce music of the highest emotional and spiritual caliber. Schumann, along with contemporaries such as Liszt and Wagner, worked towards the lofty goal of "...ensuring that the grand idea of a universal art might acquire a physical, tangible form" (Geck 22). As if this was not ambitious enough, he also felt it was his duty as a composer to establish

a connection between himself, the music, and the audience. In a letter to his mother regarding the piano work *Papillons*, he stated, “Now I’m starting to understand my existence,” and later noted that, “There are secret states of mind in which a word from the composer can lead more specifically to a better understanding and for which the listener is bound to be grateful” (Geck 65).

Thanks to many of Schumann’s writings, modern-day performers and listeners have a relatively good idea of what the word “Romantic” meant to Schumann. Regarding a pair of concertos by Moscheles, who was not as harshly criticized as Herz, Schumann attempted to put into words what made the pieces romantic:

If we call these two romantic, then by this we mean the faint, enchanted illumination that hovers over them; we do not know whether it originates from the objects themselves or from somewhere else. One cannot grasp with one’s hands particular places where the romantic, luminous fragrance comes out most strongly; but one feels everywhere that it is there. (Schumann qtd. in MacDonald 147)

Of course, musicians and scholars can eternally debate what exactly this “enchanted illumination” or “luminous fragrance” is. But Schumann had his own personal understanding of these words, and undoubtedly worked to capture this otherworldliness within his own compositions. The piano concerto is no exception.

The A minor Concerto: Poor Reception and Unorthodox Structure

Schumann’s only piano concerto has a long and interesting compositional history that provides important context for analyzing its unorthodox structure. The first movement, *Phantasie*, was written for Clara Wieck in 1841. In her analysis of the piece, Earle comments that it was “...intended to be an independent fantasia for piano and orchestra” and that, “[a]lthough it contains characteristics of a large first movement in sonata form, it was not originally meant to be the first movement of a concerto” (Earle 9). It premiered in Leipzig with the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Wieck at the piano, but was not received with great enthusiasm, and was therefore stored away in favor of other compositions.

Schumann did try to have the work published on two separate occasions, but it was rejected. Not only did the piece lack the unrestrained virtuosity that was desirable with audiences, but its symphonic-like style and strange form influenced the publisher’s belief that it would not sell. One nineteenth-century writer commented on the reasoning behind the lackluster reception of the work:

Schumann, in fact, was at that time regarded as dangerously modern and often unintelligible. Since he was so cavalier with the old forms - which were sometimes regarded as an end in themselves - and since he discouraged musical pyrotechnics, one can understand suspicion with which he was regarded. (Earle 9)

After moving to Dresden in 1845, Schumann revised the first movement and added the second and third movements, officially making the piece a true piano concerto. Al-

though it was performed by Clara Wieck multiple times over the next few years (even after Schumann's death in 1856), the concerto was still not well received. It was only Liszt, along with his reputation and influence, who could help sway public opinion in favor of the piece. He remarked, "The repeated failures of my performances of Schumann's compositions both in private and in public discouraged me from entering them on the programs for my concert.... [T]his was an error which I afterwards recognized, and I indeed regretted" (Liszt qtd. in Earle 11). In fact, the concerto was not truly accepted into regular piano concert repertoire until around the 1960s (Piano Concerto in A minor 35).

The concerto's complicated history can be explained through an analysis of its structure. Its overall structure follows a more Mendelssonian approach, deviating from the more common double exposition form by introducing the piano and orchestra together in an abrupt but brief cacophony of sound. Themes and harmonies throughout the first movement, *Allegro affettuoso*, are shared and developed between both soloist and accompaniment in order to create a balanced, well-rounded sound. The cadenza, written by Schumann himself, flows directly out of the first movement and continues to develop previously heard material, rather than introduce new ideas. Furthermore, the cadenza functions to complement and enhance the movement, rather than serve as an independent structure meant to display performance technique.

The second movement, *Intermezzo*, is both lovely and intimate. It features a slightly different type of dynamic between soloist and accompaniment, where instead of the equal sharing of all thematic material as seen in the first movement, the piano appears to embrace the first theme, while the orchestra takes charge of the second theme. The two themes interact and intertwine to produce a relatively simple piece, but the themes are still able to musically complement each other.

The completion of the second movement surprisingly brings back the first theme of the *Allegro affettuoso*, which harkens the beginning of the joyous final movement, *Allegro vivace*. The final two movements are also joined together, without the traditional pause of silence that usually separates the movements of a concerto or large work. All of these compositional decisions help fulfill Schumann's grand ideas on a unified piano-orchestral work, and result in a piece that is technically impressive (but not excessively flamboyant), beautifully lyrical, and pleasantly robust in orchestration (Earle 12-13, 37).

Figure I: The ending of the second movement and transition into the third. The lower woodwinds reintroduce the first theme of the first movement in m. 103, while the piano responds with short, improvisatory phrases. The orchestra proceeds to immediately jump into the third movement through m. 108 with a fast, ascending scale played by the strings.

A Musical Legacy Lives On: Schumann's Impact on Western Art Music

Schumann's contribution to the piano concerto genre, though low in quantity, was certainly not lacking in quality nor innovation. As a composer, he had a very defined set of ideas on the subject of Romantic music, and through analysis of his music and writings we can see the application of those ideas in the A minor concerto. His philosophies on musical

unity and continuity, non-virtuosic expression, and the piano-orchestral dynamic not only produced a unique piece of music but also elevated the entire genre to a new level. Because of its unconventionality at the time, the concerto was not fully accepted as a valid piece of music. As it was, Schumann was writing music for the artist in the era where the virtuoso reigned among the public. In commenting on the Romantic era of music, contemporary scholars usually endorse the nineteenth-century view of the composer or musician as a creator of masterpieces. This is certainly not wrong, but it is noteworthy that despite Schumann being a well-established composer, and likely a genius, he may not have been viewed as such by the general public. His creative output, especially with regards to the concerto, was altogether misunderstood and, occasionally, rejected. One can even make the argument that he never had any true musical successors due to the distinctive quality of his music. This situates Schumann as a singularly unique Romantic composer, and his musical peculiarities are heard consistently throughout all his compositions.

But if Schumann was peculiar, he was just as, if not more, brilliant. While his ideas were unorthodox and his willingness to stretch musical boundaries made many uncomfortable, he contributed to the tradition of Western music enormously, in terms of both artistic expression and technical alterations to genre. Numerous composers and musicians throughout the 20th century have admired Schumann for challenging the limitations of music and musical genre, perhaps appreciating his seemingly unregulated compositional style and his ability to take listeners to unknown realms of feeling. Indeed, the structural changes to the piano concerto alone opened up new compositional doors for future composers, which is arguably one of the most important things any artist

can do for his or her field. In an 1839 essay written for *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Schumann expressed his ambitions for the concerto by stating, “And so we must await the genius who will show us in a newer and more brilliant way how orchestra and piano may be combined, how the soloist, dominant at the keyboard, may unfold the wealth of his instrument and his art, while the orchestra, no longer a mere spectator, may interweave its manifold facets into the scene” (Schumann qtd. in *Piano Concerto in A minor* 36). It is ultimately unknown if Schumann himself believed that he was the “genius” that accomplished this feat. But contemporary recognition of Schumann’s unique voice, as well as an analysis and understanding of the A minor concerto, makes a strong case that he at the very least contributed to the manifestation of the above passage, if not really was that genius who elevated both the genre and Western music to its next level.

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Central Europe's Democratic Crisis: The Looming Threat of Populism

Ryan Strauss (CLA 2021)

I: Introduction

For the past sixty years, the world's turn towards democracy has seemed inevitable to many onlookers. Solidified by the defeat of communism, the United States' unipolar hegemony signaled to the world that liberal democracy had triumphed. However, recent decades have seen a trend of noticeable backsliding in once-promising democracies. In the words of political scientist Yascha Mounk, "Pundits and political scientists alike told us democracy would never be in danger of deconsolidating. It is" (Mounk 2018, 25). This deconsolidation is not straightforward and out in the open, but instead occurs in piecemeal, with institutions and norms being chipped away by ignorant or insidious political actors. When fundamental and defining embodiments of liberal democracies are lost, the shell that remains is what political scientists have coined illiberal democracy. A significant contributing factor to this destabilization is the rise of populist political parties, who have latched on to world events and bent them to represent themselves as 'the champions of the people'. Such parties have blighted the once-promising region of Central Europe as of late, and the crumbling of the region's democracies serve as both prime examples and warnings of the threat that populism presents to the world. This paper will outline the differences between democracies and their illiberal counterparts, and establish the danger populist movements present to the world through the examples of the Central European states of Hungary and Poland, discussing the transition to competitive authoritarianism and the worrying trends for the European Union and the Western world as a whole.

II: Defining Democracy

In order to begin, it is first necessary to understand what a democracy, particularly the Western default of a liberal democracy, is. The literature on democracy is wide and varied, with the criteria for classification ranging from highly specific to broader and more inclusive. Perhaps one of the most specific definitions for a democracy comes from Robert Dahl, who had four qualifiers. First, there must be free, fair, and competitive elections. Second, there must be full adult suffrage. Third, there must be broad protection of civil rights, including freedom of speech, press, and association. Finally, there must be the absence of nonelected 'tutelary' authorities, such as militaries, monarchies, and religious bodies, that limit the elected officials' power to govern (Mounk 2018, 26). While fully democratic regimes will occasionally stray from these or violate individual parts, their violations are not broad or frequent enough to seriously impede the ability of democratic challenges to their incumbency. Tying into this idea of challenging the incumbency, Joseph Schumpeter stresses that "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 2016, 269).

Mounk, however, asserts that these definitions combine the protection of liberal rights with democracy, making the differentiation between the two—and identification of when they may be coming apart at the seams—difficult, if not impossible. Additionally, the inclusion of institutions like the military, monarchies, and religious bodies only further complicates the ability to ask whether or not the people can rule. Therefore, he crafts a definition that is much broader and simpler, which is intended to capture this democratic promise of rule by the people. Mounk's definition of democracy describes it as a set of "binding electoral institutions that ef-

fectively translates popular views into public policy,” while a liberal democracy—the type interchangeably and colloquially referred to as simply a democracy in the Western world—is a political system that is simultaneously liberal and democratic that “both protects individual rights and translates popular views into public policy” (Mounk 2018, 27). These liberal rights include fundamental values like freedom of speech, separation of powers, and the protection of individual rights. This differentiation is crucial in understanding the recent chronic backsliding of democracies into what are referred to as illiberal democracies.

III: Illiberal Democracy

Mounk’s more straightforward definition of what constitutes a democracy is invaluable when conceptualizing the phenomenon that is illiberal democracy. These are places where popular views being translated into public policy help to subordinate independent institutions and bring them under the sway of the executive, or where it is generally accepted to curtail the rights of minorities the public dislikes. Fareed Zakaria states, “Democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms” (Zakaria 1997, 22). While the governments come into power democratically, the actions that they take once they assume office are anything but coherent with standards of democracy that are held in the Western world. The ‘liberal’ portion of liberal democracy, or the protection of the rule of law and guarantee of individual rights like freedom of speech, worship, press, and association for all citizens (including minority groups of all manner of religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, et cetera), is undermined by these governments. Illiberal democracies crack down on what the public is allowed to say, prevent specific religious practices and worship, attempt to censor

the media, and stifle protests against them in order to stay in power.

The attempts by these governments to stay in power do not end in attacking the public, as illiberal democratic governments frequently attack both governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations that present barriers to enacting their agenda. Frequently these institutions include the courts, government ethics watchdogs, and prosecutors, as well as nongovernmental organizations that represent a threat through outright opposition or mobilization against the government’s policies. While these policies and practices may seem to be at odds with what the standard expectation of a democracy is, it is essential to note that the people freely voted for the regimes that are carrying out such attacks, and often even reinforce their support for the government through public referenda or subsequent elections. However, these illiberal democracies rarely move back towards their liberal democratic counterparts, but rather move towards heightened illiberalism and further erosion of democratic institutions (Zakaria 1997, 22). Occasionally, when fostered under the stewardship of a particular type of leader, these governments can devolve into more severe aberrations that irreparably corrode their nation’s democratic shell.

IV: The Rise and Threat of Populism

At this point in time, there has been a substantial uptick in the very type of ideology that threatens to devolve liberal democracies into illiberal regimes—populism. Populist movements and leaders base their argument on several central pillars. First, they divide society into two groups, the moral public and the corrupt elite, with a stated goal of triumphing over the elite to implement the will of people (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, 8). The elite are always framed as the enemy of the public, who are self-serving and politically active

only for personal gain. Populists frame themselves as the voice and champions of the people, who are there to combat the elite and work for the common good. Since the distinction between populists, who claim to represent the people, and their enemies, the elite, is a moral distinction, the possibility of compromise becomes nigh impossible, as any deals struck would be a violation of morality rather than merely a policy compromise (Jordan 2018; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 16). Populism itself is a shallow and hollow movement, and as such, is easily filled by various ideologies and party platforms. Cas Mudde refers to it as a “thin-centered” ideology with a “restricted core,” which therefore attaches itself to other ideologies that are either thick (i.e. liberalism, conservatism, socialism) or thin (i.e. ecologism, nationalism) (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, 9). While Central Europe is currently experiencing a rise in right-wing populism, other European countries—including Spain and Greece—are currently governed by far-left populist parties.

The idea of populism is centered on the idea of Jean-Jaques Rousseau’s ‘General Will’—essentially that what the public wants is unified and objectively knowable. This notion that the public’s interests are unified is demonstrably false, yet the void left by this idea allows populist parties to latch onto it and push their agenda. Acceptance of the General Will as a model for how societal policy should be structured and function is an inherently anti-democratic notion, as the very idea of the necessity of democracy is meant to address the disagreements society has and to work to resolve them. It is the job of the public to vote on issues and decide them, not have a movement or leader dictate them. Additionally, since the idea of compromise is nearly impossible for populists as it would be a violation of morality, the democratic ideal of working together with individuals who disagree is impossible. Finally, the concept of ‘the will of the public’ prevents the protection

of minority rights in rules and laws, as the only opinion of any significance is the will of the majority (Jordan 2018). For all of these reasons, populism itself is likely to lead to parties and leaders who have, at the very least, authoritarian tendencies or sympathies (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 18).

In recent years, populists have been rising in prominence for three main reasons. First, the 2008 economic crisis that began in the United States and reverberated throughout Europe caused a recession or depression in most if not all economies, with Central European states that were still relatively poor and still recuperating from the capitalist shock of the 1990s being affected more significantly. Even today, the worldwide economy in certain areas is still recovering or attempting to recover. Furthermore, the recent refugee crisis in the Middle East and Northern Africa has displaced millions. A sizable portion of these refugees has been controversially attempting to gain access to and residence in European countries, stoking racial and cultural fear and resentment. Finally, the European Union provides a unique opportunity to European populist movements, who frame it as a shadowy third party and accuse it of attempting to work with the elites to siphon control of their country’s government to its headquarters in Brussels, claims which are not entirely false but are exacerbated by the proliferation of Euroskeptic dialogue (Jordan 2018).

Unsurprisingly, movements that attempt to speak to and side with the people are often quite successful. Populists are able to craft seemingly simple solutions to complex problems, using said simplicity as a way to appeal to voters by cutting through the rhetorical everyday minutia of politics. Even if these solutions are meant to address the very fears the populists themselves incited, they can still be successful in garnering public support. If the populists are to come into power, these ‘solutions’ often do nothing more than exacerbate the problems they sought to address, which further

angers the public. However, the people are just as likely to turn towards another populist leader of a differing ideology, or even a dictator, rather than revert to the old political elite (Mounk 2018, 38).

These tendencies of populists strike at the heart of the issue with such movements. According to Mounk, “much of the energy behind populist movements is deeply illiberal” (Mounk 2018, 35). Beginning during their campaigns, populists direct their anger towards ‘outsiders’ to the country or those ‘against the people,’ including the current political elite and racial or religious groups that they portray as not a part of the ‘real’ people. Their rhetoric is typically divisive and stokes fear or anger about a number of highly visible issues, with a nationalist component that attempts to glorify the country’s image in hopes of winning supporters through the common ground of country. However, should they be elected and hold power, their next target would be any institutions, both formal and informal, that dare to contest their claim to a “moral monopoly of representation” (Mounk 2018, 43). Essentially, any group or individual that claims they are not genuinely attempting to be the crusaders of the people is a liability that must be dealt with to retain their public image and legitimacy.

Typically, the first institutions that populists attack are the media and the free press. In their minds, these organizations are dangerous and could help to expose whatever lies or half-truths they choose to tell the greater public. This occurs first during the campaign as they retaliate against their detractors, but only intensifies when they wield state powers. Next, any foundations, trade unions, think tanks, religious associations, and other nongovernmental organizations that pose a threat to the populists are discredited and tarnished to attempt to turn the public against them. If this is unsuccessful, the populist government has the opportunity to use the power of the regulatory state to impede their function. Additionally,

legislation can be passed to do things such as limit or eliminate the flow of foreign funding to them, which can seriously hinder if not outright prevent the successful operation of these organizations (Mounk 2018, 44–45).

Outside of the public sphere, populist governments also attack the institutions of their own states. Examples of this include public television or radio stations that refuse to air state-controlled messaging and propaganda, ethics watchdogs who would dare to criticize the government, independent electoral commissions that attempt to ensure that elections remain free and fair, the military refusing to carry out orders they perceive to be illegal, legislators using the parliamentary sphere as a basis for debate and opposition, and the Constitutional Court ruling the actions of the populist to be unconstitutional (Mounk 2018, 45). All of the institutions behaving in such a manner—one that would no doubt enrage the populist government—would likely be ‘reformed’ or abolished outright. Despite all of these actions, the threat of populism poses a much greater risk than simply causing a democracy to become illiberal. Even in cases where populists are well-intentioned and genuine, they still pose a danger to democracy. Predilections that are illiberal at their core are fundamentally at odds with the upholding and maintenance of democratic institutions—like free and fair elections—that prevent them from ignoring the popular will if and when they become unpopular (Mounk 2018, 52). While these basic liberal institutions can be temporarily undermined in the short run, they are absolutely necessary for the long-term health and survival of democracy. Mounk states that “the rise of illiberal strongmen can often be a prelude to autocratic rule: once the media has been muzzled and independent institutions have been abolished, it is easy for illiberal rules to make the transition from populism to dictatorship” (Mounk 2018, 35).

Some posit that the world’s apparent commitment to

liberal democracy in the past sixty years was due to its assurance that the people would be given an opportunity to both voice their opinions in the public sphere and also remain free to have separate private lives; essentially it was a form of governance that allowed fulfillment of the “deepest and most universal human aspirations” (Mounk 2018, 130). However, Mounk believes that this is untrue, with most of the best available evidence pointing towards a built-up loyalty to the system—since it has kept peace and made the globe far more prosperous than it was—rather than a commitment to its principles (Mounk 2018, 131). If this theory was true, then liberal democracies would be both shallower and more vulnerable than their supporters believe. Recent world events suggest that democracy’s “performance crisis” and growing public dissatisfaction—which are giving way to populist movements that exploit these events in order to gain power and dismantle elements of the system, rendering liberal democracies into their illiberal counterparts—are fulfillments of Mounk’s hypothesis. Beyond this, however, is the further devolution of illiberal states into what Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way coined “competitive authoritarian regimes” under the rule of these populists.

V: Illiberal Democratic Transition to Competitive Authoritarianism

Despite the seriousness of the threat that illiberal democracies pose to the world, the distinction between them and competitive authoritarian regimes is key to understanding the functioning of certain states. Referring back to Robert Dahl’s four criteria of democracy outlined earlier, Levitsky and Way distinguish competitive authoritarian regimes as those that use formal democratic institutions to obtain and exercise political power and authority, but then violate the rules so often that they fail to meet the standards for democracy. These viola-

tions are so frequent and severe that as a result, an uneven playing field between the government and opposition is created. Despite elections being held regularly and being generally free of fraud, government incumbents abuse their state resources, deny the opposition state and private media coverage, harass the candidates of the opposition and their supporters in public and through the media, and even in some cases manipulate electoral results (Levitsky and Way 2002, 52). Journalists, opposition politicians, and other critics of the government may be subjected to spying, threats, harassment, arrests and jail time, exile, and, in extreme cases, assault or murder. The path to a competitive authoritarian regime emerges when deep and longstanding political and economic crises create conditions under which the freely elected governments undermine democratic institutions—like the electoral process and courts—but cannot remove them entirely. Hence, these institutions become mere shells of what they once were (Levitsky and Way 2002, 61). In cases of these abuses, it is no longer sufficient to call these regimes simply illiberal democracies, as government involvement with and propagation of these abuses means they can no longer be considered democratic. In essence, these extreme examples of abuses and ‘reforms’ that illiberal democracies carry out cause them to lose the ability to be qualified as democratic.

This is not to say that these regimes are completely authoritarian and one-sided, but rather there are four areas of contestation where the government could theoretically be threatened. Electorally, it is possible for a certain level of contestation, whether it be intraparty or through electoral districts the government allows the opposition to control so elections can grant it legitimacy. In terms of governmental institutions, the legislature both provides the opposition with a place to meet and a forum for them to debate and voice disapproval, with moves from the ruling government to silence them pos-

ing the risk of causing a loss of legitimacy. Furthermore, the judiciary also has the ability to reduce the government's power to some degree, with assaults on it causing further losses to the government's perceived legitimacy and possibly even public backlash. The final area of contestation is the media, which grants the opposition and government watchdogs another voice. While it is certainly possible to co-opt and control the media, it is difficult and costly to do, and even the smallest failure can result in the government's abuses being exposed (Levitsky and Way 2002, 54).

The amount of violence, centralization of government power, and blatant disregard for the most basic rule of democracy—translating the popular will into public policy—set competitive authoritarian regimes apart from illiberal democracies. While the distinction is subtle, it is highly important to note, as it signals a deterioration in the overall condition of democracy. Illiberal democracies are closer to their liberal democratic counterparts than competitive authoritarian regimes, and while they exhibit disrespect for liberal values, their democratic mechanisms are more than the mere façade of democracy seen in competitive authoritarian regimes. Tensions with democracy are inherent to competitive authoritarian regimes, and much in the same way that populism affects politics, even if the opposition comes to power, there is no guarantee of a change in the status quo; succession by another party or group can mirror the previous and even lead to further entrenchment of the system and deepening of undemocratic norms (Levitsky and Way 2002, 59).

With populism and illiberal democracies on the rise in the world, the one place perhaps most vulnerable for further devolution into competitive authoritarianism is Central Europe. The once-promising era of the 1990s, where liberalism and democracy were flourishing, is coming to an end. Populism and illiberalism are decimating the politics and institu-

tions of the region. Growing tensions surrounding democracy, the rise of normalized and organized intolerance by parties and the public, demands for 'direct democracy,' and the surge of charismatic populist leaders that mobilize the anger of the public, "make it almost impossible to avoid drawing parallels between the current political turmoil in Central Europe and the crisis of democracy in Europe between the World Wars" (Krastev 2007, 57). Perhaps the two Central European states most emblematic of the populist democratic decline into illiberalism—and possible future competitive authoritarianism—are Hungary and Poland, which will be discussed to provide contemporary examples of what the world would be prudent to observe, learn from, and contain.

VI: Hungary

As a small European country that is free of civil war, popular uprisings, terrorism, local wars, and bankruptcy, the past decade of political developments in Hungary has been unexpected. The achievements made during the 1989-90 transition into a liberal democracy are being turned away from and outright discarded—namely the rule of law, freely functioning civil society, and pluralism in academia and intellectual life. The government has been routinely attacking private property and mechanisms of the free market, all whilst under the shadow of geopolitical tensions at home and abroad (Kornai 2015, 34). In 2010, the right-wing Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Alliance and the Christian Democratic People's Party (henceforth referred to as Fidesz) came to power under the populist leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Their unprecedented electoral victory granted them 68% of the seats in the Hungarian parliament, which was enough to push any legislation and change any part of the constitution—which they quickly did. So far, Fidesz has passed a number of so-called 'cardinal laws' that govern crucial aspects of Hungarian

life—laws which future parliaments will need a two-thirds supermajority to amend. In the period from 2010 to 2014, the parliament introduced and voted on 88 bills within a week, with the vote on 13 of these occasions being called the next day, with no preparatory work being done on them inside or outside of parliament. Essentially, the Hungarian parliament now exists as a rubber stamp to pass the party's agenda into law (Kornai 2015, 35).

The introduction of a new constitution, known as the Fundamental Law, was drafted by a small group of Fidesz politicians who did not consult the public or discuss the changes. Protests against this unilateral move were ignored, and the document was pushed through the parliament by Fidesz alone. The shortened timeframe resulted in a bill with so many legal shortcomings that it has been amended five times so far (Kornai 2015, 35). In addition to changing the electoral system of the country to reinforce Fidesz's incumbency advantage, the new constitution undermines its own institutions, such as curtailing the powers of the constitutional court. The constitution has a definite ideological slant, including a preamble full of allusions to conservative values, religion, fundamental rights, and even outright pushing certain ideological positions such as defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman (Jakab and Sonnevend 2013, 135). These allusions to conservative values play into and reinforce Fidesz's populist message, portraying itself as the 'Christian savior' of the Hungarian people against the refugee 'Arab invaders'. Hungary's new electoral system, which breaks the Hungarian parliament into a mix of Single Member District First Past the Post and Proportional Representation seats, in conjunction with gerrymandering, has already returned disproportionately favorable outcomes for Fidesz. In the 2014 elections, they received a vote share of 44.87%, while their seat share was 66.8%. This trend continued in Hungary's recent 2018 elec-

tions, with Orbán's Fidesz winning their third straight term, maintaining their 2/3 supermajority of seats with only 49.27% of the vote share. These seemingly insurmountable electoral odds caused the leadership of Jobbik and MSZP–Dialogue, the two main Hungarian opposition parties, to tender their resignations following the 2018 election, effectively leaving Fidesz as the sole viable political party (Than and Szakacs 2018). So successful has their electoral system been, in fact, that Putin's competitive authoritarian regime in Russia adopted the same electoral system for its legislature, the Duma (Jordan 2018).

These changes to Hungary have centralized power in the country under Viktor Orbán. The executive and legislative branches are no longer separate but are both controlled by him in a pyramid-like hierarchy, with Orbán and associates on top passing authority down a chain of party loyalists (Kornai 2015, 36). His strict control of his party has extended into his reforms of various government institutions aimed at solidifying the control his party has over the government. One of the first institutions Orbán attacked was the judicial system, creating a new National Judicial Office with broad powers, dismissing the previous President of the Supreme Court early, forcing hundreds of judges to retire by lowering the judicial retirement age from 70 to 62, and packing the courts with loyalist appointees.

Institutions Orbán has attacked outside of the courts include the State Audit Office, Fiscal Council, Competition Authority, Ombudsman's Office, and the Control Statistical Office, all of which are now dominated by party loyalists and people close to the center of power. Impartial, independent experts now believe that certain lawsuits and judgments are being biased to favor Fidesz. Even the state's Prosecution Service has been co-opted to serve the party. The only investigations that occur into corruption and scandals are leveled at the

political opposition and thwarted when pertaining to Fidesz itself. The Prosecution service conducts dramatic arrests of members of the opposition, always making sure to remain in front of the cameras and leak compromising facts to coincide with political events to ruin the reputation of the opposition during elections (Kornai 2015, 36).

Orbán's attacks on liberal fixtures did not end with the constitution and the government but were far-reaching into the private and the public sector. Protests are routinely disregarded, and civil society is methodically harassed, with unions and relevant lobbying organizations being routinely ignored instead of consulted on relevant legislation. Private corporations and private property are also routinely facing encroachment by the government. Numerous private organizations are being nationalized, including everything from banking, energy, public works, transportation, media groups, and advertising. Industries that are not directly seized are strong-armed into selling to the government for prices well below their actual market value (Kornai 2015, 36). Fidesz decides who remains and becomes an oligarch, as well as their market share and levels of power. So great is the extent to which the government has influenced market competition that the Hungarian phrase 'Fidesz-közeli cég,' or 'near to Fidesz company' is colloquially used to refer to corporations owned by the government and their associates. Media groups are leaned on and threatened to be made into mouthpieces. Journalists are under immense pressure to conform to such an extent that there is widespread self-censorship due to fear of fines, loss of advertisement revenue, or revocation of broadcast licenses (Wilkin 2018, 24).

Not only are these actions in line with the populist playbook, but they drag Hungary further into illiberalism and closer towards competitive authoritarianism. Peter Wilkin states that "Fidesz's illiberalism [is] reflected in both the

nature of the institutional reforms and the practices through which the party govern[s]" (Wilkin 2018, 24). This illiberalism is rooted in populism, as Fidesz claims to be representing the "interest of the common Hungarian" (Rydliński 2018, 96), while at the same time being proud of its "illiberal state" (Kornai 2015, 42). Common populist indicators like nationalist tendencies and ineffective policies intended to appease the public are on display, including changing the name of the country from the 'Hungarian Republic' to simply 'Hungary,' opposing interference from the European Union and outside groups like the IMF, and promising to place society's taxation burden on corporations, while simultaneously introducing a flat tax and austerity measures that harm the poor much more than the rich.

While technically Orbán's Fidesz has been reelected through the democratic process, their repeated abuses and destruction of democratic institutions make Hungary's devolution into a competitive authoritarian regime nearly, if not already, complete. Even if Fidesz were to lose an election—which is unlikely due to gerrymandering and electoral rules that give them an unfair advantage over the opposition—they have cemented themselves in by changing the constitution and enacting cardinal laws that, even if they were in the minority, would require their cooperation to obtain the two-thirds supermajority necessary for reform. Additionally, their appointment of key officials, such as the Chief Prosecutor, President of the Republic, Heads of the Central Bank and Audit Office, and numerous judicial appointees, means that for a minimum of nine years after their defeat, party loyalists would be able to retain a level of control over the opposition government's policy. If the Fiscal Council, currently appointed by Fidesz, were to veto the budget presented by the opposition, it would even be possible for its Fidesz president to dissolve the parliament, call elections, and overthrow whatever successor government

presented itself. Fidesz and Orbán's undermining of institutions has fundamentally deconsolidated, if not outright removed, the element of democracy from the political situation in Hungary.

VII: Poland

Poland's republic was once seen as promising, much like Hungary's. There has been a longstanding special relationship between Hungary and Poland, shown in instances such as Hungary's refusal to attack Poland in 1939 despite having an alliance with Nazi Germany, simultaneous anti-Stalinist demonstrations in Warsaw and Budapest in 1956, cooperation during their transition towards liberal democracy from communism in 1989, and their joining of North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union in 1999 and 2004 respectively (Rydliński 2018, 95). The leaders of the two main populist parties in Hungary and Poland, Fidesz's Viktor Orbán and Law and Justice's Jarosław Kaczyński, also both share similarities, from their open reluctance to admitting refugees from the Middle East and North Africa to being blunt critics of the EU and having a lack of respect towards fundamental pillars of the rule of law. Many of the reforms that Fidesz began implementing after their electoral victory in 2010 are being "'copy-paste' implemented in Poland" (Rydliński 2018, 96). Much like in Hungary, Poland's largely Christian population supports more conservative values, which allows Law and Justice (PiS) to adopt and push these values to solidify their support. The manner which Law and Justice conducts themselves is also eerily similar to Fidesz, claiming to be for the "true Poles" against those who belong to the "worst sort"—in other words, supporting Christian Poles and protecting them from refugees and immigrants (Fomina and Kucharczyk 2016, 59).

As early as 2011, Kaczyński began promising that the

Law and Justice party would come to power and enact similar reforms to those in Hungary. This promise finally came true in 2015, when over 50% of the seats in the Polish parliament and the presidency were both won by Law and Justice. While they do not have the two-thirds supermajority needed for constitutional changes, Law and Justice have chosen to paralyze the Constitutional Tribunal and other institutions, frequently outright ignoring constitutional provisions that stand in their way. The effect of the status quo is that there is a lack of constitutional control over adopted legal acts, with heavily undemocratic policies being put into place with a contemptuous lack of respect for the law. For example, Polish President Andrzej Duda's refusal to seat three previous opposition nominees to the Constitutional Tribunal despite its ruling that they must be allowed to take their seats has called into question and effectively invalidated the article of the Polish constitution that declared Tribunal decisions to be final (Rydliński 2018, 102). Similar to the situation in Hungary, the courts themselves have become a subsidiary of the executive. New laws are being passed that give PiS the ability to nominate judges and control the judiciary, which are made more potent with the new rule that judges must retire at 65—a rule that when enacted removed the Chief Justice and 40% of the Constitutional Tribunal's members, with PiS overseeing the nomination of new judges (Grzymala-Busse 2018, 97).

Law and Justice also began cracking down on protests against the actions and media coverage of opposition, creating a Council of National Media that regulates private media to ensure that it fulfills its role to "cultivate national traditions as well as patriotic and humanistic values, contributing to the spiritual well-being of media listeners and viewers" (Rydliński 2018, 103). Essentially, these broad 'guidelines' allow the government to attack the right to voice unpopular opinions by stripping private broadcast companies of advertising contracts

and strong-arming their owners into selling to PiS's domestic allies. The Council, in conjunction with Law and Justice's utilization of the state broadcaster Telewizja Polska (TVP) to spread government propaganda, has effectively rendered private media irrelevant and unthreatening to the regime's rule. Finally, while not as potent as the electoral changes made by Fidesz in Hungary, Law and Justice are attempting to dilute the power of their opposition through the use of gerrymandering, with one particular tactic being to add rural and suburban areas to the district that contains Warsaw, which is a stronghold for their main opposition, Civic Platform (Grzymala-Busse 2018, 98).

While Poland is certainly under populist influence, the extent to which changes are being made and institutions are being eroded is much less than in Hungary. The lack of significant constitutional and electoral changes makes it highly possible, if not likely, that Law and Justice could lose an upcoming election, especially since their majority was much narrower than Fidesz's originally was in Hungary. While they still may be in the governing coalition even if they fail to get an outright majority, it is likely that they will then be much more moderate, just as they were when in the governing coalition from 2006 to 2007. Therefore, while it is clear that the populist influence of Law and Justice has transformed Poland into an illiberal democracy, they are not yet at the point of devolution into a competitive authoritarian regime; however, the possibility of this occurring is still quite present and will grow if Law and Justice can increase its majority through successive elections or enact constitutional changes.

VIII: Worrying Trends for the European Union and World

Onlookers may be tempted to downplay the broader applicability of the situation in Hungary and Poland. They

may point to their similarities as countries or the fact that both of them are relatively small, poor, and outwardly relatively harmless. However, trends of populism and illiberal policies are not only growing common across Europe but all over the world. Take, for example, the heavy regulation and propaganda of the media in Hungary and Poland. The deeply illiberal and underhanded uses of the state's regulatory power to reinforce their regime are seen repeated across Europe. In Italy, the Five Star Movement is secretly using fan sites to spread fake news that supports their government (Horowitz 2017). The media laws in Hungary that are intended to ensure that media is "balanced" and acting in accord with "good faith" and "fairness" as well as trying to "combat racism and intolerance" can be seen in variants across EU member states including the United Kingdom and Sweden (Wilkin 2018, 24). These laws have even been proposed in the United States by left-wing actors who purport to be standing against injustice and hate speech (Catlin 2014; Stengel 2019). While the intentions are understandable, perhaps even morally right, even in the liberal democracy of the United Kingdom, the government is using this legislation to crack down on political speech online.

The liberal democratic Western world is also no stranger to disenchantment with democracy or turning to populism. While only one-sixth of the Polish population is currently critical of democracy and believe there to be a better alternative, this grows to nearly a quarter of millennial Americans in the United States (Mounk 2018, 128). Across the Western world, populist movements have been gaining traction, including the far-right Sweden Democrats in Sweden, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in Britain, Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) in Germany, Marine Le Pen's National Front (FN) in France, and even the campaign and presidency of Donald Trump in the United States. These

populists stoke fears about the economy and immigrants, routinely attack the press (as well as the European Union in Europe) and are drawing growing interest to their platforms. While for the moment most Western liberal democratic institutions have remained stable and not been undermined, failing to learn from the examples of Hungary and Poland or insisting that it could not happen elsewhere is the height of hubris. The advisable course of action would be for the European Union to play a more active role in addressing the issues in Hungary and Poland. Outside of some strongly worded condemnations and sanctions, the European Union has been largely toothless in the face of such severe democratic deconsolidation on multiple fronts. The consequences for these countries should become increasingly severe, especially as Hungary lapses into competitive authoritarianism with Poland on the brink. No measures should be off the table, including everything from increasingly harsh sanctions from not just the European Union but also its democratic allies across the world, as well as direct intervention as a last resort.

IX: Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, the worldwide trend of democratic deconsolidation into illiberal democracy as a result of populist movements is profoundly concerning, especially as Hungary and Poland look to be in danger of further devolution into Russia-like competitive authoritarian regimes. The spread of populist leaders across Europe and the world more broadly as a backlash to economic conditions, immigration, and the European Union all threaten to undermine liberal democracies with their inherently illiberal tendencies. It would behoove the Western liberal democracies and the world to take note of the situation in Central Europe, learn from it, and take care that populist leaders and actors do not try the same tactics domestically. Critically, it is also essential for the European Union

and its democratic allies to address the issues in Hungary and Poland so that the curtailment of democracy and liberal values does not go unpunished.

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*The Central Park Five:
The Cost of Narrativization
Erin Feith (CLA 2021)*

Everyone loves a good story, but few question why and at what cost. In his article, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," Hayden White explores what he identifies as the human tendency "to give *real* events the *form* of a story" (White 8). White explains how historical events are developed into stories by distinguishing between the processes of narrating and narrativizing. While he defines narration as the relation of perceived events, White's description of narrativization as "a discourse that feigns to make the world... speak itself *as a story*", points to the danger this process poses to the telling of historical moments (White 7). This danger arises from the fact that narrativization fulfills a human desire to ascribe meaning to events. Therefore, the meaning given to the narrativized version follows what those in charge of the story believe make the most sense, and far too often what makes sense is influenced by an individual's long-held assumptions and preconceptions. As a result, historical events, when narrativized to have a "structure...they *do not* possess as a mere sequence" (White 9), reflect a cohesion based upon prejudices that prove detrimental to the individuals or groups portrayed in this way.

A particularly striking example of such dangers of narrativization is that of the case of the Central Park Five, wherein five African American and Hispanic teenage boys were arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for the rape of a Caucasian female jogger in Central Park. In his documentary, *The Central Park Five*, Ken Burns both addresses and questions the media and justice system's telling of the 1989 case, and the narrativized account that quickly emerged and cast these young men as criminals despite conflicting and insufficient evidence. The

documentary demonstrates its self-consciousness in the way that it adapts and inverts the narrative format. Burns begins his documentary with Matias Reyes's confession to the crime, thereby exonerating the five boys at the start of the film, and concludes it on an unfinished note where the five men are left navigating life after their release and awaiting the resolution of their lawsuit against New York City. Additionally, insofar as narratives act as "reflection[s] of the nature of culture" (White 5), and are therefore pieced together according to the familiar or expected, the example of the Central Park Five reflects what Jelani Cobb describes as the "mythology of black criminality" and the enduring notion of "the...rapacious menacing Negro male" (13th). In this, another element in the construction of stories about historical events is introduced, as the desire to narrativize intersects with issues of race, wherein, as the film illustrates, typecasts of certain groups of people facilitate the connection, and plausibility, of a series of occurrences. Thus, relating it to the concepts put forth in White's analysis, Burns's *The Central Park Five* reworks the conventions of narrativization to challenge the dominant narrative of the justice system and media outlets to reveal the reliance on racial stereotypes in explaining particular historical events.

From its opening scenes, the documentary proves to oppose the mainstream account of the case by interrupting the pattern of narrative in its use of an anticlimactic structure. As White indicates in his article, one of the most important components to the structure of a story arising out of a historical event is the presence of "well-marked beginning, middle, and end phases" (White 6). The inclusion of phases then "impose upon...them... the form that [people] normally associate with storytelling" (White 6). In this typical form, stories follow a pattern, where the events progress toward a climax and the most important actions supposedly occur before the conclusion of the work. However, Burns's documentary subverts

this structure, insofar as it plays with the order of beginning, middle, and end, which therefore frustrates the eventual, identifiable climatic moment. One of the clips included almost immediately at the start of the film is a voiceover of Matias Reyes, the individual later identified as the man who raped the Central Park jogger. In addition to providing details of the attack which further remove doubt of his role in it, Reyes also clearly states in the voiceover that "[he] can guarantee... that there was no way these kids saw this woman or had an idea of where she was coming from" (*The Central Park Five*). He immediately follows this statement with his confession, saying definitively that "[he is] the one that did this" (*The Central Park Five*). The content and placement of this voiceover possesses a certain significance. For his confession, which might otherwise have been the climax, comes at the beginning of the film. Here, the documentary breaks from traditional climatic narrative structure and shifts the focus of the audience away from figuring out who committed the crime to a different focus, namely, why the five teenagers were thought to have committed it. In this, the alternative mode of narrative, demonstrated in the anticlimactic format, rejects the notion of the climax being the most significant moment, thereby opposing the patterns which characterize the dominant narrative by inviting the viewer to find importance not in the story but in how it is conveyed.

Highlighting what should instead be focused on, the documentary counters the prevailing story of the teenagers' guilt by promoting an alternative cause and effect logic in the opening montage and subsequent scenes of the now adult Central Park Five. Returning to White's piece, he notes an element of narrative structure wherein "events must be not only registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence...but revealed as possessing...an order of meaning, which they do *not* possess as mere sequence"

(White 9). In this sense, narrative structure almost demands the connection of a series of events, so that one can be seen as leading to the other. Insofar as it contests the dominant narrative which linked events to find the five young men guilty, the documentary disrupts this cause and effect logic and offers a different mode of explaining the chain of events. This alternative mode is introduced within the opening montage that follows the overhead picture of New York City. Compiled of short, yet vivid, clips of news broadcasts, shootings, and protests in the streets, the montage appears at once overwhelming and disparate. However, as Cornelia Klecker notes in her article "Chronology, Causality...Confusion: When Avant-Garde Goes Classic," "meaning can be created in various ways and is not tied to a linear step-by-step unfolding of events" (Klecker 14). Indeed, upon further examination, the snippets contained in the montage depict chaos, crime, and existing racial tension in New York City during this period. Notably, it conveys how these factors contributed to the creation of a kind of hyper-vigilance, or idea of taking a defensive stance, as demonstrated in a "we'll use the gun," sentiment among the white population (*The Central Park Five*). Here, the film puts forth a new causal logic for the case of the Central Park Five that contests that of the mainstream narrative, wherein social anxiety and racial tension replace the proposed cause of dangerous, predatory black youths. Moreover, as highlighted by the references to "whites attack[ing] three black men," Bernhard Goetz's shooting of four African American men on a subway, and other instances of violence, the film indicates a new effect logic in the case of the five young men as well. With respect to the alternative cause introduced, the effect becomes not the white population under attack as the prominent narrative supposed, but rather the African American community with "the most endangered...[being]...the young black man" (*The Central Park Five*). In this montage, the

documentary provides an alternative cause and effect chain that serves as a foundation for reimagining the events that led to the young men becoming the Central Park Five.

Accompanying this introduction of a different causal sequence, the film uses personal narration in a way that works to support this sequence and further oppose the leading story told at the time. Following the opening montage, the documentary shifts to face-to-face, or voiceover interviews with the five, now adult, men. Here, each of the men provides a background for himself, giving a description of his early life, neighborhood, family, and interests. Additionally, photographs of the men at various ages ranging from infancy to elementary school graduation to early adolescence, fill the screen, supplementing the spoken details of their respective childhoods and giving the viewer an image of childhood innocence. Beyond acting as a means of generating an emotional response, the inclusion of the images and men's telling of their personal narratives serves to provide cohesion for the alternate cause and effect chain just proposed. Having the five men relate the story of their early lives, which depicts them as typical American children, playing baseball and hide-and-seek and watching MTV videos (*The Central Park Five*), challenges the original cause in the dominant story that painted them as what Michelle Alexander describes as uncontrollable "animals" (13th). The visible contrast between the two seems to highlight a falseness in the initial cause and support the alternative one promoted by the film, which says that social anxiety and racial tensions fueled a particular characterization of the young African American male. As the film proceeds, the men's description of their arrest demonstrates the proposed alternative effect of this cause. The events that they recall taking place during their arrests and subsequent interrogations, such as Kevin Richardson's recollection of being called a "little animal" and detectives repeatedly screaming at

them, “you know you...did it” (*The Central Park Five*), are the result of a social and racial anxiety.

In addition to providing support for this alternative cause and effect logic, the documentary juxtaposes this element of personal narration with the narrative provided by the media and justice system, to demonstrate the issues in this dominant telling of the case. As White describes in his article, there exists a distinction between “discourse that narrate[s] on one side and [those] that narrativize on the other” (White 6-7). Expanding upon this, he explains a difference between the “narra[tion] [of] accounts of the reality that [one] perceived, or thought [he] perceived, to exist within or behind the evidence they had examined...[and]...narrativiz[ing] [of] that reality [by] impos[ing] upon it the form of a story” (White 6). Adapting this analysis to the film, the men’s recounting of the night of the rape function in the way of a narrated discourse. While it is put into a cohesive format, their telling of it still maintains an element of “looking out on the world and report[ing] it” (White 7). This concept of narration as opposed to narrativization, becomes particularly evident when turning to the scenes of the film where each of the men describe the events on the night of April 19th, 1989. To begin, the men explain the sequence of circumstances and moments that led to them being in Central Park, such as Kevin Richardson’s detailing of how “it was a nice night,” and Raymond Santana’s recollection that “it was a holiday coming up [and they] didn’t have school and a couple of friends wanted to hang out” (*The Central Park Five*). After noting where each had previously been, playing basketball, at a corner restaurant and so on, they all describe coming upon 110th Street and “seeing this group of people” composed of both friends and loose acquaintances with whom they would enter the Park (*The Central Park Five*). From here, they detail the actions of some group members who harassed and, at times, beat passersby, coming

to the moment when the police came, at which point Richardson and Santana were arrested while the rest of the five had left to return home. In their telling of their personal accounts, it is important to note how they simply relate the events of that evening according to the chronological order in which they happened, or at least are remembered to have happened. Here, the film appears to highlight that each man is in charge of the narrative, relating the events that occurred during their respective interrogations with a tight chronology that leaves no room for interpretation. By doing so, the film uses the personal narratives to highlight how “real events can be spoken about” in a way where they “should simply be” as they are (White 8).

Juxtaposing its employment of narrative through the inclusion of the men’s personal narration that relates the events as they occur, the documentary further opposes the dominant account by highlighting the way in which it has been narrativized by the media and justice system. As mentioned above, White describes the process of “narrativiz[ing]... reality” (White 6) as seeking to make “real events [into stories]” to which they “do not offer themselves” (White 8). Holding it in comparison to the preceding scenes of the men’s description of the night and their arrest, the film reveals the media and justice system’s tendency to narrativize and recognize the problem in so doing. As the film depicts, from the moment that the female jogger is found in Central Park, a proverbial connecting of the dots takes place. On the basis of her location in Central Park and the extent of her injuries, the police initiate this story wherein the teenagers originally being held for “unlawful assembly” have now become rapists (*The Central Park Five*). By the following afternoon, during a press conference held by the Chief of Detectives after most of the five were coerced into giving false statements, the correlation between the boys and the attack on the jogger had not only

been made, but presented by the police and adopted entirely by the media as true. In this way, the documentary reveals how the police and media follow one of the hallmarks of narrativization, as they adhere to the “notion that *real* events [can] speak for themselves or be represented as “telling their own story” (White 8). As Jim Dwyer notes, “the detectives [were] trying to piece together a narrative...and trying to make it fit what they [knew] happened[,] a woman ended up at the bottom of a ravine in the Park...and a bunch of...people got hassled...by these kids” (*The Central Park Five*). In their reliance on these two real events to speak their own story, a meaning is ascribed to them that should not be. In fact, there exists a danger in such an ascription of meaning that Susan Sontag highlights in her work, *Regarding the Pain of Others*. She notes that “what a photograph,” or in this case, a moving photo, in the video news segments about the crime “ ‘says’ can be read in [different] ways...[where] eventually one reads into [it] what it *should* be saying” (Sontag 29). Thus, the documentary opposes the dominant narrative insofar as it reveals the inherent problem in its narrativized construction in comparison to its use of personal narration.

In opposing it by highlighting its narrativization, the documentary reveals the dominant narrative’s reliance on entrenched racial stereotypes to provide its coherency and closure. In his article “Transforming the Central Park Jogger into the Central Park Five: Shifting Narratives of Innocence and Changing Media Discourse in the Attack on the Central Park Jogger, 1989-2014,” Greg Stratton notes the appeal and in a sense believability of the case given the “victim’s status as a white, female resident of the affluent Upper East Side and the young men who attacked her confirming racial stereotypes” (Stratton 282). Chief among these stereotypes that the young men appear to confirm is the “myth of the bestial black man” (Stratton 282). As demonstrated by the media’s char-

acterization of the five teenagers as “wilding [or] rampaging in wolfpacks[,] attacking people just for the fun of it” (*The Central Park Five*), this myth is invoked and the notion that Jelani Cobb describes of the “black male rapist that had been a staple of the white imagination since the time after slavery” remains intact (13th). In the media’s description of their actions as such, these young men become to the public what is expected of them. The fulfillment of this expectation lends a plausibility to the events that are made to tell themselves in the dominant narrative, even when discrepancies arise in the story that is told. For despite the inconsistencies in the boys’ confessions and lack of DNA evidence (*The Central Park Five*), the story was upheld, largely because of what Craig Steven Wilder states in the documentary, that “once...on the path of identifying these men as the culprits, it [was] hard to get off that path and race...[made] it extremely difficult” (*The Central Park Five*). Along with providing coherency, these racial stereotypes also fulfilled two other elements in narrativization: closure and a “moraliz[ation] [of] reality” (White 18). With the five men arrested within two days of the crime and the overwhelming feeling of “thank God they got them” (*The Central Park Five*), the sense of closure comes from this apparent confirmation of these racial stereotypes. Additionally, a moral meaning is ascribed wherein, with the influence of stereotypes, the African American male continues to be viewed as morally bad. At the same time, this sense of closure conveys a message, largely to white individuals, of their moral goodness and provides a takeaway that they need to do more to ensure their safety, and thus, in that sense, their control.

Opposing these features of the dominant account, the documentary subverts the narrative structure used in it by denying the element of conclusion and challenging the notion of moralizing reality. As referenced above, White notes

how “closure, that summing up of the meaning of the chain of events with which it deals [,is] normally expect[ed] from the well-made story” (White 20). This ‘meaning’ refers to what White describes as the “demand...for moral meaning, a demand that sequences of real events be assessed as to their significance” (White 24). However, Burns’s film counters both of these elements and reworks them. Beginning with the way it refuses this idea of closure, the film’s final scenes highlight the fact that the case of the Central Park Five proves to be an “*unfinished* story” (White 9). It not only includes the men’s reflections of how their conviction continues to impact their lives but also how the subsequent lawsuit the five made against New York City remained “unresolved” at the time the film was made (*The Central Park Five*). By having this word, “unresolved,” be the final word seen before the final credits, the film appears to suggest the continuance or ongoing nature of reality wherein events do not simply conclude as they do in a story. In doing this, the documentary also challenges the notion of attributing a moral meaning to narrative. While it appears to moralize its alternative narrative, the documentary, being self-conscious of its narration also denies the significance of this moral element. This kind of rejection of moralizing real events is captured in the statement from Craig Steven Wilder that the documentary includes, wherein he rejects the notion of “tying [the case of The Central Park Five] up in a bow and thinking that there is something that we can take away from it and...be better people” (*The Central Park Five*). In this moralization of reality, the lofty takeaway that people can do better may obscure what Wilder suggests as a necessary realization that “we’re not very good people and we’re often not” (*The Central Park Five*), which might lead to change. For, as Michelle Alexander notes in the Introduction of her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, “a new social consensus...about race

and the role of race in...our society...must begin with...critical consciousness” (Alexander 15). Thus, in its opposition to the dominant narrative and subversion of the structures it employs, the film challenges the elements of closure and moral meaning and reworks them in an alternative manner.

A danger exists in the narrativization of real-life events. For, at the moment when “historical reality” is made to “display the form of a story” (White 9), storytellers provide a cohesion arising from their predispositions of what they consider to be believable from an often disparate series of events. The case of the Central Park Five acts as a glaring example of narrativization, which was, in this instance, carried out by the media and justice system, as well as the harmful consequences it may produce. Ken Burns’s documentary serves to visually highlight this point on narrativity and does so by inverting the typical narrative elements that are defined by Hayden White. In moving from the confession of the man who actually raped the female jogger to an unfinished conclusion of the five’s lives since release, the film reveals both the issues in the dominant version’s construction and offers an alternative account of the events of that night in Central Park. Applying its challenge to the dominant version and reworking of the narrative structures more broadly, the documentary exemplifies the stakes of narrativization, especially the harmful consequences that it can have for individuals who find themselves the targets of prejudice.

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Falling Short: Revisiting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

Kassel Franco-Garibay (CLA 2020)

Introduction

Despite the fact that the United Nations as an organization was created by great powers, some of them imperialistic in nature, the Organization has always made the claim that decolonization and the right to self-determination are core values of their global mission. It was along these lines that in 2000, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was created, quickly followed by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous people. These efforts culminated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. This non-binding declaration recognized the “urgent need” to respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples, yet it was vague and did not offer any specific goals for the States to measure against and strive to meet. While it is true that the UNDRIP has changed the narrative surrounding indigenous peoples’ rights—for example, they were included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while they were not mentioned in the Millennium Goals—the lack of tools of accountability in the UNDRIP has given states an easy way out while they continue to fail in protecting the rights of their indigenous populations.

In this paper, I aim to provide a brief history of indigenous peoples’ rights in the United Nations followed by a revisiting of the UNDRIP. I argue that it was the exclusion of indigenous voices in the final steps of the Declarations development that have led to the UNDRIP’s lack of success. The final version of the Declaration is not backed up by indigenous people nor does it hold dominant groups accountable in stopping discrimination against indigenous peoples. By not

giving proper representation to indigenous peoples in the UN system, the Organization itself is perpetuating the same structures of oppression, injustice, and exploitation that were used in the colonial times will continue to exist and prevent indigenous peoples from fully exercising their rights. Until indigenous peoples can vote and voice their concerns in matters that specifically affect them, any kind of document, declaration, or convention will continue to be just lip service.

Brief History of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the United Nations

To understand the history of indigenous rights at the United Nations, it is important to begin with the UN's historical failure to create a universal definition of "indigenous," to the point that some even argue that the body has spent too much time trying to define who indigenous peoples are rather than recognizing and protecting their rights. For this reason, the UN has recently moved away from trying to create a formal universal definition as it is not needed "to address the substantial issues affecting indigenous peoples" (United Nations Development Group 2015). Although a universal definition backed by the UN does not exist, the website Cultural Survival estimates that there exist 476.6 million indigenous people in the world, belonging to over 5 thousand groups in 90 countries (Cultural Survival 2020). There are several factors that are used in order to identify to whom UNDRIP and similar documents apply. The first document to tackle these factors was the 1982 Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples by UN Special Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo. The factors can be summarized as: self-identification; historical continuity with pre-invasion and/or pre-colonial societies; a determination to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories

and identity as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system; and finally, non-dominance (Martínez Cobo 1982). Non-dominance should not be interpreted as synonymous to being minorities. In fact, the legal status of indigenous peoples is distinct from that of minorities, even when they are often (though not always) a minority in the States in which they reside. For example, in Bolivia and Guatemala indigenous peoples make up half of the population (The Issues 2020). Minorities and indigenous peoples have some similar rights under international law, however UNDRIP is more comprehensive than international legal instruments associated with minorities (OHCHR 2013, 3). This is important to mention because oftentimes indigenous rights are "implied" when treaties/bodies talk about minority rights, but indigenous peoples are not always minorities which could potentially translate into leaving indigenous peoples unprotected.

Regardless of these factors, the international community's prevailing view today values self-identification above all. In fact, the UNDRIP has no specific definition for the word either, yet Article 33 refers to the rights of indigenous peoples to "determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions" (United Nations 2007b). And whether or not a formal definition exists, indigenous people have had a long relationship with the UN which in fact began with the organization's predecessor, the League of Nations.

In the Covenant of the League of Nations, indigenous people's existence was acknowledged under Article 22, although the context in which they are mentioned is questionable at best. The League sought to create a system in which "advanced nations, ['Mandatories'], who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position" would take under their tutelage those colonies and territories

which as a consequence of the late war had ceased to be under the sovereignty of the colonial States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world (League of Nations 1924). Even if Article 22 stated that the Mandatories' mission was to safeguard indigenous and native people's interests, well-being, and development, the inclusion of this system is a clear example of neo-colonialism that was then replicated in the United Nations Charter in the Trusteeship system (Chapters XII and XIII). In simple terms, neocolonialism can be understood as a system in which "developed" or "First World" countries control "developing" or "Third World" countries through indirect beings and usually under the justification of spreading modernization and development to those who need it most. By ranking countries based on who can act as a mandatory and take under their tutelage "new" countries and recently independent territories, both the League of Nations and the UN are participating in a system of continued dependence.

Following the creation of the League of Nations, indigenous people brought up their concerns to the League on two separate occasions. Haudenosaunee Chief Deskaheh (in 1923) and Māori T.W. Ratana (in 1925) attempted to bring attention to Canada and New Zealand's failure to uphold treaties and respect their collective rights (Gonnella 2018, 149). Unfortunately, nothing came out of these meetings and the rights of indigenous peoples were once more left out in when the United Nations replaced the League of Nations in 1945.

In 1948, the representative of Bolivia along with other representatives of Latin American countries submitted an initiative to the General Assembly (GA) to create a sub-commission that would focus on the social issues of indigenous populations in the American continent. After reviews and amendments, it became a proposal to conduct a study on

the status of the indigenous peoples of the Americas by UN specialist bodies, however, the study was never executed (Charters and Stavenhagen 2009, 18). This is recorded as the first time that the UN ever discussed indigenous rights at such a high level as the GA, and it is important to point out for two reasons: first, it shows there was interest in discussing indigenous issues early on in the history of the organization; and second, it highlights the length of the struggle for UNDRIP and the acknowledgement of indigenous peoples' rights.

The first UN body to recognize indigenous people's rights—along with being the only mechanism to have produced binding documents that protect indigenous rights—is the International Labor Organization (ILO). After conducting and publishing a study on the status of indigenous peoples around the world in 1953, the ILO adopted its Convention 107 four years later. ILO C.107 included land rights, the right to social security, equal opportunity in employment, education, among others rights (ILO 1957). In 1989, recognizing that the situation in the world had changed and building on the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the ILO decided to update their work and adopted Convention 169, which mostly focused on non-discrimination (ILO 1989) making indigenous rights to non-discrimination part of international law.

In 1977, the UN held its first conference with indigenous delegates. The International NGO Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas was held at the UN offices in Geneva on September 1977. It was "the first time that Native peoples were able to speak for themselves at the UN. Some governments felt so threatened that they prevented delegates from participating and persecuted them upon return" (Curl 2005). With over 60 indigenous

nations represented and over 250 representatives, the conference was a watershed moment in the history of indigenous peoples' rights. The key takeaways of the conference's Final Resolution were recommendations to the ILO's 107 Convention, the declaration of October 12—the day of the so-called “discovery” of the American continent—as an International Day of Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and the draft of what would eventually become UNDRIP (Curl 2005). Four years later, in 1981 the Indigenous NGOs met in Geneva again and reaffirmed the declaration of Indigenous Peoples Day.

Following the declaration of the International Indigenous Peoples Day, in 1995 the United Nations declared the following decade as the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. During those ten years, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was created in 2000 along with the naming of a Special Rapporteur in 2000 (OHCHR 2013). Both of these bodies would be instrumental in the writing and ratification of the UNDRIP.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Successes and Shortcomings

The UNDRIP was over thirty years in the making. The efforts that began in 1977 at the NGO Conference in Geneva led to the creation of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1982 (OHCHR 2013, 13). The main purpose of the Working Group was to develop human rights standards that would protect indigenous peoples. In 1993, the Working Group agreed on a draft Declaration and submitted it to the SubCommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which approved it in 1994. The draft was subsequently sent to the UN Commission on Human Rights, which established the Working Group on the draft Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples.

The Human Rights Council adopted the Declaration in June 2006, followed by the General Assembly in September 2007 with 144 votes in favor, 12 abstentions, and 4 votes against by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Gonnella 2018, 155). It is key to point out that all of the member states that voted against the resolution have large populations of indigenous peoples. At the General Assembly, the Canada representative said that the provisions in the Declaration on lands, territories, and resources were “overly broad, unclear, and capable of a wide variety of interpretations, discounting the need to recognize a range of rights over land and possibly putting into question matters that have been settled by treaty” (United Nations 2007a), echoing the reasons for the vote against by the other member states. Since 2007, all four countries that originally voted against have signed on the resolution (United Nations 2020c).

Although it is worth remarking that all UN member states have ratified the Declaration, making it an example of soft law and customary law—demonstrating the Organization's normative values on the matter of the rights of indigenous peoples—it is also key to be critical in examining whether or not the UNDRIP has been successful. One of the ways to gauge the effect of the UNDRIP is to compare the way the United Nations talked about indigenous peoples' rights before and after the Declaration's ratification in 2007. For example, although indigenous peoples were known to be some of the most disempowered and vulnerable groups in the world, the UN Millennium Declaration and Goals (MDGs) failed to mention them at all (United Nations 2000). On the other hand, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly mentions indigenous peoples six times—“three times in the political declaration; two in the targets under Goal 2 on Zero Hunger (target 2.3) and Goal 4 on education (tar-

get 4.5) and one in the section on follow up and review that calls for indigenous peoples' participation" (United Nations 2020a). Although this is a minimal improvement, it is important to acknowledge that regarding the MDGs, indigenous peoples and their rights were not recognized until five years later, when the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) gave an official statement in 2005. Thus, almost as an afterthought, the fifth session of the UNPFII (2006) was devoted to the theme of "The Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: Redefining the Goals" (United Nations 2020b). The UN seemingly learned from its mistakes and included indigenous peoples in the 2030 Agenda from the beginning, even if only two out of the 17 goals include specific mentions of indigenous rights.

The UN narrative on indigenous peoples and their rights has definitely changed post- UNDRIP, especially when talking about sustainable development. In a world that is increasingly concerned about climate change, and rightfully so, there has been an increase in interest to preserve traditional knowledge on agriculture. Indigenous peoples are wardens of over 20% of the world's land surface and 80% of the planet's biodiversity (FAO 2016). Indigenous peoples that rely on traditional agriculture are less likely to damage the earth and allow for the conservation and restoration of the natural resources. Indigenous people's traditional knowledge of the land and agriculture could be the key to fight Climate Change and protect our environment. Additionally, crops like quinoa and moringa could revolutionize the way we eat, making it more feasible to fight food poverty throughout the world (see Figure 1). In many ways, the indigenous population of the world could easily help achieve each SDG if given the resources to effectively communicate their knowledge, however, this should be done without devaluing their worth or perpetuating neo-colonial structures of oppression against

indigenous peoples.

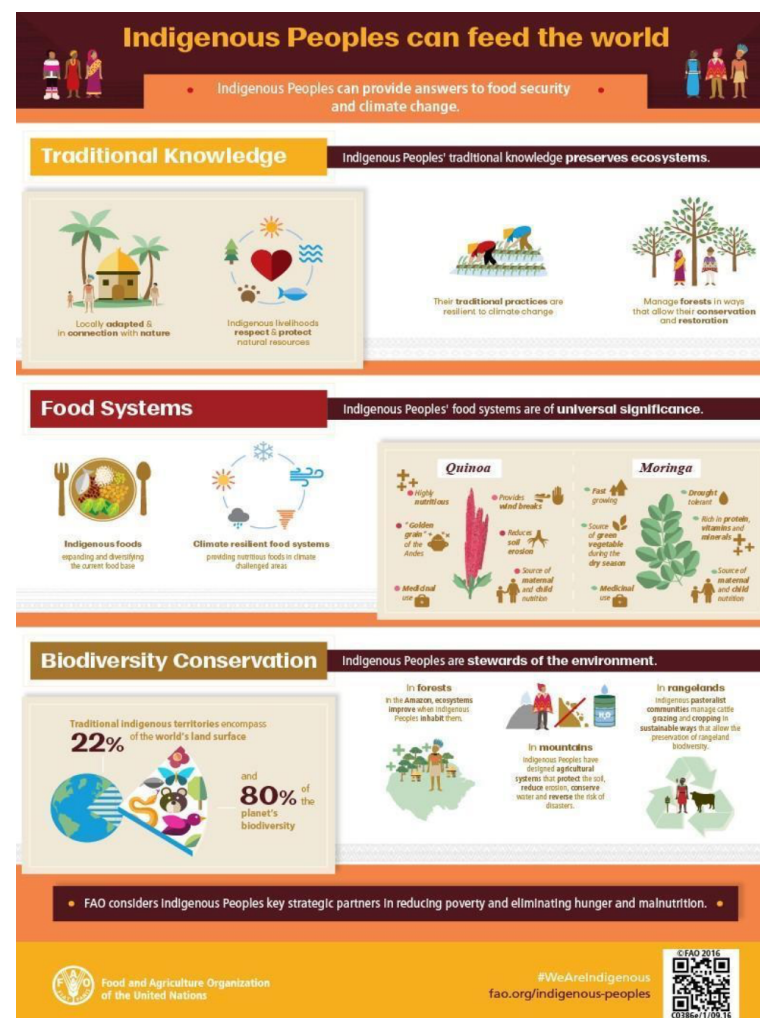


Figure 1. FAO's infographic on indigenous peoples.

Specifically looking at the SDGs number two, Zero Hunger, and 13, Climate Action, it is important to keep in mind a postcolonial perspective when discussing the way that the UN and different international bodies talk about the

contributions by indigenous peoples. Headlines reading “Indigenous People Can Save the Modern World” or “Indigenous People Are Fighting to Save the Earth for Us All” could be read as problematic. This narrative links indigenous people’s “value” to how “useful” they are for the rest of the world. Most importantly, these headlines praising indigenous people for living sustainably, often coexists with headlines depicting the violence and oppression indigenous people continue to experience today. Despite the adoption of the UNDRIP, indigenous peoples continue to have limited access to quality education, they constitute 15% of the world’s most impoverished (Hall and Gandolfo 2016), and indigenous women continue to face exacerbated gender violence and forced sterilization.

Throughout the world, indigenous movements continue to fight for their rights, which are not being protected by the declaration as intended. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, an independent non-profit work, dedicates most of its 2018 report on the status of the world’s indigenous people to the different ways that the 10th anniversary of the UNDRIP was celebrated throughout the world. As stated by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, in July 2017: “In spite of the commitment to the UNDRIP, reiterated by UN Member States, the implementation situation of UNDRIP is one of limited progress” (Jacquelin-Andersen and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2018, 9). Furthermore, the IWGIA’s report mentions the conflicts between the indigenous fight for their land and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The fight to get recognition and respect for their distinct visions of sustainable development, “indigenous peoples have highlighted over and over again that, for them, land is not merely an economic resource but a vital element of their survival as peoples” (Jacquelin-Andersen and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2018, 8). Another independent source

of reporting is Cultural Survival, which regularly contributes to the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review process by offering complimentary information to the states’ self-reporting in order to show a more honest picture of how indigenous peoples’ rights are being respected throughout the world.

In further research exploring the effectiveness of the UNDRIP it would be interesting to do a quantitative analysis of how many times the word ‘indigenous’ appears in UN resolutions each year, and to determine if there has been an increase following the adoption of the UNDRIP. However, the amount of times that indigenous peoples are mentioned should not be seen as equaling protection of their rights or direct action towards the improvement of their lives. The best way to actually determine the effectivity of the UNDRIP is to look at data and read content produced by indigenous people and indigenous NGOs.

Causes and Implications of UNDRIP’s Failure

Because of its nature as a General Assembly Resolution, the UNDRIP is a non-binding document, but a series of recommendations for signatories and member states. Although scholars have used this argument to explain the lack of accountability from member states, there is a school of thought that recognizes the UNDRIP’s power as a tool of customary law. In “To Bind or Not to Bind: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Five Years On,” Megan Davis argues that there are two competing ideas of what a declaration constitutes in international law: soft law and customary international law. The soft law argument is based on the UNDRIP’s normative weight and its high degree of legitimacy, having been signed by all UN member states. On the other hand, there is literature that argues that UNDRIP embodies, to some extent, general principles of customary

law, which would make certain rights and obligations outlined in the declaration—such as the right to self-determination, non-discrimination, and other human rights—binding even if the UNDRIP in itself is not. Davis argues that the decision to write a declaration rather than a convention, treaty, or binding document is most beneficial for the interests of indigenous communities as it made it possible to accelerate the process, making it an example of negotiation between the risks of non-ratification and non-compliance (Davis 2012, 39-40). In order to avoid the problems ILO C.169 had faced in ratification, the drafting of UNDRIP as a declaration was a strategic choice under the premise that it is better to have a non-binding document than to have no document at all.

Another argument that has been used to explain UNDRIP's partial failure is its vague nature. Although it is very explicit on land rights—for example, Article 10 states that “indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories” (United Nations 2007b), while Article 11 even goes as far as to call for “states [to] provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution” (United Nations 2007b)—and self-determination—Article 3 states the right of indigenous peoples to “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations 2007b)—when it comes to implementation it was vague. The lack of enforcement mechanisms and indicators to measure its success has enabled states to sign the declaration without committing to the protection of indigenous communities and their rights.

However, I argue that the most important argument as to why the UNDRIP has failed to attain its goals is the lack of support from indigenous communities. Although the initiative for the UNDRIP came from grassroots organizing and indigenous activism which would eventually culminate in the 1977 NGO Conference in Geneva, the bureaucratic process of the

United Nations eventually removed the voices from indigenous leaders from the final product. In an article by John Ahni Schertow for *Intercontinental Cry*—a non-profit newsroom with content centered on indigenous peoples' issues written mostly by indigenous journalists—he summarizes Charmaine White Face's book *Indigenous Nations' Rights in the Balance: An analysis of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which “exposes the UN Declaration as a deeply flawed document that was not endorsed by the world's Indigenous Peoples and Nations” (Schertow 2013). Both Schertow and White Face have less than flattering arguments against the UNDRIP, these are only two of the indigenous voices that have criticized the declaration and called for its revision.

White Face's argument is based on the differences between the three different versions of the declaration: the first official draft (referred to as the Sub-Commission text), passed by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in 1994 which was approved by indigenous peoples; the second draft, written by chairperson Luis Enrique Chavez of the Working Group on the Draft Declaration (WGDD) and passed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2006; and the third and final draft of the resolution which was passed by the UN General Assembly in 2007 (Schertow 2013). One of the examples used by White Face to show the difference between drafts is the Preambular Paragraph 12 of the first draft which stated: “Recognizing also that indigenous peoples have the right freely to determine their relationships with States in a spirit of coexistence, mutual benefit and full respect” (Schertow 2013). This paragraph was removed in the final draft, which undermines the right of indigenous peoples to freely determine their relationship with the state rather than have it forced upon by a dominant power. The removal of the paragraph, White Face writes, indicates a

lack of recognition of indigenous peoples' sovereignty.

Furthermore, another example on how the UNDRIP was watered down are the changes made to Article 6 of the Sub-Commission text, which stated that "indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and to full guarantees against genocide or any other act of violence" (Schertow 2013), this would go on to become Article 7 of the final resolution which reads "indigenous peoples have the collective right to life in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence" (United Nations 2007b). This change may seem small, but White Face argues that the original text was written as a right ("to full guarantees against genocide") while the final version "[states] an action that needs to be enforced, but it does not say how it will be enforced" (Schertow 2013). The most notable difference between the initial draft and the final product is the final preambular paragraph, which in the Sub-Commission text reads as: "Solemnly proclaims the following United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (Schertow 2013), but then was changed in the Human Rights Council Version and kept in the General Assembly version as: "Solemnly proclaims the following United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a standard of achievement to be pursued in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect" (Schertow 2013). This change destroys the meaning and weight of the original paragraph, diluting the strength of the UNDRIP to the eyes of the people that it is supposed to protect.

Schertow describes White Face's book as an important glimpse into the bureaucratic process of the United Nations that Indigenous Peoples have been forced to contend with since its founding. It is a process of forcing Indigenous Peoples to settle for less—in this case, at the direct expense of the

meaning of Indigenous Rights—for the benefit of States too rigid and myopic to work alongside Indigenous Peoples and Nations for the mutual benefit of all.

The exclusion of indigenous voices in the later part of the process to get the UNDRIP and other similar documents approved invalidates the documents and deters them from succeeding before they are even adopted by member states. In Matthew Gonella's article "If You Are Not at the Table, Then You Are Probably on the Menu: Indigenous Peoples' Participatory Status at the United Nations", he argues that in order to move away from solely acknowledging indigenous rights, but also implementing and enforcing them, the United Nations must have seats for indigenous peoples to be present in the discussions that concern them. Gonella also points out the many changes that were made in the last version of the UNDRIP at the General Assembly, "[giving] states more power over indigenous peoples in regards to their participation in decision-making processes" (Gonnella 2018, 155). These changes, which were done without the approval or consultation of indigenous peoples, were made possible by the current system of accreditation for indigenous peoples at the UN, in which they are treated as civil society. As civil society, most of the time they are only given access to a specific meeting or conference in which, of course, they do not have the right to vote (Gonella 2018, 162). Until indigenous voices are given equal weight in conversations that specifically concern them, the documents produced by the United Nations and its different bodies will continue to replicate systems of oppression and silencing that are characteristics of colonialism.

In September of 2014, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was held as a high-level meeting designed to pursue the objectives of the UNDRIP. The World Conference "advocated four measures to help bring the UNDRIP into effect: enhanced increased effectiveness of human rights bodies;

enhanced participation for indigenous peoples... ; studies on indigenous women; and respect for indigenous sacred sites” (Gonnella 2018, 160). Ever since, the topic of status change when concerning indigenous peoples has gained momentum, although states (and even indigenous nations themselves) disagree on what exactly the new status could be. Recognizing that it would be unrealistic to give all five thousand indigenous nations equal status as member states, there have been requests by several indigenous peoples for permanent observer status, like the one enjoyed by Palestine and the Holy See (Gonnella 2018, 164). Gonnella argues that granting permanent observer status to indigenous nations would “guarantee full rights of indigenous peoples when participating at international organizations” (Gonnella 2018, 167-168), enabling them to engage directly in the decision-making process in the UN system. Furthermore, he proposes that this status is in accordance with the right to self-determination which is granted by the UNDRIP. Of course, this is not an ideal situation for current member states, who could regard the change of status for indigenous peoples as an attack on their sovereignty.

Conclusion

However groundbreaking, the UNDRIP was only the first step in the acknowledging of indigenous peoples’ rights yet it has been referred to and treated as the best that the United Nations could do, however there is still a long way to go. Indigenous peoples throughout the world continue to be disenfranchised, forcibly displaced, and discriminated against regardless of the declaration’s spelling out of their rights. The nature of the UNDRIP as a non-binding document might be partially at fault for its lack of implementation and its failure to hold member states accountable for their actions regarding indigenous peoples, however the main reason for the UNDRIP’s failure is the lack of participation of indigenous

peoples in the later stages of its drafting and approval. Because the final declaration was not completely backed up by indigenous peoples, the people that are supposed to be under the protection of the UNDRIP have not taken ownership of the document and prefer to fight for their rights in other ways. In other words, indigenous resistance and activism are alive and well but does not depend on the UN nor do indigenous people seem to be interested at the moment in using the UN as a partner in their fight.

As a form of conclusion, I believe it is important to think of my paper under the light of the following question: are indigenous rights a matter of human rights? If they are, and I would argue they are, then it becomes key to include indigenous voices in advocating for their rights. The exclusion of their voices and arguments at the table is not only disempowering but could be argued as a violation of the human rights the United Nations is set out to protect. It is not until indigenous people are given a seat at the table in the UN when conversations that concern them are being held that the UN will truly play a key role in the protection of indigenous peoples, their rights and their culture.

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**“Together We Look Like Our Mother”:
Motherhood, Memory, and Legacy in *The Joy Luck Club* and
The Book of Salt
Sam Zatorski (CLA 2022)**

“They go back to eating their soft boiled peanuts, saying stories among themselves. They are young girls again, dreaming of good times in the past and good times yet to come. A brother from Ningbo who makes his sister cry with joy when he returns nine thousand dollars plus interest. A youngest son whose stereo and TV repair business is so good he sends leftovers to China. A daughter whose babies are able to swim like fish in a fancy pool in Woodside. Such good stories. The best. They are the lucky ones.

And I am sitting at my mother’s place at the mah jong table, on the East, where things began.”

*-Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club**

When analyzing the literature of diaspora, the relationship that is often most prominent is the one between a parent and child; not only between two members of a family but between the greater diasporic “child”, a person who is living in diaspora with limited understanding of their native culture, and the diasporic “mother”, a concept which finds its way into the language we use to express notions of nationality and more importantly, familiarity and belonging. A person living in diaspora is far away from their mother country, their mother tongue, and the food of their mother’s kitchen. Amy Tan’s *Joy Luck Club* and Monique Truong’s *The Book of Salt* are two novels that deal with the intergenerational diasporic experiences of East Asians, and both novels, which follow the experiences of East Asians as they attempt to navigate life in the West, have much to say on the topic of motherhood and childhood in diaspora. Amy Tan and Monique Truong are both Asian-American writers born to East Asian immigrant parents (Truong was born in Vietnam, Tan in the United States). Their parents came to the United States escaping great hardship and

strife in their homelands, homelands which these daughters of diaspora struggled to recall, interpret, and understand in the way that their parents hoped they would. It is the natural result that in both novels protagonists living in diaspora struggle to balance their sense of personal identity with the identity(s) assigned to them by the society they reside in, and eventually find some form of empowerment and security in the stories and experiences of their mothers. In *Joy Luck Club* the mother-child dynamic is more prominent than in *The Book of Salt* at first glance. However, both Binh the cook and the daughters of the San Francisco Joy Luck Club have deep and intense ties to their mothers and to the lessons they received from them during their upbringing, which greatly affect how the children of these diasporic mothers internalize and process their experiences as members of a diaspora.

“When I was a young girl in China, my grandmother told me my mother was a ghost.” This sentence begins the first China chapter of *The Joy Luck Club*. It sets the tone for many of the novel’s “mother” chapters, a reminder that the women of the Joy Luck Club did not come from a culture with permissive attitudes toward women’s behavior. Indeed, this is true across both *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Book of Salt*; the mothers of both novels find themselves suppressed, persecuted and ultimately violated by the patriarchal, conservative, rigid cultural climates in which they reside. It is under the constant watchful eye of the men and older women in their lives that the mothers of these protagonists are brought up and grow into womanhood in. In many ways, their lives are defined by the men around them, men who are often absent or abusive in practice, leaving a gap in their private lives that is often filled by older women, a role which these mothers will one day perform in turn.

These strong older female presences in *The Joy Luck*

Club are most pronounced in the form of mothers, grandmothers, aunts and other female relatives. These women are the motherly figures, whether by blood or by circumstance, in the China chapters of the novel. And quite often, it is these same older female characters who are the most rigid and cruel enforcers of social conservatism and traditional societal expectations for the young mothers-to-be. By the same token, women in the vision of Chinese society portrayed in *The Joy Luck Club* often become simultaneously victims and abusers, passing on the cycle of misogynist violence, shame and fear down through the generations and through the hierarchies of their households. Ben Xu, in his article *Memory and the Ethnic Self: Reading Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club*, makes particular note of this domestic strife, and suggests that it may be more than simple description; these chapters set in China not only give us background on the lives of the Joy Luck Club before they came to America, but also *why* they chose to recall these specific memories in the novel. Xu contends that in the example of Ying-Ying St. Clair, the young girl's wish "to be found" is a reflection of her isolation, but also of her fatalistic worldview, survival mentality, and inability to recall times of prosperity and happiness even though she is likely to have experienced them. It's vital to the conversation on diasporic literature, especially in an intergenerational context, as Xu points out, to remember that memories are not only static things, but "that we also have 'stories' and 'narratives' to tell about the past which both shape and convey our sense of self" (Xu 2). These are the memories which will provide the foundation for all the events of the novel, in both the past and narrative present.

However, the need to be an individual, to be appreciated, to be "found" is not unique to Ying-Ying St. Clair. Indeed, it is not even unique to *The Joy Luck Club*. The mother of Binh the cook had similar dreams, once, before she met her

abusive alcoholic husband and rendered herself infertile while giving him his last child, the main character Binh. She, too, had a wish "to be found"; she relates to her youngest son the story of a scholar-prince she wished would whisk her away to a life of leisure and delights, far from the hovel she lived in. It is this very same story that later gives comfort to Binh, a story which he uses to interpret and process his illicit homosexual relationship with Chef Bleriot, as well as to elevate it, to "find" himself in the comfort of his sexuality, by nominating Bleriot as his own "scholar-prince". Here we can see a hint of that dynamic memory, of a story being retold and a child using their mother's experiences to chart their own course in life. In *The Book of Salt*, Binh's mother is the first person (and, in the Vietnam sequences, really the only person) to teach him anything about love in a positive light. His father has for him only scorn, and his brothers are older and distant. It's only when Binh is with his mother, often helping her prepare food, that he is able to talk freely about love. This triangle of love, mother and food is no accident; it's an interrelationship that defines *The Book of Salt*, and it's present in *The Joy Luck Club* too, although in less pronounced fashion. Both novels make use of these devices; the dynamic memory as a reflection of a character's current attitude, and the idea of a mother as an emotional "foundation", a framework upon which one's own contributions to the world can be (and intentionally or not, perhaps are built upon throughout a lifetime. It is clear that in both novels, there is a heavy emphasis on the dynamics of a mother and child, and the implications these dynamics have for a person as he or she goes through life.

Amy Tan specifically takes great pains to emphasize the continuity of the self between mother and daughter in her novel. The women of the Joy Luck Club are so keen to see Jing-Mei Woo return to China because for them, it is as if all their daughters were returning to China, though they can

afford to send only one. They all worry that their daughters have grown up too American, have forgotten their homeland, traditions, and perhaps most importantly, their mothers themselves. By the same token, the daughters of the Joy Luck Club constantly fret that their mothers are too superstitious, too hard to understand, not American enough, still too Chinese decades after leaving that country for good. It's a push and pull, one that Marina Heung studies in her article "*Daughter-Text/Mother-Text: Matrilineage in Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club*". She specifically calls attention to the scene of Lindo Jong's haircut as an example, noting that even though Lindo doesn't speak to the (American) barber, she "interposes herself nonverbally through her smiles and her alternation between her 'Chinese face' and her 'American Face'" (Heung 5). This is a vital point to integrate: in both *The Book of Salt* and *The Joy Luck Club*, there is a strong East/West dichotomy. This does not apply simply to location, or to origin; to the characters in these novels, particularly those characters who are living in diaspora, there is not only such a thing as a Chinese person, or a Vietnamese person; there is a clear and distinct way of being, an inherent quality or qualities that make someone an outsider down to their bones. But ultimately, in this scene it is the barber who strips away this dichotomy and shows how things really are: underneath, there is always continuity between mother and child. Lindo and her daughter still resemble each other, despite their radically different experiences and outlooks. Lindo Jong and Waverly Jong are not two women from two worlds, they're two women trying to piece together the halves of one world. Ditto for all the Joy Luck mothers and daughters; while Jing-mei Woo grapples with the death of her mother, her mind turns to childhood, and she remembers the long hours spent at piano practice, a habit she grew to hate. Nonetheless, she has the family piano reconditioned, and decides to play a few bars. Picking up

some old sheet music, she makes a surprising discovery. What she thought were two pieces, "Pleading Child" and "Perfectly Contented," are not; they are in fact two halves of the same song. Though the Joy Luck Club's mothers and daughters often misunderstand, mischaracterize and mistake each other, they cannot help but be bound to each other by the simple fact that they themselves are products of each other's experiences, and that a daughter's experiences cannot exist without a mother, and vice versa.

In my view, Binh's relationship to his mother is somewhat different. In the chapters where Binh's mother is described, it is often as a solitary figure. There is little to indicate that she was a woman with a helpful extended family, with friends who could provide her solace, or any other escape from the abuses of her domestic nightmare. Binh and his mother both occupy a rather solitary place in the narrative, leaving impressions of a half-remembered face, a treasured kind word, or a favorite meal from long ago. That both of these characters are not addressed by their (real) name throughout the novel is another indicator; their mother-child continuity comes not from their closeness to the world around them, but from their detachment from it, detachment being one of Binh's most pronounced traits. The stories of Binh's mother provide a peek into a world beyond the suffering of the family's everyday lives, beyond the crush of empires and faiths that shape the world they live in. It is these dreamy portraits of scholar-princes and heroes that provided Binh a place to grow up unapologetically, to meet his true self without fear of reprisal or rejection, and to love something in the first place at all.

What, then, is to be made of this continuity between mother and child? How does it shape the choices and experiences of these mothers' children as they grow older and leave their mother's side to make their own way in the world? Much

of *The Joy Luck Club* is dedicated to answering this particular question. Throughout the course of the novel, the daughter characters gradually begin to reexamine their relationships with their mothers, and to integrate some of their lessons into their lives as the two generations grow older. However, this is not out of guilt or obligation, the two main motivators they associate with their Chinese-American childhoods. It is rather a reconciliation, a cautious and ultimately joyous synthesis of the two selves into one unbroken whole, easily the most profound and important relationship in the novel. But this resolution is not as simple as the daughters coming to terms with their shared identity and becoming better versions of themselves. This careful balance of their mothers' memories, prejudices, and instincts with their own life experiences and American upbringing points to another major element of the novel: legacy. A memory, we recall, is never static; it is always changing in the mind of the one who remembers. Suyuan Woo, it is said among the parents, died because she had "a new idea inside her head", one that killed her before it could be shared. This is not the only poisonous thought to appear in the novel; when Lena St. Clair cannot articulate her dislike and resentment of her husband Harold, she is wracked with anxiety and frustration, until her mother is able to see right through the veil of concealment and provide her own outsider's insight and advice that ultimately enables Lena to break out of the domestic dictatorship to which she had resigned herself. The sort of mother-daughter wisdom that is passed along throughout the novel is something like a parable told in pidgin: half-understood, tenuously interpreted, but applied with overwhelming force and conviction when the meaning finally becomes clear. The mothers of the Joy Luck Club worry that their daughters, by not understanding their culture and language, also lose the meaning of all that they have suffered in life to give their daughters the upbringing

they have received, that their American childhood has insulated them not only from what they might see as simple, character-building adversity, but also from the more profound truths of their lives, the hard-learned lessons produced by a far-off Chinese childhood, a turbulent adolescence, and a regretful, often painfully silent and cloistered adulthood in a strange and foreign land. When the aunties of the Joy Luck Club interrogate Jing-mei about her mother, what they really hope to find is some essential spark, some persistent and still-living vision of the woman they met many years ago, a woman who did not let go of her homeland or her convictions, and who, in her own way, with the tools she had, tried to give her child a good life. It is not that they fear to be one day forgotten, but rather that they fear one day to have never been at all, to have all of their lessons and memories and memories of memories pass out of the world forever. They fear to search the eyes of their daughters and find them empty of dearly bought swans, empty of the two wailing babies from Guilin, and empty of the Moon Lady to whom a little girl once wished to be found.

Binh's mother does not have the same chance to tell her own story in *The Book of Salt*. It is (tellingly) only through the memory of her youngest and dearest son that the reader is able to catch a glimpse of her. And yet, it is precisely because *The Book of Salt* is a deeply personal, first-person memoir of sorts that the portrayal of Binh's mother is so intimate, and her influence on the text so far-reaching. Her stories of scholar-princes and misty ponds enrapture Binh throughout his boyhood, and indeed are the genesis of his own notions of love and romance. She treats Binh almost like a secret in plain sight, her dearest and most costly act of rebellion against her abusive husband. As the only son not of the "Old Man's" stock, Binh is the one to receive his mother's most doting and authentic love, as well as to hold and safeguard her secrets, her dreams, and her regrets. This has a profound effect on the

boy as he grows to become a young man, and it follows him throughout the novel. It is a bittersweet story, of love won and lost and never, seemingly, had at all. It is a story Binh himself is doomed to repeat, finding that Lattimore's arms fail to catch him when he is no longer sufficient to serve his ends. And yet, Binh never seems to lose his fundamental belief in a love, someone's love, perhaps not his, but someone's. Like his mother, he is of the world only as far as he can love within it. If Binh cannot find love, whether in food, the arms of a stranger, or in his memories, then there is nothing left for him, and he moves on. Despite his air of ambivalence and detachment, love and care define Binh, a man who, under the shell of disillusionment, resignation, alcoholism and defeat, cherishes a treasure that he carries as plainly in his heart as his mother wore the jade on her earlobes. That we experience Binh's mother only in memory does not reduce her voice; it amplifies it throughout the main character's every word and action.

The same is true of *The Joy Luck Club*. It is not until the final chapter that there is a meeting between the perspectives of mother and daughter, a synthesis of the narrative of the self. Only as Jing-mei Woo comes at last to the land of her mother's birth does she begin to internalize what she had to teach her daughter and what mark she has left on her. In their hotel in Guangzhou, her father relates the story of how Suyuan Woo came to have, love, and lose her two twin daughters; how she found them in the waning months of her life, and passed on before they could be reunited. It is a tragic story, and one that typifies the mothers of the Joy Luck Club. It is a story of something dear being taken and found, but too late, another sacrifice made and attributed to circumstance.

But for a change, this story is one with a happy ending. Jing-Mei finally meets the sisters she never knew she had, and discovers, upon looking at the photograph, that her

mother's presence has not left after all. "Together we look like our mother. Her same eyes, her same mouth, open in surprise to see, at last, her long-cherished wish" (Tan 288). Although Binh does not experience such a joyous family reunion in his story, he pays homage to his mother's memory in his own way. All his life, he has walked his path alone, by choice and by circumstance. He has rejected the faith of his father, the subservience of his brother, the performative deference of the Indochinese in France, and the very expectation of whom and how to love at all. So it is no surprise that by novel's end, Binh stands at a crossroads. Should he remain in France, or return to Vietnam? *The Book of Salt* does not reveal his choice, because it is not necessary. Binh's story is not a book about an Indochinese cook who comes to France and cooks for two Americans; it is rather the story of a troubled heart cast adrift, braving storms and tempests in the hopes of one day washing up on the shores of a misty lake and lifting a salt-caked hand to skip stones at a distant, beautiful scholar-prince. I'd argue that ultimately, Binh too looks like his mother; someone who was determined to find meaning in an otherwise brutal and unloving world, someone who defied the laws of God and man to search for this meaning, and who, because of his strong belief in the goodness and validity of his mother's words and desires, is left searching still by the book's conclusion.

This, in summation, is the power of motherhood, memory, and legacy. The children of *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Book of Salt* often find themselves lost, unsure of what to do, and disappointed in the lives they have built for themselves. And yet, their mothers, too, once felt fear, uncertainty, misplaced infatuation, and defeat. It is when these two figures are able to meet honestly and openly, without resentment or miscommunication, that the continuity between mother and child can reveal itself fully. In these two works, the children

of East Asian mothers find solace in the memories of their mothers, of the homeland they spent their youth in, and in the dreams that motivated them to survive in the face of all the odds, not unlike the authors once did themselves. In *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Book of Salt*, it is not what the mothers have to say, but rather what they have seen, that is their most important gift to their children. By internalizing and understanding their mothers' struggles, the children of both novels, in addition to finding themselves more well-equipped to confront their own trials and tribulations, \ that they share a with their mothers a fundamental and unbreakable bond in the way that they interpret the world.

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