

Clio's Scroll



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STAFF 2012-2013

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We are proud to present the Spring 2013 issue of *Clio's Scroll*. This semester, our selections focus on the meeting of old and new. We look at a representation of mainland China compared with Chinatown in the American West, exploring shifts in demographics and its subsequent effects on culture. The remainder of the journal explores the history of controversial issues in the United States, specifically the prison system and gay rights. These debates continue to resonate in politics today. We hope that looking at these historical case studies facilitates a better understanding of the current state of affairs.

As always, we are incredibly fortunate to be working with such talented associate editors and authors. We are also grateful for the UC Berkeley History Department and Leah Flanagan's constant support, as well as those at Zee Zee Copy for collaborating with us.

Sincerely,
The Editors

“UNTAMED SHE-CATS IN A JUNGLE BEHIND BARS”: LESBIAN PRISON PULP FICTION AND THE THREAT OF FEMALE SEXUALITY, 1950-1965

Austin Bergstrom

“There are no men in a women’s prison, but there is plenty of sex,” reads the cover of James Harvey’s mass-market paperback, *Degraded Women*. A young blonde woman kneels naked on the floor—one of her perfectly red-lacquered hands reaches for her ripped clothing before her, while the other is to her face, covering her chest. “Laura found this out the hard way,” the tagline continues, “as the Lesbian wolves began to stalk her.”¹ Looming behind the woman is the red-lipstick-donning face of a brunette looking out lasciviously from behind shadows and metal bars. *Degraded Women*, produced in 1962 by Midwood Tower,

¹ “*Degraded Women*, James Harvey, Midwood F222, 1962,” Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s, http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/theme_one.php?start=2&data=jailbirds.list&photo=xdegradedwomen.jpg

one of the publishing houses most closely associated with lesbian pulp novels, was meant to appeal to heterosexual male audiences with its lurid and sensationalized depictions of prison lesbian sex. The cover artist, Robert A. McGuire—whose other work includes covers for *Female Convict* (1952, 1959), *House of Fury* (1959), and *Prison Girl* (1958)—would be remembered for having helped craft the art of lesbian noir pulp.² *Degraded Women* marks the tail end of the flood of mass-market lesbian pulp fictions that were distributed and sold in bulk from 1950 to 1965. Books featuring scantily clad (and healthily proportioned) women acting out their passions became a popular means by which lesbianism was made visible in American society.

The popularity of these pulp novels coincided with mid-20th century social science and psychiatric efforts to study the sexual lives and deviancies of American women. Dr. Alfred Kinsey's infamous *The Sexual Behavior of the Human Female* (1953) scientifically affirmed the radical fact that women are sexual beings. During WWII the social scientific and medical communities, under the pressure of rising venereal disease rates on the home front, were forced to confront the promiscuity of American women—not just among prostitutes, but also among teenage girls and single young women in workplaces and college classrooms across the country. Narratives and studies of female homosexuality pushed this acknowledgement one step further: not only were American women heterosexually promiscuous, but some were also *lesbians*. Lesbian pulp narratives, with their loaded stereotypes and male gaze orientation, speak to the growing fears about female sexuality during the height of Cold War cultural conservatism. In the aftermath of WWII, with women in typically male workspaces and thousands of American GIs

² "About the Artist," R.A. Maguire Cover Art, <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/aboutthelibrary/policiesprocedures/collectionpolicy/lesbianpulpfictioncollection.aspx>.

dead at the front, the idea that women were not only sexual, but could be sexual *without* men, was a powerful threat.

Narratives of lesbianism in women's prisons capture this fear with particularly dramatic effect. In these prisons, men are obsolete and women are "criminals"—criminals who can still be sexual, and occasionally find love without men and their families. Whereas lesbianism, in general, posed a challenge to Cold War national security interests in the heterosexual home and hearth, women in prison pulp fiction, in particular, speaks to the greater cultural concern over female sexuality in mid-century America.

***By Popular Demand!*³: The Business of Lesbian Pulp Fiction**

Lesbian pulp fictions such as *Degraded Women* emerged as part of the mass-market paperback boom that began in 1939 with the launching of Pocket Books, a revolutionary publishing house that sought to bring books outside the traditional literary marketplaces and into the drugstores, newsstands, bus stations and grocery stores.⁴ During WWII, the government issued paperback works of literature and popular fiction (Armed Forces Editions) that were specifically designed to fit in GI's uniform pockets.⁵ Following the war, publishing houses such as Fawcett and Midwood Tower joined the paperback movement, specializing in westerns, hardboiled crime, mysteries,

³ "Forced Females, Jack Lynn, Novel Book 5063, 1961," *Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s*, http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/theme_one.php?start=5&data=jailbirds.list&photo=xforcedfemales.jpg

⁴ Yvonne Keller, "'Was It Right to Love Her Brother's Wife so Passionately?': Lesbian Pulp Novels and U.S. Lesbian Identity, 1950-1965," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Jun., 2005): 385-410.

⁵ Jaye Zimet, *Strange Sisters: The Art of Lesbian Pulp Fiction, 1949-1969*, (New York, N.Y.: Viking Studio, 1999), 17.

and thrillers directed at male readership. Because books could now be published directly as paperbacks, without the prerelease of press-reviewed hardcover editions, the expanded marketplace allowed for the publication of more risqué storylines and cover art. As Jaye Zimet argues in her study of lesbian pulp fiction artwork, *Strange Sisters*, this new genre of cheap, delinquency oriented novels, “fed a broader range of fiction exploiting deviant behavior of all sorts; books sensationalizing sex, drugs and illegal or salacious activity of every kind found their way onto paperback racks, their title and cover art fighting each other for attention.”⁶ Despite the silence and invisibility around lesbianism in American popular culture, pulps allowed for the exploration of lesbian seduction. Lesbian prison narratives added the dimension of seedy crime to plotlines and drew attention to the underworld of women’s prisons: a space nearly as marginal as lesbianism itself.

In the forward to Jaye Zimet’s *Strange Sisters*, famous lesbian pulp author Ann Bannon writes that pulp publishing houses in the 1950s and 1960s followed the same marketing tactic as children’s book publishers: “*If we can make this interesting for the boys, we don’t need to worry about the girls. The boys will accept them, and the girls won’t have any choice. The girls always go along anyway.*”⁷ The best way to make a profit off 25-cent books, as with any business, was to appeal to the heterosexual male gaze. This is exactly what cover art, titles, descriptions, and taglines did. While many authors of lesbian pulp novels were men (oftentimes using female pseudonyms), there were some pro-lesbian women authors (such as Bannon). The authors were the last people consulted on cover art, which,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷ Ann Bannon, “Foreword,” in Jaye Zimet, *Strange Sisters: The Art of Lesbian Pulp Fiction, 1949-1969*, (New York, N.Y.: Viking Studio, 1999), 9.

like taglines and titles, were left to the discretion of the publishers. Oftentimes, especially for those more literary-leaning pulp authors, cover art depicted women more brazen and seductive, or meekly feminine and fashionable, than the already clichéd lesbian characters between the covers. Regardless of whether the plotlines and characters were honest, literary depictions of lesbianism by women authors or not, the moment the publishing house assigned the book a cover it became “pulp.” As historian Yvonne Keller argues, “It is less content than cover that defines lesbian pulps as a genre.”⁸ Regardless of varied storyline and plot, Keller goes on, “all [covers] name or imply lesbianism and often advertise deviance, abnormality or irresistible sex.”⁹

Most storylines, however, also fit a traditional homophobic model of lesbianism that was specifically crafted to appeal to the heterosexual men. Plots tended to circulate around female-only spaces: the college dormitory or sorority, women’s army barracks, the female workplace, or women’s reformatories and prisons. In these places without men, the male reader could imagine lesbianism as merely a side effect of his absence. Women in prison pulps usually centered on an innocent heterosexual woman who was manipulated into “deviant” relations by an aggressive lesbian inside the prison walls. The title character was always the one who fell victim to these lesbian corruptions and was left feeling shame and self-hatred over her own sexual weaknesses, lurid as they were.

As Jaye Zimet argues, the great paradox of the Eisenhower/McCarthy era was the simultaneous sexual exploration and the government sanctioning of straitlaced sensibility.¹⁰ The rise of exploitative pulp fiction, which so easily infiltrated the government’s prized suburbs, saw early

⁸ Keller, ““Was It Right to Love Her Brother’s Wife so Passionately?”” 393.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹⁰ Zimet, *Strange Sisters*, 18.

attempts at censorship when, in 1952, the U.S. House of Representatives called for a Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials. The committee was called to investigate “pocket-sized paper-bound books” many of which they found to be “filled with sordid, filthy statements based upon sexual deviations and perversions probably before unfamiliar to the type of reader who now buys them.”¹¹

The way these books put profits before public morals, the committee report claimed, was “not only a national disgrace but a menace to our civic welfare.”¹² Publishers, however, curtailed the promotion of such “immoral” behavior in their books by making sure every prison lesbian character got her due—death, suicide, or insanity—by the conclusion, or that she returned, heterosexuality restored, to the men in her life.¹³ Male audiences, like the censorship committee and Cold War society at large, were reassured by the books’ conclusions that lesbianism, regardless of how strong the love or how passionate the sex, was, like any other disease and most prison sentences, a temporary condition.

***Born Innocent*¹⁴: Psychoanalysts, Pseudoscience and Lesbianism**

The increasing visibility of lesbian women in popular culture occurred alongside the social scientific and medical community’s renewed interest in female sexuality.

¹¹ United States, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, House of Representatives, Eighty-second Congress, Pursuant to H. Res. 596, a Resolution Creating A Select Committee to Conduct a Study and Investigation of Current Pornographic Materials*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1952), 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³ Joke Hermes, “Sexuality in Lesbian Romance Fiction,” *Feminist Review*, No. 42, Feminist Fictions (Autumn 1992): 49-66.

¹⁴ “*Born Innocent*, Creighton Brown Burnham, Pyramid G414, 1958,” Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s, http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/theme_one.php?start=0&data=jailbirds.list&photo=xborninnocent.jpg

Not unlike lesbian pulp fiction, which was almost camp in its exploitation of stereotypes, scientific studies treated lesbianism as a mark of degeneracy and perversion. It was, except for in the most hopeless cases of sexual psychopathy, a curable disease that begged a social cure, much like prostitution had been in the earlier, pre-Kinsey years of the 20th century. “In their efforts to make absolutely clear to an otherwise ignorant public what dangers lurked in the shadows,” historian Donna Penn argues, “the purveyors of the dominant discourse painted a sinister association between the lesbian and the prostitute as sisters of the sexual underworld.”¹⁵ Like earlier studies in prostitution and promiscuity, studies on lesbianism in the post-war decades were fueled by fears of contagious sexuality that would undermine the nuclear household—the beacon of American democracy during the Cold War.

In 1954, just a year after the publication of Kinsey’s study on female sexuality, Frank Caprio’s *Female Homosexuality: A Psychodynamic Study of Lesbianism* was released as an “accessible” study of lesbianism in American society. In his introduction, Caprio claims that in order to fix the problems of the nuclear household in America, the public needed to understand the psychoanalytic problem of lesbianism, in the same way it needed to understand “alcoholism” and “narcotic addiction.”¹⁶ Like any other disease, unless the general public was educated on the symptoms, the societal ill could not be solved. While Caprio so generously stated that lesbians “could occasionally make valuable contributions to our society,” he also claimed that “psychoanalysts are in agreement that all women who prefer

¹⁵ Donna Penn, “The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 359.

¹⁶ Frank Samuel Caprio. *Female Homosexuality: A Psychodynamic Study of Lesbianism*, (New York: Citadel Press, 1967), viii.

a homosexual way of life suffer from a distorted sense of values and betray their emotional immaturity in their attitudes towards men, sex, and marriage.”¹⁷ That all psychoanalysts were in agreement gave “expert” legitimacy to the cultural paranoia around lesbianism in American society.

Not all titles published under the guise of legitimate psychiatric and social scientific studies could be taken as such. As Jaye Zimet argues, many risqué books were able to evade the threat of government censorship by couching lesbian eroticism in medical terminology and including “introductions and testimonials by alleged psychiatrists and M.D.s.”¹⁸ Zimet’s collection of cover artwork exemplifying this trend includes Carlson Wade’s 1961 *The Troubled Sex*. While the tagline of the book claims to be a “study of habits and practices among lesbians—their causes, cures and clinical histories,” the cover art is noticeably pulp. A blonde woman in sheer lingerie and heels looks shamefully over her shoulder at the brunette (in pants!) behind her who is blocking the doorway, hand-on-hip fierce.¹⁹ If the cover art was not such a glaring indication of the work’s pseudoscience, content often was. One such example is the 1959 *Voyage from Lesbos: The Psychoanalysis of a Female Homosexual* by Richard C. Robertiello, M.D. Although Robertiello’s book includes an introduction by a fellow M.D. and gives thanks to the theories of Freud, he opens his “study” with a vibrant physical description of his female patient: “although she wasn’t whistle-bait, she was a pleasant looking girl”.²⁰ Robertiello describes the phallic desire dreams of his patient; her cat-fights with lovers, always

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁸ Zimet, *Strange Sisters*, 83.

¹⁹ “*The Troubled Sex*, Carlson Wade, Beacon Envoy, 1961,” in Jaye Zimet, *Strange Sisters: The Art of Lesbian Pulp Fiction, 1949-1969*, (New York, N.Y.: Viking Studio, 1999), 87.

²⁰ Richard C. Robertiello, *Voyage from Lesbos; the Psychoanalysis of a Female Homosexual*, (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), 21.

ending in sex; and, lo and behold, the attraction for him, eventually bringing her back to the heterosexual world—becoming radiant and beautiful in the process.

Stereotypes of lesbianism perpetuated in pseudo pulps like *Voyage from Lesbos* were bedded in actual psychiatric literature as well. In Caprio's study, after discussing the various "types" of lesbians (latent, overt, etc.), he proceeds to point out four personality traits that psychoanalytic studies have found present in all cases of lesbians:

(1) strong reactions of jealousy; (2) definite sadomasochistic trends characterized by behavior actions of hostility alternating with feelings of self-pity. All lesbians invariably display marked feelings of ambivalence towards themselves, their love partners, their parents and people in general; (3) strong feelings of guilt whether they are overtly admitted or manifested via hysterical conversion phenomena...; [and] (4) pronounced sense of insecurity.²¹

Caprio's argument is that, not only are all lesbians neurotic, but they are also all incapable of any real, positive feelings for other people. The lesbian neither feels any true sense of love or affection, or even friendship for her female partner, nor is she capable of loving her family—her father, husband, or children. However it is more than just a lack of positive emotion: Caprio also points to the common post-war medical association of lesbianism with aggression.

This link between lesbianism and aggressive behavior (sadomasochism, hysterical jealousy and hostility) helped lead to what historian Estelle Freedman refers to as the conflation of lesbians and female prisoners in the American

²¹ Caprio, *Female Homosexuality*, 171.

imagination.²² The women's prison was an acknowledged space of female deviancy. As L. Mara Dodge's study of women prisons in 20th century America alludes to in its title, prisons were historically home to "whores and thieves of the worst kind."²³ As social scientists began to acknowledge the reality of homosexuality in men's prisons, public attention naturally turned to lesbianism within women's prisons. Caprio's 1954 study devoted an entire chapter to lesbianism among prison inmates. Part of the Cold War anxiety over lesbianism was that women in seemingly happy heterosexual marriages were actually, like communists, latent deviants (lesbians). Women's prisons were the perfect spaces to explore the possibility of lesbianism in all women. As the home of the female criminal they were also the perfect place for social scientists to forge the connection between aggression and lesbianism.

Historian Regina Kunzel argues that women's prisons gave social scientists a safe alternate space (where traditional gender roles and domesticity were impossible) to belittle the truth of lesbianism outside prison gates.²⁴ By identifying lesbianism as something that mostly happens behind concrete walls, Americans did not have to address it under their own roofs. Not many social scientists explicitly addressed lesbian culture in women's prisons in the post-WWII period until David A. Ward and Gene G. Kassebaum's 1965 study *Women's Prison: Sex and Social Structure*. Ward and Kassebaum used records and interviews from women in

²² Estelle B. Freedman, "The Prison Lesbian: Race, Class, and the Construction of the Aggressive Female Homosexual, 1915-1965," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer, 1996): 397-423.

²³ L. Mara, Dodge, *Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind: A Study of Women, Crime, and Prisons, 1835-2000*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).

²⁴ Regina G. Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 111-148.

California's Frontera Prison to address the unique kinship relationships forged between women. The study examined the way "jailhouse turnouts" were much more prevalent than those who were "true" homosexuals. The study must have eased mounting paranoia over lesbians by its affirmation that most lesbian relationships were simple outgrowths of women separated from their families who desired love and affection in the most feminine sense. Ward and Kassebaum also reassured their audience that "most women appear to return immediately upon release to their roles as mothers, wives, and girlfriends."²⁵

***Babes Behind Bars*²⁶: Women-in-Prison Pulp Cover Art**

"The matrons wielded whips...dope-peddling was rampant...the warden provided special cells for his 'favorite' girls...the crowded quarters encouraged unnatural yearnings," reads the back cover of the 1959 reprint of *Female Convict* (1952). Another of Robert A. Maguire's painted blonde women sits slumped in the corner of a dark, dungeon-like cell, ripped clothes falling off her body in convenient places, and her eyes looking up at the viewer with feisty seduction.²⁷ As the only woman in the frame, this cover directly speaks to the male readership of all lesbian pulps: here is a beautiful woman trapped in a vicious, lesbian, prison world, waiting as Zimet

²⁵ David A. Ward and Gene G. Kassebaum, *Women's Prison; Sex and Social Structure*, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1965), 198.

²⁶ "*Babes Behind Bars*, Allan Mora, Private Edition PE304, 1962," Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s, http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/crap_shoot.php?start=20&data=a-f.list&photo=xbabesbehindbars.jpg

²⁷ "*Female Convict*, Pyramid Books, 1959," Image # 1123134, *Lesbian Pulp Novels, 1935-1965*, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/dl_crosscollex/brbldl/oneITEM.asp?pid=2033368&iid=1123134&srctype=VCG.

puts it, “for the right man to come along and set her straight.”²⁸

Lesbian prison pulps of the post-war period played heavily on the butch/femme dichotomy expressed in lesbian psychiatric studies. Stereotypes were exaggerated and sensationalized for easy digestion. Zimet describes the physical representation of these lesbian “types”:

The butch is depicted with short hair almost always brown or black, occasionally red. She can be portrayed as pretty, as on Robert Maguire’s covers, but is often not. She wears pants when she can...she always strikes a dominant pose...The femme is usually blond, with long or shoulder-length hair, attractive and fully made up. She wears a low-cut dress, halfway unbuttoned blouse or lingerie with as much cleavage as possible.²⁹

These physical demarcations of lesbian identity are recurring and constant. Joan Henry’s *Women in Prison* (1953), Vincent Burn’s *Female Convict* (1956), and both 1960 covers of Ray Morrison’s *Reformatory Girls*, among countless other pulps, all follow this formulaic presentation. The prison femme is identifiable (if not through her blonde hair and lingerie) because she is the object of the gaze. The expression on her face is one of both awareness and something like guilt. The reader can assume her heterosexual innocence is about to be compromised by the more masculine, lusting woman in the frame.

Prison butch characters spoke to the “aggressive” lesbian stereotype. Like the prisons in which they were incarcerated, these characters were meant to signify the dark underworld of lesbianism that was both incurable and sadistic. In his study *Female Homosexuality* (1954), Frank

²⁸ Zimet, *Strange Sisters*, 23.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Caprio spends some time reflecting on the “somasochist” traits observed in lesbian women: “several lesbians admitted quite frankly that they had to resort to acts of violence to obtain the maximum amount of sexual gratification.”³⁰ Caprio describes patients who admitted to flagellation, and labels one of his patient’s sexual deviations as “cannibalism” (she liked to playfully bite) and “Vampirism” (she had once kissed the accidentally cut fingertip of a lover).³¹

Pulp fiction seized this notion of sexual deviance. “No form of depravity was too low to be linked with lesbianism,” Zimet writes, “. . .satanism, sadism and masochism, bondage and discipline, orgies, voyeurism, witchcraft.”³² The 1958 cover of *Born Innocent* shows a group of female inmates with dark shadows of bars cast across their scowling faces—the brunette standing in the forefront.³³ *Reformatory Girls* (1960) shows another troupe of tough prison women wielding broken pieces of furniture. “Original Title: Hall of Death” the tagline reads.³⁴ By the mid-to-late 1960s lesbian pulp cover art had moved beyond flashes of skin and longing looks to cartoonish, soft-pornographic sleaze. By 1965 covers of prison women wielding leather and whips was not uncommon (*Prisoner of Evil*, 1965; *Wrong Jail*, 1968).

Despite the homophobic and voyeuristic gaze of these books, for many young women they did provide a readily accessible representation of lesbian identity when

³⁰ Caprio, *Female Homosexuality*, 174.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 174-179.

³² Zimet, *Strange Sisters*, 24.

³³ “*Born Innocent*, Creighton Brown Burnham, Pyramid G414, 1958,” *Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s*,

http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/theme_one.

[php?start=0&data=jailbirds.list&photo=xborninnocent.jpg](http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/theme_one.php?start=0&data=jailbirds.list&photo=xborninnocent.jpg).

³⁴ “*Reformatory Girls*, Nedra Tyre, Ace F-151, 1960,” *Strange Sisters: An Archive of Lesbian Paperback Artwork from the 50s and 60s*,

http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/crap_shoot.

[php?start=179&data=m-r.list&photo=xreformatorygirls_II.jpg](http://www.strangesisters.com/a-z/images/crap_shoot.php?start=179&data=m-r.list&photo=xreformatorygirls_II.jpg)

no other means of community formation was available. As Yvonne Keller argues, the rise of lesbian mass-market paperbacks created an acknowledgement of lesbianism “that allowed women living in urban or rural areas, in heterosexual marriages or ‘romantic friendships,’ to name themselves as lesbian for the first time.”³⁵ For women who felt completely isolated by their sexuality, lesbian pulps, despite their societal stigma and loaded language and imagery, offered a glimpse of other women like themselves. However, as addressed by Ann Ciasullo, the main goal of these pulps was not to serve lesbianism, but to uphold and restore heterosexuality and the Cold War social order. In the end of most prison pulp novels, the parolee returns to heteronormalcy and the arms of men, while the true lesbian is left in lock-up. “Perhaps the women-in-prison narrative’s longevity can be explained not only by the promise of the prison lesbian,” Ciasullo argues, “but also by the promise of the prison walls themselves, of the bars and concrete that literally contain ‘deviance,’ time and time again.”³⁶

The prison—a marginalized space long ignored but nonetheless a source of intrigue for outside society—became the perfect place to cast cultural anxieties over women’s sexuality. Women’s prisons serve as a radical reminder, even today, that women do not always fit the traditional roles of femininity (asexuality, morality, gentleness). By locating lesbianism in the yards, tiers, and cellblocks of women’s prisons, the literature around women in prison in the post-war period represents the last concerted effort to mark female sexualized bodies as “deviant,” even at the cusp of the sexual liberation movement. If society was forced to deal with

³⁵ Keller, “‘Was It Right to Love Her Brother’s Wife so Passionately?’” 407.

³⁶ Ann Ciasullo, “Containing ‘Deviant’ Desire: Lesbianism, Heterosexuality, and the Women-in-Prison Narrative,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2008): 195-223.

lesbianism after WWII, it was easier to imagine lesbians as behind bars, locked away from American communities and nuclear households. Pulp covers further eased the mounting social anxiety around lesbianism by framing lesbians as mere sexual fantasies of men. However, as more lesbians outside began to see exaggerated versions of themselves on drug store shelves, next to masculine adventure books and futuristic science fiction, they would be able to craft a sense of identity that transcended bars and concrete into the full-fledged feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.

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BORN ON THE BAI-YU: A HISTORICAL LEGACY AND SET OF IMPLICATIONS

Spencer W. Smith

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the rift between Chinese Han Dynasty scholars Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 79–104 BC) and Wang Chong 王充 (c. 27–100 CE) in regards to their notions concerning the proper ‘state of being’ of omens, portents, and “auspicious things”; I subsequently use this rift to explore notions of peace contained in the “Doctrine of Great Peace” (Taiping Jing, 太平經) promulgated in the late Eastern-Han. I first explore the ‘state of being’ these two scholars claim a particular auspicious happening in ancient China, the apparition of the “White Fish”, (bai-yu, 白魚) to have. To Dong Zhongshu, auspicious happenings are decidedly divine in nature, whereas to Wang Chong, they are simple auspicious coincidence. Such delineation is significant in that Dong Zhongshu and Wang Chong’s respective notions concerning

suspicious happenings lead to the creation of different claims concerning the state of peace within the Han Dynasty: most significantly being Wang Chong's claim that the Han is already in a state of peace in his time. I then demonstrate that deep concern over the Han Dynasty's state of peace came to be exacerbated during the periods of Han dynastic decline, and is particularly evident in the discussion of 'states of peace' within the Taiping Jing. Finally, I compare and contrast the Taiping Jing's discourse concerning auspicious/inauspicious happenings to the discourse of our previous two scholars, and conclude that to those in the late-Han Dynasty, one's outlook on auspicious or inauspicious constituted something close to personal morality that played a significant part in forming late-Han eschatology.

To some, a fish is simply a fish. Be they "one fish, two fish, red fish, or blue fish," many will correctly claim these are all simply varying "fish." And yet, in the case of a certain historical "fish" and its subsequent interpretation throughout the ages, it is evident that when placed in the context of a set of extraordinary events, a fish may sometimes become something more. In the case of the two Chinese Han Dynasty scholars Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 79–104 BC) and Wang Chong 王充 (c. 27–100 CE), I will demonstrate that a fundamental rift exists between their respective interpretations of the infamous "white fish", (bai-yu, 白魚). This led to differing notions concerning heaven, earth, and empire, that seemingly hinged on what was, and what was not a "fish" - and came to play a significant role in the formation of late-Han notions of "great peace" (tai-*ping*, 太平) and eschatology.

The culprit of our supposed fish problem, the bai-

yu may be observed as being allegedly recorded in the lines of the ancient Shang Shu 尚書. When given a simple translation, the Shu line “白魚入于王舟，有火復于王屋流為鳥”¹ may be rendered as: “a white fish entered [King Wu’s] boat, and a fire broke out into a phoenix atop the king’s roof.” To many scholars of the early Han tradition² (c. 100 BCE), the significance of this classical event was easily ascertained: fish and phoenix represented heavenly sent auspicious omens, that by virtue of their apparition, affirmed their receiver’s (Zhou Dynasty King Wu in this case) “charge of heaven” (tian-ming, 天命). Note for example, how the bai-yu functions thusly in the following passage of Dong Zhongshu’s *Dong Zhongshu Zhuan* 董仲舒傳³:

“I have heard that when kings are sent heavenly emissaries, there must always be a self-brought “something” that could not have been brought about by human effort. Such is the ‘talisman of receiving heaven’s charge’. The world’s people return it with the same heart, as one returns to one’s parents - therefore heaven reliably sends omens and omens reliably arrive. The Shang Shu

¹ Referenced in the lines of the *Dong Zhongshu Zhuan* as coming from the “書”, this line allegedly references King Wu of Zhou 武王 (c. 1046 BCE).

² Such generalized “members of the Han Chinese literary tradition” constituting the body of the “scholars of the tradition” (*Ru-zhe / Lun-zhe*, 儒者 / 論者) I later discuss in regards to Wang Chong. For more about the *Ru* in the Han, see: Zufferey, Nicolas. *To the Origins of Confucianism: The Ru in Pre-Qin times and during the Early Han Dynasty = [Ru Yuan]*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2003. Print.

³ *Dong Zhongshu Zhuan, Han Shu*. ctext.org. Accessed Dec. 5 2012. I label Dong Zhongshu as a member of the 儒者 (*Ru zhe*) for reason that his views seem to possess the notions that Wang Chong critiques; as well as for reason that Dong Zhongshu has been labeled as “teacher of the great tradition” by individuals such as Ban Gu. Hence, I unfairly lump Dong Zhongshu as being a “scholar of the tradition” in this analysis.

says: ‘A white fish came into the King’s boat, and a phoenix shaped fire broke out atop the King’s roof.’ Such is a case of receiving the talisman of heaven’s charge.’⁴

Here, the bai-yu is taken by Dong Zhongshu to be something that derives external significance from its “divine nature”. According to Dong Zhongshu, the bai-yu’s entering the King’s boat may be seen as much more than just a fish in that it becomes representative of the “talisman of receiving heaven’s charge,” (shou ming zhi fu, 受命之符) thereby participating in the “case” of heaven’s bestowal of 命 to King Wu. Such reference of the bai-yu by Dong Zhongshu defines his notions as being in accordance with the seemingly long-standing view of tradition that linked auspicious Bai-yu type things, with the divine symbolic significance of bestowing 天命 to the human realm’.

This notion of assigning value to the heaven-sent state of being a case of “receiving the talisman of heaven’s charge”⁵ possesses, may be seen as near antithetical to the notions held by the later Han scholar Wang Chong. In specific regards to the same bai-yu, Wang Chong in the Lunheng (論衡) remarks:

“... King Wu received a white fish and a phoenix shaped flame - the scholars of the tradition⁶ are of this opinion, that... King Wu received the fish and bird, and subsequently received the affirmation of heaven’s mandate... as King Wu accepted the mandate from heaven, heaven used bird and fish to

⁴ See: *Dong Zhongshu Zhuan, Han Shu*.

⁵ 受命之符 reworded.

⁶ 論者 being translated as: “Scholars of the tradition” - tradition in the context of this analysis again narrowly representing ‘the adherence to the long-standing set of views that have so rendered auspicious 白魚 type things as heaven sent omens.’

affirm King Wu with the mandate.”⁷

Here, Wang Chong may be seen as setting his sights on the views “scholars of the tradition”(儒者) hold in regard to the bai-yu. In lines following, Wang Chong opens fire:

“The Bird and fish... would then be heavenly messengers carrying heaven’s mandate... However, a thorough investigation shows us that fate⁸ has nothing to do with these cases.”⁹

With the addition of this passage, it may now be discerned that by way of carrying out a “thorough investigation” (ru shi lun zhi, 如實論之) of auspicious things, Wang Chong seeks to demonstrate that events kindred to King Wu receiving the bai-yu, had had little to do with “命.”

Moreover, by asserting that bai-yu like events are not to be mixed up with the heavenly directed process of bestowing of 命, Wang Chong thereby makes the simultaneous claim that the state of the baiyu’s being is something radically unlike that which Dong Zhongshu discusses. Note the following Lunheng passage:

“...Wu Wang encountered the phoenix flames and white fish by accident; it was not by heaven’s sending that they arrived - rather the animals

⁷ See *Lunheng*, 初稟.ctext.org. Accessed Dec. 5 2012. While my translations of the *Lunheng* excerpts may be different in word order and diction, I have attempted to keep the gist of Alfred Forke’s translations close to my own translations of the *Lunheng*.

⁸ 命 being translated as “fate” in this instance; a fate translation however, is not I believe, in opposition to a “mandate” translation here and elsewhere in my analysis. Suggesting that receiving 天命 is a way of receiving fate, keeps intact Wang Chong’s claims that the Han still possesses 命 (and claim to being in a state of 太平) despite lacking any great “命 reaffirming classical omens” of the past ages.

⁹ See *Lunheng*, 宣漢.

moved and flew, and the Sage encountered them. The white fish entered the king's boat and King Yang said, 'It is just a chance.'... When a tiger crossed the Yellow River, Emperor Guang Wu remarked, 'It was nothing but a curious coincidence and occurred not by anyone's sending.' What King Wang called "chance" and Guang Wu called "coincidence" can together be called "spontaneous instances."¹⁰

Whereas Dong Zhongshu esteems the bai-yu to be more than just a fish by virtue of its role as a "heaven sent omen part of the tian-ming calculus" (非人力所能致而自至者，此受命之符也) Wang Chong here seems to claim that the bai-yu and its apparition are purely spontaneous. (可謂合於自然也) To Wang Chong then, the bai-yu's state of being is devoid of divine significance and possesses no other value than that an "auspicious animal or thing" (ji-wu, 吉物) simply derives from "being".

However, it must be noted that the notions of the bai-yu held by Wang Chong do not stand as the polar antithesis to those held by Dong Zhongshu. While Wang Chong seemingly strips the bai-yu of divine value, he neither strips the bai-yu of its auspicious nature, nor does he do away with the concept of tian-ming altogether. Rather, Wang Chong may be seen as only taking issue only with notions that ascribe a "divine" nature and a 受命之符 like function to the state of being of naturally auspicious things. Concerning the nature of the bai-yu in the Lunheng, Wang Chong labels the bai-yu as: "[an] auspicious animal that moved... and was encountered by the sage." (吉物動飛，而聖遇也) Wang Chong then is not claiming the bai-yu to merely be like any other fish, but rather to be like any other naturally auspicious fish. The set of 'animals and things' according to Wang Chong, is therefore

¹⁰ See *Lunheng*, 初稟.

closed only to the set of being both “divine” and connected to the object’s ming (命) - not to the set of being intrinsically “auspicious.”

Interestingly enough, a discussion of how Wang Chong defines the “bai-yu set” as being closed to certain circumstances, leads directly to why both Wang Chong and Dong Zhongshu go to such great lengths to properly define bai-yu type auspicious things. In regards to other bai-yu like signs, Wang Chong notes:

“Now, at this moment there is no phoenix or River Chart, and the auspicious signs have not yet become completely clear. On this basis, some say that [the Han] has not yet attained Maximal Peace.”¹¹

From this, we see that Wang Chong yet again appears to be setting his sights on some premise of “tradition”. This time however, Wang Chong’s target is: “those who say the Han has not yet attained Maximal Peace” (wei han bu tai ping zhe, 謂漢不太平者)¹² (for reason that the Han has lacked the apparition of bai-yu type omens) While the aspects of Wang Chong’s “Han naysayer” critique are manifold, the following Lunheng line contains perhaps the aspects most relevant to our discussion¹³:

¹¹ See *Lunheng*, 宣漢. Forke Translation.

¹² Referenced in a preceding line of the *Lunheng*, 宣漢.

¹³ I have deemed other critiques of the “謂漢不太平者” by Wang Chong in the *Lunheng*, be they: “未必謂世當復有鳳皇與河圖也”, or “問世儒不知聖, 何以知今無聖人也? 世人見鳳皇, 何以知之?” too diverse to be included in this analysis. While such lines are surely illuminative, I seek to mainly examine how Wang Chong’ framing makes space for Wang Chong to disprove the notions of the 謂漢不太平者, and subsequently claim evidence that the Han Dynasty has actually attained 太平.

“In Emperor Guang Wu’s time, pneumas are in harmony and people are secure, creatures and auspicious signs are waiting to arrive. The people and the pneumas already have proven it, but people who write essays on this still doubt this.”¹⁴

In light of these lines, we may now infer that what Wang Chong is doing with his prior discussion of the white fish, is using it as evidence to make larger claims concerning the “what is and what is not” questions of heaven, earth and their relation to empire. Thus, Wang Chong’s full fleshed argument using the bai-yu as evidence is as follows: if the bai-yu possesses no other value-of-being other than being an auspicious creature in itself, and if the bai-yu is not connected to the concept of tian-ming, then the apparition of auspicious things cannot therefore be said to determine whether or not an age has yet obtained “Maximal Peace” (tai-ping, 太平). And if auspicious things such as the bai-yu do not represent 受命之符, then the “scholars” are fundamentally incorrect in claiming that the Han is not at yet at great peace (han wei tai ping, 漢未太平). Therefore, the real bone Wang Chong has to pick with notions of the tradition in regards to ming and the bai-yu, is how scholars have failed to acknowledge the correct relations between heaven and earth - thereby leading them to reach an erroneous and dangerous conclusion that there was not peace in the Han.

While such argumentation may ultimately appear rather esoteric, the practical implications of Wang Chong and Dong Zhongshu’s discourse are profound. I contend that by redefining the nature of heaven’s interaction between earth and empire in terms of auspicious signs, Han scholars of the bai-yu thereby redefined what it meant to live in the Han Dynasty - for Han internal, foreign, and cosmological¹⁵

¹⁴ See *Lunheng*, 宣漢. Forke Translation.

¹⁵ Cosmological policy referring adherence to ritual, rites, and so forth.

imperial policy undoubtedly hinged upon whether or not those ruling the Han perceived their empire as in a state of “maximal peace,” or undergoing “gross decline.”¹⁶ Such is perhaps most apparent in the subsequent periods of late dynastic decline in the Han’s waning years (c. 100-220 CE). Despite Wang Chong’s claims that in his and Emperor Guang Wu’s time, “pneumas (qi, 氣) and the people were at peace,” a “wide-felt [sense of] crisis awareness” that Han moral, cosmological, and political systems had collapsed, became prevalent in the late Eastern Han as Barbara Hendrischke notes.¹⁷ Undoubtedly then, “Qi and the people” were not widely perceived of as in a state of tai-ping - thus Hendrischke comments that late-Han scholars: “gave priority to the need to communicate with heaven and its will...in proposing programs of social reform...to lead to a world

¹⁶ *Dong Zhongshu’s Third Rescript and Response*. ctext.org. Accessed Dec. 5 2012. My comments regarding Han internal, foreign, and cosmological policy hinging on the outlook of the Han elite partially stem from Michael Loewe’s discussion of Dong Zhongshu and his outlook of the Han Empire. Loewe remarks in regards to Dong Zhongshu’s “criticism of the contemporary scene” :

“He asked why in a world that was fundamentally one and the same, there was such a marked difference between past and present. The old world was marked by orderly government, with its amity between the higher and lower orders of society, a fine way of life and an effortless exercise of authority.” (Loewe. P 99)

As Loewe notes, one of the ways Dong Zhongshu attempted to mediate what the decay he saw, was by attempting to tackle practical issues of “the gross imbalance of wealth.” Such tackling with the imbalance of wealth and other economic issues in the Han as noted by Loewe, serve as very real examples of the effects perceptions of heaven, earth, and empire can have. (Contrast Dong Zhongshu’s notions of past and present, Wang Chong’s statement 光武之時，氣和人安; will Wang Chong therefore attach as much significance to issues such as the imbalance of wealth in the Han, if 氣 and 人 are perceived as in a state of 安? unlikely.)

¹⁷Hendrischke, Barbara. “*The Place of the Scripture on Great Peace in the Formation of Taoism*”, “*Daoist Classic Series*” no. 3. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2007. pp. 251

of Great Peace, where social harmony and general welfare [would] prevail.” And so texts addressing heaven’s will and 太平 such as the “Doctrine of Great Peace” (Taiping Jing, 太平經) came to be circulated in the late-Han (c. 184 CE).

A brief examination of the Taiping Jing in terms of its socio-political context reveals a strange melting pot of notions concerning peace and eschatology. As the Taiping Jing was first and foremost, “geared to the project of saving the world from imminent disaster” it carried with it new ideas of a “taiping morality.”¹⁸ Note the lines of the Taiping Jing:

“When harmony and peace come about, the three luminaries will no longer be at war and eclipse. Only when the three luminaries don’t eclipse each other may one start talking about compliance to the will of heaven and earth. Thus the non-occurrence of eclipses has been taken as proof. But someone wants to know for himself what is right and wrong and how to act morally might perhaps ignore this proof that has been provided by heaven and instead collect writings, which claim that eclipses were caused by the sun and the moon being in the same place.”¹⁹

Particularly interesting here is the claim by the Taiping Jing that morality is connected to the cosmos’s state of being. An eclipse, according to the Taiping Jing, is decidedly divine and must not be perceived as “caused by the sun and the moon being in the same place”, as those who “collect writings” would have it; Contrast such notions to those held by the Wang Chong school, who according to Hendrischke, “... opposed a moralistic approach to the study of heavenly phenomena, and attempted to deconstruct

¹⁸Hendrischke. pp. 251

¹⁹See *Taiping Jing*. Hendrischke. pp. 258

cosmic orderliness...” The “heaven” of these scholars meant “nature” or “sky”.²⁰ Therefore, the scholars of the Taiping Jing tradition decidedly reject the seeming “rationalism”²¹ of the Wang Chong “writing collectors”, and render omens and portents as distinct signs of moral “compliance.”

Moreover, we may further observe the Taiping Jing targeting the Wang Chong school, as well as contending an idea long-held by the Dong Zhongshu styled “tradition”. The Taiping Jing remarks:

“Since the middle period of antiquity people became half foolish and thought that selection for office was a small matter. ...They did not investigate and their selection often went completely wrong, which deprived and upset the heavenly offices. For this reason the three luminaries did not follow their course. For proof one must only look up at the sky to observe that heaven is not pleased. Thus the years of large-scale natural disasters do not come to an end.”²²

At first glance, these lines of the Taiping Jing appear to be aligned with the previously explored notions of the Dong Zhongshu tradition - that heaven indeed is the pulling the strings and orchestrating the appearance of omens and portents. We must however note, that a significant discrepancy exists between Dong Zhongshu’s opening claim, that “...when kings are sent heavenly emissaries, there must always be a self-brought something that cannot be induced by human effort”, and the preceding lines of the Taiping Jing.

²⁰Hendrischke. pp. 258

²¹Rationalism here used not in reference to the “rationalism” of the Western enlightenment period, but rather as a term to define the Wang Chong’s “deconstruction of cosmic orderliness.”

²²See *Taiping Jing*. Hendrischke. pp.258

While the Taiping Jing declares the state of the cosmos (and thereby the contemporary state of disorder) to be a result of poor decision-making by all those who have held office in the Han, Dong Zhongshu on the contrary claims the apparition of heavenly sent omens and portents have little to do with “human effort”.²³ Thus, the Taiping Jing may be seen here as strengthening its assertion that supposed “correct” outlook on a personal level (correct investigation and perception of office in this case) can directly please or displease heaven - causing heaven to send omens or portents commensurate to one’s behavior. Furthermore, this passage of the Taiping Jing also must be seen as taking up issue with the Wang Chong contention, that: “... if we ask the scholars of our age and they do not know a sage; then how do they know there are no sages at present? How could our contemporaries, on perceiving a phoenix, recognize it as such?”²⁴ Whereas the Wang Chong school claimed auspicious or inauspicious happenings to be largely “unrecognizable,” the Taiping Jing boldly asserts that those of the Wang Chong school are foolish, as they need only look up to the sky to observe the state of heaven!

Suggested in the Taiping Jing then, is the idea that a

²³While I have not touched on Dong Zhongshu’s perceptions in specific regard to portents, Dong Zhongshu’s outlook on portents seems to very much so mirror his perception concerning auspicious omens. Note the following passage from the *Dong Zhongshu Zhuan*:

“When a state is about to fail due to its loss of the Way, Heaven will first condemn and warn it by sending catastrophes. If the state does not understand and curb itself it will again send strange and anomalous things in order to create shock. If it still does not understand and change, then the defeating injury arrives.”

Dong Zhongshu here makes no mention of the type of individual efficacy the *Taiping Jing* claims heaven to be affected by - rather, heaven seems to react to an overall sense of failure in Dong Zhongshu’s schema, as opposed to the specific failure of ministers in the schema of the *Taiping Jing*.

²⁴See *Lunheng*, 宣漢. Forke translation.

moralistic overhaul of ‘investigation’, outlook, and human action, can directly affect heavenly affairs and in turn catalyze the arrival of 太平 to Earth. Such extension of a moral outlook to the “everyday” lives of those in the late-Han, be it “correctly” perceiving the role of officials, or even “correctly” gazing at the stars, perhaps renders the *Taiping Jing* less as a treatise attempting to challenge notions of cosmology and being of the past, and more of as Hendrischke notes, “China’s foremost millenarian text”, and as scripture used by late-Han millenarian leaders and subsequent Taoist movements.²⁵ However, we must be keen to remember that as Prasenjit Duara²⁶ has remarked, “it is time to more closely examine the political narrative in forming history” - and thus be keen to approach Han polemics as being immensely important to the construction of a working history of the Han and subsequent ages. I have therefore attempted to demonstrate that seemingly esoteric matters of “one fish, two fish, white fish or fu (符) fish” discussed by Wang Chong and Dong Zhongshu, came to shape late-Han period notions of 太平 and associated eschatology (specifically notions of *tai-ping* present in the *Taiping Jing*) that were to influence waves of millenarian and Taoist-infused movements to come.²⁷

²⁵Hendrischke. pp. 270. Hendrischke notes here that while the *Taiping Jing* did not have much of an influence as “scripture” during the time of its origin, it later came to obtain scriptural significance to various Taoist groups when it was published and edited in the 5th century.

²⁶Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History from the Nation-state*. Chicago, IL: Center for Psychosocial Studies, 1992. Print.

²⁷Such movements that drew inspiration from the *Taiping Jing*, include the 黃巾之亂 and 五斗米道, as well as other Taoist infused millenarian movements that occurred in late/post-Han times.

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SEX AND THE (CHINA) CITY

Katie Fleeman

In the nineteenth century, Chinatowns and other communities in which Chinese resided garnered reputations as seedy locations defined by tong wars and opium dens. At the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly during the Great Depression and World War II, this began to change, as Chinatowns transformed into safer, more respectable tourist attractions. In doing so, the Chinese accepted, adopted and reinforced prevailing stereotypes as a means of marketing themselves to mainstream America. This portrayal contributed to the bridging between the Chinese and the mainstream, in which the Chinese both emphasized Chinese characteristics and adapted to Western tastes. This was particularly evident in the portrayal of Chinese women, as Chinese tourist institutions commoditized Chinese women as exotic, sexual objects. As tourism necessitated the racializing and gendering of the Chinese, the community capitulated to the hierarchical notions that confined them to a foreign, non-

assimilated group, therefore justifying the objectification of Chinese women.

Early tourism in Chinatown focused on the depravity and sinfulness of the community, as nineteenth century white Americans mainly ventured to Chinatown to engage in illegal activity such as gambling and the purchase of opium. Although such enterprises primarily served Chinese residents, whites constituted a significant portion of the patronage, as Ivan Light illustrates by citing both the fact that whites often owned many of these ill-reputed establishments and that anti-Chinese activists argued with such fervor that the Chinese has a “corrupting influence upon white men’s morals.”¹ Later, this illicit reputation led to the rise of “slumming,” in which middle class whites travelled to Chinatowns to witness Chinese depravity. Staged instances of violence and intrigue – such as police raids on opium dens – contributed to and reinforced white perceptions of the Chinese as a community inferior and degraded in comparison with their own.

These nineteenth century perceptions already maintained sexualized connotations. One theoretical framework to explain these connotations refers to a patriarchal mindset created due to nineteenth century colonialism, in which western nations such as the United States asserted their hegemony by adopting a gendered view of the world that established them as dominant male figures and colonized countries like China as subordinate females.²

¹ Ivan Light, “From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (Aug. 1974): 372

² This sexualization also figured into a *longue durée* vision of east-west relations, in which the west perceived the east as a place of more relaxed sexual mores. Richard Bernstein argues that this perception arose from eastern practices of recognizing the prevalence of male sexual drive, and therefore creating unstigmatized roles purely for purpose of pleasure, such as concubines. Bernstein’s book designates “the east” under broad

There were also concrete reasons for sexual connotations to the Chinatowns themselves. Chinatowns housed numerous bordellos populated by white prostitutes, often opium addicts who fell under the power of their suppliers and mainly serviced Chinese men.³ Chinese women also serviced customers in these brothels, marketed to both Chinese and white patrons in an exoticized fashion. Some, virtual slaves called singsong girls, received clients in parlor rooms, “furnished with teakwood and bamboo, Chinese paintings, and cushions of embroidered silk,”⁴ in which they were expected to be charming, conversant, and willing. The atmosphere of these parlor rooms catered to Western notions of China as part of a mystical, exotic and subservient. In essence, the parlor rooms combined Chinese stereotypes with sexually commoditized women to make a profit.

Racialized connotations of Chinese women’s bodies also proved enticing. Chinese prostitutes offered a ten-cent “lookie” that was popular amongst “white boys whose anatomical knowledge and budgets were both modest”⁵ and were curious about the rumor that Chinese vaginas “ran ‘east-west’ instead of ‘north-south.’”⁶ Further, white patrons felt at ease performing “aberrant” sexual acts with singsong girls than that they would not try with white prostitutes. By presenting Chinese women as “different” and “foreign” this portrayal separates Chinese women from Western women – they were not the same, they were an “other.” As they were

terms encompassing East Asia, the Middle East, and northern Africa, and his book encompasses centuries. Therefore his analysis refers to a more general perception of east-west relations than specifically American and Chinese. Richard Bernstein. *The East, The West and Sex: A History of Erotic Encounters*. (New York: Knopf, 2009).

³ Light 370

⁴ Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 28

⁵ Light 371

⁶ Yung 28

different, Chinese women were not liable to the same sexual taboos as Western women. By taking advantage of this “othering,” this method of prostitution used racialization as a way for white onlookers to view the women as sexualized curiosity objects. The popularity of these bordellos revealed the importance of eroticism and objectification of women in attracting white patronage to Chinatown.

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, the nature of the attractions of Chinatown changed, although the patriarchal system of appeal persisted, as Chinatown transitioned from neighborhood of sin to tourist destination. Instead of attracting white patronage through sponsoring illicit activity, Chinese community planners deliberately created legitimate establishments that appealed to white notions of Chineseness. This was highly influenced by the presentation of Chinese in movies. Ironically, these presentations were in fact completely artificial, often filmed in possibly the most planned Chinese community of all: China City.

In 1938, Los Angeles’ Old Chinatown was torn down to make way for Union Station, the central train depot downtown. One response to the displacement of the Chinese came from Christine Sterling, the well-connected woman behind the construction of Olvera Street. With Olvera Street, Sterling created a nostalgic alley reminiscent of Los Angeles’ mythic Mexican past. According to Phoebe Kropp, Sterling’s Olvera Street reinforced Caucasian notions of Mexicans as “essentially... happy poor people.”⁷ It was a Disneyland version of Mexico: the street used “traditional” motifs that catered to Westerners’ predisposed notions of Mexico, featuring only “Mexican” architecture, eliminating anything that seemed Western, and constructed to appeal

⁷ Phoebe Kropp. “Citizens of the Past?: Olvera Street and the Construction of Race and Memory in 1930s Los Angeles”. *Radical History Review*. 81, no 1 (Fall 2001): 46.

to tourists. In creating this image, Olvera Street created a notion of Mexico as a static, backwards society, and Olvera Street could therefore reaffirm Western visitors of their status as a superior, more advanced society. This approach was incredibly successful, and upon the demolition of Old Chinatown, Sterling set out to create a community that was to “be to the Chinese what Olvera street [sic] is to the Mexicans.”⁸ In other words, an outsider’s imagining of a China’s fantastic past, which would promote the “foreignness” and “otherness” of that community.

Soon after the announcement of China City, an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* published urged Sterling to include Chinese participation in the construction of the community. But this was not an advocacy of Chinese self-determination; rather, it was a reminder that “no occidental mind can put in the little touches that create the general oriental effect.”⁹ The editorial suggested that the Chinese play a supporting role in the construction of this “sure-fire tourist attraction,” reassured that Sterling “undoubtedly will guide the project along lines which will result in the creation of a genuinely ‘foreign’ atmosphere.” The author appears to regard Sterling as capable hands, implying that leaving it solely to the Chinese to devise this community would be unwise. This well illustrates the cognitive dissonance between the desire for authenticity and the trust in Western leadership. The emphasis on authentic foreignness illustrates how China City was created with an audience in mind, as opposed to being a community for the displaced Chinese. This conveys the inextricable link between tourism and foreignness: a neighborhood must be satisfactorily “other” in order to attract a white audience. The author ends: “Everything Chinese

⁸ “Chinatown to Rise Again,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), August 11, 1937

⁹ “Black and the Future: Let the Chinese Help,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles CA), August 14, 1937

ought to be in it except the tong wars.” This sly statement references Chinatown’s seedy past, indicating that under white leadership, China City could provide a safe, legitimate cultural experience palatable to white tourists.

The efforts at appealing to Western perceptions of China were evident in the style of architecture. Old Chinatown consisted of mainly Western-style buildings serving functional purposes for the Chinese residents. The most recent buildings were built of brick, sometimes with a bit of ornamentation. A photograph of the Chee Kung Tong building, for example, shows a regular brick building with a transliterated spelling of the name (not Chinese characters) and an American flag hanging in the front.¹⁰ In contrast, China City’s architecture distinctly referenced Western notions of China: an illustration in the *Los Angeles Times* of the “Proposed Picturesque City” showed several buildings with pagoda-style roofs.¹¹ But the most apparent attempt to replicate authentic Chinese-ness was constructed through the installation of Hollywood sets. This, claimed the *Los Angeles Times*, would “preserv[e] the old oriental flavor of Los Angeles’ Chinatown.”¹² As Old Chinatown lacked such elaborate displays of old world China, the sets served as a physical manifestation of a reimagining of Chinese American culture that coincided with and reinforced white expectations. By deeming these sets “authentic,” China City reassured white tourists that their vision of China was correct.

Imagery of Chinese women contributed to the promotion of China City, as several photographs in the

¹⁰ Roberta S. Greenwood. *Down by the Station: Los Angeles Chinatown, 1880-1933*. (UCLA Institute of Archaeology: 1996) 22.

¹¹ The image also indicated that the site was intended for tourism, as it designates a specific area just outside city bounds for parking. “Chinatown to Rise Again,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), August 11, 1937

¹² “Plans for Los Angeles’ New China City Completed,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), January 18, 1938

Los Angeles Times featured Chinese women in a way that emphasizes the backwardness of Chinese culture.¹³ The *Los Angeles Times* preview of China City featured two images of attractive Chinese women in traditional dress. One displays a young girl named Dora Song embracing a metal dragon; the other shows a young girl standing among many Chinese shops. They appear youthful and simple, warmly welcoming tourists to this charming “bit of orient.”¹⁴ Another article describes the efforts of the Chinese to “purify” their community of the bad luck that caused a fire through Buddhist rites and traditional ceremonies.¹⁵ The article displays a patronizing tone, referring to a Chinese belief in “spooks” that ran contrary to the wise opinion of the Los Angeles Fire Department. The article features an image of two young Chinese women in traditional dress examining a Chinese lion. They appear to hold blind faith in the power of the lion, conveying an image of backwards innocence. The combination of the tone of the article and the image accompanying it present the Chinese community as superstitious and naïve; by using the childlike female as an official representation of the community, it subtly projects gendered ideas of female inferiority and naïveté onto the rest of the population. This intersection of gendered stereotypes with racial stereotypes reinforced notions of the Chinese as subordinates in the patriarchal structure of race.

Discussion of neither perceptions of Chinese women nor portrayals of Chinese in Hollywood would be complete without Anna May Wong, the most famous Chinese American movie star of her day. Although popular, due to

¹³ The close friendship between Sterling and *Los Angeles Times* owner Harry Chandler implies that these images were condoned by her and in all likelihood deliberately used to market the community.

¹⁴ “Curtains Raised on City’s Bit of Orient,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), June 7, 1938

¹⁵ “Chinese Swords to Drive Evil Fire Spirits From City,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), June 10, 1939

censorship laws against miscegenation, she never played lead roles: rather she was forced into stereotypes, such as the treacherous Chinese villainess, the tragic oriental beauty, or the Mongol Slave girl. Although the latter was the most clearly sexualized, the role of the tragic oriental beauty also contributed to the perception of Asians as subordinate to whites, as she would die so the white woman could marry the white hero. Through these roles, Chinese women were seen as desirous of whites – and reciprocated desire indicated a sign of corrupted morals.¹⁶ She offered to white America a Chinese prototype that lusted for white male attention, conforming to the ethnic hierarchy implicit in American culture that implied that lower races aspired to whiteness, but could not attain it. She also presented a vision of sexuality that was seductive, forbidden, and shrouded in foreign otherness. Although these were not the types of roles Wong wanted to play, they complemented Western notions, and her continuing performance further perpetuated such perceptions.

The catering to white sensibilities was not only seen in white-controlled enterprises: Chinese themselves constructed their own tourist attractions.¹⁷ Outside the bounds of Chinatown, another enterprise clearly commoditized the sexuality of Chinese women: the Chinese nightclub, which catered to groups such as white servicemen. In many ways the nightclubs rejected Chinese stereotypes, fashioning themselves after mainstream nightclubs as opposed to Peking Opera, which many audiences expected.¹⁸ At the same time,

¹⁶ Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) pg 68

¹⁷ One major factor in the shift towards tourism was the higher profitability of legitimate businesses to illicit activities. See Ivan Light's "From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940."

¹⁸ Arthur E. Dong, 2002. *Forbidden City U.S.A.* [Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ]: DeepFocus Productions.

these nightclubs recognized novelty in that they were Chinese and therefore utilized stereotypical Chinese imagery to attract audiences. They emphasized their Chinese-ness in the advertising, with acts like “Chinese Follies” and names such as “Forbidden City” and “Club Shanghai” written in fonts resembling calligraphy. A poster for Kubla Khan advertised itself as “Gateway to Chinatown.”¹⁹ In mixing east and west, these nightclubs posited themselves intermediaries between American and Chinese culture. In this way, they attracted both Chinese and American patrons. But by acting as an intermediary, nightclub performers risked isolation from both communities. Chinatown establishments condemned the shows, and parents were rarely supportive of the performers. Mainstream Americans, on the other hand, viewed them as a distinct novelty, characterized by foreignness.

Chinese women’s sexuality figured prominently in every nightclub. Described by Loirraine Dong as the “China Doll” image, the sexualized Chinese female was one stereotype nightclubs chose to maintain.²⁰ Forbidden City, perhaps the most famous, did not become profitable until Noel Toy, a University of California co-ed, debuted her “Bubble Act,” which featured her as nearly naked behind a plastic bubble. Fellow performers defended the act as “quite modest” and Toy did not take issue with her presentation; nonetheless, advertising for the act clearly capitalized on stereotypes about Chinese women. Harkening back to the nineteenth century, white men came curious to see if they had malformed genitalia – a misconception Toy often retorted to with witty sayings and songs. Other acts featured dancers in skimpy costumes with vaguely oriental trappings, presenting

¹⁹ Trina Robbins. *Forbidden City*. (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press Inc., 2010) 42

²⁰ Lorraine Dong, “The Forbidden City Legacy and Its Chinese American Women.” *Asians in America: Asian American Women and Gender*. (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998) 139

a risqué version of the traditional costumes utilized by China City and Chinatown. One entire club was named China Doll, and their menu featured a buxom Chinese woman with a seductive slit in her clingy, Mandarin-collared dress.²¹ Although many nightclubs objectified women, the emphasis and exaggerations of race compounded the sexuality of female Chinese performers, rendering the two inextricable. Among other reasons, this sexualization raised objections from the Chinese community.

Nightclubs represented the most blatant example of the commoditization of women; however, the Chinese community within the walls of Chinatown similarly utilized Chinese femininity to solicit outside attention, albeit more in a more subtle fashion. In doing so, the Chinese shifted the stereotype about their community; nonetheless, the projected image still relied on a feminine, submissive portrayal of the Chinese. After the Japanese attacked China, residents of Chinatown strove to raise money to support the effort in their home country, commoditizing themselves through events like Rice Bowl festivals. Karen J. Leong and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu argue that through these festivals, Chinese communities played into stereotypes in order to raise both awareness and funds, “emphasiz[ing] their ‘otherness’ to attract spectators.”²² In San Francisco in the 1930s, Chinatown city planners deliberately moved to erase evidence of modernity in an attempt to retain Chinatown’s “quaint charm” and Oriental nature. The result was a community described by Anthony Lee as a “Sinocized theme park.”²³ Chinese connected consumerism with humanitarianism, selling an idea of China that played into mainstream notions of China. This

²¹ Robbins 55

²² Karen J. Leong and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu. “Filling the Rice Bowls of China: Staging Humanitarian Relief During the Sino-Japanese War,” *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008): 140

²³ Leong 141

stereotype of China involved a victimized, feminine version of the community. In portraying themselves as the victims, the Chinese community could allow Westerners, the potential donors, to continue to view themselves as the dominant group.

Women played an essential role in projecting this artificial China. Judy Yung argues that these pre-war years was a time of “long strides” for Chinese women, boosting them to become “In Step” with the men during World War II.²⁴ While women did enter the public sphere in much higher numbers, they entered in a gendered fashion. Fundraising efforts conveyed the victimized version of China, which women, Leong and Wu argue, best represented.²⁵ They were very public as the primary fundraisers: dressed in traditional costume, women presented sympathetic maternal figures. Chinese men, on the other hand, were absent. Thus, China garnered “a maternal identity [which] emphasized a nation in need of paternal support from the United States.”²⁶ By seeing China as maternal and the United States paternal, the United States could establish itself as dominant on the patriarchal hierarchy. To a white audience, the gendered construction of festivals fulfilled pre-disposed assumptions about their own racial superiority.

Young women in the festivals served as enticing attractions. The festivals “emphasized the exotic beauty” by putting on fashion shows and featuring them as flagbearers.²⁷ Newspaper writers noted their attractiveness: one observer described the beauty of the Chinese girls as having “all the quality of a strange dream of beauty which comes from a sleep induced by a magic draught.”²⁸ According to Leong

²⁴ Judy Yung. *Unbound Feet*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.)

²⁵ Leong and Wu 144

²⁶ Leong and Wu 145

²⁷ Wu and Leong 146

²⁸ *Ibid*

and Wu, such descriptions appealed to preconceived notions of mysterious Oriental seduction, and the organizers of these festivals “emphasize[d] the physical appearance and sexual allure of Chinese American women to enhance the commercial and political appeal of the festival.”²⁹ In such a way, the Chinese community capitalized on and recapitulated sexualized stereotypes about themselves as a means of increasing tourism. It is significant that this was condoned as a respectable means of marketing the community, as opposed to the disapproval assigned to the nightclubs. Furthermore, the adherence to stereotyping occurring within the Chinese community itself revealed the pervasive necessity of racializing. The only way to survive economically was to accept the racial hierarchy; any advancement occurred within boundaries imposed by mainstream stereotypes and assumptions. Reality emulated fantasy – Chinatown was just less blatant about it than China City or the nightclubs.

Certain perceptions about Asian American women persist to this day. Society covets Asian women as sexually attractive, a phenomenon jokingly referred to as “Yellow Fever.” Although this appears praising, the casual term actually carries severe implications. Modern fetishization of Asian women also draws upon memories of prostitutes encountered by Vietnam soldiers, as well as images from media such as K-Pop and Japanese pornography. As the documentary *Seeking Asian Female* discusses, desire for Asian women, specifically, often carries racial stereotypes about submissiveness and exoticness.³⁰ The persistent sexualizing stereotype of Asian women racializes women, prioritizing their ethnicity as the defining attribute and demeaning other factors like personality, interests and experience. It stereotypes them, ascribing traits and histories on the basis of preconceived notions and disregarding individuality.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ *Seeking Asian Female*. Directed by Debbie Lum. 2012

It demeans them, implying an almost colonial desire for conquest and belittling valid relationships to nothing more than fetish. And it indicates a continuing urge to assign otherness to Asians: merely because of their race, Asian women are different from other women, implying that they are still somehow foreign and not assimilated. The persistent sexual stereotyping of Chinese women echoes the historical intersection of racialization and patriarchy, indicating that neither has truly left.

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COMING OUT UNDER JESUS: GLIDE MEMORIAL AND THE STRUGGLE FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

by David Holly

Introduction: A Church for all People

On September 22 1967, Pastor Cecil Williams took down the 15-foot crucifix that hung inside Glide Memorial Church, declaring that he could no longer tolerate such an oppressive symbol of death. Williams was struck by the realization that the crucifix – a constant reminder of one man’s execution – on permanent display in the sanctuary could not be reconciled with his vision of Christianity. He felt that the cross created a sense of complacency, a futile belief that faith would solve every problem:

As long as we continue to crucify Jesus, we don’t have to face our crucifixion of others, our crucifixion of our ourselves.... I took the cross down so we can stop crucifying Jesus and begin to

understand how we destroy ourselves, others, the world. We must love where love has never taken us, and take action where action threatens who would control us.¹

The following Sunday, the pastor told the congregation, “I took down the cross because it kept getting in the way of the power of people, people who have freedom to choose. The cross must be among you because you are responsible for your life and the world. You are the cross.”² For Williams and for Glide Memorial, spirituality would come to be firmly located in the here and now, not in the hereafter.

Founded by cattle and oil millionaire Lizzie Glide in the early 1930s, Glide Memorial Methodist Church had an almost all-white, upper-middle-class membership whose numbers had dwindled to less than one hundred when Williams arrived in 1963.³ He was one of four ministers hired to start the Glide Urban Center to address inner-city problems. These ministers embraced a philosophy that would tune itself into the beat and pulse of the Tenderloin; they discovered that, in order to reach those who most needed help, the Church would have to transform itself into something new.

Over the next several years, Glide would become the nexus for several of San Francisco’s radical political movements. In 1967, the hippie collective known as the Diggers took over the church during the summer of love for a “happening” called the Invisible Circus. And, when one of the participants painted “Fuck the Church” on the men’s-room wall, Williams took it not as a sacrilegious

¹ Cecil Williams, *I’m Alive* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) 80.

² *Ibid.*

³ Don Shewey, “Spirit Willing.” Commissioned for *Vibe Magazine*, unpublished, 1996, http://www.donshewey.com/sex_articles/glide.html

obscenity but as inspirational verse.⁴ In 1969, the Black Panthers set up a breakfast program at the church and passed out literature. Williams counseled Georgia Jackson after her son George was killed at San Quentin in 1971. Angela Davis often spoke at Glide during Sunday Celebration, and after she was incarcerated would describe Williams as “her spiritual advisor.”⁵ Glide actively worked with the United Farmworkers and the American Indian Movement, holding fundraisers, organizing protests, and regularly allowing the groups to table booths inside the Church. By 1972, noted Williams, “Glide Church had become a haven for radicals and a sanctuary for those in rebellion. It could be no other way, because we were in rebellion ourselves, dedicated to the proposition that probing deeply into the world is a path toward probing deeply into oneself.”⁶

The activism and involvement continued throughout the decade. When the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnapped publishing heiress Patty Hearst in 1974, Williams mediated between the FBI and the SLA to negotiate Hearst’s release.⁷ In the late 70s, Williams fielded middle-of-the-night distress calls from another Tenderloin minister, the increasingly-paranoid Jim Jones, for months before the cult leader left for his fatal mission in Guyana.⁸ The 1980s

⁴ Williams gives a detailed account of the Invisible Circus on pages 88-104 of his autobiography. The event lasted three days, with people sleeping at the church, using drugs, and having sex.

⁵ CBS-5 KPIX-TV San Francisco Video Archive, “Vibrations for a New People: Angela Davis,” January 1972, interview of Davis by Williams in Santa Clara County Jail. diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/190044.

⁶ Williams, *I’m Alive*, 109.

⁷ Williams describes the precarious process of negotiating between SLA intermediary “Death Row Jeff” at Vacaville prison; Raymond Proconier, head of California’s Prison system; and Randolph Hearst, Patty’s father. The affair involved cloak-and-dagger moments with secret messages for Williams taped to the bottom of tables in the San Francisco Public Library. See Williams, *I’m Alive*, 191-209.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 147-150, 176-182.

saw crack cocaine⁹ and AIDS disproportionately target the Tenderloin's streets, and Glide resisted both with innovative services and educational programs.

Glide Memorial and San Francisco's Stonewall

In 1963, the Glide Board established the Glide Urban Center, designed to be an "experimental urban mission" to minister to "castoffs in the Tenderloin."¹⁰ Sensing a pressing need in the neighborhood around the Church, the Board encouraged its staff to address problems no one else in the city would touch. With the creation of the Urban Center, Glide was transforming itself into something new – shifting its energies out of the church and onto the streets to work with disadvantaged groups. The church recognized that there was a unique opportunity to serve as a buffer between marginalized urban populations and the forces that historically worked against them in the city.

In that same year the Glide Board appointed the Reverend Ted McIlvenna, a young Methodist clergyman, to the Young Adult Project. This was the first of several urban projects designed to study the nature and needs of young adults in order to discover how the church could better serve them.¹¹ According to Lewis Durham, program director of the Glide Foundation, the project "turned Ted McIlvenna loose on the city of San Francisco." He then added, "Neither

⁹ Cecil Williams, *No Hiding Place: Empowerment and Recovery for our Troubled Communities* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992). Williams wrote an entire book dedicated to addressing the crack epidemic, and describes that two of his own children had problems with crack.

¹⁰ Lewis Durham, *Glide Foundation From 1962 through 1967* (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1968), 2.

¹¹ The Glide Urban Center also started the Huckleberry House for runaways; Baker Place, a treatment center for substance abuse; and Intersection for the Arts, to encourage youth participation in the arts. All three of these organizations still exist.

the city nor Glide would ever be the same again.”¹² It was McIlvenna, along with fellow progressive ministers Cecil Williams, Don Kuhn, and Durham, who steered Glide towards an urban missionary radicalism that would forever change both the church and the city.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Theodore McIlvenna was born on March 15, 1932, in Epping, New Hampshire. His father, an itinerant Methodist minister, was a missionary to American Indians. Upon completing a bachelor of arts in sociology and philosophy in 1954, McIlvenna went to Europe to study systematic theology and philosophy of religion at the Universities of Edinburgh and Florence. In 1957, he returned to the U.S. to attend the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley California, to obtain certification for ordination as a Methodist minister.¹³

While working with the Glide Urban Center, and particularly in the Tenderloin with the Youth Adult Project, McIlvenna developed a growing interest in human sexuality. He was a key organizer of the first international Consultation on Church, Society and the Homosexual in London, England, in August 1966. In 1968 he returned to San Francisco to become co-director with Phyllis Lyon of the National Sex and Drug Forum. In 1976, McIlvenna helped organize, and became the first president of, the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, where he continues to work as professor of forensic sexology.¹⁴ He has produced dozens of films, some about sex education, and some that can be classified only as pornography.¹⁵ In 1997, he invented

¹² Durham, 5.

¹³ McIlvenna's biography was obtained from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network. <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=125>

¹⁴ The Institute is an accredited university located in downtown San Francisco that offers doctoral degrees in sexology. Among the faculty is former pornography actress Annie Sprinkle.

¹⁵ McIlvenna has a page on the Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb>.

EroGel, an over-the-counter lubricant, that claims to kill “all sexually transmitted diseases known to man.” *Esquire Magazine* called it “the Goo that Saved the World”¹⁶ In 1999, McIlvenna retired from the United Methodist clergy, and is currently the curator of the Exodus Trust International Archives of the Erotic Arts. McIlvenna claims that his institution houses “the world’s largest collection of sexual materials, bigger than the British Museum’s porn library or the Vatican’s.”¹⁷

These later efforts from McIlvenna can now be seen as perhaps a natural transition from his earlier work. In the 1960s while still with Glide, McIlvenna was concerned about the needs of young adults in urban society, insisting that the Glide Board employ a “methodology which accepted all aspects of young adult life as legitimate areas of concern and action.”¹⁸ In “The Shape (or non-shape) of Missionary Theology,” McIlvenna described this goal:

Our theological method will be experimentalism, which is the doctrine that all knowledge is derived from experience. No longer will we be able to play the uninvolved expert role but will have to learn the style of the experimentalist. We must go to the places where the winds of freedom are blowing, to wherever persons are imprisoned or in slavery, to wherever arbitrary control is in effect and there is no redress for the controlled,

com/name/nm1573668/. Most of the pornographic films with which he was involved were directed by Laird Sutton. Sutton’s film credits can be found here: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1573668/>

¹⁶ Rene Chun, “The Goo that Saved the World,” *Esquire*, Jan. 1998, Vol. 129, Issue 1), 21. According to the same article, McIlvenna also developed a “vibrator for non-orgasmic women and an aphrodisiac, Vigorex Forte, which is prescribed by M.D.’s.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Durham, 5.

to wherever persons are struggling for self-determination, to wherever there are those who are hurt or excluded from rights and privileges, to wherever persons are struggling to find new ways to use the resources God has given them.¹⁹

McIlvenna invoked the language of the African American civil rights movement, but broadened its scope to include anyone “excluded from rights or privileges.” It was a methodology well suited to the multiple underserved populations in the Tenderloin. In particular, this neighborhood was also known for gay bars and cruising spots, situating Glide as an ideal point of departure to encounter homosexuals. As a result, McIlvenna thrust his church headfirst into the topic of human sexuality, and more specifically located Glide Memorial Methodist Church as a focal point for the issue of homosexuality.

At the same time, a similar dynamic was emerging among other Protestant clergy in the 1960s as the rise of the African-American civil rights movement influenced progressive ministers. As clergy grew concerned with civil liberties and social justice for blacks, the issue of homosexuality became increasingly conflated with the language of minority rights – a number of ministers embraced the ideals and tactics of the civil rights movement and applied them to their actions toward homosexuals. By the middle of the decade, influential ministers began to press for legal reforms. In 1966, United Church of Christ minister Marjorie Litkins, addressing a mostly-homosexual audience, argued that the church should stand with gays in the same way it involved itself with other marginalized communities:

If the church is to follow its master, it must

¹⁹ Ted McIlvenna, “The Shape (or non-shape) of Missionary Theology,” *New World Outlook*, June 18, 1968, 19.

conceive itself a civil servant.... This is why you read of ministers and laymen who identified with the civil rights struggle. Why the church was arrested in Selma, why the church walked with migrants to Sacramento, and it is why the church is here tonight.²⁰

Social justice and a growing awareness that gays were an unfairly stigmatized community began to transform the attitudes of church leaders regarding homosexuality. The church's role in identifying gay men and women as a minority group that, like ethnic minorities, faced institutional discrimination was a crucial component in the emergence of a gay identity. For example, many ministers pointed to sodomy laws that persisted on the books in dozens of states as unfairly targeting homosexuals. These laws, according to Pastor Kimball Jones, writing in the religious journal *The Christian Century*, were "fashioned by ignorant, frightened men to crush and torment people who do not fit accepted molds of morality."²¹ In San Francisco, Grace Cathedral's Episcopal Bishop James Pike was among the most outspoken voices for reform, and in 1964 he derided the notion "that if something was naughty, there ought to be a law against it."²² Other clergy pressed for broader reforms that included protection from employment discrimination and from police practices of harassment. These concerns included federal and military policies of firing suspected homosexuals, police entrapment to apprehend homosexuals for solicitation, and indiscriminate arrests for lewd behavior at establishments

²⁰ Marjorie Litkins, as qtd. in *The Ladder*, Ellis Radick, December, 1966, Vol. 11, no. 3, 4.

²¹ Kimball Jones, "Reappraising Laws on Homosexuality," *Christian Century*, vol. 82, May 26, 1965, 669-670.

²² From Bishop Pike's speech at Duke University in 1966, as qtd in *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1964.

catering to gay and lesbian clientele.²³

Some clergy went further, taking the recognition of homosexuals as stigmatized minority and broadening it to include a reconsideration of the church's position on the morality of homosexuality in general. In a 1967 article in *Living Church*, Episcopal minister Robert Cromey challenged Christianity's anti-gay doctrines: "I would like the Church to change its attitude which condemns homosexuality and calls it sinful. I call on the Episcopal Church to think radically about human sexuality. We should lead the way in insisting that homosexuals be given their rights as citizens."²⁴ Through the lens of civil and minority rights, the issue of homosexuality took on a different meaning – calling into question Christian teachings about sexual morality.

For Glide Memorial in the early 1960s, the church's push for civil rights and social justice was just coming into focus. Ted McIlvenna's encounters with young gay runaways however, would turn the church in an unexpected direction. During McIlvenna's community outreach in the local neighborhood, he discovered that many male runaways were driven to street hustling by the hostility and ostracism of their parents and peers. McIlvenna became acquainted with a number of these runaways and was moved by the violence, persecution, and sense of despair they often endured. "I began to be aware of the incalculable damage done to young homosexuals when they sought help from the clergy or physicians and were rejected out of hand because of the bias and personal hang-ups of these so-called experts and

²³ Lewis Maddocks, *The Church, Homosexuality, and the Law* (San Francisco: Council on Religion and the Homosexual, Glide Publications, 1967). Also see Tiffany L. Steinwert's dissertation, *Homosexuality and the United Methodist Church: An Ecclesiological Dilemma*. Boston University School of Theology, 2009. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305132716?accountid=14496>.

²⁴ Robert Cromey, "Ministry to the Homosexual," *Living Church*, Jan 8th 1967, 19.

counselors.”²⁵

McIlvenna reached out to homophile organizations for assistance in addressing what he saw as a significant problem in the city. According to John D’Emilio, “McIlvenna turned to the Mattachine Society for help, only to discover that the organization, fearful of charges of corrupting youth, firmly closed its doors to anyone under twenty-one.”²⁶

However, the connections he made with Don Lucas of the Mattachine, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin of the Daughters of Bilitis, members of the Society of Individual Rights, the League for Civil Education, and the Tavern Guild alerted McIlvenna to the conspicuous gap between the church and the needs of gays and lesbians.

In his efforts to gain a fuller understanding of homosexuality, McIlvenna organized the Glide Urban Center to convene a dialogue between Methodist, United Church of Christ, Episcopal, and Lutheran ministers and members of the gay and lesbian community. The result was the Mill Valley Conference held between May 31 and June 2, 1964 at the United Church of Christ’s White Memorial Retreat, later referred to as “The Consultation on the Church and the Homosexual.”²⁷ This meeting would include thirty participants split equally between the clergy and homosexual

²⁵ McIlvenna, as qtd. in *Engage Magazine*, Phyllis Lyon 1972. Photocopy of the original article found in Glide Memorial Archives; no other information is available about the article.

²⁶ D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 192.

²⁷ Don Kuhn, *The Consultation on the Church and the Homosexual* (San Francisco: CRH, Glide Publications, 1964). On the weekend “consultation” and the subsequent establishment of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, see the LGBT Religious Archives Network, “Exhibit: The Council on Religion and the Homosexual,” <http://www.lgbtrn.org/Exhibits/CRH/Exhibit.aspx>, accessed May 15, 2011. See also Mill Valley retreat agenda, box 18, Lyon and Martin Papers, GLBT Historical Society, and Rev. Robert Cromey interviewed by Martin Meeker, Feb. 12, March 13, 2007, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley.

men and women. The conference was designed to be an open and non-judgmental exchange of ideas that laid aside both stereotypes of homosexuals and preconceptions about the religious community.

However, the ministers agreed that before the event could occur, and in order to truly engage in a respectful dialogue, a good deal of preparation and research was necessary. As such, the church's conference participants took a crash course on the life, culture, and vocabulary of the San Francisco queer world, and visited several gay bars that catered to an all-male clientele. Clergymen Don Kuhn described this effort:

Met at the Precarious Vision, a church-sponsored coffee house on Bush Street in San Francisco, and from there members of the Mattachine Society accompanied them on a tour of the city's wide variety of homosexual gathering places – not only bars but coffee houses where the clientele could include teenagers as well as older men. Delegates saw gay men in all manner of dress from tee shirts and “drag” to “leather” and conservative business suits; they experienced firsthand the weekend life of the most visible part of the homophile population. The footsore churchmen, as unaccustomed to late Saturday nights as to the gay bar circuit, returned to their hotel rooms in the early hours of the morning.²⁸

Dale White, one of the Methodist ministers in attendance, called it “a total immersion experience.” For many in the clergy the evening marked the first time they had ever knowingly talked with a homosexual. White admitted, “I had never, you know, talked with homosexual people individually; I had no idea about the diverse cultural involvements of homosexual people in the San Francisco

²⁸. *Ibid.*, 18.

area.”²⁹

Ted McIlvenna began his presentation to the thirty informally-dressed men and women at the conference with, “Forget who you represent. We represent the human race. Let’s start there.”³⁰ Each group gave formal presentations and led small-group discussions addressing such topics as the traditional attitude of the clergy regarding homosexuality, the perception of the church among gays, and the relationship between homosexuality and the law. The consultation, according to Del Martin, was an overwhelming success. She described it as “the rebirth of Christian fellowship,” which opened “unexpected avenues of communication and cooperation between the two groups.”³¹ Don Kuhn described it as, “an atmosphere of basic trust and respect. Each ministered to the other. We were a religious gay bar.”³²

One thing on which all participants agreed was that historically, “the church let down the homosexual through a lack of understanding.”³³ Leaders of this event took this revelation to heart, and subsequently established the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) at the Glide Urban Center in 1964. This was the first organization to use the word “homosexual” in its name in the United States. The CRH stated its objective in simple terms: “to promote a continuing dialogue between the religious communities and homosexuals.”³⁴

It was further agreed that a costume-ball fundraiser would be the perfect vehicle to demonstrate that the power

²⁹ Dale White interviewed by Martin Meeker, Feb. 12, 2007, ROHO.

³⁰ Kuhn, 19.

³¹ Marcia Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (New York: 2006), 19.

³² Kuhn, 26.

³³ Nan Boyd, *San Francisco was a Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003), 232.

³⁴ Kuhn, 31-32.

of the church was fully invested in supporting gay rights, to be held at California Hall at 625 Polk Street on New Year's Day 1965. Anticipating problems with the police over an explicitly-homosexual event, Cecil Williams and Ted McIlvenna approached the vice squad in advance of the ball to discuss their intentions. They were met with a less-than-enthusiastic response. "I really don't understand you fellas, don't you realize what you are condoning here?" remarked one of the officers. "I mean, think about it for a second, you guys are *ministers*."³⁵ For Cecil Williams, the officer's reaction was to be expected, given that "this was a time when... homosexuality nearly equaled incest in the closet of American sexual prohibitions. It was buried so deep within the national psyche that the vice squad officers couldn't for the life of them understand our absurdly simple request. In their eyes, I saw the possibility dancing: Maybe these ministers are queer themselves!"³⁶

After the meeting, the San Francisco Police Department attempted to force the owners of California Hall to cancel the ball. When this failed, a further meeting between ministers and police resulted in an agreement that the SFPD would not interfere, and that the ball could proceed as planned. As it turned out however, guests nonetheless arrived to find dozens of police taking pictures of them as they entered the party. One police inspector snapped, "If you are not going to enforce God's laws, we will."³⁷

Del Martin describes the SFPD's actions in a report to San Francisco Theological Seminary magazine *Challenge*:

By their own count the police assigned 55 officers to the scene. There was a line up of police cars, plainclothes, and

³⁵ Williams, 187.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁷ Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1982), 58.

uniformed officers and one paddy wagon at the entrance of California Hall where the dance was held. Some 600 guests were subjected to a barrage of police cameras and photographers upon entering or departing the premises. Three attorneys and one housewife were arrested for the verbal assertion to police officers that the dance was a private affair and a warrant was needed for legal entrance. After the arrests the police invaded the hall in large numbers intimidating and terrorizing the guests to such an extent that the party broke up ahead of schedule.... Ministers were even threatened with arrest for escorting guests to their waiting autos outside the entrance to the hall.³⁸

On the morning of January 3, 1965 a front-page article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* read “Angry Ministers Rip Police,” accompanied by a photo of seven glowering ministers with their arms folded, all bearing pained expressions of disgust and dismay at the police’s behavior.³⁹ It was a powerful image that resonated in the public’s imagination as a vivid example of police excess. “This is the type of police activity that homosexuals know too well,” Del Martin recalled, but what made this instance so different was that it was the first time the police had played “their hand in front of Mr. Average Citizen.”⁴⁰ There was an immediate outpouring of sympathy from across the city, and numerous editorials admonished the SFPD for overstepping its authority. The image of Christian ministers defending homosexuals against repressive police tactics had struck a nerve with residents of an increasingly-liberal city.

³⁸ Del Martin, “Report on Council on Religion and the Homosexual Activities in San Francisco,” *Challenge*, Jan. 14, 1965.

³⁹ Donovan Bess, “Angry Ministers Rip Police,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 3, 1967, 1.

⁴⁰ D’Emilio, 194.

The CRH's involvement was a vital component in highlighting ongoing police intimidation and brutality. In a January 14, 1965 open letter to fellow members of the Daughters of Bilitis, Phyllis Lyon acknowledged the significance of the CRH:

To me, the Council is of prime importance. It expects to act as a buffer between the homophile groups and the community at large, give the movement an aura of respectability (has already opened lines of communication never open to us before), and hopes to bring about change in philosophical thinking and church theology.... I believe the Council has done more for DOB and the homophile movement in general public relations wise in a few months than we have accomplished in 10 years.... We are at the crest of a wave of public support at the moment, and we must capitalize on it.⁴¹

The ball encapsulated a recurring dynamic, increased police harassment and intimidation of gays and gay spaces, led to a proportional increase in activism and a growing awareness of group identity. As John D'Emilio describes, the fallout from the New Year's Ball transformed the gay community in San Francisco:

Gay life in San Francisco had reached a qualitatively new stage in its evolution... local events had conspired to initiate a profound change in the consciousness of gay San Franciscans. A community was in fact forming around a shared sexual orientation, and the shift would have important implications for the future for the shape of gay

⁴¹ Phyllis Lyon to Daughters of Bilitis Members, Jan. 14, 1965, Lyon and Martin Papers, Box 6, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

politics and gay identity throughout the nation.⁴²

According to a 1976 article in the *Berkeley Barb*, the New Year's Day event was perceived by gay San Franciscans as "the straw that broke the camel's back."⁴³ Cecil Williams later concluded that the "dawn of gay consciousness dates back to that dance."⁴⁴

This places the birth of queer identity and gay liberation in San Francisco four-and-a-half years ahead of the Stonewall riots in New York – the event most often cited as the nominative origin of the larger movement. This also underscores the significance of the role played by Glide and the CRH in legitimizing gay rights in the eyes of the public.

Subsequent events bear this out. In the wake of the ball, homosexuality suddenly came out of the closet on the national level. Within a year, increasingly-favorable articles on homosexuality appeared in *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Look*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the Los Angeles Times*, and dozens of scholarly religious journals. In 1966, the homophile organization Society for Individual Rights (SIR)⁴⁵ opened the first gay community center in the United States.

In the aftermath of the ball, the CRH itself became more politicized. Its original objectives – pursuing an ongoing dialogue between ministers and homosexuals – were transformed into more militant tones focused on police

⁴² D'Emilio, 195.

⁴³ Howard Klein, *Berkeley Barb*, July 1976.

⁴⁴ Williams, 187.

⁴⁵ Whereas the Mattachine had eschewed identifying itself as an explicitly homosexual group in order to avoid the appearance of encouraging illegal sexual activity, SIR embraced gay men's need for fellowship. Open to anything its members wanted to organize, SIR sponsored drag shows, dinners, bridge clubs, bowling leagues, softball games, field trips, art classes, and meditation groups. The group published a magazine, *Vector*, which adopted a far more militant tone than any previously published homophile literature.

harassment and abuse. In June of 1965, the Council published “A Brief of Injustices: an Indictment of our Society in Its Treatment of the Homosexual.” The language of the brief reflects this shift in emphasis:

Now we are confronted with new and more serious problems. Can we continue what we have begun? Can we do anything constructive without provoking further hostile reactions from the police and perhaps from the general community? Our answer: We know that we cannot accept the unexpected pressures to which persons of homosexual orientation are being subjected.⁴⁶

The ball also had a profound impact on San Francisco’s political landscape. City officials, politicians, and candidates were forced to recognize that the days of ignoring and intimidating homosexuals were over. This population was a real constituency, with latent political potential. The SFPD immediately tried to smooth over public relations, assigning a young officer by the name of Richard Hongisto as a liaison to the gay community.⁴⁷ In 1966, the CRH held a “Candidates Night” at Glide where political aspirants could court the homosexual vote. By the end of the year, supervisor Jack Morrison became the first incumbent to actively solicit gay votes.

After the humiliating episode on Polk Street, state assemblymen John Burton and Willie Brown introduced the California Sodomy Repeal Bill (Consenting Adults Bill) to the California legislature in 1969, and in every subsequent year until its successful passage in 1975.⁴⁸ In 1970, local

⁴⁶ *Brief of Injustices*, Council on Religion and the Homosexual (San Francisco: CRH, June 1965).

⁴⁷ Shilts, 59. Shilts indicates that harassment also decreased as a result of the police’s bad publicity. Hongisto would go on to become sheriff of San Francisco, and a staunch ally of the GLBT community.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 106. The repeal bill finally passed when majority leader George

candidates like supervisor Dianne Feinstein actively involved gays in their campaigns. Richard Hongisto publicly credited gay support for his victory in the race for sheriff. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin co-founded the Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club in 1972 with SIR, and saw gay rights presented as a minority report at the Democratic Convention in Miami. By 1980, gay rights were an official part of the Democratic Party platform.

Why, then, is it Stonewall that resonates in the public's memory as the advent of gay liberation and not the New Year's Day Ball? One possible explanation could be that it was a function of geography; several Protestant ministers invoking the nonviolent discourse of the civil rights movement in a city that had already been declared the "gay capital" of the United States, may very well have drawn a collective yawn from the national imagination.⁴⁹ Or it also could show how much the political landscape had changed in the few years between 1965 and 1969. Civil disobedience was waning; a defiant, violent uprising in 1969 in the nation's media capital was far more likely to strike a chord.

Epilogue

When Pastor Cecil Williams took down the cross and opened his church to those excluded from American society, he changed much more than Glide Memorial Methodist Church; he changed the nature of San Francisco itself. Led by an unlikely group of ministers, gay men and women were now recognized as a legitimate community. A once-marginalized population with roots in the seedy

Moscone kept the vote open and the Senate in session while a private plane could be dispatched to bring back the Lt. Governor to break the tie. Governor Jerry Brown signed the bill into law.

⁴⁹ *Life Magazine*, June 26, 1964. vol. 56, no. 26, 68. A lurid eight-page spread in *Life* documented San Francisco's homosexual nightlife, focusing on bars and cruising areas.

streets of the Tenderloin soon took shape in the working class neighborhood of Eureka Valley. There, counter-cultural homosexuals gave rise to an unprecedented movement with its own economic base, leaders, and political figures. Castro Street, the main business section of Eureka Valley, gave the neighborhood its new name: “the Castro.” The power of this emerging community exerted a palpable influence on San Francisco politics, and in 1975 George Moscone was elected mayor in large part because of the overwhelming support he received from voters in the Castro.

The tipping point came in 1977, sixteen years after José Sarria’s campaign, when a gay Castro Street storeowner named Harvey Milk won election as city supervisor.⁵⁰ Milk “polled the highest tally of any non-incumbent supervisorial candidate in the city, making him the first openly gay elected official in the United States.”⁵¹ On election night Milk said, “This is not my victory, it’s yours....if a gay can win, it means that there is hope for all minorities if we fight. We’ve given them hope.”⁵²

The first San Francisco Gay Pride Parade was held on June 28, 1970, to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion. This parade has since become a San Francisco cultural institution, with crowds growing from tens of thousands in the 1970s to hundreds of thousands in the 1990s, to over a million today. The parade commemorates a moment when the homosexual community fought back against government-sponsored repression – a moment that has come to define the advent of the gay liberation movement in the United States and around the world.

Stonewall, however, was not the beginning: gay

⁵⁰ José Sarria was a popular drag performer at the Black Cat Café, in 1961, he was the first openly gay man to run for public office. His campaign for City Supervisor garnered nearly five thousand votes.

⁵¹ Shilts., 183.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 185.

liberation began in San Francisco several years before. There is no commemoration for the 1965 New Year's Day Ball, and Glide Memorial's role in transforming a marginalized minority into one of the most powerful political and cultural forces in San Francisco is largely unrecognized. Yet, the 1965 event catalyzed a community in ways every bit as dramatic as Stonewall.

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