The Journal

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Dartmouth College

Spring 2013
The Journal is a biannual publication for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Dartmouth College. We showcase the strongest creative and analytical work produced by current MALS students as well as MALS alumni. We believe by selecting and integrating work from all four of the program’s concentrations, we’ll promote intellectual engagement, fruitful questioning, and honest discourse within the realm of liberal studies.

We are currently accepting submissions in all MALS concentrations. We are looking for creative (short story, short non-fiction, poetry, photos) as well as analytical pieces. If you have any questions, comments, or are interested in writing a feature piece, please email TheJournal@Dartmouth.EDU
# Table of Contents

**LETTER FROM THE EDITORS & CONTRIBUTORS**

**COVER PHOTO**  
**TYLER WALTON**

**OUTSIDER**  
**PAOLA ORTEGA**  
*Fiction*  
11

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UN**  
**KEELY BADGER**  
*Global/Cultural*  
23

**WALKING WOUNDED: SOLDIERS IN TRANSITION**  
**JONATHAN SAVAGE**  
*Oral History*  
38

**MAPS**  
**EMILY RICHARDSON**  
*Poetry*  
50

**DESIRE, DIARY, & TIRESIAS’S CONFESSION**  
**GEREVICH ANDRÁS**  
*Poetry*  
52-54

**TELL THE WIND MY SECRETS**  
**LAURIE LAKER**  
*Poetry*  
56
AT THE VACANT, DIRTY SHEETS
MATTHEW BERKSHIRE
Poetry
57

TAINO
BRIDGET HERRERA
Poetry
58

WHY I HATE HANG-UPS
CINNAMON SPEAR
Poetry
60

“GOD IS SHAKING ME”
SEBASTIAN GALBO
Global/Cultural
62

JULIE FOUDY
STILL ADVOCATING FOR TITLE IX
JACQUELINE WILLIAMS
Here at Dartmouth
77

DETENTION
NIUSHA SHODJA
Fiction
82

“MAXIMUM FEASIBLE PARTICIPATION”
KERI WOLFE
Global/Cultural
90
Dear Reader,

When we first met to discuss our vision for *The Journal* last June, we had many questions: How would we expand readership? How would we become a stronger presence on campus? How would we get more submissions? How would we become the respected and competitive journal the MALS program needed and deserved? We set out to not only find the answers, but implement them. We are pleased to announce *The Journal* now has an ISSN. It is also sitting on shelves at Duke, Stanford, Indiana, South Bend, and Skidmore. Our contributors have entered contests and they have gone on to publish their research. For this issue alone, we received over one hundred submissions in fiction, screen plays, poetry, essays, reviews, ethnographic studies, analyses, and photography. In short, *The Journal* is taking flight.

Therefore we wish to thank those who made this entire enterprise possible: Dr. Donald Pease and Wole Ojurongbe, who gave us the guidance and support needed to get off the ground and maintain upward momentum; Michael Beahan, for joining our team and backing our enthusiasm and vision; Carole Webber and Amy Gallagher for all their wonderful help and patience; the professors who encouraged students to submit; those who let us speak in their classes, meetings, and seminars. A big thank you to our submitters and our readers, for without both we would not be moving forward.
In this issue you will find poems about desire, lacking, inability and unknowing. You will find stories on identity and analyses on how to achieve a better world. As we read through the submissions, we began to see that each piece, in its own unique way, wants something. Wants freedom. Wants peace. Wants to move. Wants to help. Wants to fix. Wants to improve. We found ourselves thinking, isn’t that where all change starts? Where potential lives? In the moment where a want is recognized?

Because Jamaal and I will be graduating in June, it is with great sentiment that we say good bye. We hope you enjoyed these past two issues; we had a great time working with so many wonderful people, reading through so many smart submissions, and designing and publishing a truly unique journal.

Sincerely,
Katie & Jamaal
Contributors

**Paola Ortega** was born in La Romana, Dominican Republic, and migrated to Miami at the age of four. Growing up in Miami informs a lot of her writing. She received her B.A. in Women’s Studies and Criminology from the University of Florida in 2011. She is currently concentrating in creative writing. When she wrote “Outsider,” she wanted to capture a young Dominican girl’s grappling with race, identity, and self-awareness as they are shaped by the cultural diversity of Miami and informed by her family’s immigrant experience. She hoped that “Outsider” would invite the reader to recall his or her own earliest encounters with the moral dilemmas and social dynamics that he/she is forced to grapple with long after childhood has passed.

**Keely Badger** Focuses on the role of the United Nations’ efforts to champion international law and diplomacy around universal human rights, peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention. Her research and scholarship has taken many forms. Keely’s current thesis draws from the emerging discourse on youth politics in the 21st Century, bringing a critical discourse analysis to the UN’s stated goals of youth empowerment and international participation in the UN forum, and the fundamental gap between implementing these stated aims, from words to deeds. Keely brings her energies and talents to a summer position at Human Rights Watch at their Development and Outreach Division in Los Angeles, CA. She hopes to merge her academic and professional pursuits through a JD in International Human Rights Law.

**Jonathan Savage** grew up in the high desert of Scottsdale, Arizona. He completed a bachelor’s honors degree at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, where he developed a passion for the English Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century. As a graduate student in the MALS program at Dartmouth, he has focused his research on the works of the influential British author Samuel Johnson and on the oral histories of United States soldiers returning home from combat overseas. Beyond academics, he has been fortunate to play a role in assisting people with fewer opportunities than himself, serving as a student teacher and mentor in an inner-city elementary school, as a youth leader in an organization committed to urban service projects, and as the Chair of Philanthropy of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity. He enjoys snowboarding, playing sports, reading, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.
Emily Richardson attended Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. Before coming to Dartmouth, she was a high school English teacher for four years, happily spending her days convincing teenagers that books are, in fact, pretty cool. In her free time, she enjoys climbing mountains and exploring the woods, baking cookies, and playing with her two dogs.

Gerevich András was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1976. He graduated with a degree in English Literature from the Eötvös University of Budapest (ELTE), and later studied Creative Writing at MALS on a Fulbright Scholarship. His third degree is in Screenwriting from the National Film and Television School in Britain. Gerevich published three books of poetry in his native Hungarian: Átadom a pórázt (Handing Over the Leash, 1997), Férfiak (Men, 2005), Barátok (Friends, 2009) and is also published widely in journals. A book of his poems in English translation, Tiresias’s Confession, came out in 2008. His work has been translated into over a dozen languages. He has been a guest at a number of international literary and poetry festivals, and several artists’ residencies. Besides writing poetry Gerevich scripted several prize-winning short films produced in the UK, and his plays were performed in Budapest and read in London. He also published essays and stories, and translated a number of English-speaking poets into Hungarian, including Seamus Heaney and Frank O’Hara, and a book by the filmmaker David Lynch. He was editor for two literary journals: Kalligram in Budapest and Chroma in London, an assistant producer for the radio program Poetry by Post for the BBC World Service, and was also the chair of the József Attila Kör, the Hungarian young writers’ association from 2006 for a three year term. He has taught courses in screenwriting at the Moholy Nagy University of Arts and the Eötvös University of Budapest. Now he freelances, working as a poet, screenwriter, translator and journalist.

Laurie Laker Originally from England, Laurie spent his childhood between the undulating shires of Somerset and Devon, and the rockier parts of Colorado. He arrived at Dartmouth this past fall term, having graduated in May 2012 from Colorado College where he majored in English and minored in Political Science and History. Prior to attending Colorado College, he attended the United World College of the American West (UWC-USA), where he lived and studied the International Baccalaureate curriculum with 200 students from over 80 countries.
Here at Dartmouth he is a first-year MALS student on the General Studies track. Post-MALS he hopes to move either onto a PhD in English or Rhetoric or into the job market in journalism or communications.

Matthew Berkshire is originally from Miami, FL. He is drawn to a variety of literature and poetry, and is currently experimenting with both very short and very long poems. He would also describe himself as a lunch / sandwich enthusiast.

Bridget Herrera is a part-time MALS student juggling life as a cashier at CVS and as a full-time single mother. Her poem, “Tiano,” was her way of paying tribute to her Taino ancestors, the first Native Americans to encounter the full onslaught of conquest and colonization by Columbus and his entourage in the Caribbean. She has a Bachelor’s degree from Dickinson College in the field of German Studies and she created a computerized program in Germanic Mythology as her senior thesis. During her tenure in the MALS program, her academic focus has been creative writing. Via this discipline, she has learned an eclectic style of writing, which includes dabbling in poetry, oral history, fiction and non-fiction. Each course has helped her evolve intellectually by providing a varying pallet of literary genres in which to develop her voice and style while probing deeper introspection. She is currently working on her thesis, a memoir entitled Root Awakenings.

Cinnamon Spear is a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. She grew up on the Reservation in southeastern Montana and attended Dartmouth College, where she majored in Native American Studies. She tried Montana State University’s Post-Bacc Pre-Med program but soon quit and returned to Dartmouth to study creative writing and share her voice. Writing is Cinnamon’s sanctuary, freedom, and also her duty. In her life, she flies back and forth between poverty and privilege; in this exposed bi-cultured hybrid state, she feels it is her responsibility to teach the world about the Northern Cheyenne people, as well as teach her people about the world.

Sebastian Galbo grew up in Williamsville, New York where he attended Niagara University. There he earned a B.A. in English and Philosophy. He is a first-year MALS student on the General Studies Track. He will spend this summer working as a graduate researcher at Yale University’s Center for Bioethics. In his spare time he enjoys listening to opera.
Jacqueline Williams was a student athlete at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, on the women’s tennis team. Her scholarship, which afforded her the opportunity to move from Australia to study in the United States, was immensely beneficial and something that would not have occurred without Title IX. After her career as a student athlete, she became a journalist. Jacqueline’s motivation to do so was to write about social issues, including women’s rights issues.

Niusha Shodja was born in the US but grew up and lived in Iran until 2010, when she came back to study creative writing at Dartmouth. She is in her last term of the MALS program and will soon be submitting her thesis, a collection of fictional social-political and familial short stories, all based in modern day Tehran.

Keri Wolfe is a third-year MALS student in the Globalization track. Keri had been working in the field of early childhood education, but recently served as a teaching assistant for Dartmouth’s Writing 2-3 freshmen program. Her research revolves around health social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and their emphases on patients’ lived experiences as valid healthcare knowledge. Keri hopes to pursue a doctoral degree in American history and social movement studies. She wrote this piece, “Maximum Feasible Participation,” for her summer independent study on women and welfare reform in the twentieth century with Dr. Julia Rabig.
OUTSIDER

PAOLA ORTEGA

There were no white kids in Mrs. Lopez’ third grade class. There were no white kids in all of Maya Angelou Elementary, at least none that I can remember. Not even a young white teacher fresh out of college with naïve hopes of changing lives in the inner city of Miami, Florida. The whitest student there, besides the occasional European-looking Argentineans, was Jessica Falcon, the Puerto Rican paraplegic with two disturbingly narrow flesh-peggs for legs, and exceptionally large breasts for a third-grader.

It was a week before Open House; we were supposed to be on our best behavior. Otherwise, Mrs. Lopez threatened to shame us by letting any parent know of any recent trespasses.

“Remember,” she had warned, “I get to see your parenths neth week.”

I wasn’t sure if Mrs. Lopez really had a lisp, or if the saliva that always accumulated till it settled at the corners of her broad, thin lips didn’t let her pronounce the s very well, or if saliva welled up because of her glistening braces, or if her braces glistened because of all the saliva—either way, Mrs. Lopez had a surprisingly pretty face, and the bits of spit that flew out her with heated reprimands from time to time never ceased to amuse us.

“Don’t even breathe too loud,” she said, and she rushed out for some unforeseen occurrence, leaving us with a charged silence waiting to break and with the great responsibility of sitting alone and adult-less in a classroom.

I was waiting for someone to scream and trigger a bout of laughter, or for one of the boys to bravely stand on a table and start dancing for our amusement. It had been a groggy morning of times tables and long division. No one moved, more so out of boredom than the
We must have been an ugly, awkward bunch of kinky ringlets and missing teeth accustomed, by then, to no longer being centers of attention for gawking adults. Having left that place to our cuter younger siblings we were cast away, forgotten in the slowed growth of pre-pubescence. I was watching the plain wall clock with the red second-hand. This one didn’t tick. It just glided smoothly over the digits, aging us. I wondered how much time there was between each second; wasn’t that time too? A sneeze. Stifled giggles. Still no Mrs. Lopez.

I looked down at the folder on my desk labeled, “Mrs. Lopez’ TEAM Class: Teaching Enrichment Activities for Minority Students.” That had been the first year, 1998, that I had been introduced to the word minority. I felt special to have made the TEAM class. I felt smart. We were a smart bunch strategically placed in one class because of all our smartness. That’s what I was told.

I thought about opening my Nancy Drew book but let my gaze bounce around in boredom instead. It landed on Vanessa St. Hilaire, the tall Haitian girl with really long fingernails and ashy ankles. She had a head of bushy hair deep brown that faded into honey at the ends like cockroach wings. She cried for everything. If the teacher yelled at her, she cried, if somebody called her ugly, she cried, if someone said she was a crybaby, she’d cry and everyone would laugh at her, especially the boys. I only laughed sometimes. She would let out these high-pitched shrieks in her crackly voice that almost seemed feigned; it always made everybody laugh harder. I felt sorry for her. She was sitting there pathetically writing in the Lisa Frank journal she always carried—the one with the bright rainbows and unicorns—pressing down on the page and choking her pencil so hard I thought she’d either snap it or write herself into a broken tip. She habitually held her face about an inch from the page and wrinkled her forehead in effort and concentration that, frankly, were hardly necessary. So I never gave her the pleasure of asking what she was writing about nor complimenting the bright journal she hugged against her chest everywhere she went, even to P.E. and the bathroom!

The noon October sun blasted through the windows reminding us that there were still three hours before we could be freed into the noise of bustling 17th Avenue. The Caribbean street vendors would be yelling.
at people that the limes were eight for a dollar. Traffic was always slow enough on the way home to give me time to study the names of—Cookie’s Salon—every Dominican hair—Milly’s Unisex—Bachata Barbers—salon and barbershop that lined the noisy strip.

The room was bright and warm. Inviting. The sunlight made the hairs on my arms glister in a gold hue. The AC made them erect and sharp like the tiny spikes on roach legs. I let my head down onto my arm and watched Rafael Acosta, a yellow boy with yellow kinks, entertain himself by tilting his head down and opening and closing his mouth repeatedly touching his chin to his chest. Ten years later we would end up at the same university; he’d go off to become a prominent lawyer.

“What a weirdo,” I thought.

The other boys thought he was effeminate so I was ashamed that we were from the same place. My mom spotted him once when she picked me up after school and was amazed by his features. “What a jabao!” she had exclaimed—that’s what you’re called in Dominican Spanish when almost everything about you is Black except your skin. I rolled my eyes away from Rafael Acosta and his jaw, away from Vanessa St. Hilaire and her long pencil-like fingers, away from the tiny gold roach spikes on my arms still erect from the cold air, back to the red sweeping second-hand that had made us about nine minutes and twenty-one seconds older.

It had taken me longer than I liked to admit to learn how to tell time on analog clocks in the second grade. Numbers made me anxious. I was never confident at math but I was still the smartest girl in the class, at least, according to everyone else I was. I got straight A’s. I must admit that Gina Jean—another Haitian girl—was the other smartest girl in the class; she also got straight A’s. She wore a neatly ironed chemise every day. I was a lot more tomboyish. I always chose to wear a dark green school t-shirt with a scroll emblem and “the mighty poets” written on it. I secretly thought Gina might be smarter than me. She drew better than I did and seemed more confident in math. After college she would become a famous illustrator of children’s books. I was always secretly impressed by her projects in art class and no matter how hard I tried I could never draw or paint as well as she did.

Eleven minutes. The second-hand was sweeping over the six. My classmates were getting restless. Khoury Smith, the black boy with the
long eyelashes, my crush, sitting across from me, had started complaining loudly about boredom. Arcelly Martinez had tried unsuccessfully to trigger laughter by making animal noises. I was growing even more annoyed with Vanessa St. Hilaire who had now clamped her teeth onto her bottom lip as she wrote and—

“Whose parenths am I going to have a chat with?” Mrs. Lopez’ voice made my thoughts scatter like roaches at the switch of a light bulb.

She had poked her head in surreptitiously, as if to catch someone dancing on tables before they had a chance to get down. “You all are such wonderful students. I want you all to say hi to our new classmate, Vannessa Johnson! Now we have two Vannessas.” Mrs. Lopez held the girl’s hand up as if she were a boxing champion. There were no white kids at Maya Elementary so when Vannessa Johnson strolled in that afternoon wearing a flowered dress down to her heels with a fuzzy sweater draped over her shoulders and her long strawberry-blonde hair and pink cheeks to match, sea-blue eyes and freckled nose, we eyed her as if she were a rare species.

I decided that she wasn’t exactly pretty but she had all the storybook features that we knew made people stop to exclaim how lovely she was, the kind of features worthy of being in the black and white sample photos that came with the picture frames at the dollar store. I instantly felt browner. I used to stare at those pictures of little white girls angelically sitting among trees with their pretty dresses and flowing hair and melodramatically wonder if my bushy pony tail and me could ever be delicate enough to sit in flowery frames on the shelves of Walmarts and Walgreens and dollar stores across America.

“She’s pretty,” said Ada Vasquez, the Nicaraguan girl with blonde, straight hair deader than an animal carcass. Sure she was white, but Ada had just come to the states from Nicaragua a year before; she was one of us. I never really identified with the Nicaraguans, the Hondurans, or the other Central or South American kids. They had straight hair and their Spanish was very different from mine. I didn’t readily identify with the African American kids either, their English was better than mine, except sometimes they stretched or cut words in ways us “Spanish” kids knew our teacher disapproved of. However, people like Vannessa Johnson subconsciously forced us into unity.

“She’s very pretty,” I heard Vanessa St. Hilaire echo ingratiatingly
from across the room.

“She’s not that pretty,” whispered Rafael Acosta, “she got a lot of spots on her face. You think she’s rich?”

Khoury Smith paused his light drumming on the table, “Yeah, she prolly lives in a big house with a pool.”

I thought about the small apartment I lived in where I shared a bedroom with my younger brother and baby sister, and my grouchy great-grandmother who never let us touch her bed. “You know, just because she’s white doesn’t mean she’s rich, Khoury,” I corrected him as I eyed the newcomer’s dirty book bag and raggedy frilly socks.

“Good afternoon everyone,” Vannessa said boldly as Mrs. Lopez led her to the corner seat at Bus Table. She slumped onto the chair and blew air up with her bottom lip jutting out. Her sigh ruffled her bangs and slightly disturbed the laminated picture of the yellow school bus hanging pendulously from a string of yarn that Mrs. Lopez had taped to the ceiling. I heard stifled giggles from Pen Table. I was amazed by her confident address to the class.

“Tell us where you’re from,” Mrs. Lopez asked in an excessively kind manner.

“Utah,” she smiled.

“Wow, that’s far. Do you know where it is on the map?” the teacher asked.

Vannessa nodded smilingly and impressed everyone by making her way to the board and drawing the unique shape of the state of Utah. That, frankly, was hardly necessary.

I agonized for the next few days. She, the Invader, would raise her hand with her palm turned toward herself. Like a somberly wise Greek statue or some wise-looking figure, she would study the lines on her palm while she patiently waited to be called on. And she always acted delightedly surprised when Mrs. Lopez picked her out of the group to answer questions.

“What a weirdo,” I thought. She always gave perfectly correct answers. Every time she had to use the bathroom she would ask politely, “May I use the ladies’ room?” I found it annoying that she would ask to go to the ladies’ room when the bathroom in our classroom was for both boys and girls. I learned the word unisex that year. My English had gotten
better. I was not so afraid of school anymore like I was when we first migrated from the island to Miami.

I wasn’t the only one who noticed that Vanessa was a weird creature. Some of the boys called her freckleface. They laughed if she tripped. None of the girls seemed interested in being her friend except, of course, Vanessa St. Hilaire.

“We have the same name,” Vanessa had approached her on her first day.

“Oh really?” Vanessa Johnson had replied rather indifferently, “my middle name is Marie just like my great-great grandmother who died when I was five. I remember her.”

Vanessa St. Hilaire was impressed. On her fourth day in our class, the Invader gave a wrong answer during the multiplication lesson. I heard Khoury Smith mutter, “About time she gets something wrong.” I was secretly delighted. On the fifth day, Gina came up to us as we gathered for a kickball game during P.E. and reported what she had witnessed:

“I was sitting next to the new girl and I saw that she wrote in her journal, ‘Dear Journal, I’m in my new school but the kids here don’t like me.’”

Ada Vasquez put her hand over mouth and laughed.

“May I use the ladies’ room?” Khoury Smith batted his eyelashes mockingly.

“She’s weird,” Arcelly Martinez observed. We all concurred. I reveled. We made fun of her in our bad, high-pitched, accented Englishes.

On the sixth day of her invasion, we worked on essays about the trash cycle. I read my paper out loud and received the usual “very good” from my teacher. Then, it was her turn. Vanessa Johnson stood up and read her essay in perfect English. I was devastated.

“Some trash goes through a recycling process, other trash goes to a landfill, and then the cycle begins all over again.” She received an enthusiastic “excellent!” that bruised my ego although I could not help but feel impressed that Vanessa used big words like “process” and “cycle” and uttered them in perfect white American English. She was threatening my throne with her correctness.

Alas, a week of agony had passed. I found some temporary relief in the prospect of showing off all my A-plus work to my dad at Open House.
My mom had to work at night and would not make it. I didn’t mind. She didn’t speak English as well as my father did and would probably embarrass me with her accent and her giddy remarks.

“Hello all, I am so happy to finally meet you, you have wonderful kids,” Mrs. Lopez had started her speech. I was highly embarrassed and annoyed that we had entered the classroom after everyone had already been seated. “See I told you we were gonna be late,” I whispered to my father. He half-smiled at me and wrinkled his brow at my unwarranted distress.

I looked around at all the neatly ironed, perfumed adults. I found it funny how elementary school teachers and Open House events were of such serious repute for immigrant parents. My mom had licked her thumb and tried to clean a spot on my face before I left the house but I didn’t let her. I shuddered at the thought in disgust. She had fussed over my wrinkled blouse.

“It’s just Open House,” I had told her brushing her hand away from my face.

“Pues, vete con tu cara sucia y camisa arrugá!” My mother yelled in disgust, her pointy nose jutting forward like an index finger. She decided that my punishment would be to let me get to school with a dirty face and a wrinkled blouse.

I overheard Arcelly’s mom whisper to her in a familiar tone, “Oye, tenias que haber planchado esa blusa, chica.” She scolded her daughter in Cuban Spanish.

A raised white hand, palm facing away from me, caught my attention. I had forgotten all about the Outsider’s existence.

“May I use the ladies’ room outside in the hall? There’s someone currently occupying the restroom in here,” Vannessa asked politely.

The immigrant parents stared at her with smiling eyes as if they were looking at an angel. I noticed that she had been wearing the same dress from earlier that day—the black one with the floral pattern of red roses and dark green leaves. As she quietly stood up and exited the classroom, I saw no parents that I could match with the Outsider.

Later, as parents mingled and walked around the classroom oohing and aahing at our paintings and projects, I went up to Gina Jean and inquired about Vannessa Johnson’s parents. Gina always seemed to know
everything.

“I heard she stayed here after school with Mrs. Lopez helping her fix the classroom for Open House tonight,” Gina whispered. I felt a sting of envy at all those hours she had gotten to spend intimately with Mrs. Lopez. “Her parents didn’t come,” Gina continued, “I heard Mrs. Lopez tell Mrs. Padrón that she was going to take the new girl home because no one could pick her up today.”

I wasn’t sure if it was just plain curiosity, or if it was a tinge of pleasure that I experienced at the thought of Vannessa Johnson not being so dear to her parents that they would possibly neglect to pick her up from school. Either way, I decided I would ask her myself why she never went home. A slight satisfaction came over me at the thought of the embarrassment my question would cause her.

“Thank you all for coming tonight,” Mrs. Lopez was saying her last few goodbyes and parents and children were filing out of the room. It was only when my father suggested that we leave that I realized that Vannessa Johnson had not returned from her trip to the bathroom.

“Daddy,” I casually informed him, “I’m going to the bathroom in the hallway, I can meet you by the front doors of the school.”

My father, who had grown rather impatient and eager to get home to a cup of coffee and late-night news, agreed and said he would pull the car up to the curb. He was completely oblivious to my scheme. I would find Vannessa and watch her cheeks turn even brighter red as she explained why no one picked her up from school that day.

Maya’s dusky halls seemed even longer in the evening. As I turned the corner, I could not see the end of the hallway in the dimming sunlight. The cream-colored walls bore the shadowy patterns of leaves from the trees planted in the terrace, and the branches cast sharp, shadowy claws onto the walls. At that moment, something like a small seed landed on my head and rolled onto the grass. I decided the wind had carried it. I felt like running. I walked briskly past the rose bushes and pushed through the door into the bright white light of the first-floor bathroom. It was empty. I walked back outside into the shadows. The faint chatter of parents and the distant laughter and stomping of children running toward the front doors of the school made me feel far away and alone. I shivered.

I had given up on finding Vannessa when I heard yelps and what
sounded like flesh banging on metal. The sounds were coming from the second floor. I shot up the stairs and stopped halfway afraid of what I would see when I emerged from behind the wall.

“Help!” The cries had grown more frantic. “Someone help!”

I thought I’d find some dark figure trying to kidnap Vannesssa: every third-grader’s worst nightmare. I gulped heavily with every step, placed my hand over my chest to calm the tremors, and peered from behind the wall. I retreated.

Vannessa Johnson was on her knees. She had gotten her head stuck between the metal railings. She was banging furiously on the thin iron bars. She’d take turns between yelling and trying to pull the bars apart with her bare hands. The tremors in my chest eased. I almost laughed. I’m not sure if I almost laughed out of nervousness or from the sight of Vannessa Johnson trying to pull metal railings apart. It seemed as if she had been trying to get a better look at the roses and had pushed her head through the metal bars to look out over the terrace.

“How dumb,” I thought happily. I stood behind the wall at the top of the stairs with my hand over my mouth half stifling a desire to laugh and half deriding myself for my childish ambivalence.

All the classrooms on the second floor were empty. I wondered if Mrs. Lopez would come up looking for her or leave her. No one would come this way until Mr. Parchman, the janitor, swept the hall at six in the morning.

“I should go tell someone,” I thought.

“I hear you there, why won’t you help me!” Vannessa yelled, and realizing that she was aware of my presence, I felt the pounding in my chest start up again.

“Had she seen me?” I wondered terrified.

She shrieked. I peered from behind the wall. She had turned sideways and had succeeded in getting her bony left shoulder and half of her torso through the two metal bars that had first mercilessly trapped her strawberry-blonde head.

“Help me I can’t breathe,” she was crying now.

“Oh my God,” my chest pounded. If she kept pushing through she would dive right into the thorny rose bushes on the first floor. I noticed the red second-hand gliding over the digits on the wall clock in Mrs. Padron’s
classroom. The lights were on inside the empty room. Another loud shriek suddenly shook me out of my panicked quandary. I shot back down the stairs, ran past the first-floor bathroom.

“Hey! What are you doing,” Vanessa St. Hilaire had emerged from behind the bathroom door pouring bright white light onto the dark hallway walls. I had brushed past her and made her drop the journal she held against her chest.

I ran. I didn’t stop running until I got to the passenger door of my father’s station wagon. He had brought the car up to the curb and was impatiently waiting for me. I waited an eternity of seconds for him to press the unlock button, slumped into the seat, and with my bottom lip sticking out, let out a heavy puff.

“What took so long?” My father asked. I searched for answers in the lines on the palm of my hand. My nails peeked over the tips of my fingers like crescent moons. I could feel the skin behind my ears heating up, my heart was convulsing in my chest. “What’s wrong?” he probed.

“Is this a heart attack?” I thought.

“I said, what’s wrong?” He asked accusingly as if he knew I had just committed a grave crime. Not responding when he addressed me was always an egregious offense. Would she die? Would one of the janitors pass by early in the morning only to find bloody limbs sticking out of the rose bushes? We were almost five blocks away from Maya when the sounds of sirens thrust me into greater, more terrible alarm. I lowered myself in the passenger seat until the world beyond the glass was hardly visible, and pressed on the imaginary gas pedal under my right foot. Would Vanessa St. Hilaire find her and then accuse me of abandoning Vanessa Johnson? More convulsions in my chest. I’m gonna die, I thought. At least when they come looking for me I’ll be dead and everyone will feel sorry for me too. I thought about Vanessa’s screams. I thought about my mother’s sobs when she came out to greet us and discovered my cold, limp body in the passenger seat.

“How could someone so young die from a heart attack? So young, so sad,” the adults would say when they heard about my decease.

“Que te pasa?” His voice was stern now; he always resorted to Spanish when he was really serious. I looked up at the merciless red glare of the stoplight, and blinked back the sting in my eyes.
“Nada,” I said and realizing that I had neglected to put on my seatbelt, I reached back for it and lowered it diagonally across my torso. The stiff edge rubbed against my neck as if to slice it, kind of like how people in the movies dragged their thumbs across their necks to signify someone’s imminent death.

“What did you say?” he insisted.

“Nothing,” I responded loud enough for him to hear this time hoping that the loud click of the seatbelt had masked the crack in my voice.

By the next morning I was a nervous wreck. I had had a sleepless night expecting the police to show up at my door. I packed a small bag that night just in case, even remembered to put my toothbrush in.

“Paola, what is all this stuff for?” My mother surprised me. Her arched eyebrows deformed into tildes of confusion.

“I’m playing house. I’m going on a trip.” I answered impatiently.

“Don’t even think you’re taking that bag to school, your book bag is much too heavy already. You’ll break your back.” My mother had a way of handing out arbitrary commands that made me think of childhood as mere children’s subjugation to impatient adults. “Put all those clothes back, you’ll just leave a mess for me to clean up later.”

I had hoped that my mom would see how thoughtful and prepared I was in case they arrived to take me away. “Such a brave and thoughtful girl my daughter is,” she would solemnly say as they escorted me out in handcuffs. They never came.

I walked into class nervously the next morning, half-expecting to find everyone mourning the loss of our classmate, half-expecting to find the police waiting for me. I was a bit relieved to find that everyone was behaving normally. I floated to my seat at Paper Table. I could still picture her squirming and yelping. In my apprehension I had reached my table without even glancing at the corner seat of Bus Table. I tried to look up without moving my head. I could see the laminated picture of a lined sheet of school paper swinging lightly back and forth mocking my moods. I had hoped to see the faint reflection of a strawberry-blonde head in the glare of the lamina. No such luck. I could feel Vanessa sitting there with her hands neatly folded, and her brand new and freshly sharpened pencil resting in the crease of her old-fashioned composition notebook.

“Okay, get your notebooks out,” Mrs. Lopez said. I hoped she’d call
roll. No such luck. She never did call roll. She knew us well enough that she would simply mark whoever was absent or tardy. Without disturbing the rest of my tense body, which had now become simply a vessel that carried my anxiety, I turned my head around as much as my neck would allow, not unlike old Barbies and tattered action figures mistreated by their careless owners. Her chair was empty. “Today we’re going to continue our lesson on big, nasty cockroaches and other insects!”

I let out an infinitesimal sigh of relief, took my notebook out, rested my decrepit, eraser-less Number 2 pencil in the crease, and waited.
Human Rights and the UN

Keely Badger

Introduction

Just as human beings have turned to war to achieve desired ends throughout history, so too have we turned to peace and cooperation to run its counter. Pursuits towards the attainment of international security and justice, as well as the proliferation of newfound humanitarian moral standards, have become beacons of hope against the backdrops of war. The United Nations has striven, from its genesis year in 1945, to remain at the helm of charting that course ahead, shaping and reshaping those standards, and positioning itself to enforce them throughout the international arena at large. Because the great world wars of the 20th Century scarred humanity in permanent and unforgettable ways, the United Nations set forth the goal of establishing the contours of the contemporary consensus on internationally recognized human rights.

Inextricably linked, human rights and the power and protection of the State have evolved, hand in hand, within the jurisdiction of the United Nations in the international arena. With international enforcement, and in many cases, peaceful or military intervention, comes the sacrifice of state sovereignty. The idea of the global responsibility to protect, brought into being in 2001 under the auspice of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, is an evolving humanitarian value, holding profound potential for the future protection of human rights. Standing in contrast to the former ‘Westphalian’ sanctity given to States within their protective boundaries, the Responsibility To Protect (RtoP) has come to dominate UN discourse during the ‘reform era’ negotiations from the early 2000s to the current day. Some argue that its implementation should become a moral imperative, and others remain leery of its dangerous interventionist potential at the hands of powerful, interest-seeking states. While the ‘theory of universal human rights’ has sifted into human consciousness since the UN Declaration, the issue of when to intervene, how, and with whom to do so, remains contested within the evolving international human rights dictum. Though significant strides have been made within

The Journal 23
the context of reinterpreting the responsibilities that come with state sovereignty and the obligation to honor individual human rights, evidenced through the RtoP agreement, there remain significant setbacks to widespread implementation—mainly the view of state sovereignty taken by certain member states.

This paper will chart the evolution of sovereignty in the 21st Century in relation to international human rights, both as a blocking agent to political action and humanitarian intervention, and its contentious interpretations by various UN member states. This paper will further highlight the re-shaping and re-interpretation of sovereignty seen through the UN consensus on the RtoP doctrine and its emerging significance in international politics and practice from the 2000s to present day. Ultimately, though progress has been made to realign the United Nations with a trajectory of reformed and newly effective internal mechanisms, RtoP’s successes in action, evidenced in several human rights cases, are selective. Oftentimes it is applied in line with the Security Council’s veto-holding members’ geo-political agendas. As such, the UN and its ability to intervene consistently and effectively in cases of human rights abuse remains a contentious topic in global affairs, undermining the institutions legitimate authority as both arbiter and executor of universal human rights theory and practice.

**A Foundation for Universal Human Rights**

Just over sixty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly officially adopted The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, enshrining that the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (UNDHR: Preamble). Ever since their birth in a moment of post-Holocaust wisdom, “human rights embedded themselves slowly but steadily in human consciousness in what amounted to a revolution of moral concern”(Moyn 6). It was Eleanor Roosevelt who said the Declaration “set up a common standard of achievement for all people of all nations,” and “might well become an international Magna Carta of all mankind” (Kennedy 84). In many ways she was right, and it has.
Codified across a spectrum of legal instruments and evoked as ‘guiding principles’ for countless global institutions, regard for human rights has been made manifest through “peace-making, peace-keeping, peace-building, and humanitarian assistance and development processes” (Zifcak 160). The United Nations can be credited with positing human rights as universal entitlements, regardless of race, color, creed, or most importantly, national identity. Since those defining moments, there is little doubt that human rights have evolved into a powerful transnational ideal, “no longer rights articulated in relation to a citizenry within any given state” (Moyn 10), they have come to be seen through a far more expansive and universal lens. However, despite the work of the UN, social movements that emerged in the 1970s in order to advance human rights and expose state perpetrators through networks of monitoring, journalism and reporting, the implementation of such rights is still largely within the national, sovereign territorial domain of the state.

The United Nations has walked a fine line between asserting its dominance as a collective international organization and appealing to the spectrum of national interests that compose its member-state constituency. Thus, state sovereignty is given the utmost respect in the UN Charter, as it was a critical pre-condition to its signing members at UN’s formation in 1945. Chapter I Article 2(7) states that the United Nations “shall not intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state,” and indeed the idea that states still hold the keys to their own destiny is what has allowed the UN to continue and evolve. However, in recent years and in the name of enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights, “Chapter VII has been given significant interpretive leniency” (Bellamy 72). Chapter VII grants the Security Council the power to “determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” and to take military and nonmilitary action to “restore international peace and security” (United Nations Charter: Chapter VII, Article 41-21). In line with the evolving moral standards of the 21st Century, these breaches of peace and acts of aggression are increasingly within the confines of nation states and perpetrated at the cost of human rights, and life, upon a states own citizenry.

In his 2001 Nobel Peace Price Lecture, Kofi Annan articulated the justification for the profound transition in the UN’s consideration of the
States once eminent domain:

In this new century, we must start from the understanding that peace belongs not only to states or peoples, but also to each and every member of those communities. The sovereignty of States must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights. (Annan 2001)

Kofi Annan has been instrumental in the advancement of international human rights within the United Nations. In September 2005, at the World Summit in New York, “Annan persuaded all the world leaders to agree that human rights constitutes one of the three pillars—along with peace and security and economic and social development—that form the base of all the UN’s work”(Terlinger 167), and that honoring human rights was integral to all. He simultaneously advanced the reform of the Commission on Human Rights to the newly strengthened Human Rights Council, the RtoP doctrine, and the establishment of a new Peacebuilding Commission to “advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery”(Terlinger 167) in his reform package. Arguably one of the most noteworthy heroes of the 21st Century international human rights movement, Annan did his job well in tying human rights to the international responsibility to protect, and as such was a critical figure in shifting the paradigm of state sovereignty to one of state responsibility. But this profound recognition would come in the aftermath of a war-torn decade, and one that tested the legitimate authority of the United Nations to respond to humanitarian crises.

21st Century: “Responsibility to Protest” & Sovereignty Redefined

A new vision for human rights was on the rise—the responsibility to protect—which took hold in the new millennium’s opening years. First conceptually introduced in 2001 in the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), and later endorsed by the High Level Panel Report (2004) authorized by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the idea was put to the negotiations table leading up to the 2005 World Summit. With the highest hopes that the
United Nations reform package would enable swifter, more effective response to humanitarian tragedy, the RtoP was one of the its critical platforms for achieving those ends. This norm, which was eventually endorsed at the World Summit, though significantly watered down, and later solidified into official UN doctrine in 2006 (Resolution 1674), would guide the re-shaping of the meaning of sovereignty and the responsibilities of a state to its citizenry. As such, it was a groundbreaking benchmark for the United Nations. As Jack Donnelly, author of Universal Rights In Theory And Practice asserts:

Because human rights first emerged in an era of personal, and thus often arbitrary rule, an initial emphasis on individual liberty and state restraint was understandable. As the intrusive and coercive powers of the state have grown—steadily, and to now frightening dimensions—an emphasis on controlling the state continues to make immense political sense. The language of human rights abuses and violations continues, quiet properly, to focus our attention on combating active state threats to human rights. (Donnelly 37)

The RtoP aimed to do just that. Premised on the fact that sovereignty first entailed a responsibility to the individual sovereigns within each and every state, the right to sovereignty was laid out as resting on two foundational tenants: that individuals have unalienable human rights (Bellamy 10), and “that governments have the primary responsibility for protecting the rights of populations in their case and that when they abuse those rights or fail to protect them due to incapacity, the international community acquires a responsibility to step in, in a manner consistent with the UN Charter and authorized the Security Council” (Bellamy 10). The RtoP would be implemented “in response to four crimes perpetrated by the states: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing”(Bellamy 36). But RtoP but was also meant to entail a more proactive humanitarian response, including early warning and prevention of human rights abuse, assisting states on the brink of conflict, and post-conflict rebuilding. These accompanying assets to RtoP would be contested by UN member states in the name of preserving state sovereignty, and would therefore fail to become realized as part of the RtoP doctrine in the
Much to the disappointment of Kofi Annan, who was, and remains, one of doctrine’s greatest champions, the mechanisms to make RtoP more robust were thwarted by UN member states in 2005. Significant ideological divisions between the “Global North” and “Global South” UN member states contributed to the UN reform debate stalemate, as well as the subsequent “grand bargain” on RtoP and other key reforms aimed at the advancement of human rights protection. In interviews and discussions with more than 70 diplomats and UN officials from every region of the globe at UN Headquarters in New York in 2005, author Spencer Zifcak documented the North-South negotiations leading up to the 2005 World Summit.

In regards to ideological divisions regarding sovereignty and the responsibility to protect, the differences between North and South are substantial. “Two concepts are central here: sovereignty and multilateralism” (Zifcak 165). For the South, “National sovereignty is their overarching value” (Zifcak 167). Looking specifically at security, “the South is resolutely opposed to UN legitimization of North military interventionism” (Zifcak 167). Therefore, in taking a literal interpretation of the UN Charter, the South’s “insistence of the preservation of sovereignty holds fast even in the face of gross and systemic human rights abuse. Except in the most special circumstances, therefore, the sovereign rights of states must prevail over the human rights of people” (Zifcak 167). Vastly influenced by the colonial experience, weary of unregulated unilateral intervention, and the concentration of power within the hands of Security Council P5 membership, “the South provides a robust defense of multilateralism. On this view, it is not open for one bloc of nations to assert their unilateral or even hegemonic entitlement to do as they please in international affairs” (Zifcak 168). With this being said, RtoP still had strong support by key members of the South, including most notably the African Union, which “characterized the shift as one from non-intervention to non-indifference’ that represented an embrace of
sovereignty as responsibility (Bellamy 13), and the post-genocide Rwandan government itself, which became “a committed advocate of the RtoP” (Bellamy 13).

In contrast to general views of the South nations, the North focused primarily on global security threats, civil war, ideological militancy and terrorism. “The North would like to see the UN priorities revolve around responding decisively and effectively on behalf of the international community” (Zifcak 166). To this end, sovereignty should not be used as a blocking agent for intervention. “The UN’s Chapter VI and VII powers must be interpreted liberally so as to provide the world organization with the legal authority and political legitimacy to respond effectively, and where necessary, militarily, to substantial threats” (Zifcak 166). The North’s position is similar with respect to humanitarian intervention. “Whether cast in security terms, or as the ‘responsibility to protect’, military intervention to prevent gross and systemic human rights abuse clearly constitutes an invasion of the target nation’s sovereignty” (Zifcak 166). This line of thinking can be hazardous, however, as it was used to legitimize the United State’s controversial ‘preemptive’ invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the absence of express Security Council authorization:

The war was a challenge not merely to multilateral institutions, but to the very idea of international order and collective security. The war split the Security Council, divided the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and prompted the creation of the high-level panel to rethink the idea of collective security in a world dominated by the US military power. The invasion shocked the United Nations and leading capitals around the world. Now visible to all was the tension between two competing visions of world order. (Danchin & Fischer 5)

Iraq represented a paradox, for even though the United States would like to see leniency regarding the sovereignty of other nations, it regards its own sovereignty with ardent exceptionalism. Unwilling to forsake much ground towards multilateral cooperation, the United States has single-handedly rejected some of the most prominent human rights resolutions of the last decade. According to Human Rights Watch:
The US is the only country other than Somalia that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history. It is one of only seven countries—together with Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga—that has failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (CEDAW)(Human Rights Watch Report:1)

Furthermore, the United States played a heavy role in undercutting Annan’s reform package as well as the scope of RtoP in the lead up negotiations to the 2005 World Summit. Under the Bush Administration, newly appointed Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, intervened at the last moment, creating even greater contestation between the North and the South parties. “In a famed intervention, just days after his arrival and only five weeks before the World Summit was due to convene, Bolton proposed approximately 750 amendments to the draft Summit Outcome Document”(Zifcak 155), demanding all references to the MDG’s (Millenium Development Goals) be removed, and no new aid commitment to developing countries be made unless they had been seen to use the resources wisely in the past. Further, all mention of the right to development was crossed out. “All references to nuclear disarmament were excised. A reference to the international community’s ‘shared responsibility’ to act against crimes against humanity were replaced with a phrase proposing simply that the international community may ‘decide’ to act in a last resort”(Zifcak 155). The list went on.

The implications for RtoP were grave as a result of the U.S.’s non-support:

The nature and scope of RtoP was contested, negotiated, and ultimately revised through the process of norm contestation and diffusion that took place in the proceeding weeks. Key components of the RtoP concept proposed by the ICISS did not survive the process: the ‘responsibility to rebuild’ after an intervention was dropped in its entirety; proposed limits to the use of the veto by the UN Security Council were dropped; criteria to guide
decision-making about armed intervention was dropped; and the idea that absent of Security Council authorization, intervention for humanitarian purposes might be legitimized by the General Assembly or regional organizations was rejected. (Bellamy 9)

The notion that sovereignty was being re-shaped in the 21st Century in hopes of eliciting international calls to action in cases of human rights abuse was weakened substantially, and several early cases since RtoP’s inception in 2005 also validate that claim.

From Words to Deeds

The RtoP, in norm and in principle, marked a victory for human rights and humanitarian intervention in spite of claims to state sovereignty. Its record of implementation, and success in certain regions and not others, is however, a mixed one. “Since 2005, the RtoP principle has been directly applied in Kenya, following the post-election violence in 2008, and more notably in Libya in 2011, following former leader Muammar al-Qaddafi’s brutal crackdown on his people during the revolt against the regime”(Bajoria 3). Cases of human rights atrocity originating before the genesis of RtoP in 2005, though remaining ongoing sites of conflict such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Rwanda, have illuminated that RtoP was initially slow to become incorporated in the language and discourse of international human rights, but its underlying theme of international responsibility to protect is still expressed nonetheless through peacekeeping missions in those regions. The following cases demonstrate RtoP’s evolution.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO & DARFUR

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), civil war had raged since 1997 despite the 2003 peace settlement and MONUC peace operation. “Since then there have been recurrent outbreaks of violence in the country’s east targeting mainly civilians and sexual violence against women and girls remains widespread”(Bellamy 52). There is broad agreement that all four crimes warranting RtoP action have been
committed, “yet RtoP has not generated additional support for the mission since 2005 despite its well-documented shortcomings” (Bellamy 52). The same is true in the case of Darfur, “which for many analysts and activists presents RtoP’s primary test case, a test which the principle is generally reckoned to have failed” (Bellamy 53). RtoP has not been referenced in the UN Security Council’s resolution for intervention. However, this does mean the Security Council has not acted with the responsibility to protect in mind.

The Security Council has, in fact, been consistently seized of the matter and has responded with a raft of relatively innovative measures including targeted sanctions, referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court (which led to the indictment of Sudan’s president), and the authorization (under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, Resolution 1969) of a large peace operation (UNAMID) with a clear civilian protection mandate. (Bellamy 54)

Though not explicitly evoked in these ongoing human rights cases, RtoP has slowly contested and broken down the idea that state sovereignty can act as a shield to international intervention in cases of human rights abuse.

KENYA (2008)

“The diplomatic response to the ethnic violence that erupted in the aftermath of the disputed 30 December 2007 elections in Kenya is widely trumpeted as the best example of RtoP in practice (Bellamy 54). With “systematic violence resulting in more than 1,000 deaths and the displacement of over 500,000 civilians “(ICRP Kenya: 1), paired with “Kenya’s role as a Western ally and regional business hub, external intervention was almost immediate” (ICRP Kenya: 1). In January 2008 the UN Security Council reacted “In the name of ‘the responsibility to protect’. Peace negotiations and mediation undertaken by Kofi Annan resulted in the ‘signing of a power-sharing agreement on 28 February 2008’” (ICRP Kenya: 2). This rapid and coordinated reaction by the international community was praised as “a model of diplomatic action directly under the Responsibility to Protect” (ICRP Kenya: 2). However,
the Kenya case raised criticism of the selectivity in which RtoP was being applied. First, there was the relatively small-scale nature of casualty count; as well the already withstanding relationship between Kenya and the West, and lastly, criticism concluded that the conflict was minor in comparison to other human rights atrocities. Jean Ping, the General Assembly President at the time, “questioned whether it was appropriate to apply RtoP in this case, suggesting that it raised serious questions as to the threshold of violence that constituted an RtoP situation and about the potential selectivity when the response to Kenya is compared with the lack of response to the much more serious situation in Somalia” (Bellamy 55). The case of Kenya also illuminated the flaw that the RtoP doctrine does not specify a human rights abuse “threshold,” leaving it up to the international community to intervene, selectively, when it sees fit. The issue of RtoP selectivity would be realized again that same year.

GAZA (2008-2009)

Shortly after a six-month ceasefire brokered by Egypt between Israel and Hamas, both Israel and Hamas launched extensive attacks that were widely agreed to have crossed the RtoP threshold:

Israel’s technological superiority and reliance on heavy armor and firepower contributed to a wide disparity in casualties—approximately 1,440 Palestinians have died (with some organizations estimating that at least half of the dead are civilians), compared with 13 dead (including four civilians) on the Israeli side. (Zanotti 1)

External observers generally agreed that both sides had committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. “Israel used prohibited weapons against civilian areas, conducted indiscriminate attacks, often failed to exercise due care in distinguishing civilians from combatants, and attached the UN humanitarian personnel and the ICRC” (Bellamy 59). The UN Human Rights Council issued the incriminating ‘Goldstone Report’ that was “unsurprisingly criticized as biased by Israel and its allies, but remains the most balanced and comprehensive account of the war based
on a forensic examination and recounting of the conflict” (Bellamy 59). The question of whether RtoP should be applied was further raised in the General Assembly debate in 2009, and as Iran put it:

We have witnessed the repeated failure of the Security Council to leave [sic] up to its responsibility and to take appropriate action against Israeli regime’s continuous aggression and mass atrocities in the Palestinian occupied territories and in neighboring countries. (Bellamy 59)

Decisive action by the UN Security Council was not taken, nor was the RtoP embraced, despite the findings of the Goldstone Report. A lack of concrete international intervention and application of RtoP consistently across human rights cases proves legitimacy to the claims that RtoP has been selectively embraced based on cases of political, and indeed Western, interests and alliances. However, in more recent years, the use of RtoP has been numerous, either in official Security Council resolution or within the intention and scope of peacekeeping interventions.

LIBYA (2011)

On February 26, 2011, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1970, “making explicit reference to the responsibility to protect” and “deploring what it called ‘the gross and systemic violation of human rights’ in strife-torn Libya” (Department of Public Information, United Nations). Political protests beginning in the capital city of Tripoli broke out, “demanding an end to Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi’s 41-year reign, wherein Libyan civilians found themselves the target of mass atrocities at the hands of government armed forces” (ICRP Libya: 1). Gaddafi responded with severe brutality, dispatching the national army to quell opposition. Two months after the first warning Resolution, the Security Council acted again, passing Resolution 1973 “demanding an immediate ceasefire in Libya, including an end to current attacks against civilians, which it said might constitute ‘crimes against humanity’” (Department of Public Information, United Nations). Authorizing a multi-national effort to establish a no-fly zone, and
encouraging member states to take all necessary measures, including NATO, air strikes culminated in the successful capture and death of Qadhafi in October 2011.

In this case, the United Nations headed the quick international responses raised by individual states, “including the United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland, Australia, and Canada, and reacted quickly to the humanitarian crisis, freezing financial assets and imposing travel bans and sanctions” (ICRP Libya: 1). Explicitly evoking the RtoP, the United Nations was successful in bringing down the human-rights-abusing regime and galvanizing a far-reaching multilateral response. Though 2012 has brought instability again, the case in Libya reveals the importance of UN member-states raising calls for the implementation of an RtoP response, that the explicit reference to RtoP holds far reaching international persuasion, and the swift action of the Security Council to authorize multilateral action against human rights abuse is of critical importance.

Subsequent Cases Evoking RtoP

Again in 2011, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1975 “condemning the gross human rights violations committed by supporters of both ex-President Laurent Gbagbo and President Ouattara” (Department of Public Information, United Nations), in Côte d’Ivoire. The resolution cited “the primary responsibility of each State to protect civilians,” as well as authorized the UNOCI military operation, which swiftly ended President Gbagbo’s hold on power. In Yemen the Security Council passed Resolution 2014, which referenced RtoP in its condemnation of Yemeni authorities and their human rights violations. Again in 2011, the case of South Sudan followed suit, eliciting Security Council use of the RtoP, when “Resolution 1996 established a UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), to—among other things—advise and assist the government in fulfilling its responsibility to protect civilians” (Department of Public Information, United Nations). South Sudan officially became an independent country on June 9, 2011, and is now an official member of the United Nations and Africa Union (AU).

Though 2011 saw several cases of state-imposed human rights
abuse, it was also the year in which RtoP gained legitimacy under UN Security Council resolutions, either in reference or as the explicit reason for multilateral intervention. As an emerging norm from its genesis in 2005, it has already made a mark upon the international communities’ standards for human rights action. However, RtoP can only be fully exercised when there is agreement among member-states of the Security Council, specifically the P5 veto-holding members. The case of Syria in 2012 points to this weakness, as well as its selectivity as the hands self-interested, sovereignty claiming Security Council P5 members.

In February 2012, “the Security Council voted on a draft resolution backed by an Arab League plan to resolve the crisis in the country, where UN officials estimated that security forces had killed well over 7,500 people since the popular uprisings in March 2011” (Department of Public Information, United Nations). Evidence of systematic acts of brutality, “including torture and arbitrary arrests, point to a clear policy by Syrian military and civilian leadership amounting to crimes against humanity” (ICRP Syria: 1). Though the draft resolution called for the Syrian government to withdraw its armed forces from civilian protests, and “thirteen of the Council’s 15 members voted in favor of the text, China and Russia exercised their vetoes, double blocking the adoption of the resolution” (Department of Public Information, United Nations). Both countries claimed opposition to what they saw as a “potential violation of Syria’s sovereignty” (Moscow et al). The General Assembly, Human Rights Council, the U.S. Obama Administration, and the international community at large adamantly condemned the human rights crimes committed by the Syrian authorities, but the Security Council was rendered forceless by the veto block. Finding some interventionist alternatives, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan led the UN-Arab League Joint Special Envoy to Syria in March 2012, with hopes of negotiating a ceasefire. However, later that month, Anna’s efforts were to no avail, with conflict persisting and fostering increasing human rights implications for neighboring states:

Reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch highlighted ongoing rights abuses, from the arrest of minors to extrajudicial executions. The impact of the conflict began taking
its toll on the countries bordering Syria, with over 24,000 Syrians occupying the Turkish refugee camp of Kilis, which reportedly came under fire from government forces. (ICRP Syria: 1)

Crimes against humanity persist in Syria, marking perhaps the greatest failure of the United Nation’s responsibility to protect since RtoP has been used to greater extent within the last few years. High Commissioner Navi Pillay summed up the failings of the Security Council well in her address to the 193 member-states of the General Assembly:

At their 2005 Summit, World leaders unanimously agreed that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from crimes against humanity and other international crimes... They also agreed that when a State is manifestly failing to protect its population from serious international crimes, the international community as a whole has the responsibility to step in by taking protective action in a collective, timely and decisive manner... The virtual carte blanche now granted to the Syrian Government betrays the spirit and the word of this unanimous decision. It is depriving the population of the protection they so urgently need. (Pillay 1)

It is clear from the case of Syria that the state interests of China, claiming that intervention would compromise “dialogue between the government and the opposition” (Moscow et. al) and Russia, “Syria’s staunch ally”(Moscow et al), prevailed over appeals to Security Council humanitarian action. Returning to Simon Chesterman’s demonstration that sovereignty is often used to veil underlying state interests or a lack of political will, it is clear that the honoring of international human rights law through RtoP remains easily overcome if just one of the Permanent Five Security Council members objects in the name of sovereignty or the preservation of their own self-interests. Until the United Nations overcomes the inherent flaws within the structure of the P5 Security Council, its unwillingness to act or uncertainty of when the threshold has been crossed to do so, RtoP will remain compromised, selectively applied, and therefore weakened in its potential to dramatically re-shape and re-
power the humanitarian moral standards of the 21st Century.

Conclusion

RtoP remains a somewhat abstract principle, despite its progress over the past several years. Its recent setback in the case of Syria, notwithstanding, which continues to unfold amidst serious international appeals for intervention, RtoP’s emergence in world politics and international human rights law has been significant. “Five years from its adoption, RtoP boasts a Global Centre and network of regional affiliates dedicated to advocacy and research, and a global coalition of non-governmental organizations” (Bellamy 26). Published by Routledge, the Global Responsibility to Protect journal publication and book series continues to trace the RtoP principle, highlighting its relationship and applicability to past and present cases of genocide and mass atrocities. Through the University of Queensland in Australia, the RtoP Research Centre and associated fund sponsored by the Australian government “facilitates the organization of regional offshoots, including the “IRtoP’ (Individual Responsibility To Protect) and “W2I’ (Will To Intervene) projects, focusing respectively on engaging individuals as agents of change and generating the political will to intervene”(Bellamy 26). Still, RtoP has already heavily influenced the international diplomatic discourse of the 21st Century, and in many ways it exposes the responsibilities and expectations to which state actors should be held.

There is no doubt that the growing regard for human rights, and the international communities call to action in humanitarian support, has been significant over the last two decades. Speaking directly to this is the large increase in international efforts in “peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, in which the UN has played a central role throughout”(Zifcak xviii). Successes in Kenya and Libya with the direct application of RtoP are to be commended, and often lacking responses in Gaza, Syria, the longstanding conflicts from the 1990s in the DRC, Darfur, and Somalia, and the 2000s in Iraq and Afghanistan should be continually brought to light. Work towards these ends will inherently be plagued by the geo-political interests of every state, notably the United States, Russia, and China, who have notoriously held their own sovereign agendas as sacred even at the expense of large-scale human rights casualties abroad.
Walking Wounded
Soldiers in Transition

Jonathan Savage

Introduction

No history is as compelling as that told by the people who experienced it. This is the lesson I learned in the course of gathering oral testimony from soldiers transitioning from combat to civilian life. Their experiences — always raw, often brutal, sometimes gut-wrenching — leaped from their heart into mine. Oral history is palpable.

Every soldier I spoke with had a story to tell, indeed had a story he very much wanted to tell, and every soldier seemed flattered to have a listening ear. Each interlocutor spoke with the hope that his words might be useful, might somehow make the world better. Most of these veterans were hit hard by the challenges of re-entering American society, especially after undergoing the unthinkable atrocities of war. Yet, in nearly every case, the soldiers remained optimistic about [eventually] making a successful transition.

Perhaps the most striking discovery was that the soldiers viewed their re-entry not entirely as a gain, but in many ways as a loss: a loss of the surprisingly valuable entailments which war had pounded into their psyches. The esprit de corps, the clarity of purpose, the comradeship, the corporate endeavor, the sort of experiences that invest life with meaning — these were not easily recovered and sustained in life as a civilian.

The following accounts are excerpts from my work in oral history. Together they form an unforgettable, disturbing, and yet, in other ways, exhilarating exposé of the challenges of coming home.
Stoney Portis
Captain, U.S. Army

Born into a patriotic family, Stoney was raised on a ranch in south Texas. At twelve he set his sights on serving as an officer in the U.S. Army. He graduated from West Point in 2004 and has completed combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Intelligent and well-spoken, Stoney possesses the qualities of a leader. Whether discussing academic subjects or joking with friends, he relates with ease to those he comes into contact with. Stoney currently resides in Hanover, New Hampshire and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree at Dartmouth College. West Point has already selected him to be an instructor in the Department of English and Philosophy once he graduates.

In war, you want soldiers who are badasses. You want tough, cigarette smokin’, cussin’, motorcycle ridin’ guys next to you who aren’t afraid of fighting. But at home we don’t want our soldiers to be these mean sons of bitches; we want them to be behaved, well-mannered men who take care of their families and their jobs. When they re-enter society, the biggest concern is, “Oh my God, what are they going to do now?” These eighteen to twenty-two year old type-A male personalities have been living on the edge of a cliff with the daily suspense and adrenaline of combat, and what you realize very quickly is that there’s a large gap that has to
be crossed from being a combat soldier on the front-line to being back in normal society. So when I was getting ready to come home after both deployments, my thoughts were much more on my soldiers than on me or my family.

I’ve seen a lot of carnage, a lot of people die. But people react differently, and for me, growing up on a ranch where animals died and dealing with the death of my mother at the age of sixteen, I had already worked out these things. I knew that wouldn’t be the case for my soldiers. One of the time periods with the most suicides in the army, which has a very high suicide rate, is the week before re-entry. Soldiers are so scared about going home they choose to end their life. The unit that we replaced in Iraq had a soldier kill himself two days before he flew home because he couldn’t deal with the stresses of going back. He made it through twelve months of terror and he’s scared to go back home. Figure that out.

A lot of soldiers come home and seek new ways to replicate the adrenaline rush of combat. They get a really fast motorcycle, go skydiving, and buy guns and go shooting. These are all very dangerous things to do, especially if you combine them together. I can’t tell you how many times after we made it through a deployment that a soldier would drink, get on his motorcycle, crash, and die. I look for excitement in pushing myself with physical rigor. I have a routine which helps because there’s a left and right limit to how far something can affect my life. If you have structure, it’s different than uncontrolled speed and rage. You just have to be smart. You can learn to live without adrenaline . . . it’s okay (laughs).

For a lot of my soldiers, financial and relational problems were the top stresses of going home. Some make so little money they qualify to be on food stamps. They’re also married and have three kids; they’re barely making ends meet. Finances become an issue because they realize they’re going back to making a minimum of $12,000 less because they’re losing the combat pay.

There is also an obscene amount of soldiers whose wives cheated on them while they were deployed. They left their home base with a home, a car,
a wife, and two kids. They came back and the home was sold, the car was gone, the wife was living with a boyfriend, and the kids were with the grandparents. It would take more than two hands to count the number of times where something like that happened. While deployed they had the luxury of not having to deal with it, but coming home they had to face the facts. I even had a professor at West Point who returned from Iraq and his wife and two daughters were living in a crack house. It knows no boundaries.

When I came back home, my wife had her own way of running the household. It’s neither right nor wrong, but when I got back I just did things differently. My wife and I have a great marriage, but that’s just an example of the little things you come home to and have to deal with.

Every day for the last two months in Afghanistan, we got shot at. Every single day. I’m talking bullets whizzing by your head. You just get tired of it. There’s this psyche that develops during deployment where you go from being proactive about not getting hit to accepting that everybody’s going to have their day someday. It gets really bad the last week because everyone’s on edge. You think, “I’ve made it this far, I don’t want to die or lose an arm today.” Then all of a sudden there’s this window that opens up: you’re going home! You can see the light.

I was excited to get home so I could drive down the street without getting blown up. Sure I was ready to leave, hell yeah! I was ready to go eat good food. You get tired of eating Army food. A lot of our resupply helicopters kept getting shot down and we didn’t have room for luxury items like mail, extra food, or even water. You had to prioritize. We drank water that we purified out of the river, and that was fine. But when I got home I was ready to turn on the tap and drink a glass of water out of the sink. I relished turning on the tap and drinking a glass of water. How crazy is that? Even today I’ll turn on the sink and be like, “Ahh, it’s water!”

Before I came home, I was really nervous and excited about finally getting to be with my wife. I got married in July of 2006 and deployed in October. I was coming home having spent five times more time in combat than I had as a married man at home. The irony there is that as soon as we hit ground
they said, “You’re going back in a year.” You kind of have this clock ticking in the background.

The army gives you a month off as soon as you complete three weeks of mandatory reintegration training with classes, counselors, psychologists, financial planners, you name it. It’s a pretty good process but everything depends on how the program is presented. If it’s planned to cover your ass and check the box, then that’s how it will appear to the soldiers. But if it’s planned as a legitimate opportunity to sit down with the guys and come away with a product like a financial plan, then it’s very effective. At first I thought, This is a waste of my time. I just want to go home and drink tap-water. But at the end of the day you see that it’s value added.

The fact that I’d been trained in the military to act a certain way became a big problem in terms of going back to a normal lifestyle. There are little things in everyday life that you or I normally wouldn’t think anything of, but because I’ve been preconditioned to react in certain ways, it presents a challenge coming home. To this day I have a habit of scanning both sides of a road before I go under a bridge because they would always hit you with IED’s (improvised explosive devices) from above. I sometimes don’t even notice because it’s so second nature to me.

In Afghanistan we drove our Humvees down really treacherous trails with 200 foot sheer drop offs to our left and 100 foot cliff-faces up to our right. If we veered left we’re going down into the gorge, but if we went too slow Taliban fighters would ambush us from the high ground. So when I redeployed back to my home base in Colorado at the tip of the Rocky Mountains, I would freak out when driving around a mountainside (laughs).

In Iraq, it’s very, very dangerous to have a lot of people close to you because they would detonate suicide vests on us. Whenever I was in a crowd of people, my initial reaction was to take out my 9mm sidearm and push them all back. It was no big deal. I never thought it was a problem until I came home. The first time I went grocery shopping with my wife, there was a crowd of people all around when we walked into the store. My heart started racing and I instinctively grabbed for my sidearm. But
I’m not in uniform, so it’s not there. At that point I realized, “Holy crap, I have to turn all these things off.” It truly is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Everybody’s got their own type of PTSD, mine just happens to be to the flavor of driving in the mountains.

The biggest adjustment that I’ve had to make is overcoming the loss of a soldier. I was in command in Afghanistan. I was making decisions; the buck stopped here. In one battle we were almost overrun by a force of 350 Taliban fighters. We lost eight guys. I can tell any family member, “Hey, eighty dudes against 350, we lost eight they lost 150, we did pretty damn well.” But that never makes a good excuse. It’s hard to quantify, and even harder to rationalize, loss of life. I stopped counting dead bodies that day after I reached one-hundred. Here I am today still thinking back to the guys who were under my command . . . their moms and dads trusted me with their sons and they didn’t come home. Every day I think, Fuck. My friend lost his leg and it’s because of a mission that I planned. That’s tough to swallow. There’s not a day that goes by that I don’t think about one of those guys or that I’m not sorrowful for the loss of the Afghans either. The kids we killed were the same ages as us; their fathers were subsistence farmers like mine. But at the time there’s a choice: I’m going to bring my guys back or I will not. The latter was never an option.

These feelings get pushed aside when you’re in combat because it becomes a simple dance of life or death very, very quickly. To be able to consider these thoughts wasn’t an option while I was in Afghanistan. They keep piling up and you have to go through that pile one day. PTSD in a lot of cases is going back through all those things, the unpacking and organizing of that pile. There are emotions that I have that don’t affect my daily life, but that still exist and surface. That’s something that I hadn’t planned for when I was getting ready to come home. I think about drinking tap-water not about unpacking the memory that my friends lost their lives.

There are three people who I can really unpack that bag with: my wife and two men who shared those experiences with me. I have the luxury of having people who are outlets for me and who help me cope with it. But think about the soldier who lost his wife during the deployment . . . who is he going to talk to?
Daniel was born in 1975 and grew up in the small Massachusetts town of Ware. Working in a foundry until his early twenties, he joined the Army National Guard in search of a brighter future. His unit was activated after 9/11, and in March 2002 he participated in the first wave of the invasion of Iraq. His deployment was extended to a long fifteen months. Daniel went back for another combat tour in 2004. His matter-of-fact style of conversation leaves no doubt that the experiences he relates are the blunt, uncolored truths. Having suffered so much during and after his time in combat, he continues to search for something meaningful in life.

I didn’t want to come home. I would’ve rather stayed there longer to see some kind of improvement. I went to Iraq twice and still didn’t see anything but instability. When we were getting ready to leave, I had separation anxiety. Back home, I was homesick from not being in Iraq. I felt no sense of worth. I didn’t have a mission anymore. I missed the camaraderie, that tight, tight bond. You always had somebody to look out for or to look out for you. Everybody was there for each other. Three people in my unit committed suicide when we came back because they lost
that sense of unity. I felt a loss of something and I still do . . . there’s not a
day that goes by that I don’t wish I could’ve stayed there longer.

I had major depression when I came home. Relationships went down
the tubes. My wife and I got a divorce. I signed the kids over and don’t
talk to any of them. I have no relationship with anybody in my family. No
girlfriend. I have no friends. It’s just me alone. I’m always waiting . . . you
know, wishin’ I was still there. There’s a sense of nothing to do but you’re
always seeking for something to do. When I couldn’t find that something
I turned to alcohol and just stayed drunk. I found myself homeless, no
money. I hit rock-bottom.

One day I found myself in somebody’s barn, drunk. I left in the
afternoon and when I came back the cops were waiting. I told the owner,
“T’m a homeless veteran, I have nowhere to go. I have no family, no
friends, no nothin’.” My biggest problem was that I was running from
everything. I knew I had PTSD, and I was self-medicating with alcohol
and experimenting with drugs. I’d been hiding from these problems for
so long, all the losses in my life, and my biggest fear was getting sober
and letting this shit catch up with me. Now it’s caught up to me, and my
world is turned upside down. The VA ended up coming to get me, and I
went through this program called ASAP (Alcohol Substance and Abuse
Program). I’ve been sober for about a year and I’m back to that heightened
sense of wanting to do something all the time, but not knowing what it
is. I haven’t gotten a civilian job yet. I can’t. I don’t feel like I’m ready. It
almost feels like I have no mission left in life.

I just went through a six week PTSD program. It didn’t give us any
exposure therapy; it taught us more of breathing techniques. It was like
sitting around a hippie drum circle listening to them beat on bongo drums
(laughs). Their programs aren’t good for us younger veterans. I’m fresh
out of combat, and I did six weeks of Vietnam therapy for people who have
years of problems in their lives. Okay, fine. They did thirty-five years of
things that fucked up their lives. I don’t want thirty-five years of negative
impact in my life. I want to learn how not to do those things. It was a
waste of six weeks. A lot of money invested in nothing that really matters.
I have daily panic attacks. I have them in the day when I get up and at
night when I lie down. I can’t be in a store for more than ten minutes. I
get what I need and get the hell out. I’m hyper-vigilant, concerned with
everything going on around me. The lights, the sounds; it puts me back in
certain places I don’t want to be. It just triggers me for some reason. The
flashbacks first come on physically. You’re adrenaline just spikes so high to
where your chest gets tight, your hands start sweating, your pupils dilate,
you get shortness of breath. You go into survival mode: flight, fight, or
freeze mode. I had to look up why my body does this on my own. Why I
experience physical pain almost like I’m going to die. The emotions follow
the physical aspect. The anger and rage soon set in. You can’t control your
emotions anymore. Before I was in the army, if I didn’t like somebody, that
would only last a day or two. Now I write every motherfucker off in my
life including my family. I don’t care about anybody. I’m emotionless.

If you’re diagnosed with PTSD, you can’t put a mild rating on that. You
either have it or you don’t. It’s a crippling disease that will affect you for
the rest of your life. It’s like asking a woman who just got out of therapy
for getting raped, “Are you better now?” Hell no, she’s never going to be
better. You can’t erase watching your buddies go thirty-five feet up in the
air in a Humvee, do four flips, and just be reduced to a puddle of mush.
You can’t erase watching a little kid get run over in front of you. Or the
one coming to get his little sister out of the road, and you fucking run him
over next. It’s ingrained in your mind and will never be erased . . . never.

I still hate driving. Because I was a truck driver and gunner, it doesn’t take
much to trigger a flashback. When I see kids playing on the side of the
road, I’ll slow down to ten miles per hour. I also can’t be around grills. I
don’t like the smell of burning meat. I’ve smelled burned flesh so much
that it’s stuck in my brain, my nose. The smell of hamburgers will trigger
major nausea and panic attacks. I can’t be around it. People say, “Why? It’s
just a burger.” They don’t understand.

People always want to know if I’m proud of having served. No, I’m not
proud. I’m not proud that I’ve killed people. I’m not proud that my friends
lost their lives. There’s nothing for me to be proud about. The public
likes to put us up on a pedestal. Glorifying us as heroes isn’t proper. War definitely isn’t to be glamorized, you know? I can’t speak for every soldier, but you can be proud of your country, but don’t be proud of your soldiers, because we don’t want to be proud of what we did. I’m happy that I lived through a lot of situations, but I have no pride whatsoever.

When we got off the plane from Iraq, the USO (United Service Organizations) people were there to meet us. They lined us up in a formation and marched us through the airport cheering and having everybody clap. I didn’t want the limelight on me. I felt kind of disrespected. You can’t forget about what you’ve just been through, sorry. They had no idea.

After I went through three years of combat, I went back to an active duty post, a garrisoned environment. These guys hadn’t deployed yet, and they live by the book of army regulations. They don’t know what it’s like to see their friends lose their heads or arms and legs. They don’t know what you’ve just been through emotionally and physically. They worry about wearing their uniforms in accordance with the regulations, shaving every day, shining their boots. That’s what these guys worry about, and after you just went through all this shit you’re faced with these guys enforcing all of these stupid little standards. Right back to the bump and grind. Not cutting you any break. Where’s the debriefing? Where’s the decompression time? Give me a little time off. Give me some therapy so I don’t crack.

They want you to come back from combat and continue on with your normal job. They give you a couple of briefs by a chaplain and social workers. Just briefs: “Be aware of this, watch your buddy for this.” They don’t prepare you. After being in that much combat, veterans do not function well in the civilian population. On a scale of one to ten, your normal idle mentality is a six. When you react in combat, you go up to a ten. But when you react for so long, you stay in that combat mentality, even back home. How the fuck are you going to get along with anybody? How are you going to be comfortable in this environment? You’re stuck.

You’re up at four thirty in the morning pacing the floor. Walking the
hallways instead of sleeping, or lying there pumped ready for something to happen. How do you get back to normal? You can’t. It’s how we’ve been trained, and you just can’t cope with shit. I’ve been on so many medications it’s just ridiculous. Klonopin, Xanax, Citalopram, Prozac, Trazadone, you name it. What they do is just sedate you. It’s just a band-aid over the problem. Because if you take them away like I’ve done several times in the past, you go right back.

Where I’m sitting right now is real to me. It exists in time, in light, in feeling, in smell. Coldness, that is real. Where I was doesn’t exist unless I’m there. See what I’m saying? I have to be somewhere physically to accept that it’s real. That’s what my therapist and I talk about. I’m working on these problems. I take every moment as it comes.

Conclusion

Combat affects each individual differently, as does returning home from combat. As illustrated from the stories above, every person who goes off to war comes home a different person, a dramatically different person. Too often we notice the physical changes of those returning: a soldier is maimed or crippled. Too seldom, however, do we reckon with mental changes. Yet from the voices of the men above we hear how psychological mutations cripple their future lives. War takes its toll on mental equilibrium. To some the effects can be ameliorated by the love of family. To others the effects persist but are hidden by the exertions of daily life. Finally, and most sadly, to others depression and thoughts of suicide linger for years. The latter may not be the walking dead, but they are the walking wounded. The price they have paid to spare our country from future terrorist acts is almost as great as soldiers who do not come home. Increasingly, we are listening to their stories. And we must never stop. The oral histories of the walking wounded must be told, heard, and heeded.
I’ve spent much of my life
turning around, retracing my steps.
I can’t read maps very well and
following them is even more of a challenge.
When I first got behind the wheel,
the driver’s ed instructor told me
to drive to the grocery store
in the next town over,
about ten minutes away.
I asked her which way to go.
You have lived here sixteen years and
don’t know how to get to the grocery store?

I was looking at the hemlock trees
that line the street, noticing the way I could
see a transparent version of myself in the glass,
looking to see if the blue heron had returned
to the pond we ice skated on every winter.
I was looking at the way smoke weaves
into the sky as it comes out of chimneys,
trying to find a good song on the radio,
watching dogs and bicycles and lawn mowers.
I wasn’t paying attention to where we were going.
But I’ve always loved maps.
In elementary school, when I got off the bus,
I grabbed my snack and sat at the kitchen table,
spinning my parents’ globe,
watching the tilt of the axis,
figuring out how to get from here
to somewhere else.
On Sunday afternoons, I pulled out the World Atlas
from the dark wooden bookshelf in the living room.
Awkwardly carrying the oversize book in my arms,
I put it on the rug and lay on my stomach,
feeling the sun on my shoulders
through the huge south facing windows.
Moving my fingers over places I couldn’t pronounce,
I flipped through the book slowly.
I floated down rivers, traipsed over mountains,
and hopped from country to country, city to city,
pausing over small towns and fishing villages
and islands that seemed lonely
in the best way.
Desire is a cramped, musty apartment
noisy with the highway traffic;
scents line up before the mirror
but the fridge is empty, the handle sticky.

This is where the cutest guy lives,
the one you never find at home
because he sleeps in other men’s apartments:
rows of alluring snapshots fill the wall.

Stick your own photos up among them,
put his pants on, slip into his bed,
adopt his surname – if you move in,
all you’ll be is part of the furniture.

Translated by Christopher Whyte
DIARY

For days now fighter planes have been circling above us:
I stood in Riverside Park and scanned the sky,
others jogged or walked dogs as they did every afternoon.

Each person was three thousand less. We were afraid
of the day before yesterday, of the hatred painted
on walls and on benches: “Kill all the Arabs!”

Black women in their forties wept through the morning Mass,
and I sat in the pew alone, a stranger in the shared city,
but the priest hugged me like an old friend when I left.

I spent the afternoon rambling, empty and dejected,
past photocopied faces of those who were missing.
The cars didn’t move: people’s minds too were in deep-freeze.

For two days I carried food and medicine, volunteered
to save lives, but was sent home: the army took over.
There was nothing to do, nowhere for me to go.

I was empty still, and helpless, I watched the TV,
the same sequences several hundred times on the news,
no-one said anything, they were busy counting the dead.

I understood this was no theme for writing. Time didn’t pass.
Just to keep busy, I went to the barber, went running and shopping,
visited the laundrette and gazed at the bright New York sky.

Translated by George Szirtes
“Sometimes I wake from dreams
and I have no idea what I am,
old or young, boy or girl.

I have to touch myself
to check: the only evidence is
my sweating body in the damp bed.”

Tiresias sat facing me. He’d been
walking his dog, I’d been running.
Both of us slumped on a bench.

“It has long ceased to matter whether
it is light or dark. The inner clock
that knew the time of day has stopped.

It’s years since I lived in the present,
only in prophecies and myths;
I can’t find my way in the street.”

He lit a cigarette and scratched his dog
behind the ear. “András, if I could
talk about it, just this once perhaps…”
in my dreams I am always a woman, 
wild and desirable, and wholly out of reach, 
adored and admired by men.

I play with my breasts in my dreams, 
my skin soft and delicate. Light trembles 
throughout the entire dream-sequence.”

He scratched his shin with his white stick, 
the skin was peeling off his hands, his face, 
the dog had found a hedgehog to play with.

“The loveliest time of my life seems 
So short, a matter of minutes now. 
It was when men still desired me.

He gave a deep sigh, spat and looked away. 
“If you enjoy being a man be careful, 
you could at anytime turn into a woman.

The line between the two is too narrow. 
Perhaps if I become pregnant, 
I would still be a woman, a mother.”

Translated by George Szirtes
We are like trees.
We brave the elements,
simply for the sake of living,
bending to whatever winds may blow.
We drink in rain, and we huddle
close in cold.

We go to war.
A place, a thing, where strong men
wilt,
and weak men fall as leaves in
autumn chill.

We are like trees,
but we are not wise.
I awoke from the dream startled.
The bedroom was oh so very cold,
and I went to cover you in the down,
but suddenly I remembered;
staring at the vacant, dirty sheets.
TAINO
BRIDGET HERRERA

Father
Chieftain
Headdress of fronds
Whose plantain trees reign over the island
Beneath the green canopy
Hammocks sway
While bitter palm fruit kisses
Native face
Budding heart beats on tip of shoot
Red flower weeps with bended neck
As I see caravels
One
Two
Three
Sail close to shore while children sleep

Mother
Warrior
Golden Flower
Feathered crown beseeches sky
Yuca tubers nestle below her feet
Beware
Cassava sap
A deep torpor breeds

Enclave
Ghosts
Defiler of sand
Silver finger points to stay
Pearly teeth brazen pale face
While nature’s children fade away

“Aji Aya Bombe!”
“Better Dead than a Slave”
Drink venom milk to set souls free
Mother
Father
Climb up tree
Dangled fruit
Heads tilt to sea
To sway again
While paradise bleeds
That click stirs silence
Echoes in my ear
Until I hear
My mother screaming
She calls on me
Her guardian angel
A freshman in college
To save her as I did before
Distance means impossibility
So I listen
Dad’s fists hit her face
Breath forced from her body
My beautiful mother cries
Don’t hang up
Don’t hang up
Please, don’t hang up
On 3 August 1971, American television aired “Oral Roberts in Hawaii,” a program special featuring the esteemed titular American televangelist. A dozen American men and women sing the opening medley, bedizened in brightly-colored Aloha shirts, muumuu, shells and scented lei. The camera retreats, drawing the expanse of the Pacific Ocean and gently swaying palms into the frame while the group energetically sings a secular verse: “Sing me a song of the islands, where hearts are high when the moon is low, where rippling waters seems to say, ‘Al-ho-a’ [...] Bring me the fragrance of ginger, and strum your guitar as I dream away...” (Roberts 1971). While this performance may present itself as a tawdry rendition of Rodger and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific* or a humorous caricature of American tourists, it is, in fact, the foot-tapping prelude to a widely successful evangelical television program.

Like many of its ilk, Roberts’ evangelical program garnered millions of viewers, promulgated a set of moral values and admonished Americans to repent and live the ‘true’ Christian lifestyle. Locating the pulpit on the shores of Hawaii and donning native vogue may have been an effort to make Christian values more palatable for a growing secular - and liberal -society. The very act of doing so, however, raises one of the central concerns addressed in this paper; that is, the various modes and practices, both secular and religious, televangelist preachers employed in the design and production of their programs. In 1976, Newsweek dubbed the evangelical movement “the most significant and overlooked religious phenomenon of the 1970s” (quoted in Horsfield 8). Recognizing the wealth and dynamic political feuds within the broadcasting industry, a 1978 *Wall Street Journal* headline declared: “Religious Broadcasting Becomes Big Business” (Frankl 12). Although not all televangelist programs located their ministerial work in Hawaii or other ‘exotic’ venues, each adopted modern-
The resurgence of conservative evangelicalism, or what would eventually...
be called the New Christian Right (NCR), was undergirded by a series of tumultuous socio-political changes during the 70s. The establishment of the NRC was heavily influenced by the ideologies of 19th-century evangelicalism, which was typically “characterized by racism, a hostility to Native Americans, an imperialist mentality, superpatriotism, a pro-militarist stance, and a deep suspicion of “foreign” ideologies such as Catholicism and socialism” (Peck 81). For evangelicals, a spate of Supreme Court rulings and shifting lifestyle habits presented a pernicious threat to evangelical values. Heather Hendershot’s *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (2004) acknowledges the impact of Supreme Court rulings in 1962 and 1963, which proscribed school prayer and Bible reading. Concurrently, “the defeat in Vietnam, Watergate, rising rates of drug use, teenage pregnancy and divorce, the growth of the pornography industry, and an increase in sex and violence on television” plunged America into moral peril (Hendershot 82). Janice Peck’s study, *The God’s of Teleevangelism* (1993), also points to political events, such as “the Cold War, McCarthyism, and Eisenhower’s election,” as catalysts to the rise of conservative evangelicalism (81). In 1973, evangelicals watched in horror as abortion was legalized. Against this backdrop of social and legal reforms, evangelicals interpreted social change as an acute symptom of modernity, and developed a deep and unshakable conviction that America epitomized the biblical city of Sodom.

America thus witnessed “the reflowering of evangelical activism,” which would represent and institutionalize a Christian counterpoint to the confusion of modernity (81). While conservative evangelicals combated social liberalism, they also labored to distinguish themselves from the liberal Protestantism that prevailed during the 1960s. Liberal Protestantism promoted both political activism and “provoked deep reassessments of religious faith and practice for many members of mainline denominations” (81). Conservative Protestants kept this kind of grass roots participation at a distance, arguing that liberal Protestantism made too many concessions to the social liberals of the 1960s. Additionally, many conservative evangelicals felt that liberal Protestantism obfuscated the line dividing its Christian doctrine from the popular trends of New Age philosophies and spiritualism. As a result, “conservative evangelicalism was strategically positioned to fill the vacuum created by the faltering of
liberal Christianity” (92). Rather than renegotiate their own doctrine to accommodate this growing liberal worldview, these conservatives advanced an aggressive model of Christianity that would challenge social liberalism and ground its viewpoints on American nationalism.

Incorporating broadcasting technologies, telemínistry gained considerable momentum from the early-fifties through the mid-sixties. Communications historian, Peter G. Horsfield’s Religious Television: The American Experience (1984), astutely observes that the candidacy and election of a “self-proclaimed “born-again” Southern evangelical as American president [Jimmy Carter]” was the galvanizing event that “brought the phenomenon [televangelism] to public attention” (Horsfield 13). Historians agree that the pivotal election year of 1976 led to its “most visible manifestation”: evangelical television (13). Hendershot also comments on the significance of the Carter nomination: “Carter was an avowed born-again, but to the disappointment of his conservative Christian supporters, he turned out to be something of a liberal in sheep’s clothing” (Henderson 27). Despite this disappointment, “just having a born-again in the White House […] helped to get evangelicals onto the popular culture map” (27). Conservative evangelicals agreed to promote Carter’s status as a ‘born-again’ rather than focusing on Carter’s weak conservative character. Many Americans were surprised to find that these evangelist broadcasters wielded large budgets, exercised technological prowess, possessed sophisticated fundraising strategies and presided over enormous congregations. Horsfield points out that “the fact that the growth of evangelist broadcasting had occurred largely unnoticed led many to believe that the broadcasters had in fact been operating in secret and were intent on some kind of social or political duplicity” (13). Post-Watergate attitudes of suspicion led many Americans to scrutinize the ‘machinations’ of these powerful broadcasters, and this element of suspicion seemed to be justified after the following election year when a coterie of evangelicals launched an alliance with “new right” politicians, such as Moral Majority. The significance of organizing such a coalition was to combat the “moral and political” ideologies that threatened Christian values (14). As a result, the merging of conservative evangelicalism and American politics led suspicious onlookers to fear the rise of a technocratic theocracy ruled by evangelical broadcasters and fundamentalist politicians.
Gaining this momentum, conservative evangelicalism worked to preserve and propagate its Christian politics by expanding the evangelical press, building Christian educational institutions and organizing Christian lobbying coalitions. Peck understands these evangelical entities as instrumental in developing “its ideological and material resources in opposition to the dominant currents and structures of modern society” (83). Peck articulates that “economic and industrial development, black civil rights struggles, and the universalization of television have eroded many boundaries that had separated orthodox Protestants from “the world”” (83). Much of this success, however, is indebted to the efficiency and growth of televisual ministry. During the 1960s and early 1970s, televangelism underwent an important transition following the FCC’s decision to revise its broadcasting regulations, which resulted in three major reforms.

First, the FCC stated that “there was no difference, in terms of serving the public interest, between sustaining-time and paid-time religious programming” (98). In other words, stations were no longer responsible for reserving airtime for free religious programming. Second, stations were permitted to feature commercial advertising during “noncommercial” religious programming, therefore attracting wealthy investors and maximizing profit. Lastly, and most crucially, the FCC removed religious programming from the aegis of the Fairness Doctrine, which served to maintain a fair representation of competing political ideas and viewpoints (98). Broadcasters therefore were free to promote particular social or political viewpoints without the responsibility of balancing them with contending perspectives.

With these new revisions, televangelists became fierce competitors in the marketplace, buying blocks of airtime from independent stations. Horsfield’s statistics illustrates how this revised body of legislation impacted religious broadcasting budgetarily. He notes that the Christian Television Mission’s budget increased from $90,076 in 1969 to $125,081 in 1971; the Christian Evangelizer’s Association nearly doubled its budget from $571,000 in 1970 to $1,117,000 in 1971 (Horsfield 99). By 1977, 92% of all religious television was paid-time programming (Horsfield 27). As a result of this fiscal support, the number of these programs grew from 38 in 1970 to 72 to 1978, and evangelical
programming airtime increased from 53-percent in 1959 to 92-percent in 1977 (9). Mail-in fundraising tactics, such as ‘prayer requests,’ often triggered a deluge of mail; Horsfield reports that Oral Robert’s ministry yielded 20,000 pieces of mail each day (28). As it has been suggested, the FCC’s rulings deregulated religious broadcasting, positioning the televangelist enterprise in the ambit of a wider American audience and competitive marketplace.

Theorizing Televangelism

Because television functions as the central tool of the televangelist enterprise in voicing the Christian message, it is beneficial to turn to Jacques Derrida’s thoughts on televangelism. In his seminal study of Derrida and televangelism, critic Michael Naas’ Miracle and Machine: Jacques Derrida and the Two Sources of Religion, Science, and the Media (2012), explores Derrida’s understanding of televangelism. Naas suggests that Derrida’s fascination with televangelism is both cultural and epistemological, rooted in the “elementary faith that Derrida claims to be the basis of all media, that is, capitalizing on the “I believe” or the “I believe you” or the “Believe me as one believes in a miracle” at the origin of every form of communication and every social bond” (Naas 139). Derrida articulates that there is a “capitalization upon the testimonial faith that is the condition of all teletechnology that leads to the production of miracles on the plasma screen,” but “only through a high degree of technological knowledge, not to mention tremendous investments of capital” (139). This strain of thought demonstrates that Derrida is not only cognizant of the size of the televangelist enterprise, but, most importantly, its power to produce, induce and reinforce belief. Derrida points out that while religions have a “universal vocation,” “Christianity’s particular brand of universality […] has gained such prominence and legitimacy on the world stage and […] has marked international discourse, law, and institutions to such a degree” (133). It is precisely how this universalization of Christianity is sustained that propels Derrida’s argument forward.

At the core of Derrida’s analysis of televangelism is a suspicion of the power and hegemony activated by American telemisters. For Derrida, Christian teleministry resembles a panoptic power that
centralizes a dominant (Christian) ideology around which all opposing (non-Christian) discourses and viewpoints are controlled and regulated. Similarly, Peck articulates the hegemonic power exercised through televangelism:

Religious rhetoric persuades through authoritative proclamation rather than by rational argument. Listeners are moved by religious rhetoric when they feel the terms of their belief system have been faithfully represented by speakers who hold the necessary authority to deliver divine messages (Peck 199).

As such, the central “power of television is vocal […] the recording of the voice is one of the most important phenomena on the twentieth century” (Naas 142). While recording the voice was a defining hallmark of technological progress, Naas points out that Derrida routinely speaks of “the tevisual hegemony of the Christian religion,” or the enforced universalization of its message (Derrida quoted in Naas 34). Naas illustrates Derrida’s concern, remarking that Christianity is “the most widely disseminated, most dramatic, spectacular, and arguably the most successful televisual representations of religion in the United States” (134). In what he has termed the *telegenic voice*, Naas summarizes Derrida’s understanding of the hegemonic Christian ‘voice’ of televangelism as a media phenomenon that claims both political and religious ‘truth’ while actively quashing contending non-Christian voices.

**Politics and the National Pulpit**

The 70s was a momentous decade in American religious history for two reasons. First, it registered the energetic resurgence of evangelical broadcasting; by the mid-sixties, religious broadcasting had lost its zeal and maintained only a small portion of airtime. Second, there was an emerging dialogue between evangelism and conservative American politics. Evangelical discourse figured prominently among the competing and divisive political voices of 70s America, particularly in the debates of cultural feminism and gay liberation. The resurgence of conservative (tele) evangelicalism was, in part, a reaction to the dynamism and instability of moral and cultural values of the 70s. While televangelism used biblical logic and argumentation as a lens to study culture and politics, 70s
liberals worked by “interrogation and questions: why should we accept conventions, norms and values? Furthermore, what stops us from creating new values, new desires, or new images of what it is to be and think?” (Colebrook 5). In light of Naas’ notion of the **telegenic voice**, this section analyzes how (tele)evangelicalism impacted the American political theatre and adopted rhetoric of nationalism and citizenship to ground its politico-religious viewpoints.

With President Carter in the White House, televangelists confronted social liberalism in 70s America by organizing powerful political coalitions with the Christian Right. Peck writes: “The success of any modern social movement depends on building a coalition around clearly identified issues. A movement must also have a clearly identifiable opposition if it is to create enjoinment in the moral arena” (Peck 87). In forging a strong political coalition, teleministers gained traction as they set out to expunge what they saw as the moral perils of American society.

Three significant conservative religious programs that gained momentum during the 70s were Anita Bryant Ministries and her infamous Save Our Children campaign (1977), Pat Roberson’s 700-Club (founded in 1966, but reached national syndication in 1974) and the establishment of Rev. Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority (1979). Known as the beautiful runner-up in the 1959 Miss America pageant and spokeswoman of Florida orange juice, Anita Bryant spearheaded a virulent anti-gay crusade in Dale County, Florida. In 1977, Bryant attended a revival at Miami’s Northside Baptist Church where she listened to an incensed preacher denounce the recently-ratified Dale County anti-discrimination ordinance for gay residents, claiming he would “burn down [his] church before [he] would let homosexuals teach in its school” (Beirich 1). Stirred by the preacher’s words, Bryant launched a national campaign called Save Our Children, which sought to overturn the pro-gay ordinance. To the dismay of gay residents, Bryant’s bitter crusade garnered over 64,000 petitioned signatures in less than six weeks, ultimately repealing the ordinance with a 70% vote.

While Bryant was not recognized as a ‘trained’ televangelist, historians and critics alike tend to overlook her oratorical acumen and adoption of preaching tactics. Bryant was an enterprising and talented speaker; her activity in beauty pageants and music career made her
comfortable in front of large crowds. Like her male televangelist counterparts, Bryant’s hard-line Christian message was articulated through the *telegenic voice*. Instrumental to the campaign’s efforts to overturn the ordinance were Bryant’s evangelist-inspired commercials that were broadcasted locally in Florida. One particular commercial juxtaposed the events of the Orange Bowl (a national American college football tournament) with the events from the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade. The commercial features a collage of live footage and photographs featuring public displays of homosexuality, such as transgender folk, cross-dressers, dancing lesbians and shirtless men. On a deeper level, Bryant’s visual rhetoric arranges multimedia to juxtapose ‘old’ and ‘new’ American social values, which at once extols an America defined by collegiate athletics, patriotism, family leisure and national sport, and bemoans the moral corruption of gay liberal culture.

Seen from this perspective, evangelicals believed social liberalism was deteriorating Christian-American values. This sentiment of Christian nationalism is best reflected in the visible support of Jesse Holmes, the senator of North Carolina who remarked: “I have pledged my full support to her [Bryant…] She is fighting for decency and morality in America—and that makes her, in my book, an *all-American lady*” (Young 38 my emphasis). As an “all-American lady,” Bryant’s crusade mobilized a vicious misrepresentation of homosexuality that systematically subsumed pedophilia, child pornography, youth exploitation and perversion under the category ‘homosexual.’ Bryant forewarned her audience that “if homosexuals are allowed to change the law in their favor, why not prostitutes, thieves, or murderers?” (Kondracke 13). During another religious anti-gay crusade, Bryant often relied on the myth of homosexual proselytization, or the deliberate recruitment strategies Bryant and her proponents believed gays used: “Some of the stories I could tell you of child recruitment and child abuse by homosexuals would turn your stomach [...] Homosexuals cannot reproduce, so they must recruit” (4). Seen as “an assault on the nuclear family,” gays (and feminists) were misrepresented as predators targeting vulnerable American youth (Peck 82). Additionally, Bryant routinely imbued biblical interpretation with humor to cement her political viewpoints: “If homosexuality were the normal way, God would have made Adam and Bruce” (Carroll 291).
vociferous critics of social liberalism, evangelicals used broadcasting networks that worked to propagate their anti-gay sentiments and speak to millions of “decent” American citizens.

The crusade went national when Bryant’s campaign attracted the support of two prominent televangelists, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. At a rally in Miami in 1977, Falwell chimed in with Bryant’s anti-gay obloquy: “So-called gay folks [would] just as soon kill you as look at you” (Johnson 1). Reaching national syndication in 1974, Robertson’s 700 Club echoed a similar lamentation heard in Bryant’s anti-gay commercials. Peck points out that “programs such as the “700 Club” encourage political activism in terms of moral imperatives that derive from divine mandates” (Peck 87). Significantly, Robertson often lamented the dissolution of what historian Grant Wacker has termed the “Christian Civilization.” Wacker understands the resurgence of conservative evangelicalism to be rooted in the myth of the “Christian Civilization.” Wacker explains that the Christian Civilization ideal “is constructed on the belief that there exists a set of “moral absolutes” explicitly and transparently revealed in Scripture that should underpin society’s laws, institutions, and public policies” (Peck 82). Wacker clarifies that the Christian Civilization embodies an “explicit set of social and cultural commitments” that is “not so much a list of discrete ideals of a coherent world view, as a way of seeing reality” (Wacker 297). This is precisely what Naas articulates through his notion of the *telegenic voice*; that is, a dominant discourse that aims to universalize its political message, pushing resisting viewpoints into a realm of cultural unintelligibility and illegitimacy. Both Naas and Wacker’s terms are inextricably linked as the *telegenic voice* directly articulates, promotes and defends the principles of the Christian Civilization narrative.

Teleevangelists thus sought to establish a national pulpit where the *telegenic voice* could urge Americans to preserve the Christian Civilization that was quickly deteriorating. While conservative evangelicals asserted that America should strive to emulate the principles of Christian Civilization, many social liberals of the decade felt that its narrative read more as a nostalgic threnody for an outmoded America. On the *700 Club*, Robertson expressed the core sentiment of the Christian Civilization ideal: “I think we should be a biblically-based nation. There has got to be some unifying ethic for society” (quoted in Horsfield 155). Although
the discourse of Christian Civilization imagined a very specific kind of America, it also advanced a narrow definition of American citizenship. Not only did conservative evangelicals envision and advocate for the grand restoration of Christian Civilization, they also inspired the evangelical interrogation of American citizenship. Televangelist Jerry Swaggart’s program, The Camp Meeting Hour (a widely popular program launched during the 70s), preached: I have always thought that Christians should get involved in public life [...] The way you lead is from service. If we serve the people with knowledge and compassion and with care, that’s the way we ought to take over leadership (Clarke 3).

As conservative evangelicalism aimed to reform society through a biblical lens, Falwell’s program also admonished his faithful viewers to animate political leadership with Christian principles. Long after the 70s, Jerry Falwell continued to blend nationalist and religious rhetoric. In a comment to the Washington Post in 1997, the Falwell expressed: “If we do not act now, homosexuals will ‘own’ America! If you and I do not speak up now, this homosexual steamroller will literally crush all decent men, women, and children [...] and our nation will pay a terrible price!” (Falwell quoted in Johnson, my emphasis). Such views typified not only the nationalist rhetoric of televangelism, but also promoted a model of Christian citizenship that merged Christian values with political responsibility. This model of citizenship exhorted Americans to construct and maintain this Christian Civilization through political activism and awareness. Like many of his televangelist counterparts, Falwell routinely adopted and relied on a nationalist vocabulary to ground his political viewpoints, calling upon “America” and the “nation” to mobilize conservative Christian resistance.

One of the most visible institutions reiterating the discourses of the Christian Civilization was Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority. Although Moral Majority flourished in the 1980s, the far-reaching influence of 1970s (tele)evangelicalism paved the way for its establishment. With the help of Paul Weyrich, founder of Christian Voice (1976), Falwell established a political organization that vehemently opposed homosexuality, abortion and anti-family attitudes in an effort to preserve the values of the Christian Civilization. Founded in 1979, Moral Majority emerged as a powerful think-tank institution that advocated for the union of personal (religious)
and political viewpoints, and articulated the epistemological and political foundations for a new American moral order. Social liberals and opponents of Moral Majority viewed Falwell as a pompous moralist whose religious cant condemned Americans who did not hold Christian values. Moral Majority, Hendershot argues, “made a huge political splash and was, [...] a daunting, frightening force of the political Right” (Hendershot 32).

Falwell successfully mounted a political platform whereupon conservative evangelicals and politicians aimed to conform liberal social values to the ideals of Christian Civilization.

Another political entity that employed the telegenic voice to articulate both evangelical and nationalist sentiments was Falwell’s highly-patriotic “I Love America” rally. Much like his Moral Majority, these rallies epitomized televangelism’s nationalist-religious rhetoric. Resembling the ethos of nineteenth-century camp-revivals, Falwell’s campaign invited televangelists, such as Robertson, to lead crowds on the steps of state capitol buildings across the country, preaching to throngs of listeners to preserve Christian values in the face of modernity. In his influential evangelical manifesto, Listen, America! (1980), Falwell articulates that the political intention of the “I Love America” rallies was to “prompt politicians, citizens and non-Christians to consider establishing a national morality on the foundations of Scripture” (Falwell quoted in Swatos 515). The demonstrations were also intended, he remarks, “to rally together the people of this country who still believe in decency, the home, the family, morality, the free enterprise family” (515). Seen from this perspective, the rallies’ politico-moral logic aimed to fully restore the Christian Civilization tradition.

Televangelism, Testimony and the ‘Self-Help’ Genre

While this paper has examined the larger political implications of the evangelical collective, it shifts focus onto the individual and its relationship to conservative (tele)evangelicalism. This section of the paper revisits several reasons advanced by religious historians for the success of conservative evangelicalism during the 1970s, and then proposes an explanation that has not yet been articulated.

Peck’s subchapter entitled, “Evangelism and the Problem of the
Peck contends, “lies in its creative responses to the problem of self and its ability to make sense of the difficulties of modern life by incorporating these into a coherent symbolic system” (Peck 93). For Peck, evangelism offers a haven from the confusions of modernity. Continuing, he remarks that conservative evangelism “offers a cosmic framework that responds to profound questions about the relationship between society and individual existence at the time when such questions seem to have been increasingly urgent for people both inside and outside its boundaries” (93). Similarly, Wacker writes that conservative evangelicalism provided a solution to people’s “deep bewilderment about the reasons for the faltering of the American dream” (Wacker 306). Conservative evangelicals recognized the unreliability of American narratives of material success and focused on the spiritual treasures promised in Heaven. While Wacker and Peck agree that conservative evangelicalism offered a refuge from a decade marked by tumultuous socio-political change, both historians overlook the role ‘born-again’ testimony played in the success of the televangelist ministry.

Significantly, the evangelicals’ emphasis on personal spiritual testimony offered an alternative to the sudden swell of autobiographical print culture of the 70s. Peck points out that “the act of commitment plays a major formative role in determining belonging in social movements” (Peck 89). “Commitment arises,” he continues, “from “bridge-burning acts” such as being spiritually reborn” (89). The ‘born-again’ experience is not simply a tacit transition to the evangelical faith, but rather an emotional and visceral life-event that has brought one to the threshold of conversion. It is common for ‘born-again’ evangelicals to remember where and when they were when they had their born-again experience. It could have been before a risky surgery, a life-threatening accident or a period of heightened consciousness when they left compelled to change the moral and spiritual direction of their life. In the evangelical community, this life-affirming and empowering account of change experience is often narrated and re-narrated to others. In this sense, Peck cites the historical research of Gerlach and Hine’s People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation (1970) wherein they write that being “spiritually reborn” is
[...] a psycho-social state [...] generated by an act or an experience which separates a convert in some significant way from the established order (or his previous place in it), identifies him with a new set of values, and commits him to changed patterns of behavior. (Gerlach and Hine quoted in Peck 89)

Seen from this perspective, how did this born-again narrative - that is, emotive evangelical testimony - work against the prevailing values of social liberalism? Giving an account of oneself empowered the evangelical who may have formerly been lost in the confusion of modernity.

To illustrate this last point, Peck (as well as historian Sam Binkley in his Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption of the 70s) explains that the decade saw a major proliferation of “self-help literature, counseling centers, encounter-style retreats, and lifestyle programming” (93). The evangelical conversion narrative countered the secular humanism of this self-help genre, therefore legitimizing and grounding this personal experience in religious meaning. The success of conservative (tele)evangelicalism was its carving out a space for spiritual transition, human conversion and heartfelt testimony during a decade when all meaning was radically questioned and doubted.

In conclusion, conservative (tele)evangelicalism during the 70s expressed its Christian ideologies through various institutions and programs, ranging from Pat Robertson’s televised 700 Club to Jerry Falwell’s conservative think-tank, Moral Majority. It has been argued here that televangelists and evangelical politicians alike have drawn and relied on a nationalist vocabulary to cement their political viewpoints, which often informed discourses of citizenship and Christian models of responsibility. Additionally, evangelical ministers recognized the power of the telegenic voice in transmitting the narrative of the Christian Civilization, and its urgent message to all patriotic Christians to restore America’s moral order.
Tyler Walton

Julian Fenn

Dartmouth College
If Julie Foudy could tell her sixteen-year-old self one thing, it would be to surround yourself with people who celebrate differences and who think outside the box. She wishes she could have told her younger self it is okay to think differently. Foudy was just sixteen when she made her debut with the United States women’s national soccer team. Four years later, in 1991, the team played in the first Women’s World Cup. The U.S. won and it was the start of the world’s love affair with the team.

In 1996, Foudy led her team to the first Olympics for women’s soccer. They won again. The team went on to win another World Cup in 1999 and a second Olympic gold in 2004. Without knowing it at the time, they were revolutionizing the world of professional sport for women. Foudy is still one of the most recognizable female athletes. She traces her path to becoming a professional athlete back to a scholarship she received from Stanford, enabled by Title IX. It was the first scholarship given to a woman in soccer.

Speaking to a Dartmouth College audience, Foudy said the landmark legislation, passed in 1972 and requiring gender equality for any education program or activity receiving federal funding, is one of the most profound civil rights laws passed last century. The law’s application within college athletics requires that for every male athletic scholarship, there must also be a female athletic scholarship. The law’s passing increased opportunities for women and girls in sports. Before Title IX, about one in twenty-seven women and girls were participating in high school and college sports. Today, about one in three women and girls participate in sports.

Foudy, along with hundreds of locals, recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of Title IX during Dartmouth’s leading voices lecture series. Though Foudy believed the anniversary was an opportunity to reflect on
the great strides the legislation had made for women and sports, she used it to shed light on one reality: A large number of female athletes don’t know what Title IX is and, if they do, they have a negative perception of it. The legislation has been criticized for forcing athletic budget cuts. Foudy said it was usually associated with men’s sports being cut.

“It really saddens me,” Foudy told students, faculty and community members in the Hopkins Center for the Arts’ Alumni Hall. “Because the intent of Title IX has been to provide opportunities for women, not at the expense of men. It ends up getting a bad rap, which is unfair.”

Foudy worked with Sen. Birch Bayh, “the father” of Title IX, as she put it, when she sat on the Commission on Opportunity in Athletics in 2002, which considered possible changes to Title IX. It was then that he told her how it all began.

“He told me he and his wife, who was an undergraduate with him, applied to the University of Virginia Law School,” she said. “He told me how she was much smarter than him, had better grades, test scores, yet she didn’t get into law school, but he did. So they decided to do something about it.

“(Title IX) started as an education amendment to get women into colleges and universities. The by-product of it is the sports. There have been so many wonderful things associated with it. One of the reasons why I advocate for it so much is because of all the benefits that are associated with sports.”

Foudy was appointed by the George W. Bush administration to serve on the Title IX review panel. It was a defining moment for women’s athletics. Her sharply worded report, Dartmouth President Carol Folt said at the event last Tuesday, was really what helped prevent changes that were being contemplated at the time and that could have eroded the power of Title IX. Foudy called it one of her greatest achievements. “I had to step out on the plank and say, ‘I’m going to do a minority report and I don’t agree with what you’re doing,’” she said. “I just felt that the conversation was always focused on blaming women’s sports, instead of finding a solution where we could all play.” Foudy said the beauty of Title IX for women was that it is both a great enabler and a great leveler. It provides a pathway for American girls to follow their dreams.

Foudy, Mia Hamm and Kristine Lilly, who also received soccer
scholarships enabled by Title IX, were all “feisty young teenagers” when they joined the national team. The team played together for almost two decades, during which time they overcame many obstacles as pioneers for women’s soccer. “Success isn’t a matter of chance; it’s a matter of choice,” Foudy said. One choice the group made was to always work harder. It was “okay to be competitive, okay to go after it,” Foudy said. When she got to the national team, not only was competitiveness embraced, it was celebrated. They also chose to celebrate others and to be courageous.

Another choice the women made was to make a difference because they wanted to leave the game in a better place for the next generation of players. She remembered the days in the mid-1990s when “you’re at your 10th roach hotel for the month and you’re getting $10 a day.” The group had been playing together for about eight years. It was then that they started to question their situation. “We weren’t asking for millions; we just wanted a fair, decent living,” Foudy said. “That was a huge battle for us. We turned to women like Billy Jean King, who was a great mentor and sounding board for us. We changed a lot of the funding and the structure, not just for our level, but also for younger girls coming through. At the end, we were making a nice living. Now there’s popularity in the sport because it’s being marketed.”

Though people refer to the team as pioneers for women’s soccer, saying they revolutionized professional sports for women, Foudy said they had not been successful in getting women’s professional soccer off the ground. “We set a standard that we hoped would be the norm rather than the exception,” she said. “I think we changed attitudes and acceptance toward women’s sports, but I think the professional frontier is one that’s really hard to tackle. We haven’t done well with that in soccer.

“You can really generate a lot of enthusiasm around national team events, World Cups and Olympics, but trying to replicate that on a weekly basis is hard. Things are changing, you’re seeing progression; it’s part of the Title IX wave of athletes. It just takes time.”

Since hanging up her cleats in 2004, Foudy — a commentator with ESPN and founder of the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy — has gained a reputation as being an outspoken advocate for gender equality in sports. Similar to what the likes of King did for her, Foudy believed it was her duty to mentor young girls on life’s possibilities, show them how
they could strive for something more and provide insight into why it’s okay to be different. There is not a girl in America who should grow up with a sense of limitation with Title IX behind her, Foudy said. “I learned by watching all of these women that in choosing to make a difference you don’t have to be a CEO, the president of a company or a captain, an Olympic gold medalist or even the most confident or popular person at your school,” Foudy said. “You can be the quiet kid who doesn’t want to talk or the nerd who thinks they’re a little bit different. As long as you believe in something passionately, you can get it done.”
I strove to keep my balance as I was hurriedly forced down the stairs, pushed by the girls behind me. My legs sped up and I shifted my weight, trying to avoid shoving against the girls in front of me, stepping with my body turned to the side. I felt my pants get trapped underneath my heels and I stumbled, barely catching myself with three heavy stomps down five steps of stairs before regaining stability, and almost taking down two others with me.

We were herded underground through a narrow hallway, poorly lit, smelling of the shelved cabinets outside of a mosque housing pairs of shoes that had been drenched with sweat from the feet of those inside performing their noon prayers. I was caught in the middle of the flock, my steps fast and close together as we were pushed past a woman collecting our belongings: purses and mobiles, our headscarves and any fabric ties or cords connected to our manteaux. We were driven into a small room. I kept my manteaux on, given no choice but to allow the woman to scissor off the two black straps sewn at its sides that used to tie into a bow in the front, cinching my waist.

The room was windowless, except for what was the door, which was jailed with metal bars. We spent the night awake, sitting up on the floor, our knees forced to be folded up into our bodies, our backs leaning either against the white painted brick walls or each other.

The cold basement air numbed my toes, exposed in my strappy heels, wearing nothing but fuchsia polish. My eyes scanned the room. There must be at least thirty of us. I barely fidgeted, trying to make myself comfortable enough to close my eyes. If I can sleep for even an hour, this will be over sooner. I felt my pants wedged between my buttocks; my body trembled as I lifted my bottom off the floor and tried to pull out the seam. I gave up, unsuccessful. I looked at the girl next to me, coiled up, stretching her manteaux beyond its threshold to cover her bare knees. At least I wore pants. I shut my eyes.

I wondered where Pezhman was being held. It seemed as though
the guys were being kept somewhere upstairs. We had been dating for less than a month, and going to tonight’s party had been a last minute decision. “A friend of my friend Bahman is having a party tonight. That’s also an option,” Pezhman said over the phone. “Would you like to go?”

“Khoobe? Is it any good?”

“I think it’s a big party. How about we go, if it’s good, we’ll stay, if not, we’ll get up after only an hour or two then go out somewhere? For either dinner or ghelyoon?”

I didn’t smoke, even if it was just the hookah. I stood in front of my closet, with its doors wide open. To roam the public spots of Tehran, females are forced to wear a headscarf veiling their hair, a long sleeved manteaux gowning to the knees at the least to conceal their shape, and long pants down to the ankles, minimizing the visibility of any bare skin. Normally, I reached for a dress getting ready for a party, which I would temporarily cover with a manteaux and scarf before leaving the house, my bare shins hidden in the privacy of my car.

The party was in a building of seventeen stories. The windows were mirrored and double paned, blocking the penetration of the beating of the subwoofer or the dancing laser lights - I still wonder what gave it away to the police. Someone must have ratted us out. Maybe the neighbors. I wish we had never gone. Our first party. We had only been dating for a month- maybe not even.

We were seated when the police arrived. The song sounded like techno and the dance floor was packed and humid with sweat. They were in plain clothes: collared shirts and belted pants. One had a handy cam, following the room on film. Pezhman and I were sitting on the series of chairs that were placed against the living room walls, opening more than enough space required for dancing.

“Look,” Pezhman referenced the man with the camera with an outward motion of his chin. He put his hand on my knee. His hands were strong and large, harmonizing his 184 centimeters of height, and they cupped my knee perfectly, before sliding off my thin legs that brought me up to his square shoulders, and back onto the chair handle between us.

“Vaa, “ I said, puzzled. “It’s not like it’s a birthday party. What is he filming?”

Pezhman went quiet. Distracted in thought, the skin between his
black eyebrows wrinkled. His brows sat closely to his eyes, almost as black as his hair, gifting his face with a mysterious appeal. He had a dark wash of jeans on and a navy Ralph Lauren shirt, with a diagonal green lined golden stripe across the front, an enlarged polo playing logo on its chest, its collar erect, and the only three buttons left open.


“Wha-,” I reached for my purse and took out my manteaux and scarf, which I had kept beside me, avoiding having taken them off in one of the bedrooms intended for the girls to strip down to proper party attire, since we had planned to stay for no more than an hour. I hurriedly pulled my arms through the pale blue sleeves, concealing my exposed skin from the sleeveless modestly low cut top I had on.

“The alcohol! Get rid of the alkol.” I heard someone whisper loudly.

“Pour it down the sink.”

Girls panicked to get to their hijabs waiting for them in the room. I don’t remember how it happened, or when exactly it started happening; the next thing I knew we were all told not to move. My hands shivered as I waited, but I waited. Someone will pay them off and they would leave. Where was the host? He’ll pay them off, and they’ll let us all go.

“Natars,” Pezhman whispered. “Don’t be afraid.” His hand didn’t touch mine, and his body shifted away from me to avoid the slightest physical contact. I had met Pezhman behind a traffic light driving home from dinner with university girlfriends. A couple of months had passed since graduation and we caught up over pizza at a small Italian place called Pastoo. It seemed like we hadn’t seen each other in forever- the last few months had been busy with building final maquettes, scale models, and getting ready for our thesis defenses, too engaged to hang out like previous terms. We had dinner, chatted, and possibly gossiped a bit. I was giving one of my friends a ride home, and a Kia Sorento on the left lane tried to keep up, aligning themselves parallel to us. I glanced over from the wheel; they were waving their hands, signaling for us to roll down the window. We ignored them, my girlfriend and I secretly exchanging smiles between the two of us, with our faces pointing towards each other, away from the passenger window. This was typical; a car of girls approached by a car of
guys, asking to roll down their window, at least one of them trying to exchange numbers with one of the girls, beseeching for her to punch his number into her mobile. It was when we were side by side behind the traffic light that we finally caved and let the window down.

“I don’t want to be pesky. I know you,” said the passenger leaning forward into the dash. “I know you be khoda, to God. Aren’t you Atoosa?”

“And you?” I asked, my teeth exposed, the corners of my lips turned upward.

“Pezhmanam.” He said. “I’m Pezhman. You don’t remember me? We met last spring, eid norouz, new year break, in Shomal.”

Everyone went to Shomal by the Caspian Sea for the New Year holiday.

“No, listen. Don’t you have a villa in Darya-Kenar? You’re Arshia’s sister.”

Ahh. I was starting to remember.

We were escorted into vans, white Toyota HiAces with the words “guidance patrol” written in white inside a thick stripe of green, lined up outside the building. They separated the girls and guys upon boarding the vehicles. I called home, knowing my phone would be confiscated soon after. My dad answered.

“Baba,” I whispered. “They got us. We’re in the mashin now. I don’t know where they’re taking us. I think Vozara.” Vozara is the detention of detentions, where you’re not just filed as a record, but jailed, known for un-Islamic arrests, reasons being attendance at a “mixed” party, alcohol consumption, “bad” hijab- which can mean anything from a good deal of makeup, a too short manteaux, too many strands of hair showing from under your scarf, or just plain bad luck and an unforgiving officer. My words must have been shaking. My father consoled me not to worry, that they might keep us over night since it was late; he would send my brother with some comfortable clothes and shoes. The guards and officers never gave me the sweatpants or flats, even when I asked for them. I sat on the cold floor with my feet at a forty five degree angle tiptoe in my heels and my knees tucked beneath my chin in the windowless room, painted white over brick, the closest link to the outside the barred door.

I went through episodes of sleep, nothing deep or lengthy. My stage one of quiet sleep was interrupted with a startle.

“I’m telling you to open this damn door jendeh. Open it whore!”
“Speak right miss.” A voice on the outside answered.
“Shut up and open the door. I’m telling you I need to go to the bathroom.” The girl gave the bars a strong shake. No one responded.
“Open! Open it!” She started to scream even louder. “I need to piss.” She kept her grip wrapped around the bars. “Filthy whores. I’m talking to you. Are you deaf? I’m telling you I need to piss.” She paused for an answer. “Khaar kosse, open it cunt.”
“E e khanoom! Miss! Speak right.”
“I’ll piss right here. I’m not joking. I’ll piss right here for you.”
I had never heard a girl be so vulgar, and furthermore, to government officials. She really had to go. Two insults later, directed towards their mother and sister, her panties came off, and she relieved herself, her knees bent and spread apart, holding the bars like a caged orangutan at the zoo, splattering the hallway floor, managing to target just outside the cell. “She thinks I’m joking. She thinks I don’t have the balls. Kos nane.”
I closed my eyes and rested my forehead on my knees, blocking out the commotion that had stirred in the hall. I had been pulled over before, I had been warned for being bad-hijabed, but never had I been arrested. It was cold. They could give us blankets, or at least newspapers to spread underneath us. I didn’t even know anyone. Why did they have to put us in a cell? And pile us all into one? My stomach growled. Some of these girls had done this before. I didn’t belong.
“We’re wretched.” Someone whimpered. “What are we going to do?”
My ears listened but I refused to lift my head, feeding the urge to continue breathing the warmer air trapped between my chest and knees.
“Nothing. We’re wretched, that’s all.”
“Vang!”
“The filths!”
“What are we going to do if they take us?”
“If? Didn’t you hear them? They’re taking us. They said seven. It’s seven.”
“They said it’s just test e alkol, no?”
“We don’t know. What if they test that too? Anything can come of these filths.”
We had been there since three. I never thought four hours could go by so slow.

An hour later than scheduled, we were lined up, paired, and handcuffed, left hand to a fellow inmate’s right, and directed into the vans. Our families stood outside, mothers in tears, fathers comforting, begging to let their child go, as we were vanned and driven off to the forensic clinic for breath tests. Alcohol consumption is a crime, but what the girls truly feared was whether or not they would be examined, not for showing abstinence from alcohol, but from sex.

I had nothing to fear- a twenty four year old virgin who barely drank, not because of Islam but because I detested the taste. I didn’t have a sip of alcohol that night- we were only planning to stay for an hour or two.

Alcohol consumption can land you seventy lashes, but nowadays it has fortunately been replaced with a monetary fine. Gradually falling out of fashion in the past eight or so years and being informally replaced with monetary fines and permanently documented criminal record files, rarely are the whips taken out anymore.

I was hand in hand with a girl called Sara. She was almost a head shorter than me, wearing black head to toe with the exception of a thick lock of platinum dyed hair-although black at the roots- and burgundy painted nails. Her dark shadow was in time with her pupils, but now spoiled with the ashes of heavy layers of mascara freckling down to her cheekbones. Her eyes were red - probably from keeping in the jade green contacts for so long. “Did you have mashroob?” She whispered barely moving her lips, asking if I had had any alcoholic beverages. Her lips were stained from the lipstick she had wiped off at some point in the night. I raised my eyebrows and gave my chin a lift, signaling my negative reply. Her nose was an exaggerated example of the widespread rhinoplasty, looking like a slide at the Wild Wadi water park in Dubai, the bone shaven to a strong curve, its tip high and up almost forming an obtuse angle with her lip. I felt a pull, my arm slightly thrusting away from my body as Sara wiped her palm on the side of her thigh.

I opened my mouth as the breath analyzer came down the line and it was my turn to blow. We were charged eight thousand tomans each for the imposed test; those of us who had money with us paid up front, those with their pockets drained of any notes depicting the turbaned head of
Khomenei had their names put down as *bedehkaar*, owing money.

I blew on command. The man looked at what seemed to be a small screen and squinted. “*Dobare,*” he said. “Again.” I blew again, still confident. He looked at the screen. My eyes sought to meet his for confirmation. He denied me eye contact and moved on to Sara. “Blow,” he ordered. My stomach growled.

It wasn’t until four o’clock that afternoon that they overwhelmed us with food. The cell door opened to two large aluminum rectangular dishes, two bowls of yogurt, a bag of bread, and one plastic spoon per person. There were around twenty of us now, the other half moved to the neighboring room to allow more space. I took my spoon and dipped into what waited. It was *zereshk polo*, barberry rice, with chicken. The rice was warm but only at room temperature. The small tart berries were scarce, and the white grains lacked any trace of saffron. I chased it with a spoon of yogurt.

“They’re keeping us tonight too,” one of my cellmates said quietly.

“Probably, Or else they wouldn’t be giving us food.” She tore off a piece of the *lavaash* bread and dipped it in the bowl of shared yogurt.

“And still, thank God,” another said. Her eyebrows were shaven replaced by brown ink tattooed with its tail higher than natural, giving her a devilish look. “I heard all they gave the boys was stale bread.”

“They beat them too.”

I cut into the chicken using the side of my spoon, managing to separate strings of the meat, pursued by rice, joining them together as they entered my mouth.

I heard yelling, “Aren’t you going to give us soda?” It came from the next cell. I scooped some yogurt. “A Coca, a *doogh*, something,” she nagged, her tone offended. A *doogh* would be nice, I thought, the carbonated yogurt drink seasoned with mint. Then again, a soda might be better.

“She’s so cheeky,” a girl smiled.

“I think it’s the same girl who peed.”

I kept quiet, my spoon rummaging any remaining grains of rice, making a scratching hum as it hit the foil bottom.

“So they’re keeping us tonight.”

“But tomorrow they’re letting us go. I heard them when we were
coming back from the forensic clinic.”

I let my spoon fall with the others into the aluminum, splattered with sparses of white. My knees folded into my chest and I rested my back against the white painted brick wall. I pulled the foot of my trousers over my bare toes folded inward at the knuckles, locking the ends of my pants underneath them. Tonight was still cold.
Although poverty in the United States had existed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, federal efforts to eliminate destitution did not materialize until the Social Security Act of 1935. With this New Deal legislation, the national social safety-net system, known informally as welfare, began. Public assistance has generated a significant amount of controversy throughout the years: the welfare system has opponents who contest it just as vehemently as its proponents support it. Yet no welfare policy may be quite as notorious as the War on Poverty’s Community Action Program (CAP) in the 1960s and its call for “maximum feasible participation.” Many politicians inferred that this phrase meant the radical involvement of poor people at all levels of action, such that traditional power structures would be overturned. Hindsight shows that this insidious belief held little truth. Officials worried about the potential radicalization of the poor, ultimately causing them to move control of the CAPs away from low-income people by the early 1970s. They instead placed authority into the hands of middle class professionals and private leaders. Women, especially activist mothers, comprised a majority of the poor who capitalized upon the CAPs’ opportunities.

Particular attention will be paid to the perspectives of low-income women in this brief narrative of the War on Poverty, as this form of political action best suited their already-existing networks and current unpaid community work. It is for these reasons that indigenous community women were so likely to utilize funding from the CAP. Because of this, I hope to most authentically reflect the experiential knowledge of these women who worked so dedicatedly to
improve their impoverished communities. Despite all the hardship and conflict that community organizing brought them, the CAP proved to be one of the most successful ways to address the needs of low-income peoples in the twentieth century.

I. Community Activism and the War on Poverty

In 1964, President Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), which designated $947 million to a plethora of services intended to help the poor. Thus began the federal government’s War on Poverty. The legislation created new job training programs, youth employment opportunities, adult education classes, rural economic development programs, services for migrant farm workers, and the AmeriCorp VISTA program. It also established legal services for the poor and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). An important part of the EOA was the Community Action Program (CAP), which provided money for the creation of over one-thousand Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to engage poor people’s action directly. This specific aspect of the legislation aimed for the controversial “maximum feasible participation” of CAP recipient populations. However, to avoid upsetting the balance of states’ rights versus federal law, the EOA included an amendment that governors could veto what they “simply couldn’t abide.”1 Furthermore, the CAP language provided for flexibility and a range of interpretations. This elasticity sometimes benefitted poor people in a given area because they were able to control their CAA to best fit their own needs. Yet sometimes the flexibility of CAAs deprived other low-income areas of useful services when municipal and state officials deterred poor people’s participation. When this occurred, low-income women, especially mothers, built upon their legacy of successful collective action and strove to improve the CAAs that were supposed to be aiding them.2

Motherist Politics

Despite varying ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, poor women united within their communities through shared poverty experiences.
The CAP afforded them the perfect opportunity to officially become involved in their neighborhoods, as most of these women had participated in informal types of organizing and networking before the War on Poverty. Because of the lack of homogeneity between CAA members and other community organization members, the formal and informal political actions of low-income women had to encompass distinctive facets of identities and incorporate a variety of tactics. Community organizing initiatives previously did not have to consider these two issues.

The activism of middle class, white women has been documented and discussed for years, as their privileged positions permitted these women to write diaries or letters. They also left files and family documents behind. All of these items traditionally have been used as the primary sources of historical information. Furthermore, activism typically had been viewed as a potential niche for well-educated women, who could not enter legal work or academics due to gender prohibitions; rarely was it considered as a venue for low-income women’s input. Yet as recent scholarship has branched out and utilized other resources that can better represent members of the lower class—such as oral interviews—narratives now relay previously unheard stories that reveal the ways in which women approached activism: not through their privilege, but through their need.

Low-income women first encountered community work through many different means, but a common thread weaves through all of their personal accounts. Each of these women had grown up under parents who were strongly involved in the community as well. Many of these women spoke highly of their parents, especially their mothers, and expressed regret that public rhetoric painted such negative pictures of lower class women, as this obscured the skills and aptitudes of their mothers. For these women, just as for their mothers, contributing to one’s community and helping those in need was unquestionable. It was part of one’s citizenship. Many women first joined a church or school group. A few more first participated in a larger social movement. Sometimes these women worked within already-established organizations, such as a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or a church group. Frequently traditional institutions failed them. This was the case with women like Evelina López Antonetty, a single-mother in the Bronx who first tried, unsuccessfully, to
improve her children’s school system through the PTA. She instead had to found her own group, the United Bronx Parents, to better address the core issues revolving around the schools by acquiring CAP funding. Antonetty’s mother had also been actively involved in their neighborhood while Evelina was young. Yet even women whose parents had not begun a tradition of community participation found that activism was impossible to avoid, as their need required these women to serve as tough advocates for their children.

Some women embraced this aspect of motherhood readily. Others expressed trepidation at the start. Etta Horn, a single-mother in Washington, D.C., felt as if she could not devote time to participating in the local welfare rights movement because it would take her away from her family. However, after attending a few meetings, Horn reshaped her view of motherhood. She soon saw her participation with the movement as an integral part to her role as a parent because through it, she helped work toward significant gains for her children. Her “welfare rights activism, like her school and church volunteerism, constituted one avenue to improve the lives of her children, as well as those of poor women and young people throughout the country.” Horn ultimately served as vice-chairman for the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) in 1967.

A woman’s many sides to her personality shaped her activism, but at the same time, her community engagement also influenced her mothering. Her politicization affected both directions of her identity. Interestingly, low-income women involved in neighborhood organizing were devoted to improving the lives of all those around them, not just those of their nuclear family. To accurately analyze women and the CAP, one must employ a “broadened definition of motherhood,” making sure not to “miss the material conditions that contribute to differing family forms.” This perspective of mothering helps to better understand the motivation behind low-income women’s organizing tactics and approaches. It also explains why women sometimes were so willing to give up their paid positions within CAAs: these women had been committed to community work even before the War on Poverty provided financial compensation for them. They were much more concerned with how they could best benefit their community than if they were getting paid for their time. Yet while this expansive characterization of motherhood contributed
to unifying poor women in their communities, it also isolated middle class female sympathizers. Differing valuation of shared mothering experiences revealed the importance of class in creating cohesion within the movement.

Class Antagonism: The Barriers of Motherist Politics

While large numbers of middle class women joined in the women’s movement, most lower class women did not identify with the group. Black men and women had always worked outside of the family, a legacy of slavery and the impoverished conditions freed blacks first encountered toward the end of the nineteenth century. Married and unmarried low-income white women had also been a part of the workforce for decades. Most lower class mothers had never enjoyed the luxury of staying home with their children and still had to assume all the tasks that mothering entailed in addition to their work tasks. These women simply wished for a way to be economically remunerated for their time in the home, the way that married women were compensated through their husband’s earnings. Poor women were more concerned with improving the associated economic worth of their work within the home by pushing for welfare programs that would compensate them appropriately, than they were with joining middle class women and their desire to voluntarily seek outside employment.10 Low-income women and welfare recipients wanted the same privileges afforded to their middle class counterparts.

Historian Cynthia Edmonds-Cady conducted oral interviews with lower class and middle class participants of the welfare rights movement in Detroit. Her accounts reveal that most of the middle class Friends of Welfare Rights groups became involved because of their sentimental perceptions of motherhood. Many of these Friends cited an instance in which they realized that these low-income women were mothers just as they were, and that their struggles revolved around providing for their children. Therefore, “most [middle class women] saw their welfare rights work as an extension of their lives as mothers.”11 These women also functioned with a broad definition of motherhood and wide range of people whom they were working to benefit. However, the welfare recipients interviewed did not view their experiences of motherhood as
similar to those of the Friends, nor did they believe this “romanticized vocation” was a worthy means over which they could bond. To poor women, middle class women simply could not understand the struggles that were associated with poor motherhood, regardless of other mothering commonalities, so they maintained distance. Middle class women had to remain on the fringe of the group.

This purposeful disconnect precluded gains that could have been made by reaching out to groups and networks with different resources. Yet low-income women were willing to make this sacrifice in order to create the most authentic membership within poor community organizing. As historian Rose Ernst said, “Experience, defined by the absence of privilege, is what establish[ed] credibility among activists in this movement.” In these activists’ eyes, political action permitted these women to turn their oppression into knowledge. Their experiences had allowed them to be experts on how antipoverty policies worked or failed. Welfare rights organizations and CAAs still utilized middle class sympathizers, mainly for financial contributions and transportation purposes, but these Friends rarely participated in any decision-making processes. They never assumed any leadership positions in the organizations over which poor people had the utmost control. When women lost power within the CAP, these class dynamics changed, which frustrated them greatly. Even black middle class supporters were excluded from full participation within poor peoples’ movements, as lower class motherist activism did not extend beyond a shared experience of poverty and could not be bridged by common racial experiences. Instead, racial differences only escalated tensions within these groups.

Racial Conflict in Low-Income Community Organizing

One cannot discuss women and their roles as poor mothers without also considering how race affects their identities. Gender, race, and class are not dichotomous; they all combine together to further marginalize a person. Because of this, non-white lower class women felt they had more issues to combat than just food insecurity and the needs for shelter, healthcare, and education. Usually the unique ethnic needs of an African-American community differed from those of a Mexican-American
population, or an Asian-American neighborhood, or even from a Native American reservation’s wishes, though each of these minority populations benefitted from CAP funding. While some basic necessities remained the same, the racial experiences of each group of people greatly influenced their local courses of action.

Even before the turn of the century, poor black women had been focused on more needs than their white, low-income counterparts. For example, while nineteenth-century white welfare activists fought for economic remuneration for their mothering, so that they would not have to seek outside employment, black communities extended this further and pushed for universal provisions in healthcare, living conditions, and education, which, if provided, would resolve any need to work away from their children. They did not see a need to establish programs that benefitted only a few at the very bottom of the class system. Instead, they thought, why not provide these services for all? Additionally, poor black women were much more concerned with rape and violence against women, as they knew many poor African-American women’s lives would not improve, regardless of the social services available, if their home situations were dangerous for the mother or children.15

The activist paths of black women and white women continued in their own separate directions much of the time. By the War on Poverty, other growing minority groups within the United States complicated potential collaboration even further. Assumptions have generally held that there were rarely any racial alliances in low-income neighborhoods because this is supposedly where racism most prevailed. Yet recent research shows that actually, when necessary, different ethnicities were able to work together to achieve their common goals. In Durham, North Carolina, for example, a low-income program called Operation Breakthrough (OBT) ultimately integrated, so that poor white members and poor black neighborhood residents worked together to provide healthcare and quality elementary education for their children.16 Unfortunately, racial groups sometimes could not coordinate their efforts. This greatly hindered the overall efficacy of the CAAs or neighborhood initiatives involved. In Los Angeles, the Black freedom struggle and Chicano movement clashed when an African-American CAA director fired a Chicano field director. Though Jones eventually rehired the field director, the CAA’s internal
tensions had already escalated, permanently weakening the CAA’s overall strength. In the most racially diverse cities, the CAAs accomplished less to address poverty than in the more homogenous poor populations. Nonetheless, these programs still managed to serve their communities as best as possible, as low-income women still saw local activism as the most effective avenue for change.

Although some non-white women, such as Etta Horn, moved beyond their local organizations to contribute to the national welfare rights movement, and others participated in occasional women’s liberation or civil rights’ activism, most of these low-income women kept their political activity within their geographic localities. They did not feel as if the larger movements reflected their experiences well enough to earn their time and energy. In regards to the civil rights movement, one woman claimed that:

Many of the national African-American leaders did not understand the significance of the community-based struggles for safe housing, adequate medical care and quality education, among others, that were waged in low-income black neighborhoods across the country during the 1960s and 1970s.

Women may have agreed with the platforms held by these national movements. Yet the concerns of this larger political activism did not match their own activist priorities. It was difficult for poor women to worry about integrated stores if one never had the financial means to travel to such a store or to purchase anything inside. Members of the lower class felt that community work provided ways to tailor activism to their local needs; the CAP allowed them to carve out their own activist niches instead.

However, the belief that certain issues did not involve them meant that these community members had created narrow definitions of who belonged to their own political communities, often to the exclusion of sympathetic outsiders. Sometimes, this even alienated indigenous women who were engaged in local activism. One such woman, living in a poor Brooklyn neighborhood, had to obtain an illegal abortion. The procedure left her utterly sick and weak afterwards, but she never felt that her neighbors provided a space for her to discuss this issue, as pro-choice activism was not in the best interests of the community. Because
of this, she had to participate in pro-choice rallies elsewhere to meet her individual political needs. Lower class community workers “measured the value of political ideology by its direct benefit to those living in [their] community and other poor areas,” so their priorities were limited by their population’s shared experiences. These activists saw a distinction between politics and community work: community work fit the needs of local people within their neighborhood, whereas politics only involved and benefitted those in power. Politics, as they saw it, was untouchable and irrelevant. This belief among low-income people was pervasive and powerful, and it greatly influenced the behavior of poor community workers in comparison to those who had been trained and educated in social work outside of a given community. This difference in perspectives and demeanor strained relations between resident and non-resident workers, a battle that became extremely important in the later years of the CAP.

II. The CAPs’ Downfall: Contested Professionalism and Fears of Radicalization

Local grassroots organizations for the poor reached the height of their government funding during the War on Poverty. Unfortunately, federal support slowly dwindled over time and local agencies began to suffer. Internal struggles over how to run the CAPs quickly emerged. Combined with the fear of placing power into the hands of the poor—a fear that was prevalent at the federal, state, and municipal levels—public support for the CAPs dropped drastically. This hindered the CAAs ability to receive further funds, so that community antipoverty organizations’ efforts never matched the success of their activity in the 1960s and 1970s again.

Although many women were pulled into community work through their families, social networks, or other civil society organizations, many more joined the War on Poverty because of their sympathy for the needs of the poor. These females tended to be involved with the paid side of community work, as they had sought careers in social work or community action. Their outlooks on community activism tended to reflect their educational or vocational training. Their academic lives had informed them of the oppressive systems in place, and this influenced
their purpose regarding community work. Meanwhile, community residents tended to prefer programs that sanctioned flexibility, such as the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM). The OEO’s guidelines “betrayed a professional bias that dismissed poor people’s ability to exercise critical leadership,” but CDGM still allowed for its early childhood education centers to adapt the suggested OEO structure to their communities as was fitting. Most community workers believed that involvement in these types of accommodating programs best benefitted the communities they intended to serve and provided the most rewarding work experience for the community organizers, as well. However, not everybody in the CAAs and similar organizations agreed with this type of management. Just as class differences generated varying ideas as to how to best conduct business, many of the men involved in these programs also pushed for different goals and tactics. The Washington, D.C., NWRO campaign for furniture in 1970, manifested these difficult dynamics clearly.

At the time, poor women in Washington, D.C., were unable to save anything from their cash assistance, due to how few of their basic living expenses were covered by the funds each month. Therefore, most of them were in need of furniture for their homes. To meet this need, welfare recipients began to organize. When local welfare caseworkers ignored their requests for extra funds, the women placed hundreds of emergency cash requests with the agency to procure money for furniture. Still, the welfare department did not respond. As their legitimate and proper actions had elicited no reactions from welfare caseworkers, the women began to radicalize. They attacked the welfare department’s building, breaking windows and creating a ruckus. Although the welfare department still did not responded to these women, George Wiley, the director of the NWRO, did. He called in twelve more staff members for the organization to handle the situation. These new NWRO participants brought the furniture campaign in a new, more peaceful direction, as they insisted open negotiations with the welfare department would be more fruitful. All twelve of the new activists were men. The national organization hoped to move away from the radical image these women had created, but ultimately the new staff members’ techniques failed as well, as no extra money was obtained for furniture for these mothers. This situation begged the questions: which methods were most effective? Was there a difference
between the types of tactics if the end results were the same? The common belief of the time was that yes, there was a difference, a very large difference, between the two types of tactics. Even if each situation ended the same way, radical methods intimidated most Americans. Throughout the 1960s, community action continued to gain a negative image among the public because of the assumption that it would veer toward militancy.

President Johnson, supposedly the man behind the War on Poverty, was among the politicians who feared the CAPs’ outcomes. In fact, he held stronger doubts than most. His presidential tapes, now housed in the University of Virginia’s Miller Center, reveal that he did not understand the CAP, to the point of distrust in the CAAs. He also worried that the assumed potential that radical grassroots groups would emerge could hurt his chances of re-election. To hinder the possibility of militancy and radicalization, Johnson’s budget director clarified what “maximum feasible participation” meant in a memo released shortly after the EOA. According to this note, the phrase simply meant that professionals should still lead the agencies, but that a concerted effort should be made to provide poor people with the rest of the non-professional staff jobs. To Johnson’s administration, the CAP was not intended to empower poor people, despite the ideology and sociological theories off of which it was based. Instead, they intended for the CAP to provide low-income people with work.

Unfortunately for the lower class, and particularly for the women most involved in community work, the unquestioned, expansive support of the CAP existed for only a few years before the government and public began to pull back their support and funding. Additionally, poverty research had begun a new area of study. The discipline’s push for “hard statistics,” which were supposed to be objective and scientific, held these programs to new standards when the issue of their funding came up again. For example, the Head Start community preschool program, which had begun in 1962 before the War on Poverty, was founded based upon the political conviction that it was a positive, beneficial program for the government to offer. However, by the early 1970s, the nature of poverty research had changed greatly, so that the federal government needed different proof than before to justify continued funding for the preschool agenda. Political whims no longer sufficed. Studies had to show
financial returns on the money put into the program, in order for more money to be devoted to the cause. With these tides of change, federal support for community action and the War on Poverty slowly faded throughout the 1970s. By the 1980s, President Reagan eliminated the CAP completely. Existing CAAs either had to close or find new sources of funding. Therefore, the nature and efficacy of neighborhood organizing changed yet again.

III. Low-Income Women’s Participation in CAPs—Success or Failure?

Many scholars believe that the CAPs’ outcomes represent some of the most successful community activism in response to poverty. Yet in many ways, this poor peoples’ movement seemed to fail. According to Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, the lack of enduring activism constitutes the movement’s biggest failure. Poor people, especially the organizers involved with the National Welfare Rights Organization, spent too much time coordinating organization efforts, rather than pushing mass mobilization and greater membership numbers. Therefore, people were not driven to prolong participation. Furthermore, they were not able to withstand the pressures community activism faced in the late 1960s and 1970s. Because most of the smaller non-federally funded organizations never progressed to national levels, sustaining momentum proved to be even more difficult. For CAAs and their programs, the move away from government backing hurt the energy of these institutions as well, as few members remained motivated enough to seek alternative funding.

Naples’ interviews also revealed another way in which these organizations suffered: they left little room for their children to participate. Women, whose children accompanied them, were often seen as forcing their children to join. At the same time, those children who later wanted to participate in community activism as adults often felt as if their parents’ groups did not match their own political interests. This was partly because their children were affected by the era of globalization, so that they were more knowledgeable of, and sympathetic to, causes in distant locations. Yet these children also often felt excluded from their mothers’ activism because these women had spent so many years narrowing down the informal membership criteria for participation in
their neighborhood groups. Because these mothers did not create a flexible environment in which their children ultimately could join their organizations, it seems as if they somehow failed in the end, no matter how successful their activities may have been at one time.

However, Ernst defends the people involved in this local community activism, particularly the women, as she points out the difficulty in cultivating and maintaining any sort of political movement while the members’ lives are in constant crisis. Ideally, these women might have fashioned organizations that could withstand internal and external pressures. Yet this simply was not feasible. While their activism altered and improved their mothering, they were also limited by their needs to mother. While their organizing often helped them acquire that which they were lacking, the fact that they were lacking sometimes served as a huge deterrent to success. These women lived a precarious, paradoxical lifestyle—not by their own choosing, but because they were poor. Their very cause for motivation continued to limit them, to the point of supposed failure. Yet during the height of the War on Poverty, poor people—especially activist mothers—made significant gains that they probably would not have made without collaboration and neighborhood action. The memory of these achievements has endured and is evident in poor peoples’ initiatives today: until the American welfare system changes drastically, community organizing will continue to serve low-income groups as one of the best tools they can use to meets their needs.
Endnotes


2 Ibid., 19.


8 Naples, 113.

9 Ibid., 60.


12 Ibid., 214-215.


14 Edmonds-Cady. “Getting to the Grassroots,” 19.

15 Gordon, 142-143.


18 Naples, 104.

19 Ibid., 141.

20 Ibid., 147.

21 Ibid., 136.

22 Ibid., 87.


24 Valk, 47-49.


26 Ibid., 51.


28 Ibid.

29 Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. Poor Peoples’ Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977),