The Hanover Historical Review



Volume 21 **2026**

THE HANOVER HISTORICAL REVIEW

Volume 21

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Submissions must be the author's own work, and all details must be cited accurately, using footnotes and a "works cited" list, both in conformity with *The Chicago Manual of Style.* (See Hanover's *Style Guide for Chicago Manual Footnotes*.)

Note that using AI to compose or edit a paper can result in uncited generalizations, false information, and/or false citations. All submissions will be spot checked for appropriate use of sources, and the *HHR* will not publish anything they know to include falsehoods or assertions without appropriate citation.

Submissions should be emailed as attachments to Professor Sarah McNair Vosmeier (advising editor): vosm@hanover.edu.

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- Submissions should generally be no longer than about 3,000 words.
- Because all submitted manuscripts will be evaluated anonymously, the author's name should appear only on the title page. There should be no identifying markers (including headers and hidden texts) within the body of the paper.

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Foreword

The Hanover Historical Review is an undergraduate journal dedicated to publishing student essays and documents related to the field of history from any department of Hanover College.

In the fall of 1992, Professor Frank Luttmer selected an Editorial Board of enthusiastic students to determine manuscripts to be published and edit them for uniformity within a journal. Professor Luttmer supported the first Editorial Board in the early editing and preparation stages, while Professor Daniel Murphy oversaw the final copyediting for publishing and printing. Spring 1993 marked the inaugural issue of the *Hanover Historical Review,* and it continued annual publication through 2001. We published issues in 2009 and 2010, and then annual publication resumed with the 2016-2017 academic year, ably led by Professor J. Michael Raley through 2025. Professor Sarah McNair Vosmeier joined the HHR as advising editor after his retirement. Every year, dedicated students have served as editors and board members, continuing the tradition started with Professor Luttmer in 1992.

Throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, seven members of the *HHR* Editorial Board, led by Professor Vosmeier, met regularly: advertising the journal to interested students, conducting a Call for Papers, to anonymously reviewing submissions, and copyediting the accepted essays. Only Professor Vosmeier knew the identity of the manuscript authors, allowing the Board to anonymously evaluate submissions and suggest revision notes. This double-blind anonymity is of utmost importance to the *HHR* for fair consideration of student work, and it makes it possible for Board members to also submit their own essays.

The following criteria guide the Editorial Board's review of submissions:

1. The essay's introduction effectively presents a clear, original thesis.
2. The thesis is supported by ample primary and secondary sources that are critically interpreted by the author.
3. The author brings forward a fresh interpretation of their evidence that advances current scholarship.
4. The thesis is frequently referenced within the body of the paper and clearly restated in the conclusion.
5. Essay text, including footnotes and the Works Cited section, is formatted correctly in the Chicago Style.
6. The writing style is clear, fluid, and logical, employing strong transitions and connected phrases and clauses.

Based on those criteria, Board members choose which submissions can be published. (Often, the Editorial Board accepts a submission provisionally, providing notes for revision and resubmission.) We received so many strong submissions this year that it was especially difficult to narrow the field down to a publishable number of articles. Accepted papers went on to a

final round of copyediting by the Board in the spring term to comply with the *HHR* format and Chicago Style. Authors whose works are published in the journal are extended invitations to join the *HHR* Editorial Board in the next year.

The 2026 *HHR* contains nine essays on historical themes written and submitted by Hanover College students from a variety of disciplines penned within the 2025 calendar year.

Two were written by first-year students: Evan Neiswanger's "Can Europe Be Secure Without U.S. Involvement?" looks at Modern Europe's reliance on United States military power; and Devyn Sapper's "Godfrey Dold: 'Madison's Oldest Businessman'" reflects on the life of nineteenth-century Madison businessman Godfrey Dold.

Five essays were written by upperclassmen. Katherine Gilliland's "Pyongyang Today, Panem Tomorrow" compares modern-day North Korea to the fictional nation of Panem from Suzanne Collin's dystopian novel *The Hunger Games*; Paige Norton's "'God Will Decide My Fate': How Soldiers on the Western Front Used Christianity to Rationalize or Condemn the First World War" discusses how religion affected soldiers' understanding of World War I; Abby Smolnicky's "Postcolonialism in the Modern Prometheus" analyzes Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through a lens of postcolonialism; Claire Walsh's "Nineteenth Century Women's Piety: Limitation or Comfort?" looks at how women in the nineteenth century grieved; and Sophie Whitham's "Environmental Injustices and Degradation of the Florida Everglades: From Pa-hay-Okee to Drainage Empire to Alligator Alcatraz" provides a history of the Florida Everglades's path to protection.

The remaining two essays are excerpts from senior theses: Elyse Wilson's "Honky Tonk Angels: Feminist Activism through the Lyrical and Personal Expression of Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton" explores Lynn's music as a form of activism, and Creek Arthur's "Worshiping the Womb: American Feminism and Neopaganism in the Mid-To-Late Twentieth Century" analyzes the intersection between Neopaganism and the second wave of American feminism during the twentieth century. These essays reflect the efforts and scholarship of young writers, researchers, and historians.

We hope the readers enjoy this year's edition of the *Hanover Historical Review*!

Senior Editors
Sophie Whitham and Creek Arthur

Outstanding Essays by First-Year Students

Can Europe Be Secure Without U.S. Involvement?

by Evan Neiswanger

The success of Europe is largely credited to the United States's unwavering protection of the continent. U.S. security protection throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – primarily through NATO – enabled European countries to allocate resources to areas such as scientific research, universal healthcare, and education. As Robert J. Art observes, "The unanimous wish that the United States stay [in NATO] is the most potent evidence available that Western Europe's governments still do not trust themselves to avoid their worst excesses of their past."[1] This renewed concern has revived long-standing debates among scholars and policymakers about whether Europe can genuinely provide for its own defense in the absence of sustained American involvement.

Assessing the United States's central role in contemporary Europe requires a thoughtful reflection on the historical trajectory that shapes the current relationship. In 1890, the United States surpassed Great Britain as the world's largest economy, a position further enhanced by America's industrial capabilities during the Great War. "A 44-month economic boom ensued from 1914 to 1918 [for America], first as Europeans began purchasing U.S. goods for the war and later as the United States itself joined the battle."[2] American neutrality made converting the economy to a wartime footing easier than it otherwise would have been, aided by the wartime patriotism of American manufacturers.

In the aftermath of the Great War, both the Entente and Central Power countries were riddled with economic and infrastructural turmoil. Despite not joining the League of Nations, the United States solidified itself as a central economic power in Europe. The United States and banking tycoon J.P. Morgan played a central role in funding Great Britain and France's war efforts from 1916 to 1918 and were an even bigger contributor in helping countries prevent hyperinflation after the war. "The bank [J.P. Morgan] continued to assist the French government,

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[1] Robert J. Art, "Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO," *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (1996): 6.

[2] Hugh Rockoff, "Until It's Over, Over There: The U.S. Economy in World War I," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 10580 (2004).

raising money in 1919 and 1920, aiding in the stabilization of the Franc in 1924 and again in 1926."[3] The U.S. also eased the Central Powers' reparation payments, as reflected by the Dawes Plan.

The Dawes Plan was a key event that showcased the United States's effort to help rebuild all of Europe, not just the Entente. Solidified in 1924, the agreement restructured Germany's World War I reparations by making them more manageable and stable. "The [Dawes] plan had been hailed by many as the salvation of the European world."[4] This economic plan demonstrated Europe's early reliance on American financial support and leadership in the aftermath of WWI.

America's involvement in World War II was substantially different from its involvement in World War I. More than four times as many American lives were lost in the former than in the latter. Additionally, the allies relied heavily on American weapons exports, particularly in air and naval theatres. "In four years, American industry turned out 296,000 airplanes, 102,000 tanks, and 372,000 artillery pieces.... Navy and civilian shipyards launched 87,620 naval vessels."[5] Although Europe relied on the unprecedented American military capacity and manufacturing capabilities during WWII, it was the aftermath of the war that began Europe's thorough dependence on the United States, especially regarding security.

WWII left Europe physically destroyed and economically exhausted. To avoid mistakes from the previous reparations of WWI, the United States adopted a deliberate and expansive role in reconstructing Europe. The United States implemented the Marshall Plan, which provided billions of dollars in aid, raw materials, machinery, etcetera, to help rebuild Europe. The Marshall Plan's chief objective was to contain the spread of communism by promoting stability and creating strong trading partners. The Marshall Plan was extremely successful and significantly increased European GDP while helping rebuild industrial productivity. "The Marshall plan in fact played a key role in inaugurating the postwar era of prosperity and stability

[3] Martin Horn, "A Private Bank at War: J.P. Morgan & Co. and France, 1914–1918," *Business History Review* 74, no. 1 (2000): 109.

[4] Thomas W. Lamont, "The Dawes Plan and European Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1925): 182.

[5] Edward J. Marolda, "Gearing Up for Victory: American Military and Industrial Mobilization in World War II" (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1991).

in Western Europe."[6]Among other things, the Marshall Plan cemented the notion of the U.S. as Europe's indispensable partner in postwar recovery and modernization.

The Marshall Plan's success laid out the groundwork for future diplomatic and economic alliances, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The United States helped create NATO in 1949 to promote security and stability in Europe as a collective defense against the Soviet Union while mitigating the spread of communism in Europe. Although NATO benefited European countries, it also marked the beginning of Europe's deep reliance on the United States for security and prosperity. "Washington maintained hundreds of thousands of troops on the continent, along with nuclear weapons, and remained tightly bound to Europe through NATO's collective-security pact."[7] NATO integrated U.S. forces, bases, and command structures into Europe's defense structure that were largely directed by U.S. military personnel, exacerbating European dependence on American military leadership in the region.

America's nuclear umbrella also contributed immensely to Europe's economic growth and reliance on the United States during the Cold War. The U.S. provided total nuclear deterrence through NATO and reassured its member states' safety despite their limited military capability compared to the Soviets. "The European security order was indisputably dependent on America's military (and to an extent its economic) power."[8]America's ability to protect Europe while acting as a nuclear deterrent to the Soviet Union allowed Europe to focus on economic growth, democratic consolidation, and integration throughout the Cold War.

This background information begs the question: Can Europe be secure without U.S. involvement? I argue that Europe cannot maintain long-term security without the United States, as its defense has been shaped over more than a century by American military and economic structures, reinforced by the global dominance of U.S. weapons systems, centrality to NATO's command and deterrence architecture, and Europe's continued lack of a coherent independent military identity. I also contend that America's technological superiority, logistical capabilities, and defense industrial base reinforce Europe's ongoing reliance on U.S. protection. Together,

[6] J. Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen, "The Marshall Plan: History's Most Successful Structural Adjustment Program," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 3899 (1991): 2.

[7] Benjamin Rhode, "Europe Without America," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (2024): 10.

[8] Rhode, "Europe Without America," 10.

these factors demonstrate that no existing European framework can realistically replace American leadership.

Europe's dependence on the United States during the Cold War greatly expanded American influence across the continent and helped create the enduring reliance on the U.S. as reflected in the contemporary world. Initially, NATO did not require any members to contribute a specific amount of their GDP to defense spending. While the U.S. invested between 3-5% of its annual GDP on defense, most European states combined spent roughly 1–2%. Lower defense burdens allowed European governments to redirect funding toward healthcare, education, social welfare, and scientific research. "This strategy was influenced by the US plans for the economic recovery of Europe, including the Marshall Plan."[9] Europe's competitive industries grew in part because defense costs did not consume national budgets.

The U.S. invested some of its capital into advanced European manufacturing sectors whose success relied on access to American markets. American demand and investment supported European jobs, technology transfer, and integration into global supply chains. Despite its benevolent presence, the Marshall Plan manipulated war-torn Europe into producing goods that the United States would have unrestricted access to. "Washington did not perform this role out of self-sacrificing altruism, but enlightened self-interest. It considered the preservation of Western Europe within the free world a key national interest."[10] Regardless of motivation, American involvement stabilized Western Europe by reducing risks that could jeopardize its economic success.

Because the U.S. acted as the backbone of Europe post-war, European states and NATO members largely avoided developing autonomous military capacity. Large standing armies, intelligence apparatus, strategic airlift, and naval operations were all delegated to the United States. "All such efforts have stretched defense budgets, especially in Europe, where the defense

[9] Klaus Petersen, Fulvio Mioni, and Herbert Obinger, "The Cold War and the Welfare State in Western Europe," in *The Cold War and the Welfare State, ed. Klaus Petersen and Herbert Obinger* (Cham: Springer, 2021), 53.

[10] Rhode, "Europe Without America," 11.

industry experienced decades of low investment following the post–Cold War 'peace dividend."[11] Avoiding military costs produced long-term savings that allowed further investment in other civilian sectors.

Without American protection, Europe would not have sustained a trajectory in which states could prioritize domestic investment and export-oriented growth without first developing comparable militaries. "First, the Marshall Plan had a positive effect on Italy's economic development. Provinces with more reconstruction funds experienced larger increases in agricultural production—between 10 and 20 percent for major crops."[12] Europe's postwar development was therefore bound to American security guarantees and economic support from the Marshall Plan.

U.S. military superiority and defense manufacturing further reinforces Europe's reliance on the United States. Unlike European investment during the Cold War, U.S. investment focused on military research and the development of technologies in aerospace engineering, missile defense systems, and naval power. "Cold War capitalism—especially the high military Keynesian period of 1950-1970, when the defense shares never fell below 9%—was a qualitatively more militarized economy."[13] Military spending was integrated into the American economy when Europe concentrated much of its capital into social programs, contributing to persistent capability gaps between the U.S. and Europe.

The United States also maintains unmatched aircraft capabilities, including strategic bombers and advanced multirole systems such as the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II. Many European air forces have adopted the U.S.-manufactured F-35 as their next-generation platform due to its stealth, networking, and multirole capabilities. Despite Europe's investment in homegrown alternatives like FCAS and Tempest strike aircraft, both programs remain in development and require reliance on U.S. technologies for interoperability. "While Brussels has pledged €300 million to the ambitious European sixth-generation fighter jet program, it has also

[11] James Black, *Drivers of and Barriers to European Defence Cooperation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2024), 11.

[12] Nicola Bianchi and Michela Giorcelli, "Reconstruction Aid, Public Infrastructure, and Economic Development: The Case of the Marshall Plan in Italy," *The Journal of Economic History* 83, no. 2 (2023): 503.

[13] Tim Barker, *Cold War Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Military Spending, 1947–1990* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2022), 15.

opted to purchase 11 U.S.-built F-35A aircraft,"[14] showing a lack of trust in Europe's ability to produce an able competitor to the F-35. American missile defense systems such as Patriot, Aegis and THAAD also form a core part of NATO's security architecture. In reaction to the Ukraine conflict, European military imports from America "shot up by 155 percent over 2020-2024."[15] These trends reflect Europe's continued reliance on the U.S. defense production capacity, especially in times of intercontinental conflict.

Case studies further illustrate this dependence. During the Balkan conflict in the 1990s, European states lacked the precision strike and command-and-control capabilities necessary to resolve the crisis, requiring American-led intervention. Despite European efforts to quell the Libyan conflict in 2011, it "could be contained only by a significant international military intervention spearheaded by the United States."[16] In the war in Ukraine, the United States has provided the most advanced weapons systems, while European states have struggled to match their scale and speed of assistance.

Although European states have continued to provide military and economic assistance to Ukraine, U.S. support has been critical to success on the front lines. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated, "It will be very, very, very difficult [to win without American aid] … we will have a low chance to survive without support of the United States."[17] Despite the collective size of NATO—31 member states—the United States occupies a uniquely central position in sustaining Ukraine's war effort. The reliance on U.S. systems and supply chains indicates that under current conditions, European states face structural limitations in independently matching the scale, speed, and technological sophistication of American military assistance.

The American defense industrial base significantly contributes to Europe's reliance on the U.S. for security. The American defense manufacturing sector is among the only entities capable of mass-producing advanced weapons such as fighters, missiles, submarines, and munitions. The

[14] Jack Buckby, "Europe's FCAS 6th Generation Fighter Is in Trouble," *National Security Journal,* July 29, 2025.

[15] Laura Kayali, "US Dominates European Weapons Purchases: Report," *Politico,* March 10, 2025.

[16] R. Craig Nation, *War in the Balkans, 1991–2002* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2003), 5.

[17] Volodymyr Zelenskyy, quoted in Alexander Smith and Alexandra Marquez, "Zelenskyy: 'Very Difficult' for Ukraine to Survive without U.S. Military Support," *NBC News,* February 14, 2025.

military industrial complex is intertwined with the U.S. economy, which allows billions of dollars to be spent on assembly lines and provides hundreds of thousands of jobs for Americans. "The USA's global arms exports went from 35 per cent to 43 per cent, which was almost as much as the next eight largest exporters combined."[18] Not only did the U.S. consistently invent unprecedented weapons, but it was able to produce them in bulk and sell them to Europe.

Europe's investment in the civilian markets during the twentieth century hindered their investment in military research projects and especially in assembling weapons. Even with improved budgets, domestic priorities are often splintered, and funds are insufficient to develop multiple high-end platforms independently. "Procurements are too small in scale and the system is, overall, insufficiently innovative given the worsening security environment.... this risks further fragmentation of the continent's defence-industrial base."[19] A few European countries possess advanced manufacturing capabilities (France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy); however they still fall short of American production power, and there is no evidence that European cooperation can rally over military production, even as war rages in Ukraine.

Despite these structural limitations, some scholars argue that Europe is gradually developing the capacity for strategic autonomy, pointing to increased defense spending and collaborative initiatives within the European Union. However, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficient to replace the scale, integration, and technological sophistication of U.S. military support. Persistent coordination problems, uneven national commitments, and continued reliance on American systems suggest that such initiatives are unlikely to close the capability gap in the near term.

European security remains deeply reliant on the United States, a dependence rooted in the military power and economic structure that Washington has provided throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This reliance was reinforced by decisive American leadership during the Great War, World War II, the Marshall Plan, and the Cold War. The U.S. nuclear umbrella and NATO's command structure enabled European states to prioritize domestic welfare and

[18] Mathew George, Zvezdan Djokic, and Pieter D. Wezeman, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2024," *SIPRI Fact Sheet* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, March 2025).

[19] James Hackett and Benjamin Shreer, *Progress and Shortfalls in Europe's Defence: An Assessment* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2025), 55.

economic development rather than sustained military investment, widening the defense capability gap between Europe and the United States.

Over time, American dominance in weapons manufacturing, logistics, and defense technology further discouraged European governments from developing comparable defense industries. As a result, Europe's ability to independently project military power has remained limited and uneven across member states. The performance of leading European militaries such as England and France in the Balkans, Libya, and most recently Ukraine underscores the structural limitations of Europe's fragmented defense industrial base. Unless Europe fundamentally reinvents its defense institutions and industrial capacity, it cannot replace the stabilizing force the United States has provided for more than a century.

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Godfrey Dold: "Madison's Oldest Businessman"

by Devyn Sapper

For most of the nineteenth century, Americans – namely white Protestants – became immersed in Victorian culture. This included what Pamela Walker Laird explains as "ambivalence regarding the mix of abundance and poverty around them." Essentially, there was an internal struggle between succumbing to capitalistic materialism and traditional simplistic living. This struggle impacted much of daily life, including the values that were brought to people's business practices. For example, in nineteenth-century business culture, there was increased focus on moral character as a necessary feature of a successful businessman.[1] An example of this focus on moral character is the life and business of Godfrey Dold, a jeweler from Madison, Indiana. Beyond apparent financial welldoing, Dold's real success came from his reputation as a businessman of good moral character, being known for his industriousness, modesty, competitiveness, and initiative in his work and beyond.

Being consistent with the capitalist nature of America, there is no separating Godfrey Dold's success from his financial gains throughout his life. Dold was a jeweler in Madison, Indiana, a small town on the Ohio River.[2] According to his obituary in the *Louisville Courier,* Dold worked at his shop for sixty-one years (1858-1919), only retiring a few months prior to his death.[3] During this time, he amassed statistically impressive amounts of wealth. In 1860, he had $1,000 worth of real estate value.[4] This increased greatly as the business entered the 1870s. In 1870, Dold had $5,100 worth of real estate value.[5] This is significant because in 1860, 57% of free men did not own any real estate. Also, in 1870, only 20% of free men owned $2000 or more

[1] Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020), 103.

[2] 1860 United States Census, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana, digital image s.v. "Godfrey Doles," *Ancestry.com.*

[3] "Oldest Merchant Dies," *The Courier Journal*, Sept. 14, 1919, 29, available at *Newspapers.com*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/118939091.

[4] 1860 Census, s.v "Godfrey Doles," *Ancestry.com.*

[5] 1870 United States Census, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana, digital image s.v. "Godfrey Dold," *Ancestry.com.*

in real estate like Dold had.[6] Dold's real estate values through the years demonstrate the financial success that his business brought him.

Dold's final resting place also demonstrates his financial success. His tombstone at Springdale Cemetery in Madison is a multi-foot tall obelisk. His resting spot is surrounded by those of his family members, including his four daughters. His family's ability to afford a large plot at the cemetery alongside a significant tombstone for himself represents Dold's wealth.[7] Consistent with his life prior, Dold's death displays him as a financially successful businessman. However, Dold's successes in life cannot be reduced to his finances. Laird further explains that "wealth alone could not serve as the measurement of success for Victorian businesspeople."[8] Dold's success is best shown through his consistent moral character throughout his life.

By representing what it meant to be a morally sound businessman, Dold established a strong reputation for his business and more importantly, himself as the business owner. The main factors of Dold's good reputation in Madison were his industriousness as well as his modesty. In her book *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing,* Pamela Walker Laird states that the most important trait for businessmen of the time was their "willingness to work."[9] As mentioned earlier, Dold worked at the same shop in Madison for sixty-one years. This led to his being known as "Madison's Oldest Businessman."[10] He was known because he worked at his shop and maintained his business for what ended up being most of his adult life. This is important because in the nineteenth century, the reputation of a business was connected to the reputation of the business owner. Dold's owning a successful business made him look respectable. In his obituary, the *Madison Courier* reported that he did his job in an "effective and admirable fashion." By running a reliable business, Dold was characterized by the work he put out. While talking about his life, there was no disconnecting him from the work he put into the business. The second important aspect of Dold's character was his modesty. Laird also points out the importance of being frugal, which Dold demonstrated in his life. This can once again be shown in how long he worked and, more importantly, in his working at the same

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[6] Sarah McNair Vosmeier, "An Overview of Real Property Ownership, 1850–1870," Fall 2025, in possession of author.

[7] Godfrey Dold, grave marker, Springdale Cemetery, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana, digital image s.v. "Gottfried 'Godfrey' Dold," *FindaGrave.com.*

[8] Laird, *Advertising Progress,* 104.

[9] Laird, *Advertising Progress,* 106.

[10] "Oldest Merchant Dies," *The Courier Journal*, Sept. 14, 1919, 29, available at *Newspapers.com,* https://www.newspapers.com/image/118939091.

store the entire time. Dold's own brother, Englebert, was a successful jeweler in Louisville, Kentucky.[11] Dold could have moved to the bigger city with his brother, but instead, he stayed in Madison to run his store and lead his family. Also, his obituary described him as soft-spoken and introverted, and yet, he never shied away from his obligations.[12] Quiet, introspective hard work is what made Dold's reputation in his community. Beyond his nature of hard work and modesty making him popular among his fellow Madisonians, it was his competitive nature that set his national reputation.

Two other key aspects of a successful Victorian businessman were initiative and competitiveness. These two are important to the increased valuation of the "middle-class heroics" – people who represented the best of the best of hard-working small businesspeople.[13] Dold solidified himself as one of those heroes, gaining himself national acclaim. The thing that brought him to the spotlight was the fact that he drilled a hole into a no. 7 cambric needle, the long way, and then threaded it. This led to Dold being featured in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, as reported by *The Metz Times* in Metz, Missouri.[14] Dold's motivations were reported by the *Los Angeles Times* in an article titled "Briton Couldn't Outdo This Man." Essentially, Dold had heard that an Englishman had achieve the same thing, and he was convinced that he could do it too.[15] It was this level of competitiveness that drew the nation's journalists to the story. *The Hanford Morning Journal* wrote that he had just wanted "to do that man one better."[16] Dold wanted to beat the English because he was competitive, and he took the initiative, even at seventy-five years old. He ended up being covered all around the country, with the *Los Angeles Times* publishing an obituary, for instance.[17] He was not a small businessman who only mattered among those who knew him personally. He was a representation of what a small businessman could be for the entire country. In these articles, they never discussed how much money he made. They discussed how he had been hard-working and competitive and yet incredibly modest. The

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[11] "Englebert Dold Dies After Short Illness," *The Courier Journal*, Aug. 16, 1903, 10, available at *Newspapers.com*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/1117697041/.

[12] "E.W. Hughes and Godfrey Dold," *The Madison Courier*, Sept. 13, 1919, 2.

[13] Laird, *Advertising Progress,* 104.

[14] "Brief Bits of News from Richards," *The Metz Times*, May 15, 1931, 2, available at *Newspapers.com*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/587988079/.

[15] "Briton Couldn't Outdo This Man," *The Los Angeles Times,* May 27, 1923, 60, available at *Newspapers.com*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/380342836/.

[16] "Could Split Hairs," *Hanford Morning Journal*, July 25, 1907, 6, available at *Newspapers.com*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/561940361/.

[17] "Briton Couldn't Outdo This Man," *The Los Angeles Times*, 60.

national articles prove that Dold's success is most shown in his moral character because that is what mattered enough to write about.

Money was not the only thing that made a successful businessman in the 1800s, shown by the fact that Dold's character was the factor that led most to his success. Through the way that people discussed his life and success, it becomes clear that it was not his finances that made him respectable. People all over the country discussed his personal moral character and that is what established his good reputation. Dold – through his industriousness, modesty, competitiveness, and initiative – was a representation of the great Victorian businessman of the 1800s. He was someone who worked in the middle ground of materialism and morality, wealth and virtue.

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Upper-Level Essays

"Pyongyang Today, Panem Tomorrow":
A Comparative Study of Authoritarian Control in Fiction and North Korea
by Kathryn Gilliland

In the heart of North Korea, Pyongyang, the elite live in luxury. Many that live there have never known the struggle for basic necessities, while the general population cannot say the same. The elites of the regime are only able to stay in their positions through the control of the general populace and media manipulation. To the government of North Korea, fear is their strongest weapon of oppression, especially when it comes to the younger generations.

Thousands of individuals have suffered at the hands of the North Korean regime, and very few have lived to tell their tale. As a result of this, it is incredibly difficult to truly understand how people suffer at the hands of authoritarian regimes. That is where novels come into play, specifically *The Hunger Games* series. While these novels of suffering did not actually occur within our world, they mirror the authoritarian government of North Korea in striking ways. In the fictional world of Panem, the Capitol represents Pyongyang. Panem is a bubble of society shielded from the knowledge of suffering, where its citizens engage in excess consumption and indulgence. In contrast, the districts go to bed starved and labored by the chokehold of fear.[1] The Capitol thrives on the fear from the districts, even going as far as using it as entertainment propaganda every year during the annual Hunger Games. Two citizens, "tributes," from each district get reaped from a lottery, forced into an arena with other tributes, to fight each other to the death until one winner remains.[2] The winners are then forced to serve as eternal reminders that the Capitol has complete dominance over the districts.[3]

Similarly in North Korea, individuals are subjected to psychological warfare and indoctrination.[4] In contrast to the fictional world of Panem, however, they do not need an arena to assert their dominance. The country itself plays that role. This stark parallel leads to strong observations: fear is consistently systematic, and survival depends on one's ability to navigate generations of lies that have been spun into a nation's identity. Documented accounts from

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[1] Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 18.
[2] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 18.
[3] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 18–19.
[4] Kang Chol-Hwan and Pierre Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag* (London: Atlantic Books Ltd, 2012), 83–90.

defectors prove the link between the usage of propaganda and media manipulation by the Capitol in *The Hunger Games* and its real-world counterpart, the North Korean regime. *The Hunger Games* represents how literature can serve as a powerful lens for visualization of authoritarian regimes maintaining control of their populations through restricting information, instilling fear, and shaping perceptions.

MEDIA MANIPULATION AND PROPAGANDA IN NORTH KOREA

To fully understand the depth of manipulation by the North Korean regime, it is first crucial to understand exactly how the regime controls and manipulates what society sees in the media. In North Korea, state-run television and radio shows are the sole sources of information that people are legally allowed to receive.[5] Each household is given a government-issued in-home radio system that must stay on at all times. They are pre-tuned to government-run stations only, and families are unable to change the station.[6] Outsourced media is highly illegal, to the extent that government officials conduct unnotified raids if a family is suspected of hiding any in their household.[7] This system was put in place following the Korean War under Kim Il Sung's leadership, exemplifying the regime's focus on enacting strict information controls in an effort to maintain ideological unity and prevent any foreign influence.[8] Televisions are controlled in a similar manner. All content seen or heard is carefully curated by the regime's propaganda department to glorify the Kim family, promote the country's Juche ideology, spread false information on other countries, or portray North Korea itself as thriving.[9] Harsh punishments are doled out upon anyone who displays negative emotions while listening to or watching government broadcasts. Defector testimonies and various organization reports place an emphasis on these punishments—stating that they range from basic imprisonment to incredibly strenuous forced labor. While these punishments are certainly physical, their true goal is to reinforce the ideal that the regime holds control over all available information.[10]

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[5] Tara John, "North Korea's Kim Jong Un Appoints Sister Head of Propaganda," *Time*, July 24, 2015, https://time.com/3970838/kim-jong-un-sister-north-korea/. 1.

[6] Anna Fifield, *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019), 113.

[7] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 122.

[8] Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 148–152.

[9] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 113–114.

[10] Barbara Demick, *Nothing To Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009), 247.

Television and radio shows are not the only forms of control over the media that the regime enacts.[11] The regime ensures propaganda promoting the Kim family is ever-present in citizens' daily lives. Since the beginning of his reign of terror, Kim Jong Un has been mythologized in North Korea by the regime's propaganda department.[12] Before he was even officially announced by his father as the next successor of the regime, propagandists were working to make it known to the general populace that he was more than worthy of taking on the role.[13] Society began to hear about the "Leader Comrade," while regime officials began publicly discussing entering "a historic time of transition."[14] Booklets titled *The Material in Teaching the Greatness of Respected Comrade General Kim Jong Un* began getting distributed to every unit of the Korean People's Army as well.[15] He became vastly known as the "genius among geniuses."[16] The regime knew that certain claims about him would be hard to swallow, even in the consistently propaganda-fed nation. They began strategically throwing new stories out in the media so the details would blur together, and all anyone would be able to specifically describe about Kim Jong Un was how great and all-dominating he was. The use of exaggerated claims to ensure loyalty through fear was put to the test by the regime, and it was successful.[17] This personality cult development mirrors the "divine figure" campaigns built under Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung that portrayed them as near-gods—further ingraining the ideal of unquestioned loyalty into the minds of North Korean citizens for generations.[18]

Propaganda was not enough to entirely ensure loyalty to the dictator. Propaganda was needed for the country as a whole.[19] The regime needed people to believe that North Korea was a thriving nation in order to prevent an uprising. Many in society do not realize that the elite in Pyongyang live in luxury, while the working class and the poor do not know where their next meal is going to come from and cannot afford education for their children.[20] This is where the

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[11]Emily Bienvenue, "Computational Propaganda: Political Parties, Politicians, and Political Manipulation on Social Media." *International Affairs* 96, no. 2 (March 1, 2020): 525–27.

[12] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 84.

[13] Mason Richey, "Turning It up to Eleven: Belligerent Rhetoric in North Korea's Propaganda," *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (December 1, 2016), 97.

[14] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 71.

[15] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 71.

[16] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 71.

[17] Richey, "Turning It up to Eleven," 99.

[18] B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race* (Melville House, 2010), 102–109.

[19] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 68–70.

[20] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 106–107.

propaganda comes into play. The regime is very selective about what they present to society about the country's success. Their first effort to boost morale for the country was to place a strong push on military strength through broadcasts, but they initially just increased fear towards the government, so the regime dropped those broadcasts and switched their narrative.[21] They decided to place an emphasis on in-person visual propaganda: the theater.[22] All performances were meticulously picked apart to spread the exact message of patriotism that the regime wanted society to see. Nothing demonstrated throughout any theater performance was without meaning.[23] Through the various shows, pride was able to be grown as many saw real people, sometimes even people they knew, sharing their faith in the nation. Theater quickly became the regime's propaganda department's top pick for spreading the belief that the nation was prospering.[24] Other mass performances—such as the Arirang Mass Games—serve a similar purpose.[25] Ultimately, even those that were initially suspicious of the messages being spread about Kim Jong Un in the transition of eras began to find themselves thinking about their suspicions less, proving that unfortunately no one is immune to propaganda.[26]

MEDIA MANIPULATION AND PROPAGANDA IN *THE HUNGER GAMES* SERIES

From North Korean broadcasts to the expertly edited spectacles of propaganda in Panem, the narrative remains the same: if the government has control of their stories, they have control of their citizens.[27] This narrative is the bottom line of why fictional works of literature are the most effective at educating the public on how authoritarian regimes operate and maintain their control.[28] When examining this concept, it becomes increasingly evident that *The Hunger Games* novels, written by Suzanne Collins, allow for extremely accurate visualizations of how the North Korean authoritarian regime operates. Perhaps the most strikingly obvious connection here is how the Capitol in the novels maintains an absolute media lockdown throughout the districts.

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[21] Suk-Young Kim, *Illusive Utopia: Theater, Film, and Everyday Performance in North Korea* (University of Michigan Press, 2012), 47.

[22] Kim, *Illusive Utopia,* 47–49.

[23] Kim, *Illusive Utopia,* 83.

[24] Kim, *Illusive Utopia,* 48.

[25] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 197–203.

[26]Mariana Claudia Mungiu-Pupazan, "Illusion of Excessive Consumption and Its Effects." *Analele Universităţii Constantin Brâncuşi Din Târgu Jiu*: Seria Economie 1, no. 4 (Special Issue ECO-TREND 2015), 234.

[27] Ismail Tahir, "The Concept of Power in Suzane Collins' The Hunger Games." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 2, no. 4 (2017): 166–74.

[28] Tahir, "Concept of Power in Suzane Collins' *The Hunger Games,*" 166–74.

Each district only sees the news that the Capitol wants them to see, to the extent that they are even restricted from seeing news stories about things occurring in other districts.[29] Along with that, individuals have no idea what life is like in other districts, as travel and communication between them is entirely prohibited.[30] The main character, Katniss Everdeen, acknowledges this when she discovers that there had been an uprising in District 8 upon witnessing a private broadcast only meant for the mayor of District 12's eyes.[31] During her victor's tour sometime later, when visiting District 8 she realized that she never would have known if she had not happened to see that broadcast.[32] If thoughts of revolution were to spread, the regime would stand no chance. Authoritarian regimes thrive on complete and utter control. If the population were to rise against them, they would be extremely outnumbered. There are significantly more citizens in the general populace than there are elites in control.

Now while the games themselves do not directly mirror an aspect of life under North Korea's regime, they are important to discuss when it comes to understanding authoritarian governments through literature. The games are framed throughout each novel as a noble tradition. However, they also serve as a punishment to the districts for their actions during the Capitol's rise to power. As a result of this, the Capitol forces each district to provide one male and one female tribute between the age of twelve and eighteen to the games each year, where they will fight to the death.[33] The last tribute standing is crowned the winner. This role of forced participation reinforces fear and submission to the government on a grand scale, leading to an easily interpretable message. It is here that individuals can truly view what an authoritarian regime does, and what harm they cause to their citizens. The use of entertainment to maintain control at its core demonstrates why authoritarian regimes like North Korea favor media manipulation and propaganda. It acts as a distraction and allows citizens to become pacified. Due to this, most of the general populace in *The Hunger Games* do not even realize how drastically different their lives are from those in the Capitol.

[29] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 80.
[30] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 80.
[31] Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2021), 78–79.
[32] Collins, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire,* 204–205.
[33] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 18.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF PROPAGANDA

In both North Korea and Panem, propaganda has its most powerful grip in its capacity to shape behaviors and the minds of citizens. This stems from the systematic instillation of fear as well as the normalization of poverty.[34] In Panem, the Capitol focuses a lot of their monopoly of power on the youth populations in the districts — specifically in career districts.[35] Academies teach the children pro-Capitol propaganda, and many even grow to view participating in the games as an honor.[36] North Korea uses similar education programs to indoctrinate their youth with propaganda as well. There are two organizations that stand out in this regard: the Korean Children's Union and the Socialist Patriotic Youth League.[37] Both programs put an emphasis on teaching children the wonderous acts of Kim Jong Un, as well as teaching them the nature of the "collective and organized life" in the country.[38]

Children are not the only ones affected by this, but when it comes to adults, the effects are more physical and emotional. This is mirrored in both North Korea and Panem. In the districts of Panem, the main reason propaganda is so effective stems from individuals' fears of what would occur to their families if there was ever a lack of compliance.[39] The Capitol ensures the people stay consistently afraid, as public executions and punishments occur frequently. No one wants to make a decision that could subject their family to torture, especially publicly, even if that means staying compliant with an abusive government. Situations like these can be seen in North Korea as well. The regime uses consistent surveillance of their citizens, even to the point of employing informants.[40] Using their citizens' fears as their own personal propaganda in turn causes generations of submission.[41]

CONCLUSION

The manipulation of the Capitol mirrors the way authoritarian regimes, specifically North Korea, use the media to suppress the true narratives to keep their populations submissive. This is why understanding the mechanisms of propaganda is essential when it comes to resisting the

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[34] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 112.
[35] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 94.
[36] Collins, *Hunger Games*, 95.
[37] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 114–115.
[38] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 114–115.
[39] Collins, *Hunger Games: Catching Fire,* 18–19.
[40] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 121–122.
[41] Fifield, *Great Successor*, 127–128.

control of authoritarian regimes. Having strong media literacy, the ability to seek the truth instead of just accepting curated headlines and other sources of information, is an extremely powerful defense that must not be taken for granted. As reality and fiction intertwine, citizens and readers alike need to acknowledge the danger that unchecked media control can cause and the value of reliable open information sources. In an era where misinformation spreads like wildfire, ensuring access to diverse news and media sources is the strongest tool society can use. Whether the information about authoritarian regimes comes from fictional characters like Katniss Everdeen or from North Korean defectors, these stories can be remindful of the fact that resistance must always begin with knowledge of the truth. While authoritarian regimes are daunting, they are not as all-powerful as they seem. Understanding their mechanisms of control can lead to a path of successful resistance. "So don't feed the nightmares. Don't let yourself panic…They've taken enough already."[42]

[42] Suzanne Collins, *Sunrise on the Reaping* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2025), 4.

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“God will decide my fate”:
How Soldiers on the Western Front Used Christianity to Rationalize or Condemn the First World War
by Paige Norton

At the onset of World War I in August 1914, many young boys and men signed up for what they envisioned as a glorious, yet brief and without too much bloodshed, battle for their respective fatherlands. Those naïve, youthful notions were swiftly and mercilessly crushed, for example by an estimated casualty count of three hundred thousand in just the French army within merely four months.[1] Troops searched for any kind of respite in the horrific landscapes of the trenches, and for many, this took form in the outlet of religion. While there are numerous personal narratives of soldiers’ religious experiences on the front lines, none has been so imprinted on public memory as the Christmas Truce of 1914. Aside from this rare showing of common humanity, there has not been much study of how soldiers on all sides of the war experienced faith in a place and time that seemingly resembled hell. This paper will discuss how Christianity interplayed with patriotism, gave grounds of reasoning for soldiers, or propelled them further to question faith, country, and self. How did religious practice or thought influence one’s willingness to kill and be killed? Did it give them purpose in the killing machines of modern warfare, or did it serve only to make them happy cannon fodder for inept generals? There are a variety of perspectives among German, French, and British soldiers on this question. Soldiers of the First World War turned to religion in droves, whether that be for those who were particularly devout and felt they were fulfilling a mission from God and country, or those who classified themselves as non-religious and went to mass or communion simply for reminders of comforts from home or out of fear of what would be waiting for them on the other side of death.

One way soldiers coped with the horrors they were witnessing was what academic Joseph F. Byrnes called “the search for allies in heaven.” In his book, *God on the Western Front: Soldiers and Religion in World War I*, Byrnes examines how religious experiences shaped a soldier's mind and their outlook on war. The term “allies in heaven” originates from the French

[1] Antoine Prost, “War Losses,” in *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Freie Universität Berlin, October 8, 2014), https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war-losses/?version=1.0.

saint Joan of Arc (canonized after the war), who had visions of the archangel Michael.[2] Byrnes writes, "heavenly personalities inhabited the imaginations of the men in the form of assumed visions or simple faith in signs and miracles."[3] These heavenly personalities took their most famous form in the Angels of Mons story of August 1914, in which bow-wielding angels descended from the skies and aided the ailing British forces. This story was written by Arthur Machen, who proclaimed until his death that it was fictional. However, his assertion does not account for individuals like English nurse Phyllis Campbell, who reported that many soldiers in her care were experiencing these visions; or Brigadier General John Charteris, who wrote home to his wife about the visions; or a lieutenant colonel, cited in a 1915 issue of the *London Evening News,* who stated that he saw squadrons of cavalry men riding along with English troops.[4] In his book, *Angel of Mons*, David Clarke asserts "These stories suggest that among the thousands of English soldiers trapped in the path of the advancing Germans there were a few individuals who came to believe they had been saved by a miracle."[5]

In another instance of perceived divine intervention on the battlefield, Byrnes looked to the Battle of the Marne in what he calls one of the few unabashed stories of it. This time, it came from the lips of a captured, dying German priest in a French army hospital, who claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary as she had appeared to Saint Bernadette, or the Notre Dame de Lourdes. He claimed that his unit was winning when suddenly the Virgin appeared and turned away from them, using her hand to push German forces back. Two additional wounded officers who had come in with the priest reportedly saw a statue of Notre Dame de Lourdes and exclaimed, "Ah, the Virgin of the Marne."[6] On the French side of this miracle, Father Stéphen Coubé gave an official interpretation of the miracle, titled *Missel du Miracle de la Marne* (The Missal of the Miracle of the Marne). In his preface, Father Coubé explains the distinctions between types of miracles that were made by Bishop Charles Gibier of Versailles; the previous year, he stated that there were "absolute" miracles like resurrection or "relative" miracles, in which God conducts natural forces in a way that changes results. Father Coubé, in a statement that opposes those of

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[2] Joseph F. Byrnes, *God on the Western Front: Soldiers and Religion in World War I* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2023), 45.

[3] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 45.

[4] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 46.

[5] David Clarke, *The Angel of Mons: Phantom Soldiers and Ghostly Guardians* (Chichester, West Sussex, England: J. Wiley, 2005), 54.

[6] January 1917 issue of the *Paper of the English Channel* as cited by Christine Walczak in "The Missal of the Miracle," Sisters of Charity of Saint Jeanne Antide Thouret, May 26, 2020, paragraph 8.

the captured German soldiers, classified the Battle of the Marne as a relative miracle, that God had helped generals make decisions and had given the soldiers the determination they needed, rather than intervening directly. Coubé explains further the events of September as they relate to the retreat of the Germans at the Marne: September 3 started with many prayers to Joan of Arc from French soldiers, and from the fifth to the eighth were the days of prayer to France's national Saint Geneviève with the feast of the Nativity of Mary on the last day, and finally on September 12, the Germans made their major retreat, the same day as the feast of the Holy Name of Mary. Coubé taught that everything happened according to God's will, and he recognized the Marne as an expression of God's favor to France.[7]

These are not the only reports made by British and French soldiers of heavenly appearances. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux's home Carmelite convent received thousands of reports from soldiers who claimed that she had protected them or given them the motivation to continue onward. Soldiers affectionately referred to her as "little sister" and "little flower."[8] In a letter to the convent, Lance Corporal James Dalton stated, "I prayed to the Little Flower, and suddenly a nun appeared before me… She was beautiful and was on her knees, her head bent down and her hands folded; but her face wore an expression of intense sadness, as if she deeply pitied us."[9] Private Paul-Henry Joly recounted, "One evening, on August 2, we were huddling, a full half-section of us, around a shack, which was being smashed to pieces under heavy gunfire…. As for me, while I was praying to the Blessed Virgin, I invoked Sister Thérèse…. All of a sudden… I saw her standing at the foot of a machine gun that was there. She was looking at me and blessing us all. She then told me with a smile: 'Don't be afraid, I have come to protect you…' And as a matter of fact, not one of us died, and we soon got out of this awful situation safe and sound."[10] Another soldier, unnamed by Byrnes, explained that, though he had distanced himself from religion, he was brought back to belief when she appeared to him after he begged for her to get him back to his wife and children.[11] In addition to these, many letters contained stories of relics of Thérèse miraculously stopping bullets or shrapnel from piercing the men. One such account is

[7] Missel du Miracle de la Marne, as cited by Joseph F. Byrnes in *God on the Western Front: Soldiers and Religion in World War I*, 50.

[8] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 61.

[9] James Dalton, "She Was on Her Knees," *Stronger than Steel: Soldiers of the Great War Write to Thérèse of Lisieux* (Brooklyn, NY: Angelico Press, 2021), 27.

[10] Paul-Henry Joly, *Stronger than Steel*, 74.

[11] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 61.

that of Corporal Henri Bellois: "A revolver bullet pierced my jacket, my squad notebook and my wallet, and in addition my waistcoat, in front of the heart. But the bullet deviated without reaching my shirt thanks to the little medallion of Sister Thérèse which was there as a rampart." Corporal Bellois, as well as many others, sent their Croix de Guerre medals to the convent as a show of gratitude for her protection, Bellois saying, "This Croix de Guerre belongs to her rather than to me, in the table of decorations which is exhibited in her honor. And I thank her from the bottom of my heart: Thank you, my Little Thérèse!"[12]

As for the Germans, there were no soldier reports of miraculous appearances, aside from those in opposition to German forces at the Battle of the Marne. This, however, does not mean that German troops were without their own devotions. Popular saints honored by Protestants and Catholics alike included Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint George, Saint Joseph, Saint Barbara, Saint Moritz, and Saint Hubert. Each held their own patronage that fit perfectly into wartime religion. Saint Michael the Archangel is the patron saint of military personnel, Saint George of cavalry, Saint Joseph of hard workers, Saint Barbara of artillerymen, Saint Moritz of infantry, and Saint Hubert of riflemen.[13] As opposed to having actual visions of the divine beings, German religious expressions were often in the form of art. One such expression is that of a postcard that Byrnes examines, entitled *Heldentod* (the hero's death). Byrnes describes the image: "against a purple, battle-scarred land and a darkening skyscape flecked with the pale red of a late sunset, a luminous angel cradles the head of a dying soldier, before bearing his soul to heaven."[14]

Aside from man-made images of angels and patron saints, German soldiers also believed they encountered religion in seeing what Byrnes calls "wayside wonders in battle zones." Soldiers witnessed what they thought to be signs from the heavens in the curious survival of crucifixes or statues of the Virgin. Byrnes describes one such occurrence at Saarebourg, where a monument of the crucifixion was partly destroyed, and German soldiers were struck by the sight of the body of Christ remaining completely upright on the pedestal, although the cross no longer remained. In a similar vein, the statue of the Virgin and Child sitting on top of the Basilica of Notre Dame de Brebières at Albert in Picardy inspired soldiers to wonder which side the Virgin was on. Byrnes cites historian Paul Fussell, who explained that a rumor began that when the

[12] Henri Bellois, "1917 May," *Courier from the Front: Excerpts from Correspondence Received at the Carmel of Lisieux during the First World War* (Lisieux, France: Les Archives du Carmel de Lisieux, 2022), 4.
[13] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 61–62.
[14] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 56.

Virgin fell to the streets, the war would end. He further states that "When this proved harder than it looked, the Germans promulgated the belief that the side that shot down the Virgin would lose the war."[15] Additionally, Fussell explains that the remaining Virgin and Child also became a symbol of the impacts of war on the innocent, particularly women and children. French liaison officer Paul Maze is cited on his thoughts on the hanging statue: "The statue of the Virgin Mary, in spite of many hits, still held on top of the spire as if by a miracle. The precarious angle at which she now leaned forward gave her a despairing gesture, as though she were throwing the child into the battle."[16] Along with viewing the seemingly divine survival of these monuments, soldiers on all sides generally had varying devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Byrnes cites the preparation of a Sacred Heart scapular medal by the Archdiocese of Munich and a French mother's letter to the Annales de Notre Dame de la Salette, which stated that her son, because he had a medal of the Virgin and carried a Sacred Heart image, had been spared several times.[17]

Even for those soldiers who openly mocked religion, there still existed those small notions of Christian morality, even if not stated outright. Inarticulate Christianity refers to what young English officer Donald Hankey experienced from his peers in the trenches. He was sure that many of the soldiers he was with were good men and were religious in that sense only, because they never spoke to God. Hankey explains, "Here were men who believed absolutely in the Christian virtues of unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility, without ever connecting them in their minds with Christ." He also explains that the chaplains were wrong about these men, saying, "They saw the inarticulateness, and assumed a lack of any religion. They remonstrated with their hearers for not saying their prayers, and not coming to Communion, and not being afraid to die without making their peace with God." He further states, "As a matter of fact, I believe that in a vague way lots of men do regard Christ as on their side."[18]

On the other side of this spectrum from inarticulate is that of diffusive Christianity, a term used by English churchmen to function as a label for Christianity that was composed of "good neighborliness, friendliness to the church… and an appreciation of Anglicanism as a support of

[15] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 58.
[16] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 58.
[17] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 60.
[18] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 74.

English identity."[19] This version of Christianity was characterized by religious objects such as the Bible itself, pictures, or rosaries used as luck charms instead of or alongside a traditional religious use. This type of religion was also rampant with the philosophy of fatalism, with the idea that it was simply the will of God that you die or are wounded when it is your time.[20] Byrnes describes this as "religious belief in the broadest sense." However, he also explains that while fatalist expressions were common, when pressed, clergymen often found that the soldier's fatalism was more providential and divine than anything.[21]

Though the term that bears this definition is English in nature, diffusive Christianity (or at least the fatalist parts of it) was certainly expressed by those on all sides. German theology student Alfons Ankenbrand demonstrates this, saying, "My future life belongs to God, my present one to the Fatherland, and I myself still possess happiness and strength." Byrnes further explains that resigning oneself to the will of God could come as a profound experience of faith, experienced with joy when one made it safely through a battle. Another soldier decidedly stated, "Happy are those who believe." Byrnes references one lieutenant who wrote to his mother to say they would be reunited in Heaven with happiness eternal, to which Byrnes writes, "This resignation was expressed as reliance on divine providence and not as unadorned fatalism." Another, whom Byrnes highlights, volunteered at age seventeen and wrote home to his girlfriend, "God will decide my fate."[22] Of course, not all religious soldiers were perfectly resigned to death, even if they did believe in assurances that they would reunite with loved ones in Heaven. Here, Byrnes mentions Edward Tennant, who assured his mother two days prior to his death that he had taken communion and was carrying his medal of the Blessed Virgin, but he was still seemingly questioning his faith and what meaning it could hold when looking upon piles of bodies. Tennant stated that he did not believe even God knows. Officer Eric Lubbock wrote his mother a cautiously faithful message: "We should feel proud that we are suffering for that step and sweating blood to help the world, as One once sweated blood before to save it." He explains to his mother that death has to be the start of something better: "If this world with all its passions, sorrows, and griefs" is all that exists, "then the great Giver of Life is but a torturer." Private J. Bowles, in a far more condemning view of the Creator, states that, "in war there is no

[19] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 75.
[20] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 76.
[21] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 78–79.
[22] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front*, 80.

place for a God of Love" and no need to fear future suffering after death as their lives in the trenches were already a "hell that the devil himself would be proud to reign over."[23]

Regardless of the faithless, such as Private Bowles, religious belief centered around the First World War did not end just because the war itself did. One incident connected to the war actually made news as recently as December of 2024: the healing of a World War I veteran at the Sanctuary at our Lady of Lourdes over a century prior was confirmed as the seventy-first miraculous healing at the shrine. The story of the holy site originates from Saint Bernadette, who at age fourteen claimed to see a Marian apparition at a grotto while fetching firewood. The Virgin asked her "to drink of the water of the spring, to wash in it and to eat the herb that grew there as an act of penance." The next day, the once muddy grotto was now flowing with clear water.[24] Since then, Catholics have made the pilgrimage to Lourdes in the hopes of being healed by the waters.

One such story is that of the seventy-first confirmed miracle, mentioned above, of Royal Navy veteran John "Jack" Traynor, who in 1923 went on a pilgrimage to the site. Traynor was born in Liverpool in 1883 to a devout Irish Catholic mother. He was present on the first day at the Gallipoli landings in 1915, where he was later caught in machine gunfire, which hit his head and arm. The injuries to his arm severed the nerves and left him paralyzed on his right side, while the injuries to his head caused him to have seizures, and he was sent back to England. Eight years later, in 1923, he was sent to a hospital for incurables but chose to join a parish trip to Lourdes. He was, by all intents and purposes, gravely ill for the first three days of the trip. On the second day, he experienced a severe seizure, and doctors tried to return him to where he was boarding, but Traynor persisted and made it to the baths. "They took me into the bath and bathed me in the usual way." He explained, "I never had an epileptic fit after that." While in the bath the next day, his right leg began to flail, and he regained use of it shortly thereafter. He then insisted on going to the nearby Church of the Holy Rosary to sit for the Eucharistic procession, and when the Archbishop of Reims passed him, his right arm also began to flail, and he regained its use as well. Doctors of the Lourdes Medical Bureau examined him before he left and stated that he was now able to walk perfectly, retained full use of his right side, his seizures had stopped, and even

[23] Byrnes, *God on the Western Front,* 82.

[24] Thérèse Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death and Visions* (New York, NY: Burns & Oates, 2003), 88–90.

that an opening in his skull to relieve pressure on his brain had started to close completely on its own. They crafted an official report stating that Seaman Traynor's "extraordinary cure is absolutely beyond and above the powers of nature."[25] On December 9th, 2024, the Archbishop of Liverpool officially announced that Traynor's case had finally been recognized as a miracle after extensive research by doctors at the Lourdes Medical Bureau.[26]

Soldiers of the First World War experienced Christian religion in a diverse range of styles. Whether that be miraculous healings, such as that of John Traynor, or simple pure faith in things like the "wayside wonders" of the upright Virgin and Child at Albert. Soldiers from different countries experienced religion in a multitude of ways, each one different but holding defining characteristics, such as the apparitions of the "allies in heaven" witnessed by the British and French or devotional art produced on German postcards. Though the actual religious experiences differ among nationalities, many soldiers, though they may not have realized it, would have been united in their expressions of religion. Soldiers of British, French, and German origin all expressed inarticulate Christianity in their general belief in God or Christ being on their side, with phrases carved into souvenirs like "Gott mit uns!" or "Dieu et mon droit!" (God with us, God on my side). All sides also experienced diffusive Christianity, imbued with a fatalistic philosophy of dying when it was your time, "religious belief in the broadest sense." Though this resignation to die in sacrifice of God and country was often characterized as fatalistic, Byrnes distinguishes these as mostly more providential, reassuring views of a serene afterlife that provided soldiers with the incentive to move forward, even at risk of death. Finally, soldiers shared a common devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin across borders. Soldiers of all sides shared at least religion in common, and despite many questioning how God could exist in so horrific a time and landscape, troops increasingly turned to religion for spiritual (and evidently physical) healing or comfort, or in some cases, even miracles.

[25] Plinio Maria Solimeo, "John Traynor's Miraculous Cure in Lourdes Finally Confirmed," Irish Society for Christian Civilization, February 18, 2025.

[26] Rev. Malcolm McMahon, "Statement on the Case of John Traynor," The Shrine to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, February 2, 2025.

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Postcolonialism in the Modern Prometheus

by Abby Smolnicky

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or *The Modern Prometheus*, has long been read as a cautionary tale of scientific hubris, enlightenment rationality, and romantic resistance to materialist visions of life. However, after following Victor Frankenstein and the Creature's evolution, the story extends far beyond the limits of science alone. The emergence, education, and social exclusion of the Creature alongside Victor's obsessive attempts to control the meaning of life explore the fundamental principles that the anthropological theory Postcolonialism would later establish.

The idea of Postcolonial theory began with the publishing of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, where he argues that Western portrayals of the East are founded entirely on a system of power intended to justify European imperialism on Other cultures.[1] The Other, as defined by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and used by scholars, is the binary label for any non-European, colonized individuals or cultures used to justify the dominance of their invaders.[2] These binaries eagerly align with Postcolonial theory, as the entire framework analyzes the impact colonialism had on the colonized culture, focusing specifically on how such power dynamics, identity, and representation have changed colonized culture. Said was not alone in leading Postcolonial theory, as the previous works of Claude Levi-Strauss, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, and Franz Boas shared key details that expanded the theory, leading it to a postmodern era.

In *Frankenstein's* case, Shelley explores repeated encounters between the self and the Other through Victor and his Creature that closely resemble postcolonial ethnographic processes. Modern critics such as those publishing in *Anthropoetics*, have shown that the Creature's search

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[1]Edward W Said, *Orientalism (*Panthenon Books, 1978), p.3-5, https://monoskop.org/images/4/4e/Said_Edward_Orientalism_1979.pdf.

[2] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* trans. by Terry Pinkhard (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 108-109, available at https://files.libcom.org/files/Georg%20Wilhelm%20Friedrich%20Hegel%20-%20The%20Phenomenology%20of%20Spirit%20(Terry%20Pinkard%20Translation).pdf

for belonging and Victor's refusal to acknowledge him replicate the ethical and social tensions that have defined real human communities. Victor behaves exactly like an imperial figure, inventing and rejecting his savage "Other" in order to preserve his own authority. These insights parallel Michel-Rolph Trouillot's argument that Western civilization has historically understood itself through the invention of the so-called "savage" and the subsequent judgement and alienation of them. R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms's analysis of Claude Levi-Strauss and his belief in binaries aligns with Victor's view of life and death, and how he means to control it, as well as in how the doctor labels the line between himself and his monster. Franz Boas, a foundational thinker of anthropology, shares similar views on Postcolonialism where his theory of cultural relativism highlights the Creature's side of the Other: being exposed, judged, and colonized because of the rejection of the Self, and how he creates his own lived experience. Together, these thinkers reveal how *Frankenstein* is not a simple romance, but rather, a narrative that anticipates the central concerns of Postcolonial theory. When Victor creates the Creature, he withdraws from him in horror and then attempts to define humanity by excluding him. Victor subconsciously participates in the same cultural processes that anthropologists have identified in colonized societies. The Creature, in contrast, learns language, customs, and social values by observing the world around him, and his development mirrors the ethnographic work of understanding culture through lived experience. In depicting Victor as a chemistry-based scientist who engages in the same acts of othering, mediation, and cultural interpretation as a colonizer, Shelley shows that the *Modern Prometheus* embodies a civilizational impulse to understand humanity by creating, observing, and rejecting different cultures as seen in postcolonial theory.

In the novel, Victor's creation and subsequent rejection of the Creature embodies the relationship of Othering that is central to the maintenance of power and identity in imperial societies. Shelley presents Victor as a figure who defines his actions by drawing rigid boundaries between himself and the being he has created, stating "I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived."[3] He categorizes the creature by his few behaviors as imperfect and uncivilized. In projecting onto his creation all that he fears, despises,

[3] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones, 1818), 58, available at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm.

and cannot reconcile within himself, Victor transforms him into a symbolic embodiment of monstrosity and primitiveness. This is the moment where Trouillot's concept of the "savage slot" illuminates the maker and monster dynamic, asserting that the West constructs the Other as a mirror through which it both fantasizes and measures itself. He writes: "What has not been emphasized enough is that this Other was a Janus, of whom the savage was only the second face. The first face was the West itself, but the West fancifully constructed as a utopian projection and meant to be, in that imaginary correspondence, the condition of existence of the savage."[4] Victor's hopes, projections, and subsequent horror at his creation when met with "failure" mirrors Trouillot's multi-faceted Othering process. The scientist projects Western ideals about perfection in not only the human body, but mind, onto the Creature, who is forced into becoming the "savage" in this narrative. This directly mirrors how colonizers define themselves through the marginalization of Others, proving that the act of Othering is not merely an interpersonal or moral failure but a structural, socially legible method of asserting authority. Victor has invented an Other in his own image, imposing hierarchies of worth and refusing to acknowledge the Creature's true agency and desires. The Creature, like colonized subjects in anthropological studies, is rendered simultaneously visible and illegible, present yet denied recognition, forced into a position of dependency and marginalization. Victor's ethical failure is inseparable from his epistemological one as he refuses to understand or interpret the Creature accurately because he does not want to recognize him as a sentient, morally complex being. As literary figures, both characters dramatize the act of a dominant figure inventing and imposing a false identity onto the marginalized Other. Thus, the text shows that the process of Othering is always relational, socially structured, and laden with ethical consequences.

While Victor embodies the Western act of Othering, the Creature fulfills the role as a mediator between binary boundaries of the human and inhuman, colonizer and the colonized. From the moment of his creation, the Creature demonstrates an innate will to not only survive, but to understand and explicitly participate in the social world. Andrew Bartlett from *Anthropoetics* notes "The Monster does not want simply to stay alive, to survive as an animal, to feed and clothe and shelter himself. He hungers for the transcendental effect of sociality, which

[4] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness" in *Anthropological Theory, An Introductory History*, ed. R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 8th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 515.

itself can never be 'consumed' but only experienced as an effect of the mimetic interactivity of economic exchange."[5] As the Creature "grows up" and seeks mental maturity, he actively engages in the same kinds of observation, learning, and social interpretation found in Postcolonial theory when examining how marginalized subjects navigate and resist imposed hierarchies. The Creature's desire to participate in human exchange mirrors the adaptive strategies of colonized or subaltern figures, who must interpret and negotiate the social, economic, and cultural systems established by dominant powers in order to assert agency and claim recognition. Claude Levi-Strauss's Theory of Binaries furthers the postcolonial connections, as thinking in binaries furthers the human mind's search for intermediaries that transcend and reconcile these opposites. Sherry Ortner explains: "Although Lévi-Strauss proposed that human thinking always parsed the world into binary oppositions, he also believed that the mind was dissatisfied with such oppositions and always searched for a mediator for them. This mediator was a category that was not subsumed by either part of the binary but somehow transcended them."[6] In the context of *Frankenstein*, the Creature embodies this problematic mediator, operating in the space between human and nonhuman. He reaps the experience of assimilation in human culture while remaining rejected outside of it. Like an anthropologist seeking to identify these limitations, the Creature observes language, social norms, and moral codes similar to participant observation through the De Lacey family.[7] Shelley shows that the Creature's knowledge of humanity arises not from isolation or innate rationality (as Victor attempts to claim for himself), but from engagement, empathy, and mimicry, all processes of postcolonial engagement with participant observation. As scholars Younes Poorghorban and Ali Taghizadeh write in "The Monstrosity of Knowledge":

> The monster, despite being of a different species, shares a connection with humane feelings about nature, rejecting man's rationality. However, the monster's inability to fit into the rational understanding of man leads to his rejection by society. Consequently, the

[5] Andrew Bartlett, "Keeping the Monster at a Distance: Artificial Humanity and Victimary Otherness (Frankenstein and the Problem of Modern Science Part 3 of 3)," *Anthropoetics* (Fall/Winter 2007/2008): para. 14, available at https://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1303/1303bartlett/.

[6] Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in *Anthropological Theory*, ed. McGee and Warms, p. 357.

[7] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein,* 115.

monster seeks refuge in nature, emphasizing Shelley's Romantic view that accommodates both man and the monster.[8]

After entering the human social world through its fieldwork and learning that he lies outside of it as this Other, the Creature demonstrates the anthropological labor of understanding social systems through careful observation. By existing in this liminal space, the Creature exposes the artificiality of the binaries that Victor relies upon, just as Postcolonial theory interrogates the constructed boundaries between colonizer and colonized.

While Victor's approach to knowledge embodies the rigid binaries of the West, the Creature demonstrates a fundamental understanding of human society aligning with Franz Boas's cultural flux and relativity. As Bartlett writes in "Frankenstein and Scientific Revelation," "When Frankenstein isolates himself and builds the monster in his self-torturing madness, he is concentrating exclusively on the 'object alone' and paradoxically forgetting the human mediation on the scene without which his 'object' cannot have or create value."[9] By attempting to extract knowledge from an abstracted, decontextualized object, Victor mirrors western Enlightenment scientific thinking that ultimately fails him. The Creature becomes a being that exceeds Victor's control because Victor's method ignores the relational and cultural dimensions necessary to truly understand the life he seeks to master. Similarly, Postcolonial theory critiques the colonial and imperial impulse to categorize, classify, and dominate without accounting for context, agency, or lived experience, highlighting the dangers of marginalizing colonized cultures in isolation from their social and cultural realities. Victor's rigid rationalism exemplifies a failure to recognize the complexity and humanity of his creation, replicating the epistemic violence inherent in colonial thought. In contrast, the Creature's understanding of society develops through observation, engagement, and adaptation, reflecting Boas's argument that cultures are not static but exist in constant flux.[10] The Creature does not impose fixed categories on the human world but rather learns its codes, customs, and values in order to negotiate inclusion and assert identity from within a society that rejects him. This adaptability in learning social and moral norms embodies

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[8] Younes Poorghorban and Ali Taghizadeh, "The Monstrosity of Knowledge: Mary Shelley's Symbolic Encounter with The Enlightenment and Industrialization in Frankenstein," *Anglo Saxonica*, 14 August 2024, p. 10, available at https://revista-anglo-saxonica.org/articles/10.5334/as.144.

[9] Andrew Bartlett, "Frankenstein and Scientific Revelation Frankenstein and the Problem of Modern Science (Part 2 of 3)," *Anthropoetics* (Spring/Summer 2007), para 12, available at https://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1301/1301frank2/.

[10] Franz Boas, "The Methods of Ethnology," in *Anthropological Theory*, ed. McGee and Warms, p. 145.

the anthropological approach that Boas championed, one that resists absolutist or essentialist definitions and recognizes that both individuals and societies are in continuous transformation. By dramatizing the Creature's learning, Shelley indirectly equates his culture and world to colonized subjects that must navigate and reinterpret imposed systems to survive. The contrast between Victor and the Creature highlights a broader ethical and epistemological principle where civilization's understanding of humanity requires attention to mediation, relationality, and flux rather than isolated rationalism. Shelley's narrative thus dramatizes the ways in which Postcolonial theory emerges from the limitations of rigid rationalist models. The novel shows that ethical, cultural, and epistemological insight arises not from domination or abstraction, but from participation, observation, and relational understanding. The Creature is marked as the embodiment of a more humane, adaptive, and theoretically prescient mode of interpreting human societies.

In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley creates a narrative rendition of how civilizations attempt to understand themselves and the Other in their respective worldviews. Victor's relentless rejection of the Creature mirrors the Western construction of the "savage slot" described by Trouillot and embodies the mediatory processes outlined by Lévi-Strauss. The Creature negotiates the space between human and nonhuman, demonstrating the relational, interpretive effort necessary to participate in society. The Creature's adaptive approach to learning reflects Franz Boas's insight into cultural flux, highlighting the failure of Victor's rigid materialistic rationality and illustrating how ethical understanding emerges from engagement and observation rather than abstract mastery. By analyzing *Frankenstein* through a postcolonial lens, it becomes apparent how literature can explore the ethical, cultural, and social mechanisms that control imperial authority in a way other than ethnographic fieldwork.

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Nineteenth Century Women's Piety: Limitation or Comfort?

by Claire Walsh

During the last days of spring in 1891, Alma and Henry Martyn Rogers began to mourn the passing of their two-year-old daughter, Mary Spencer.[1] She was their third child to die in the span of four years. Prior to Mary's death, two-year-old Bessie and two-month-old Louise Rogers both passed away in 1887.[2] At the time of the tragedies, the Rogers family was living in Kentucky, but they later found a home in Hanover, Indiana.[3] Henry Martyn was a well-known minister and his wife, Alma, was a homemaker. Throughout their lives, they kept an extensive record of family letters, each one chronicling a personal history of grief, love, and life.[4] The Rogers family letters provide a rare insight into nineteenth-century life, especially motherhood. As the matriarch of the family, Alma Rogers's correspondence accounts for a majority of the letters. She received many messages from friends and family over the years, each of whom expressed their condolences for her sudden losses. It is through these letters that a unique picture of grief begins to form, which enforced an unwavering faithfulness in God's plan. This devout lens for viewing death interconnected with nineteenth-century women's expectations to be pious. Strict standards of virtue were necessary to meet the standards of a proper woman. Not only was piety an attribute expected for women but, as Alma's letters reveal, it was a necessity for mothers who had to cope with the loss of their children. Grief only served to strengthen the bonds of submissiveness to God's natural order and strongly informed the way women viewed themselves in the greater context of a patriarchal society.

At the time of the Rogers children's deaths, infant mortality had been slowly decreasing, yet ideas surrounding the ideal Christian death remained, placing importance on mothers as pillars of faith. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, a steady decline in infant mortality can be attributed to better socio-economic conditions and increased medical

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[1] Mary Spencer Rogers, gravestone, Richmond Cemetery, Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky, digital image s.v. "Mary Spencer Rogers," *FindaGrave.com.*

[2] Bessie Goodloe Rogers, gravestone, Richmond Cemetery, Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky, digital image s.v. "Bessie Goodloe Rogers," *FindaGrave.com*; Louise Tinsley Rogers, gravestone, Richmond Cemetery, Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky, digital image s.v. "Louise Tinsley Rogers," *FindaGrave.com.*

[3] 1920 United States Federal Census, Hanover, Jefferson County, Indiana, digital image s.v. "Martin M Rogers" *Ancestry.com*.

[4] Jen Duplaga, "Henry Martyn Rogers," paper to author, Nov. 11, 2025.

knowledge, which limited the spread of water and food-borne illnesses.[5] A decline in infant deaths, though, did not mean they were any less traumatic. In scholar Lynne Vallone's review of death in Victorian literature, she discussed the work of James Kincaid, who highlighted how "If child death can no longer be seen as inevitable, or at any rate normal, it will seem a worse blow when it happens."[6] This no doubt would have been the case for Alma Rogers, who had to witness the consecutive deaths and illnesses of her three daughters. These grim deaths had to have some form of explanation, and the mystery of God's plan offered a satisfying answer. The consolation that there was a sacred reason for the loss of a child was essential for mothers who had a responsibility to ensure that their children, when the time came, had a "good" death. A "Victorian good death" characteristically dealt with Christianity and required time to prepare and express one's faith in God.[7] The intense devotion nineteenth-century women seemed to possess was detailed by historian Barbara Welter in her work titled "The Cult of True Womanhood." While her article specifically discussed the years 1820-1860, evidence suggests her findings are still applicable to Alma's experiences in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Through her research, Welter observed the widely held belief that "Religion or piety was at the core of women's virtue, the source of her strength. Religion belonged to women by divine right, a gift of God and nature."[8] This apparent predisposition that women had to be virtuous meant that they were the key to cultivating faith within the household.

When looking back on the Rogers family letters, the concepts used to comfort the grieving family almost always revolved around surrendering to God. Death was synonymous with heaven, which one needed to have faith in. After Mary Spencer's death, Alma and H.M. Rogers received a letter from a family friend. It referenced a story they had read in the news in which "a woman who had been greatly afflicted said, it is all right, God never makes any mistakes."[9] In a similar sense, a letter from Alma's mother, following the death of Bessie Rogers,

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[5] Stephan J. Kunitz, "Mortality Change in America, 1620-1920" *Human Biology* 56, no. 3 (1984): 569–70.

[6] Lynne Vallone and James Holt McGavran, review of *Fertility, Childhood, and Death in the Victorian Family*, by Nancy Fix Anderson, Claudia Nelson, Ann Sumner Holmes, George Eliot, Karl Ittmann, Pat Jalland, Penny Kane, et al. *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 1 (2000): 224.

[7] Sarah McNair Vosmeier, lecture for "American Women's History," Hanover College, September 17, 2025.

[8] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 152.

[9] Letter to Henry Martyn and Alma Smith Rogers, 21 June 1891, folder 7, box 1, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

stated “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”[10] While Welter discussed piety and the restrictions it placed on women, faithfulness also came as a necessary comfort to grieving mothers. This is most aptly seen through a letter written by Mrs. Perry Brand to the Rogers family, in which she laments the death of Mary and her siblings: “she had two little sisters there. Gone to that world before. They’ll feel no pain or sickness there. Nor taste death anymore.”[11] The touching eight stanza poem found in the letter also illustrated the solidarity experienced between mothers. Mrs. Brand’s haunting details, such as “A little bed untossed” and empty “places around the table,” suggest the possibility that she too had mourned the loss of a child.[12] Women’s perceived closeness to God also made coping with their children’s deaths easier for them than it was for fathers. Scholar Patricia Jalland explored this subject through analysis of the Tait family who, in 1856, lost five of their seven children.[13] Catherine Tait, the mother of the family, wrote about her “submissiveness to God’s will” and acceptance of the deaths of her children. In contrast, her husband Dean Tait had written “no similar discussion of his own state of mind at the time” and instead “retained hope for longer than his wife,” experiencing shock “correspondingly greater.”[14] This fascinating distinction between men and women when experiencing the loss of a child supports the idea that religious teachings affected women differently during the nineteenth century. Women had been taught since childhood to maintain their obedience towards men and God. Conversely, it was difficult for men to grasp their own powerlessness in the face of death, as they had not experienced that same lack of control as women.

The impact of a patriarchal society on how nineteenth-century women viewed themselves and their faith can additionally provide an explanation for their viewpoints on the woman’s rights movements of the nineteenth century. In an 1894 letter to Alma Rogers, her close friend Jennie A. Wyatt informs Alma on the current state of her church. Jennie expresses her frustration by stating “Our leading ladies are “women’s rights” women with their suffrage clubs and anything

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[10] S Goodloe to Alma Smith Rogers, 25 Sept. 1887, folder 7, box 2, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

[11] Poem by Mrs. Perry Brand to Henry Martyn Rogers, 2 June 1891, folder 2, box 1, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

[12] Poem by Mrs. Perry Brand to Henry Martyn Rogers, 2 June 1891, folder 2, box 1, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

[13] Vallone and McGavran, review of *Fertility, Childhood, and Death in the Victorian Family*, 222.

[14] Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 137.

to divide their time.... Our former minister was right under their thumbs, and this one has a mind of his own."[15] She conveys a happiness that her Church's new minister, a "staunch good man," was standing up to these leading women.[16] Alma and Jennie grew up in a male-dominated society, maintained by women's piety and virtue. Knowing this, it makes sense that they cannot fathom why the next generation of women would question a society so normal to them. Their faith, as much as it restricted them, helped them cope with unimaginable tragedy. For the two women, they may have believed that if they even entertained the idea of "women's rights" they would be forsaking their religious traditions. In Alma's experience, her surrender to God and subsequently the Church's leadership may have been essential to understanding the deaths of her three daughters. She maintained her faithfulness so that she might one day see her children in heaven. In the words of Reverend J.P. Roth, who wrote to the Rogers family in 1891, "Great as are these afflictions, how much greater would they be without the hope of a future home, a better world, for us…such is the kingdom of heaven."[17] Knowing how important faith was to Alma Rogers and the women she surrounded herself with, one can understand her mentality and respect her devotion.

One of the core traits imposed on the women of the nineteenth century was piety; however, this religiosity informed more than just their virtue. It guided them through loss and hardship. Surrendering to God's will was a comfort. This obedience, though, not only applied to God but to men, who had perpetually been the leaders of society. When a traumatic event occurred, such as the loss of the Rogers children, men could not find the same solace in God that women seemed to possess. An astonishing and haunting solidarity is seen between the women in Alma Rogers's life, who utilized religious teaching as a way to console each other. For these women, their teachings later appeared to contradict the beliefs of a growing population of suffragists. Their cultural and religious beliefs, despite their benefits, held them back from realizing their own potential. They had yet to imagine a future in which women and their daughters could one day achieve equality in society.

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[15] Jennie A. Wyatt to Alma Smith Rogers, 6 July 1894, folder 5, box 3, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

[16] Jennie A. Wyatt to Alma Smith Rogers, 6 July 1894.

[17] J. P. Roth to Henry Martyn Rogers, 2 June 1891, folder 2, box 1, Rogers Family Letters, Duggan Library, Hanover College (Hanover, Ind.).

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Environmental Injustices and Degradation of the Florida Everglades:
From Pa-hay-Okee to Drainage Empire to Alligator Alcatraz
by Sophie Whitham

The Everglades is an ecological region spanning the southern portion of Florida with a rich human-environment history. Its capacity for biodiversity makes it one of the most important subtropical wetlands on Earth, and its protection is vital to preserve unique ecosystems, landscapes, and sociocultural heritages. Much of the degradation of the Everglades began with American colonization and influence in the area. During this time, Floridian Native American tribes were forcibly removed to reservations or further concentrated into or around the Everglades. The onset of development projects and misguided attempts to control natural flooding periods did much harm to the natural environment and the indigenous peoples remaining before the area became protected under state and federal legislation in the late 1900s. Despite the establishment of the Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and various other refuges, sanctuaries, and conservation areas, the region and the people who historically inhabited it continue to be targeted economically, politically, socially, and physically by bad-faith actors in the United States government and disproportionately affected by anthropogenic climate change. The state of the Everglades is an unfortunate example of the complex cause-and-effect relationship between environmental injustices and degradation over time that is fueled by colonialism, systemic inequality, industrialization, capitalism, exploitation of resources, and willful ignorance of socio-environmental concepts.

The first peoples to inhabit the Everglades were the Paleo-Indians (late Pleistocene period) when the area was still arid prairie land. The climate shifted into its modern wetland state around 5,000-6,500 years ago, and with it the native peoples adapted.[1] Spanish explorers were the first to record contact with the Florida tribes: the Calusa, Tequesta, Ais, and Keys Indians, among others.[2] Spanish and British occupation and tribal conflicts reduced their populations, and

[1] David McCally, *The Everglades: An Environmental History* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), 31, 35.

[2] Jerald T. Milanich, "Original Inhabitants," in *The New History of Florida,* ed. Michael Gannon (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012), 13–14.

cultural mixing with the Creeks and escaped African slaves led to the Seminoles and the related Miccosukee Tribe becoming the primary tribes of Florida. These tribes were further pushed south into the Everglades (which they referred to as Pa-hay-Okee or "grassy waters"), or they were exiled to Indian Territory as a result of Florida's being ceded to the United States through the Adams-Onís Treaty (1821), by the Seminole Wars of 1816-1858, and by a series of Indian Removal Acts.[3] The Seminoles, Miccosukee, and various unaffiliated indigenous groups still inhabit this area and are often on the frontlines of conservation and social activism efforts on behalf of their historical connection to the land and because they are disproportionately affected by many of the modern issues impacting the Everglades.

Negative public opinion of the Everglades stemmed from difficulties faced by American soldiers during the Seminole Wars and settlers in adapting to the unique terrain.[4] It was viewed as an uninhabitable wasteland in its natural state, and government and citizens alike saw dormant economic opportunities for industry and agriculture in a drained Everglades. The first-ever published study on the Everglades—gathered on behalf of the Secretary of the Treasury—states that "The statesman whose exertions shall cause the millions of acres they contain, now worse than worthless, to teem with the products of agricultural industry; that man who thus adds to the resources of his country…will merit a high place in public favor…he will have created a State!"[5] The Swamp Land Act of 1850 saw the region (along with all other swamp lands in America) be opened for development and various drainage and flood control projects, though the Civil War impeded these efforts for a short while. Florida governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward's vision of an "Empire of the Everglades" became the early blueprint for the physical and economic resources necessary to "reclaim" the Everglades.[6] By the mid-1900s, canals, railroads, roads, and urban areas gradually replaced native habitats.[7] With the establishment of Everglades National

[3] National Park Service, "What's in a Name?" (NPS, 2015), https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/kidsyouth/whats-in-a-name.htm; P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, "1821 – Florida Becomes Part of the United States," (University of Florida, 2021), https://pkyonge.uflib.ufl.edu/2021/08/20/1821-florida-becomes-part-of-the-united-states/.

[4] Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2007), 41.

[5] J. E. Dovell, "The Everglades Before Reclamation," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 1, article 4 (1947): 1–43 at 33.

[6] George A. Smathers Libraries, *America's Swamp: The Historical Everglades Project* (University of Florida 2025), https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/c.php?g=1123872&p=8197489.

[7] National Park Service, "Developing the Everglades" (NPS, 2020), https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/historyculture/development.htm.

Park in 1947 and the Central and Southern Florida Project (C&SF) in 1948, the government initially had goals of creating better organized water control projects in response to hurricanes, droughts, and flooding. The northern portion of the Everglades was divided into Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), while the south was dedicated to the National Park.[8] The environmental impacts of this extensive human involvement are numerous and far-reaching. Today's greater Everglades ecosystem has lost over seventy percent of its water flow and is less than half of its original size.[9] The nine primary habitats (defined by plant communities) of the Everglades—hardwood hammock, pineland, freshwater marl prairies, freshwater slough, cypress, coastal lowland, mangrove, marine, and estuarine—are extremely sensitive and require ultra-specific conditions to properly function, a combination that does not mix well with human-induced loss of overall biodiversity, introduction of exotic species, and depletion of healthy soils and water.[10]

It was not until 1969 through the 1970s that major concern was devoted to the environmental degradation of the Everglades. This concern came after an attempt by the Dade County Port Authority to build a 39-square-mile jetport in a Big Cypress WCA without permission from the C&SF, National Park authorities, and the Department of the Interior. Environmental scientists and activists, conservation groups, and media outlets came together to shut down the project that would have decimated the water supply and created tons of pollution and waste region-wide.[11] Shortly after this, the Big Cypress National Preserve was established, UNESCO appointed the Everglades as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site, and it was noted as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention.[12] The Everglades is still under threat by urbanization, agricultural and water control projects, mining, oil drilling, invasive species, pollution, geological subsidence, and climate change. With these come negative social impacts for the peoples living in or near it, namely displacement, desecration of sacred lands, resource scarcity, disruption of livelihoods and cultural practices, health issues, and loss of

[8] South Florida Water Management District, "History of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem," (SFWMD, 2017), https://www.sfwmd.gov/who-we-are/history.

[9] Conservancy of Southwest Florida, "Everglades Restoration," (CSF, 2024), https://conservancy.org/everglades-restoration/.

[10] National Park Service, "Habitats and Plant Communities," (NPS, 2025), https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/nature/habitats.htm.

[11] Robert S. Gilmour and John A. McCauley, "Environmental Preservation and Politics: The Significance of 'Everglades Jetport,'" *Political Science Quarterly* 90, no. 4 (1975): 719–738 at 729, 737.

[12] UNESCO World Heritage Convention, "Everglades National Park," (UNESCO, 2025), https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/76/.

ancestral identity. There is a notable lack of communication between organizations (environmental or otherwise) and indigenous tribes of the Everglades, which has persisted since American settlement of the area. This is despite the fact that "Allowing Indigenous people to remain caretakers of their lands and waters, numerous studies have shown, are critical to protecting biodiversity, forests and fighting climate change" and that these peoples are often more directly affected by environmental issues.[13] Many indigenous groups have adapted to their new environments after displacement from their ancestral lands, and another great injustice is making decisions without their input, decisions that greatly impact their quality of life and the land that supports them.

It is no coincidence that less than sixty years later, the Everglades and its peoples once again come under threat by a major development project: an immigrant detention center colloquially dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," which is situated directly on the abandoned jetport site in the Big Cypress Reserve. This facility operates as a temporary internment camp for migrants that are to be deported and is one of many that have increased activity in 2025 as part of President Donald Trump's strict deportation policy. Politicians, civil liberties groups, and environmental activists (such as the Friends of the Everglades and the Center for Biological Diversity) have raised concerns over the humanitarian conditions and environmental impacts of this facility. Also, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Florida, Americans for Immigrant Justice, and the Miccosukee Tribe have come together to file a class action suit *(Friends of the Everglades, Inc. vs Noem et al.)* against involved government officials; and Amnesty International recently reported on "Torture and Enforced Disappearances in the Sunshine State." In addition to human rights abuses including unsanitary conditions, medical neglect, cruel punishments, due process violations, and people unaccounted for, the Miccosukee Tribe and other environmental activists assert that:

> cultural activities will not be allowed to proceed due to the environmental effects of the facility's operation and construction, as well as attendant concerns related to the health, safety, and security of residents and community members. Additionally, the facility is located immediately upstream from several Tribal villages such that potential

[13] WGCU, "In Florida, the Miccosukee fight to protect the Everglades in the face of climate change" (The Associated Press, 2025), https://www.wgcu.org/section/environment/2025-03-07/in-florida-the-miccosukee-fight-to-protect-the-everglades-in-the-face-of-climate-change.

> contamination or pollution from the facility will have a direct and adverse effect of potable water quality for residents and the surrounding environment.[14]

Alligator Alcatraz officials are found to have violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Administrative Procedure Act (APA) in failing to conduct environmental impact surveys and residential impact assessments before construction of the site began.[15] Despite also being a massive financial burden, the facility remains operational (as of December 2025) and has thus far managed to dodge legal accountability through political connections and a technicality of it being state-run and not bound to the "usual" standards (though potential federal funding is currently under investigation as well).[16] The lack of federal oversight and integration into the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) databases/systems has permitted secrecy and made it difficult for environmental and human rights organizations to study the true extent of harm inflicted.[17] A United States Geological Survey (USGS) environmental impact study conducted on the 1969 jetport site stated that development in this area would "lead to land drainage and development for agriculture, transportation, and services in the Big Cypress Swamp which will inexorably destroy the south Florida ecosystem and thus the Everglades National Park."[18] Now, scientists examining the immediate impact of Alligator Alcatraz (through indirect methods) have observed air, water, and light pollution; landscape alterations; habitat fragmentation; and other threats to the sensitive ecosystem and its many threatened and endangered species.[19] Alligator Alcatraz, on a conceptual and realized level, exemplifies the intersectionality within environmental injustices: an area of natural and cultural significance is being used for government-enforced political violence and callous endangerment of multiple

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[14] Amnesty International, *Torture and Enforced Disappearances in the Sunshine State: Human Rights Violations at "Alligator Alcatraz" and Krome in Florida*, Amnesty International, AMR 51/0511/2025 (2025): 1–61 at 5–6, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/AMR5105112025ENGLISH.pdf; *Friends of the Everglades, Inc. v. Noem: Motion to Intervene – Document No. 33*, District Court, S.D. Florida, 1:25-cv-22896-JEM (2025): 1–20 at 9, https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.flsd.692544/gov.uscourts.flsd.692544.33.0.pdf.

[15] *Friends of the Everglades*, 9–10; Richard Luscombe, "Alligator Alcatraz Snaps Back to Life after Judges' Reprieve of Florida's Migrant Jail" (*The Guardian*, 2025), https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/07/trump-alligator-alcatraz-florida.

[16] Luscombe, "Alligator Alcatraz Snaps Back."

[17] Amnesty International, *Torture and Enforced Disappearances*, 6.

[18] United States Geological Survey & United States Department of the Interior, *Environmental Impact of the Big Cypress Swamp Jetport* (USDOI, 1969): 1–155 at 152, https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/FI/06/01/11/15/00001/jetportimpact.pdf.

[19] Kaylyn Zipp, "'Alligator Alcatraz' Could Threaten Fragile Ecosystem" (The Wildlife Society, 2025), https://wildlife.org/alligator-alcatraz-could-threaten-fragile-ecosystem/.

vulnerable populations in a fragile ecological system. William "Popeye" Osceola, scribe of the Miccosukee Tribe, states "It's not lost on us that there's this facility where you're trying to round up individuals who do not look like them, that they say do not belong here, and they're not part of their country. And just looking at tribal history, that's the whole basis of the reservation system in this land."[20] It has never only been about land itself, but also about who deserves to rule over it. The racial overtones cannot be denied, the commitment to misinformation and scapegoating is intentional, and the sense of entitlement over peoples and lands has done irreversible harm to society and Earth alike. That is the crux of colonialism, and happenings in the Everglades today and historically are living testaments to it.

While the injustice and degradation in the Everglades cannot be undone, various restoration efforts are well underway and providing important successes. The largest among them is the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which is led and supported by the Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives (OERI), National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Department of the Interior. OERI has a Congressionally established task force (established in 1996) that carries out its three main restoration goals: improve watershed quality and restore historic water flow (CERP's current focus); habitat protection and invasive species management; and human-environment cooperation.[21] Other government organizations that have developed multiple Everglades restoration projects include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture, and USGS. The EPA conducts an Everglades Ecosystem Assessment Program for the purpose of providing public-access environmental health data for the region as a whole and its specific habitats.[22] Such federal efforts often struggle to make leeway due to funding disparities and partisan legislation, but state-level projects have made progress through targeted location or issue-focused approaches. The Everglades Forever Act (1994) has helped lower phosphorus levels and agricultural runoff from the EAA.[23] The Kissimmee River

[20] Alexandra Martinez, "'History is Echoing': Miccosukee Tribe Challenges Secrecy and Environmental Harm at 'Alligator Alcatraz'" (*Prism Reports,* 2025), https://prismreports.org/2025/08/05/alligator-alcatraz-miccosukee-tribe/.

[21] Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives, "Everglades Restoration Programs and Projects," *EvergladesRestoration.gov*, https://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/restoration-program-overview.

[22] Environmental Protection Agency, "Environmental Monitoring in the Everglades" (EPA, 2025), https://www.epa.gov/everglades/environmental-monitoring-everglades.

[23] Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "Everglades Forever Act (EFA)" (FDEP, 2024), https://floridadep.gov/owper/eco-restoration/content/everglades-forever-act-efa.

Restoration Project (completed in 2022) restored 40 square miles of floodplain and 20,000 acres of wetland, recovered 44 miles of water flow, and removed water control structures.[24] Despite public support and comprehensive planning, the unfortunate reality is that restoration and conservation endeavors are too little and too late. Sea level rise and intensified storms influenced by climate change and global warming are especially harmful to the coastlines and subtropical zones that comprise much of Florida's territory. Major obstacles in the path of restoring the Everglades include scale, cost, and funding, as well as political pushback and the failure to address climate change itself. The efforts of grassroots indigenous activists (especially those of the Miccosukee Tribe) and organized protests reflect resilience and hope for the Everglades ecoregion and continuously raise awareness towards environmental and social issues.

Florida's Everglades and its inhabitants have been subjected to a violent cycle of degradation and injustice since American colonial forces exerted influence over the area. The region called Pa-hay-Okee by indigenous tribes is only a skeleton of its former self, having suffered through misguided water control projects, habitat destruction, and encroaching industrial and urban settlement. Whether considered a drainage empire in the early 1900s or a site for an inhumane immigrant detention facility in modern times, the Everglades is a microcosm of the power imbalances that form the dark underbelly of American prosperity and capitalist ideologies. Exploitation of resources, pushing minority groups into the fringes of society politically and physically, polluting biological systems that are necessary for life, and facilitating the loss of biodiversity has recklessly endangered this sensitive ecosystem and all the living beings who depend on it. The American government has proven unreliable at best when it comes to environmental issues, and constant partisan legislation and stalemates allow places of incredible importance like the Everglades to degrade further as waters rise and temperatures warm globally. Restoration and conservation efforts should remain the top priority for the Everglades, and more must be done locally, regionally, and federally to support its rehabilitation and to platform indigenous voices who live interconnected with this sacred land.

[24] South Florida Water Management District, *Restoring the Kissimmee River* (SFWMD, 2022), https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet_KissimmeeRiver_2022_Final.pdf.

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Senior Theses

Excerpt from "Worshiping the Womb:
American Feminism and Neopaganism in the Mid-To-Late Twentieth Century"
by Creek Arthur

Note: This is an abridged version of the author's senior thesis. The sections titled, "Wicca," "The Pre-Patriarchy Matriarchy" and "The Noble Savage: Neopaganism and Cultural Appropriation," as well as discussions on the sexual revolution and other content have been cut for brevity.

Leftists adopted Neopaganism as a response to postwar evangelical Christian conservatism. In a nation where women's role models consisted of housewives and actresses, Neopaganism brought forth different, more autonomous role models from folklore and mythology. In a nation where technology dominated the environment, Neopaganism encouraged connection with nature rather than subduing it. In a nation where political strife ruled the people, Neopaganism brought community and peace to leftists. Even so, Neopaganism itself made no effort to tear down the Western Patriarchy, as it claimed to do. Existing in the realm of relational feminism, a sort of feminism where women's rights activism is based on the differences between women and men, Neopaganism upheld many conventional gender standards, particularly for women. Neopagans saw women as inherently nurturing figures. Some sects scrutinized women's physical appearances to such an extent that it limited their abilities to hold leadership positions within their communities. Although Neopaganism in the United States was shaped by the values of the second wave of feminism, it did not actively overturn gendered roles and at times welcomed conservative culture.

Defining Neopaganism and its Practitioners

One of the most difficult parts of studying Neopaganism lies in finding its definition. Even the name holds controversy. Who considers themselves Neopagan varies from group to group, even individual to individual. So, what is Neopaganism? Margot Adler's book, *Drawing Down the Moon*, introduced many Americans to Neopaganism. She uses Isaac Bonewits's definition of Neopaganism. Therefore, Bonewits's definition of Neopaganism became the main

definition in the United States. Isaac Bonewits was an expert in Neopaganism with a Bachelor of Arts in Magic from the University of California, Berkeley.[1] He wrote books, appeared in documentaries, and normally was the main speaker for panels on Neopaganism that he attended. He also founded the Aquarian Anti-Defamation League, a civil rights group for those of minority religions and spiritualities. Bonewits defines Neopaganism as "polytheistic (or conditional monotheistic) nature religions that are based upon the older or Paleopagan religions; concentrating upon an attempt to retain the humanistic, ecological and creative aspects of these old belief systems while discarding their occasional brutal or repressive developments."[2] Essentially, Bonewits presents Neopaganism as an altered form of ancient paganism to fit better the standards of modern civilization. This definition seems to align with the perception of the Neopagan movement of the mid-to-late twentieth century, so it will be used throughout this essay.

Not only does the controversy surrounding the definition of Neopaganism lead to an underrepresentation of people who claim the practices within the movement, but representative census data simply does not exist. The United States census does not record religious affiliation as part of the mandatory census; this is in accordance with 13 United States Code 221(c), which states that "no person shall be compelled to disclose information relative to his religious beliefs or to membership in a religious body."[3] This law was first passed in August 1952. This was two years before Gerald Gardner would publish his famous book *Witchcraft Today*, which introduced Wicca (the most popular religion within Neopaganism) to the world. Therefore, the American census would not have accurate numbers pertaining to how many Americans considered themselves Neopagan. Alongside that, Neopagans are what social scientists call "a hidden population."[4] This suggests that those who identified as Neopagan, especially those living in conservative areas, may not have felt safe to disclose their practices. This leads to yet more underrepresentation of the Neopagan community. Finally, the lack of bureaucratic structure and record-keeping provides a third major obstacle in determining Neopagan demographics. Without

[1] Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon* (New York: Viking Press, 1981); "Berkeley Student Will Graduate with Bachelor of Arts in Magic," *New York Times*, June 1, 1970, accessed September 24, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/1970/06/01/archives/berkeley-student-will-graduate-with-bachelor-of-arts-in-magic.html.

[2] Isaac Bonewits, "The First Epistle of Isaac," *The Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* (Berkeley Drunemeton Press, 1976), 2:4, quoted in Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 10.

[3] Refusal or Neglect to Answer Questions; False Answers, 13 U.S.C. § 221 (1952).

[4] Helen A. Berger, Evan A. Leach, and Leigh S. Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census* (University of South Carolina Press, 2003), xvii.

membership records, like those that most Christian organizations maintain, it is difficult to determine how many members Neopagan organizations have and how those numbers have changed over time.[5] Helen A. Berger, alongside fellow sociologists Evan A. Leach and Leigh S. Shaffer, recorded one survey of Neopagans spanning from 1993 to 1995, which they refer to as a census. In 1999, at the publication of this census, scholars estimated that there were between 150,000 and 400,000 practicing Neopagans in the United States of America.[6] Though not during the target era of the Second Wave of American Feminism, this data can provide insight into Neopagan lifestyles and political views. According to the findings of Berger, the white, middle class dominates the American Neopagan community.[7] Also, Berger's survey of Neopagans in the United States reports that a disproportionate number of Neopagans identify as women, with multiple surveys recording over 55% of respondents identifying as women.[8] Therefore, white, middle-class women now make up a majority of Neopagans.

Neopaganism serves as an umbrella term for many spiritual paths. (Note the use of the term "spiritual paths," which many Neopagans, especially those in all-women groups, preferred to use because the term "religion" often felt too structured, limiting, and oppressive to fit in with Neopagan culture.)[9] The most studied of these paths include Wiccans, women-only groups, the Reclaiming Tradition, Shamans, Odinists (the only group not started through a leftist or liberal movement, and instead through a Neo-Nazi movement), and Druids; but scholars cannot determine just how many spiritual paths existed due to Neopaganism's fluid culture.[10] While white demographics dominate Neopaganism, white people were not the only group to found new spiritual movements during the mid-to-late twentieth century. Lucumi culture was brought to the continental United States by Caribbean immigrants. The combined practices of Yoruba, Palo, and Curanderismo attracted African-American, Latino, and Asian audiences. In contrast to white Neopaganism, which mostly exists in middle-class suburbs, Lucumi culture finds its place in the urban sprawl.[11] Lucumi culture, being diasporic in nature, evolved throughout the twentieth

[5] Helen A. Berger, "Introduction," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 1–7, 6.
[6] Helen A. Berger, "Witchcraft and Neopaganism," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 28–54, 28.
[7] Berger, "Witchcraft and Neopaganism," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 28–54, 29.
[8] Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 27–28.
[9] Helen A. Berger, "Background," in *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neopaganism and Witchcraft in the United States* (University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 4–25, 5.
[10] Berger, "Witchcraft and Neopaganism," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 28–54, 41.
[11] Ysamur M. Fores-Pena, "Lucumi: The Second Diaspora," in *Witchcraft and Magic,* 102–119, 102.

century.[12] Due to the nature of these new, non-white spiritual paths – especially their ties to slavery – many practitioners do not place themselves under the Neopagan umbrella. In fact, the total number of African-American, Native-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Latino respondents to Helen A. Berger's demographic survey adds up to only 2% of Neopagan respondents.[13] Even so, scholars of Afro-Caribbean culture find discussion of Lucumi culture necessary when talking about Neopaganism, as shown by the inclusion of Ysamur M. Fores-Pena's article, "Lucumi: The Second Diaspora," in *Witchcraft and Magic: Contemporary North America*.

To understand who the Neopagans were, it is important to understand which groups are not included under the Neopagan "umbrella term," like the Lucumi. Most Neopagans separate themselves from the culture of Satanism and New Age religion, as they consider those religions as something other than Neopaganism. However, due to the amorphous nature of Neopaganism, there will always be exceptions.[14] The exclusion of New Age religion from Neopaganism is the most significant exclusion because the two spiritual paths hold many of the same beliefs, demographics, and practices. The main difference between the two appears to be how the spiritual paths are taught. While Neopagan spiritual paths operate through covens and depend on knowledge that has been passed down, New Age spirituality tends to be taught through paid classes and lectures.[15] According to sociologist Michael York, Neopagans consider New Age as "more expensive, more superficial… commercial, consumerist, fraudulent, spiritual marketing schemes, a Yuppie phenomenon, gameplaying for shock value, mostly Christian, more generalized, undisciplined, insensitive, ungrounded and seeking a quick fix."[16] The disconnect is even more interesting because Neopaganism also has many of these traits, and the feminists who consider themselves Neopagan even pride themselves on the fluidity of Neopaganism. So, what makes Neopaganism and New Age religion different? It is all in the name.

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[12] Fores-Pena, "Lucumi: The Second Diaspora," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 102–119, 103.
[13] Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 29–30.
[14] Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 15.
[15] Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 24.
[16] Micheal York, "New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 16, no. 3 (2001), 365, quoted by Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, in *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 25.

The Second Wave and Feminist Spirituality

In 1963, Betty Friedan published a book titled *The Feminine Mystique*. This book catered to white, middle-class, married women and their feelings unfulfilled as housewives. The same year, President John F. Kennedy (alongside the director of the Women's Bureau, Esther Peterson) established a Commission on the Status of Women to investigate women in the workplace. Additionally, President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, the first attempt to eliminate sex-based wage discrimination.[17] These three major events led to American realization of major gender discrimination in the postwar United States, especially among white, middle-class Americans. . This movement attacked the conservative ideal of "traditional" gender roles, including many aspects of Christianity.

The section of *The Feminine Mystique* titled "The Passionate Journey" provides insight as to why so many women turned to Neopaganism. Friedan discusses the First Wave of Feminism, which officially started in 1848. She states, "At every step of the way, the feminists had to fight the conception that they were violating the God-given nature of women."[18] With this statement, Friedan immediately places the clergy in a position that is in opposition to feminism. She continues by claiming that "Clergymen interrupted women's rights conventions, waving Bibles and quoting from the Scriptures… 'Let your women be silent in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak' … 'And if they learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.'"[19] Thus, Friedan presents not just the church, but also the Bible and its teachings as something to hold back not just feminism, but women. Later in *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan suggests that ministers, priests, and rabbis exist as barriers to women's emancipation due to their respective institutions' "dogmatic definitions of marriage and motherhood."[20] The women reading and reacting to *The Feminine Mystique* most likely experienced this confining, misogynistic rhetoric in their own churches, especially women in more orthodox churches.

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* kicked off the Second Wave of Feminism, encouraging housewives to toss away their aprons and become something more Since she attacked the Christian Church as an obstacle to equal rights, it should not come as a shock that

[17] Wendy Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities" in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 56.
[18] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1963), 33.
[19] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 34.
[20] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 351.

many people tossed away their crosses and rosary beads as well, especially with the lack of women with autonomy as role models. With the lack of strong female role models in their modern lives, women turned to ancient mythoses. There, a woman could find powerful figures like Athena and Artemis in Ancient Greek mythos, Diana in Ancient Roman mythos, and Freyja in Norse mythos. Margot Adler called them, "stronger and healthier 'role models' than the images of women projected in the late 1950s."[21] Compared to the housewife ideal of the 1950s, the women of pagan mythologies appear to have more agency and tend to be more central or significant in the stories that they appear in. Aligning with ancient female deities that were strong and autonomous would have empowered women and provided an example of what women could be outside of a wife and a mother.

American feminism quickly took over the development of Neopaganism in North America. When Raymond and Rosemary Buckland brought Wicca from the United Kingdom to the United States in the 1960s, it spread quickly throughout North America. Since Wicca originally started as a fertility religion, the "English Traditionalists" often held family values that aligned more closely with American conservatism.[22] This was where Gerald Gardner's attachment to patriarchal standards for women thrived. In contrast, the swift spread of Neopaganism in the United States can be accredited to three major groups: those involved in counterculture movements, women seeking a more female-leaning religion, and environmentalists.[23] All three of these groups make up what was the Second Wave of American Feminism.

The ties between Neopaganism and Second-Wave Feminism originated in California with an all-female sect of Wicca led by Zsuzsanna Budapest, who called themselves "Dianic Wiccans" or "Dianic Witches." Dianic Wiccans altered Gerald Gardner's original rituals so much that they oftentimes did not consider themselves Wiccans, even though that is a part of their name. Despite Gerald Gardner's original vision for covens to have six women and six men, Dianic Wiccan covens are mostly – if not entirely – made up of women.[24] The first Dianic Wiccan coven formed in California, with Zsuzsanna Budapest as the high priestess alongside six

[21] Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 16.

[22] Alexei Kondratiev, interview with the authors, in Ellen Evert Hopman and Lawrence Bond, *People of the Earth: The New Pagans Speak Out* (Destiny Books, 1996), 128.

[23] Berger, "Witchcraft and Neopaganism," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 28–54, 36.

[24] Berger, "Witchcraft and Neopaganism," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 28–54, 28.

other women. They founded Dianic Wicca because they believed that women's bodies and souls needed to be "reclaimed" from male-dominated religion.[25]

A unique part of Dianic Wicca's development focused on the violence against women under patriarchy. Budapest outlined spells to help women begin healing from rape as well as a hex to cast against rapists. According to Zsuzsanna Budapest, "A witch who cannot hex cannot heal," suggesting that retaliation to patriarchal violence was the only way these women could truly heal from their experiences.[26] Due to the Dianic Wiccan perspective on patriarchal violence, Dianic Wicca was considered a religion for the radical feminist. As one feminist poet in the Dianic craft, Oriethya, stated in an interview, "the more radical I became, the more I got off the beaten path in women's politics… politics alone wasn't any kind of full answer… I needed to ask myself what the world would look like if God were a woman."[27] Oriethya discovered a community built by women like Zsuzsanna Budapest that satisfied her desire for feminism and a feminist lifestyle outside of politics. With the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982 concluding the Second Wave of American Feminism, a spiritual and cultural feminism may have seemed like the only option. Before that point, Dianic Wicca acted as a political extension to feminism.

Many of the causes backed by feminists during the Second Wave of American Feminism are mirrored in Neopagan rituals, especially in all-women groups. In her Dianic Wiccan instructional manual, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting and Other Womanly Arts*, Zsuzsanna Budapest recalled one of the rituals her coven performed:

> A young woman… came to us after her rape… We shared a hex with her to bring this man to justice… She performed the hex, with our help, and buried the remnants in a nearby cemetery. The rapist was caught … after raping someone else. The police put him away for all his crimes. He is still in jail. In San Francisco, we performed a spell against the Briggs Initiative, which would have made it illegal for gays to teach. The initiative bit

[25] Zsuzsanna Budapest, Janet Roslund, Helen Hancken, Ann Doczi, Nina, Anna Kria, Tannie Braziel, Mildred Schmidt, Miki Jackson, and Joya, *The Feminist Book of Lights and Shadows* (Feminist Wicca, 1979).

[26] Wendy Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities" in *Witchcraft and* Magic, 55–80, 64.

[27] Oriethya, interview with the authors, in Ellen Evert Hopman and Lawrence Bond, *People of the Earth*, 128.

> the dust. The success stories are endless and miraculous. Spells are powerful prayers and they do work. Practice your powers and you will never again believe you're inferior.[28]

Budapest suggests Neopagan groups participated in activism through their rituals. They believed that, by performing spells, they actively fought against rape and homophobia. Budapest and her followers believed that their rituals produced tangible results and empowered women in the process. Therefore, some saw these women as critical figures in the Second Wave's fight for autonomy and equal rights.

The American public was unaware of how connected feminism and witchcraft were until 1975, when authorities arrested Zsuzsanna Budapest for tarot card readings. Specifically, police charged Budapest with "foretelling the future" out of her shop in Venice, California.[29] Budapest's arrest received enough recognition for a small article in *Ms.* magazine, a feminist publication, which made her a national figure amongst feminists.[30]

Additionally, one of the major feminist action groups established during the Second Wave (making its first appearance on Halloween in 1968) called itself "W.I.T.C.H." Founded by "hip Left style politicos," W.I.T.C.H. took its name from a Bible verse.[31] In 1 Samuel 15:23, the Bible declares "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."[32] The acronym may have come before the full name itself, as members of W.I.T.C.H. claimed that the acronym stood for a variety of phrases including "Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell" and "Women Inspired to Commit Herstory."[33] The irony of using a concept seen as negative in the Bible for a political movement further demonstrates the anti-Christian sentiments of the Second Wave of Feminism. According to Robin Morgan, the only criteria for being a "W.I.T.C.H." was "being female, untamed, angry, joyous, and immortal."[34] W.I.T.C.H. encouraged women to exist outside of their preconceived role of the housewife and display emotions that society deemed as "unfeminine." While W.I.T.C.H. did not necessarily seek to replace the Christian Church that they criticized,

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[28] Zsuzsanna Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting and Other Womanly Arts* (Wingbow Press, 1976), 42.

[29] Zsuzsanna Budapest, interview with the authors, in Ellen Evert Hopman and Lawrence Bond, *People of the Earth*, 354.

[30] Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities," in *Witchcraft and* Magic, 55–80, 62.

[31] Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 57.

[32] Samuel, 1:15–23 (King James Version).

[33] Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities," in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 56.

[34] Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful* (Vintage Books, 1970), quoted by Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities" in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 56–57.

they did establish a link between feminism and witchcraft and showed the influence that images of witchcraft had on the feminist movement.

Radical leftists rejected Christianity and many of the ideals that came along with it. As theological scholar David Miller claims, "The revolution does not look like monotheism, Christian or post-Christian. What it looks like is polytheism." [35] Polytheism, by definition, involves the worship of multiple deities or beings. Christianity's doctrine focuses on the worship of a singular God, making it monotheistic. While the Christian doctrine is strict in terms of its worship, with its first commandment reading "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," polytheism provides a much broader range that allows multiple groups to exist alongside each other.[36] What makes Neopaganism unique is that someone could practice one set of traditions and worship one set of deities without invalidating another person's practice.

Many factors led to the explosion of the Second Wave of American Feminism. The radical feminists of the Second Wave critiqued the existing culture surrounding marriage, love, heteronormativity, and rape. They also fought for access to contraception, abortion, and childcare.[37] Overall, the movement was about female autonomy. In the United States, religious culture influenced how much autonomy women had. This led to a new question alongside the "women question" of equal rights: can women be liberated under Christianity? Some feminists, such as Mary Daly, did find their voices in Christianity. Others found solace in the image of the witch.

The women who integrated feminism into their spirituality practice form what scholars now call "feminist witchcraft" or "feminist spirituality." Feminist spirituality, in scholarship on Neopaganism, usually refers to Christian feminists or, more often, Dianic Wiccans (or Dianic Witches).[38] Within feminist spirituality, women from various religious backgrounds find themselves in solidarity. Mary Daly, a Catholic feminist and self-described "crone," described witches as women who use their strength and as women who work in harmony with nature. Daly led the charge in Christian scholarship discussing women's treatment and oppression within the Christian Church. Daly's 1975 *The Church and the Second Sex* even included a "Feminist

[35] David Miller quoted by Adler in *Drawing Down the Moon*, 29.
[36] Exodus 20:3–17 (King James Version).
[37] Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad* (University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 3–4.
[38] Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities" in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 55.

Postchristian Introduction."[39] So, while not every feminist turned towards Neopaganism and witchcraft, many non-Neopagan feminists supported the movement.

Ultimately, what distinguished feminist spirituality and Neopaganism from the conservative Christians they fought against was that feminist witches worshiped beings or deities that are female or have a feminine energy. For some, such as Alison Harlow, who was a priestess in a spiritual path that deals mostly with women, their call to Neopaganism started as a feeling. Harlow was taking a break from the Christmas Eve Mass at her church when she felt a presence, which she called, "ancient and wise and definitely female."[40] In her description of her call to Neopaganism, Harlow's descriptors of "ancient" and "wise" suggested that whatever feminine entity she encountered provided something more connected and stimulating than the Christian God.

Environmentalism, Eco-Feminism, and the Goddess

Across various Neopagan cultures, issues of the environment seemed to be a top priority. According to Berger's survey, 92% of Neopagans believed that the American government spends too little money on the environment, a significant difference when compared to the 55.7% of the general American population who answered the same way.[41] The environmental crises of the mid-twentieth century included deforestation, drought, desertification, toxic waste, and decreasing biodiversity. According to feminist environmentalists (or eco-feminists), the impacts brought on by these issues disproportionally affected women, people of color, the working class, and children, due to oppressions such as racism, classism, and colonialism.[42] Therefore, many feminists viewed environmental issues as feminist issues. Neopagan connection to nature increased the desire to participate in eco-feminism.

Environmentalists rejected Christianity because early ecologists blamed western culture – especially Christian culture – for contemporary environmental crises. In Christian mythos, the creation of the Earth and its inhabitants occurred in a linear timeline. First, God had made light and darkness, then the sky. Next came the Earth, the seas, and vegetation. Then God created the sun and the moon. Next, God made animals that did not live on the land. Then, God created land

[39] Griffin, "Webs of Women: Feminist Spiritualities" in *Witchcraft and Magic*, 55–80, 59.
[40] Alison Harlow, conversation with the author, quoted in Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 14–15.
[41] Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 61.
[42] Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (Rawman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000), 1.

animals and, finally, man. As an afterthought, God created woman to keep man company. (There are other versions of the creation story, but this is the best known.)[43] The order that God made things in the Christian creation story did not happen at random. It was so everything else could exist for man. As historian Lynn White explains "no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes."[44] Due to the philosophy that everything on Earth exists to serve man, centuries of Christian civilizations aimed to dominate the natural world rather than work with it. A prime example of this was America's dream of "Manifest Destiny" in the western United States. Thanks to "Manifest Destiny," the United States has lost over 90% of its native grasslands. With the degradation of prairie habitat, Native American tribes in the area lost food sources and sacred land, invasive species encroached on the land, and the natural biodiversity plummeted.[45] The American grasslands may be the most extreme example of the degradation of the environment through American philosophies under Christianity, but the same principles apply to every ecosystem across the United States.

Christianity tends to be both anthropocentric and androcentric. By framing nature as the creation of a separated deity and with a purpose to serve man, Christianity led civilizations to "exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feeling of natural objects," according to ecologist Lynn White.[46] In addition, the Christian God existed entirely separate from the environment, which gave Christians another degree of ambivalence about the environment.[47] Paganism, on the other hand, allowed for more human connection with nature. In pre-modern folklore and mythos, nature spirits resided everywhere. These spirits were more accessible to the common man than gods. For example, in Ancient Greek mythology, oftentimes communing with local stream, hill, or woodland spirits was much easier than going to a temple and communing with the gods and goddesses who live upon Mount Olympus.[48] Within these religions, spirits had to be appeased if people altered the natural landscape for any purpose. These examples demonstrate that many of these religions followed the philosophy of animism: the idea that every natural object has a spirit or an energy associated with it. Margot Adler theorized: "Neo-Paganism is an attempt to

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[43] Genesis, 1:1–27 (King James Version).

[44] Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–1207, 1205.

[45] "Central Grasslands Conservation: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service," FWS.gov, accessed November 3, 2025, https://www.fws.gov/program/central-grasslands-conservation/about-us.

[46] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205.

[47] Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 18–19.

[48] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205.

reanimate the world of nature; or, perhaps more accurately, Neo-Pagan religions allow their participants to reenter the primeval world view, to participate in nature in a way that is not possible for most Westerners after childhood."[49] By this logic, the evolving disconnect between humans and nature contributed to the growing population of Neopagans.

The rejection of Christianity and the consciousness of environmental issues all led to eco-feminism. One of the contributors to this is "Goddess Spirituality." Goddess Spirituality evolved from the belief that matriarchies dominated in prehistory. "The Goddess" did not have one distinct look or manifestation. Neopagan feminist Starhawk claimed that "The Goddess" had two manifestations: the moon and the Earth. First, she explained that "Our great symbol for the Goddess is the moon, whose three aspects reflects the three stages in women's lives and whose cycles of waxing and waning coincide with women's menstrual cycles."[50] This symbolism tied the Goddess to women in a deeper sense, both figuratively and literally. Paralleling the Christian idea that God made man in his own image, the Neopagan ideal attached the Goddess to the menstrual cycle, an intimate aspect of womanhood that had long been shamed by the patriarchy. In the same article, Starhawk also claimed, "The Goddess is also the Earth – Mother Earth, who sustains all growing things, who is the body, our bones and cells."[51] This definition of the Goddess pulled her from some unreachable heaven and placed her existence within the natural world. This definition also established the Goddess as a creator who sustains all growing things, representing another significant part of women's sexual health: the womb. Starhawk's definitions attached a central deity to both nature and womanhood. Even with its dubious origins, Goddess Spirituality provided one of the paths that led to eco-feminism by placing the divine within nature.

Eco-feminists believed that an understanding of nature led to understanding the oppression of women and other marginalized groups across the world. Eco-feminism utilized sex and gender as the starting point for criticizing the "isms of domination," referring to sexism, racism, ableism, and ageism.[52] The root of these "isms" was patriarchy. According to eco-feminist philosopher Karen J. Warren, the patriarchy was an unhealthy social system comprised of four parts: faulty beliefs, impaired thinking and language of domination, behaviors of

[49] Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 25.
[50] Starhawk, "Witchcraft and Women's Culture," *Womanspirit Rising*, 263.
[51] Starhawk, "Witchcraft and Women's Culture," *Womanspirit Rising*, 263.
[52] Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, 43.

domination, and unmanageability of life.[53] Essentially, Warren argued that the belief system of the patriarchy led to an obsession with domination over other groups, which made life unmanageable for everyone, not just marginalized groups. That unmanageability just led back to or intensified the patriarchal belief system. Therefore, patriarchy was an unhealthy social system. Early eco-feminism focused on two results of this system: war and rape (especially military rape). Rape makes life unmanageable for women and war makes life unmanageable for both humanity and the ecological systems in which humanity lives. As for the environment, Karen Warren targeted the military as a main contributor to environmental degradation. Warren claimed, "Military action makes life unmanageable… by releasing toxins, pollutants, and radioactive materials into the air, water, and food."[54] With the comparison of bombs to sex and with the domination the military holds over the environment, it made sense that eco-feminists equate rape with environmental destruction and domination at the hands of the patriarchy. When the idea of the Goddess gets tangled into these concepts, Neopagans view environmental destruction as the rape of the Goddess.

Using this lens, spiritual eco-feminists believed that feminist spirituality was essential to eco-feminism. Starhawk even defined eco-feminism as a spiritual movement, saying, "Ecofeminism is a movement with an implicit and sometimes explicit spiritual base… it encompasses a dimension that profoundly challenges our ordinary sense of value, that counters the root stories of our culture and attempts to shift them."[55] In the last part of the quote, Starhawk talked about eco-feminism countering the root stories of our culture and shifting them. This shift aligned with the drive to pull away from Christianity for both environmentalism and Neopaganism. Eco-feminism, like both environmentalism and Neopaganism, aimed to take power away from forces of oppression and spread it more evenly among the population. For some environmentalists, such as Lynn White, Jr., that force was Christianity because of its contribution to the capitalist point of view on ownership and imperialism. For Neopaganism, that force was patriarchy. For eco-feminism, that force encompassed both drivers of oppression, leading to intersectional activism that attracted many leftists.

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[53] Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, 207.

[54] Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, 209.

[55] Starhawk, "Feminist, Earth-Based Spirituality and Ecofeminism," in *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecological Feminism*, ed. Judith Plant (Santa Cruz: New Society Publishers, 1989), 174–185, quoted in Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, 32.

To further the point of environmental consciousness and activism, Helen A. Berger's survey of Neopagans suggested that the majority of Neopagans, like most Americans, lived in metropolitan areas.[56] A safe assumption would be that those living in metropolitan areas would not get much access to nature in general, let alone the natural world. Margot Adler argued that the rise of cities provided a major push for the American population to turn towards Neopaganism, claiming that, "The Pagan revival seems to be a survival response to the common urban and suburban experience of our culture as 'impersonal,' 'neutral,' or 'dead.'"[57] Adler suggested that people turned to Neopaganism as a response to the monoculture found within early suburbs and the destruction of green spaces in cities. Like with Goddess spirituality, Neopagans sought to reconnect with a long-gone connection. In this case, the lost connection was between people and nature.

Conclusion

Between feminism and environmentalism, the ideals of most Neopaganism groups represented an era of new thought in the United States of America in the face of political conflict, one that would parallel the reaction to the twenty-first century's new era of political unrest. Even with the faults of Neopaganism in its origins and its methods, it provided a refuge for many women in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Many victims of patriarchal violence, especially women, sought support after experiencing patriarchal violence, and Neopagan covens welcomed victims with open arms. That alone makes Neopaganism a significant part of the Second Wave of American Feminism.

[56] Helen A. Berger, Evan A. Leach, and Leigh S. Shaffer, *Voices from the Neopagan Census*, 30.
[57] Margot Adler, *Drawing down the Moon*, 25.

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Excerpt from "Honky Tonk Angels:
Feminist Activism through the Lyrical and Personal Expression
of Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton"
by Elyse Wilson

Author's Note: *The following text is a condensed version of an original senior thesis. For the purposes of this publication in the* Hanover Historical Review, *the author has removed the comparative sections concerning Dolly Parton to provide a more concentrated analysis of Loretta Lynn's working-class feminist narrative.*

Since its creation, country music has been a foundational part of American culture. This music has the power to transcend generations, time, and place through relatable, simple tales. Much like other art forms, country music uses its lyrics and construction to promote certain messages or make commentary on the world, nation, culture, or political atmosphere it exists in. Loretta Lynn is an exemplar in the country music space, and her work has transcended generations from the height of her fame in the middle of the twentieth century. Lynn and those like her in country music were activists and created elements of cultural change by challenging stereotypes and traditional gender roles. Lynn has used her platform in a way that trailblazed a path for future female performers and women in America. Her lyrics and life touch on personal topics for her and her audience (such as motherhood, traditional gender roles, and forms of expression) while also promoting activism in a way that brings her listeners to want more instead of alienating or isolating them. Lynn's contributions to music as an artist are celebrated especially for how she has influenced the music world and the political atmosphere by working to create a freer and more equitable future. The main caveat is that Lynn never actually subscribed to the feminist movement. However, through her actions and values, Lynn sought to emphasize the structural injustices women have faced in American society and thus fueled ideas about how women in the next generation could exercise their freedoms. While not being a traditional feminist, Loretta Lynn had a significant impact on the country music industry and the larger conversation and changing societal notions about women.

Lynn's disposition towards activism demonstrates her social position and the larger history of the development of activism within the genre. Mark Allan Jackson's *Honky Tonk on the Left: Progressive Thought in Country Music* examines the nuances of progressive ideas and how they present themselves through lyrics and the actions of performers. The chapter titled "Stand Up to Your Man" focuses on Loretta Lynn's use of her platform to voice her opinions (through her lyrics, interviews, and books) on injustices she experienced and encountered. Jackson's main claim is that Lynn would downplay her subscription to feminist ideals but still make statements that seem to be proudly supporting the movement.[1] For Lynn, her music subscribes to the ideas around feminist change even if she herself was unwilling to acknowledge it publicly. The increasingly "riotous, anti-male stance of the Women's Movement" that developed in the late 1960s was too extreme in comparison to the stances that Lynn took, which is why she could not associate herself with it.[2]

In an article from 1982, author Jimmie Rogers analyzes the type of love and type of women Lynn describes in her songs, which shows how he and other critics regarded her role in the progress of the women's movement. "Images of Women as Depicted in the Messages of Loretta Lynn" highlights the traditional stereotype of men and women within country music and the agreement among popular opinion and music experts that women are often criticized unfairly. One study Rogers discusses focused on 137 songs involving love, relationships, and women's demeanor to determine if Lynn supported common stereotypes of women. The analysis found that only 38 songs had a submissive woman while 99 did not subscribe to this stereotype. In these 99, Lynn challenges the double standard between men and women and highlights the unequal treatment women face in relationships. The article claims that Lynn's best demonstration of these demands for equality is through her song "We've Come A Long Way Baby" where the female narrator insists on receiving "sexual satisfaction." Additionally, the song conveys Lynn's outspoken belief in women's right to abortion.[3] In the end, Rogers claims that Lynn was not an active spokesperson for the women's liberation movement and even tried to take herself away from the spotlight on these issues. Even so, her lyrics tell the real story. Although she may want

[1] Mark Allan Jackson, "Stand Up to Your Man: The Working Class Feminism of Loretta Lynn," in *The Honky Tonk on the Left: Progressive Thought in Country Music*, edited by Mark Allan Jackson (University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 117.

[2] Jackson, "Stand Up to Your Man," 104.

[3] Jimmie N. Rogers, "Images of Women as Depicted in the Messages of Loretta Lynn," *Studies in Popular Culture,* no. 5 (1982): 47.

to take herself out of this campaign, her music focuses on the problems that many women face, and "when those women…elect to attend to a Loretta Lynn song they often hear about females who are *not* described as submissive, dependent, and supportive," which in turn is activism for the women's liberation movement.[4]

Lynn acknowledges the difference in her stardom and her reality through her song "Success." In the song, the singer laments about her partner's success and how she has become "second place… since fame and fortune knocked our door."[5] Writing semi-autobiographically, from her husband's point of view, Lynn recognizes how she has to spend so much time away from her family and that her "success has made a failure of her home."[6] Lynn regrets how little time she was able to spend at home but knows that her success is creating her family's wealth. She holds stake in the gendered constructs of the mid twentieth century, which say that women should not be the sole breadwinner. Her commitment to her family reflects the new wave feminist belief that women can have the success they desire while also deserving the experience they want within the home. While the feminist movement wants to empower women to have social and occupational opportunities, women still have the choice to take a more traditional role, but feminists stress that traditional roles should be a choice, not something assigned to women based on their gender. When Lynn was first discovered, she already had a husband and children and could have easily not taken the opportunity to become a performer, but nevertheless she did. Lynn uses her fabricated and exaggerated depiction as a traditional southern woman to relate to her audience, while also defying gender norms by being the main contributor to her family.

Lynn's statements and actions as a popular figure create space for other women to feel comfortable expressing their opinions on the circumstances of their lives. One of Lynn's most popular songs, "The Pill," tells the story of a woman who, now with access to the birth control pill, has the freedom and confidence to stand up to her husband because she is no longer burdened by pregnancy. With direct lyrics, including "I'm making up for all those years now that I got the pill" and "this incubator is overused because you've kept it filled," Lynn paints a very realistic picture of what women have gone through and how necessary birth control is. In her

[4] Rogers, "Images of Women," 47–48.

[5] Johnny Mullins, "Success," performed by Loretta Lynn, *Honky Tonk Girl* (Bradley's Barn, Owen Bradley, 1962).

[6] Ruth A. Banes, "Mythology in Music: The Ballad of Loretta Lynn," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 16, no.3 (1985): 288.

song, the husband has been "crowing how you and your hens play" (implying infidelity) and forcing his wife to bear and raise many children while not being a participant in the household. The birth control pill is the key to the woman's liberation because she now has a choice in the number of children she has, contributing to the success of the household itself by reducing the number of children needing to be raised. The song was originally recorded in 1972, a year before the landmark decision *Roe vs. Wade,* and was released three years later. It quickly became controversial and was banned from country radio stations after it hit No. 5 on the Billboard Hot Country charts. Its popularity and controversy led some pop stations to start playing the song and contributed to its spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart at No. 70.[7] The aversion of country radio to promoting this song aligns with traditional values the genre typically subscribes to. Lynn's acceptance and promotion of the birth control pill was too much for the men running these radio stations to bear as it reflected a changing society and descriptions of women's liberation and choice. Her commitment to making conversations about the pill more mainstream contributed to a greater social acceptance of a woman's right to choose.

Lynn's promotion of the birth control pill gave women more freedom to express their beliefs and goals for their life while still not rejecting tradition. This song was wildly popular with female audiences as it allowed for conversation about female sexuality, reproductive health, and the power dynamics within marriages. Lynn herself said she was not reliant on contraception. However, when she was having children the birth control pill was not available. While she does not regret the children she had, she believes she would not have had as many if the pill had been accessible sooner.[8] Lynn recognizes how the availability of the pill as well as comprehensive sex education would help women in situations like hers (bearing children with a very dominant husband in a working-class household). In the end, her position on birth control was controversial for the times, but she was willing to take that position, even though her being the matriarch of a large family made her an unlikely representative of the movement.

Songs like "The Pill" exist as examples of how Lynn, and other artists in her realm, could poke fun at the hypocrisy they deal with. Naomi Weisstein was a feminist critic during the women's movement of the 1970s. She studied women's humor in feminist media and highlighted

[7] Beverly Keel, "Why Loretta Lynn's 'The Pill' Is Sadly More Relevant Than Ever (Guest Commentary)," *Billboard: Country,* Oct. 5, 2022, https://www.billboard.com/music/country/loretta-lynn-the-pill-relevant-1235150781/.

[8] Jackson, "Stand Up to Your Man," 114.

how women present themselves to the world. She explains that "women's charm has depended on our passivity and muteness as well as on our acceptance of the myth that it is in our nature to suffer."[9] This is the same message that Lynn uses in her music. While Lynn still subscribes to some more traditional notions of women though her family life, her songs reflect a different attitude about what she believes a woman can be. Lynn has shown that she is not afraid to speak about what she believes in and is outspoken about the unfair limitations that women have been subjected to.[10] Weisstein recognizes the emotional toll and anger that women carry by having systematic hinderances to their liberty; they can in turn use humor to criticize those who instigate and contribute to this system of oppression. She continues by saying "once women begin to develop a sense of shared oppression …with the surfacing of anger comes the realization that sarcastic humor can serve as one way for women to regain some measure of social control and thus reduce the feeling of personal and group powerlessness."[11] Lynn's ability to bring women together in this way can be seen in the public reactions to "The Pill." Lynn was able to speak about a controversial topic and help women to "reject the myth that it is a wife's duty to produce one child after another with no choice in the matter."[12] The intersection of humor also speaks to the creation of women-only conversations and spaces within the public sphere. Traditionally women-only conversations took place in domestic spaces like the kitchen under the guise of some domestic task. Because of the influence of the women's movement and Lynn's music, these conversations can happen more publicly even if radio stations tried to ban the song from being played. Even while Lynn did not directly subscribe to the women's movement, her actions and music connected to feminist goals by creating a place for conversations on women's agency.

Lynn's hit "Coal Miner's Daughter" best represents the dualism within Lynn's life as an agent of change while also being a member of traditional Appalachian culture. Ruth Banes unpacks this when describing how southern artists create the mythology of the South: "Southern mythology is similarly represented in the conflicting dualities…: poverty and affluence, traditional and liberated female roles, Appalachia and America."[13] Lynn reminisces on the life she grew up in, describing the hardships her family faced, with her father working in the mines

[9] Suzanne L. Bunkers, "Why Are These Women Laughing? The Power and Politics of Women's Humor," *Studies in American Humor* 4, no.1 (1985): 87.
[10] Jackson, "Stand Up to Your Man," 117.
[11] Bunkers, "Why Are These Women Laughing?" 87.
[12] Bunkers, "Why Are These Women Laughing?" 88.
[13] Banes, "Mythology in Music," 284.

and her mother raising eight children. She does not lament about their circumstances but tells her family's story with a sense of nostalgia. When Lynn writes songs about her own life, she reflects both the truth and the narrative she wants others to hear. While she claims to sing authentically, memory is not always what it seems to be. People can sometimes remember events from their childhoods through a haze of nostalgia because they were unaware of their families' true circumstances. In "Coal Miner's Daughter," Lynn sings about how her family only had enough money to buy one pair of shoes per child per year: "But in the wintertime we'd all get a brand new pair / From a mail order catalog / Money made from selling a hog."[14] The song goes on to say that Lynn's father always made sure they had the money, even if she did not know where it came from. These details add to the narrative that is twentieth-century Appalachia, where survival is dependent on the collaborative efforts of everyone involved despite a culture of rugged individualism. In Butcher Holler, the people cared about the well-being of their neighbors and worked for the greater good of all. Through "Coal Miner's Daughter," Lynn expresses how this type of community shaped her life and how over time the world outside Appalachia has caused this comradery to no longer exist. "Coal Miner's Daughter" is a critique of a different kind than that of her other songs because it focuses on the issues in a changing America, such as how rural communities are being transformed and how the nation is losing its sense of community.

The public reaction to Lynn's songs and the reluctance of radio stations to play them proves how "against the grain" her ideas were for the time, even if they seem obvious now. Although Lynn denied being a "libber," her popularity and confidence to make these statements helped to "set up a strong line of resistance to the masculinized world of country music and opened doors for…female country singers who were…every bit as successful as men."[15] Even though Lynn personally does not assign this label to herself, she demonstrates her opinions through her actions. She is working within the confines of the music industry, which historically does not favor female artists, and she takes a stance within the industry, becoming an agent of change and activist for women in the future, as her music has already shown. Through her lyrics and presentation, Lynn becomes a symbol for women and for the southern working class while

[14] Loretta Lynn, "Coal Miner's Daughter," performed by Loretta Lynn, *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Bradley's Barn, Owen Bradley, 1971).

[15] Anderson, "After All He's Just a Man," 96.

still being contradictory in nature. Banes describes Lynn as endorsing values that are "distinctively southern" with an "emphasis upon…. loyalty to family and place... and an individualistic morality."[16] Her lyrics represent how she remembers her own life making her uniquely able to describe the inner thoughts and feelings of her audience.

[16] Banes, "Mythology in Music," 284.

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