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**CHASEN JEFFRIES**, *HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY, Class of 2020*: did not pursue a specific concentration within the study of history, but plans to pursue a graduate degree in history or international relations. He is particularly interested in Modern Middle East studies.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the 2019-2020 Editorial Board, I am proud to present *Columbia Journal of History's* summer 2020 edition.

Despite the global pandemic, the editorial board managed to review and select five articles from this season's submissions, which exceeded the total number of submissions from last summer. The majority of submissions came from universities in the United States and the United Kingdom. A few came from institutions in Asia and Europe.

In the first paper included within this edition, Roman Shemakov analyzes the advent of the Morris Worm and traces the histories of language and law surrounding cybercrime and cybersecurity. His ambitious and accomplished project is one of intellectual and legal history that explains the evolution of contagion rhetoric from its origins, the experts and professionals, to its reverberations—the public, national security agencies, and more. The paper incorporates a wide range of sources into its analyses and in doing so presents a persuasive argument on why society today is—considering the minimal, if not nonexistent, changes in policy and legislation since the Morris Worm—underprepared for another internet catastrophe. For readers hoping for a deeper dive into the history of cybercrime and its language, I recommend pairing this paper with David S. Wall's Cybercrime: The Transformation of Crime in the Information Age, published in 2007.

The second paper by Ellen Weaver draws much of its analyses from a graphic novel about migrants relocated by the French state agency, *Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d'outre-mer* (Bumidom), from overseas departments (DOM) to metropolitan France. According to Weaver, the novel, titled *Péyi An Nou*, is one window into the marginalized, silenced, or hidden history of laborers who touched so many facets the country. She makes a compelling argument that *Péyi An Nou* allows one to remember, or reembody, the hidden history. For readers intrigued by the topic of Weaver's "history from below," I recommend Sylvain Pattieu's 2015 article in *African and Black. Diaspora: An International Journal*.

The third paper by Madeline de Figueiredo traces the emergence of the "fancy trade" in the American South. Drawing from various primary sources, de Figueiredo offers an argument that departs from the global capitalism thesis of several established historians of the



Atlantic world and American slavery; she contends that the fancy trade's rise primarily owes itself to the white Southern—or rather the planters'—desire for domination in the slaveholders' republic. Most of the secondary sources mentioned in this paper are fantastic resources for understanding the relationship between global capitalism and enslaved labor; however, I highly recommend all readers to pair this paper with Saidiya Hartman's magisterial essay, "Venus in Two Acts," published in the June 2008 issue of *Small Axe*.

The fourth article by Hayle Meyerhoff examines the history of gambling women, known as the "Faro Ladies," in 1790s Britain. It successfully details how, during a time of political instability, gambling women were monitored and condemned if they did not align with normative ideals surrounding women's bodies and behaviors. For further reading on the Faro Ladies in history and literature, I highly recommend Rick Wei Po-Yu's 2018 essay in *Crossings: A Journal of English Studies*.

Last but not least, the final article of this edition explores the idea of the Spartan mirage and concludes that it is a myth that conceals the reality of corruption surrounding the ancient city state. Drawing heavily from primary sources, Jeffries argues that ancient Sparta defies public imagination; that it was not the polis of equality, honor, and austerity. While the author cites two separate works by the scholar Paul Cartledge, I recommend here another book by Cartledge titled, *Spartan Reflections*.

I hope the five articles included will be enlightening and enjoyable, as the five incredible authors and the *Journal's* editors worked hours to make this issue a reality.

Most importantly, I would like to thank Roman, Ellen, Madeline, Hayle, and Chasen for their patience throughout this process. I would also like to thank the editors for their commitment, especially those who were willing to work the past few months. It was truly a pleasure to work with you, as you are all incredibly insightful and vigilant. I am proud to be part of such a dedicated team.

Sincerely,



T. M. Song

*Editor-in-Chief*

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# THE MORRIS WORM: CYBER SECURITY, VIRAL CONTAGIONS, AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, 1945-1989

*Roman Shemakov*

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the history of cybercrime rhetoric through the 1989 hacking of the earliest internet network, ARPANET. The event is useful for understanding how the contagion rhetoric of computer science professionals imprints onto the public consciousness, security agencies, and legal institutions. By drawing on notes from the meetings of the National Computer Security Center, Congressional Hearings, Court Cases, and National Legislation in the aftermath of the Morris Worm, the author explores how contagion discourse constructs protectorate institutions in its image. From the birth of the computing industry in World War II to the Computer Eradication Act of 1989, this paper traces how popular catastrophic events, like the Morris Worm, construct a public reaction that instinctually abdicates intellectual authority to an expert-induced panic.

**Keywords:** internet governance, infrastructure development, computer rhetoric, viruses

On November 2, 1988, a watershed moment in the history of the internet occurred at 11:28 p.m. Academics at Stanford, the RAND Corporation, MIT, and Berkeley reported that all of their computers stopped operating and they could not access any information. Within two days, more than 10 percent of computers in the United States lost functionality. What turned out to be a line of code capable of replicating and moving between systems was difficult to imagine, let alone explain to an American public seldom familiar with the existence of the internet. At the time, the code's author, Robert Morris, was a 22-year-old graduate student at Cornell when he accidentally released the program that would permanently change the way the American public imagined the internet. In an internal investigation, a commission at the Ithaca Ivy, baffled by the incident, highlighted the collateral damage inflicted by Morris' code: "a more apt analogy would be the driving of a golf cart on a rainy day through most houses in a neighborhood. The driver may have navigated carefully and broken no china, but it should have been obvious to the driver that the mud on the tires would soil the carpets and that the owners would later have to clean up the mess."<sup>1</sup>

For decades before the Morris Worm was released, the internet was predicted to be a revolutionary invention. A 1964 article titled “The Computers of Tomorrow” articulated a future where computerized applications could be used to “information retrieval, bill payments, and stock trading.”<sup>2</sup> Computing promised to be a giant leap forward. But few envisioned it becoming a domain primarily defined by insecurity. Computing is especially fascinating for understanding how cultural knowledge is packaged into artifacts that take on roles of objectivity and reliability.<sup>3</sup> A few historians have done a fantastic job of exploring how Cold War anxieties, political visions, and the AIDS epidemic have been infused into the foundational myths of these machines.<sup>4</sup> I build on the theoretical structure of these works by specifically focusing on the history of the internet and how social symbols get transferred from one cultural domain to another. This paper traces how metaphors of disease and contagion spill out of insular expert laboratories and permanently imprint themselves onto institutions.

The 1980s became the decade when the promise of an unabated and free telecommunication network was thwarted by the construction of legislative and bureaucratic walls. Rather than considering the internet an inherently revolutionary technology, I build on the work of technology historians by analyzing how computing came to express existing social structures of the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> By considering the history of the internet as a culmination of expectations about security, disease, and the Cold War political logic, it is possible to begin deciphering why cyberspace came to be acknowledged as inherently threatening.<sup>6</sup>

This paper places the Morris Worm—the first large-scale internet attack—center stage. Beginning with the relationship of the computing industry to military technology, I trace the conversations regarding computer security from the early 1960s until the 1980s. As computing and the internet gained popularity, the rhetoric of computer security transformed into metaphors, packaging within it the anxieties of the AIDS epidemic and the Cold War. While the expert discourse percolated for about a decade, it became transformative in the aftermath of the Morris Worm, bringing previously insulated conversations into the public spotlight. The Morris Worm became a public spectacle that institutionalized industry discourse within American laws, courts, and security bureaucracies, shaping the structure and understanding of the internet forever.

### The Emergence of Computing and the Internet

The early years of the computing developments were intimately tied to the United States military and government apparatuses. The contributions of the scientific community to the Allies’ victory during WWII ranged from decryption to the bombing of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. Despite the self appraised neutrality of the scientific community during the post-war years, their achievements are difficult to separate from the demands of Cold War security struggles.<sup>7</sup> Even as the internet escaped the direct grasp of government services, academic researchers continued to articulate security-centric



motivations to justify their work. Once the internet entered the public domain, an onslaught of security breaches pushed the United States Congress to construct limits around proper computer programming, and the computer science community used contagion anxieties of the 1980s to articulate technical intricacies to a lay audience.

Prior to the emergence of the internet, computing power was tightly coupled to American security demands. While technologies operating on autonomous circuitry had existed prior to the 1940s, World War II accelerated the development of this nascent technology. One of the most cumbersome problems for the Allies concerned airplanes. Flight had evolved significantly since World War I, and very few gunners could accurately handle anti-aircraft artillery.<sup>8</sup> The earliest solutions involved a myriad of handwritten graphs with mathematical solutions that came to be known as a “gun directory,” an electromechanical operator able to quickly measure an enemy plane’s future position and automatically move itself based on the directory’s output. The mathematicians that worked on these problems during the early years of World War II came to be known as “computers.”<sup>9</sup> But the human “computers” made mistakes and the exacerbation of the war required scalability. The Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator (ENIAC), was created with a Department of Defense grant to calculate the “gun directory” almost a hundred times faster. Herman Goldstine, the director of the ENIAC pointed out that “the automation of this process was... the *raison d’être* for the first electronic digital computer.”<sup>10</sup>

The investment that made the ENIAC possible continued to soar even after the war had ended. In an address to President Roosevelt, Vannevar Bush articulated the vision of American military superiority based on scientific progress rather than strategy:

This war emphasizes three facts of supreme importance to national security: (1) Powerful new tactics of defense and offense are developed around new weapons created by scientific and engineering research; (2) the competitive time element in developing those weapons and tactics may be decisive; (3) war is increasingly total war, in which the armed services must be supplemented by active participation of every element of the civilian population.<sup>11</sup>

The time element became the vital factor in 1949, when the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb.<sup>12</sup> The race against Communism constructed a political dogma based squarely on scientific superiority. Starting with the SAGE air defense system that would “use computers for an entirely new purpose of real-time control and the integration of multiple data sources,” the American military harnessed the full might of universities, researchers, and civilians in a desperate attempt to be first.<sup>13</sup> From the 1950s through the 1960s, more than 25 similar military computing systems were designed based on SAGE. Hundreds of university departments and private industries were created to ensure American computing came out ahead.<sup>14</sup>

As the Cold War heated up, so did visions of ambitious and far-reaching projects. One week after the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik into space, the US government

established the Advanced Research Projects Agency with the “stated mission of keeping the United States ahead of its military rivals by pursuing research projects that promised significant advances in defense-related fields.”<sup>15</sup> Rising fears of nuclear war created room for previously untenable projects to take shape. In 1964, RAND Corporation engineer Paul Baran wrote an article contemplating the worst-case nuclear scenario and imagined a communication system with no central authority that “would be designed from the get-go to transcend its own unreliability” and could be used by survivors to communicate safely across the country.<sup>16</sup> The development that distinguished this network from a telephone line centered on how information traveled. Rather than sending information in one piece, via one cable, a message would be broken down, sent in pieces, and reassembled at the endpoint.<sup>17</sup> Baran became one of the earliest scientists to articulate a vision for what a national internet would look like.

The possibility of a secure national network caught the eyes of directors and scientists at the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Defense now renamed Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). Despite certain historical accounts, Paul Baran was not the first to imagine what a packet switching network would look like.<sup>18</sup> Robust time-sharing projects that pooled computing power across the country to assist in disparate research concerns were already taking shape at universities across the country. The first successful internet-based logic system, Compatible Time Sharing System, emerged out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1961.<sup>19</sup> Not wanting to start from scratch, the first ARPA director, JCR Licklider, gave his alma mater, MIT, a \$3 million grant to continue research into time-sharing systems.<sup>20</sup> Universities quickly became hubs of internet researchers, creating lucrative opportunities to pursue computing projects under the guise of plausible deniability regarding their relations to military interests.

From its active role in WWII research, MIT quickly gained a reputation as the center of computing research. After Licklider, Ivan Sutherland, another MIT graduate, took the helm of ARPA and happily wrote a \$7 million grant to his alma mater for MULTICS, an evolution on time-sharing technology that could handle thousands of users simultaneously.<sup>21</sup> The campus also became a cultural hub for computing enthusiasts. The term “hacking” was originally used by MIT to describe physical pranks until the early 1960s, when it permanently slipped into the halls of the computer science department.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of entering a computer system without permission did not only preoccupy computer science students. As early as 1966, the House of Representatives held a week-long meeting to discuss the potential threat computers may have on privacy.<sup>23</sup> While the meetings were comically unproductive, they attempted to dissect issues that would become central once computing grew in scale, including the potential for adversarial intrusions. In a prescient turn of events, less than two years later, the West German police caught an East German spy snooping through the files of the IBM’s German offices in what some have called the first case of computer crime. The spy had tried to physically insert a disk into the



computer, but researchers had already started sounding theoretical alarms about the possibility of remote access.<sup>24</sup>

The conversations surrounding security and privacy proliferated throughout bureaucratic ranks. In October of 1967, the Defense Science Board led a study group to examine the risks of computing. The RAND Corporation published the classified findings in February of 1970, predicting that engineering will not be able to solve the issues of computer security.<sup>25</sup> Classified access and social relations preoccupied early conceptions of system security:

3. Contemporary technology cannot provide a secure system in an open environment, which includes uncleared users working at physically unprotected consoles connected to the system by unprotected communications.

4. It is unwise to incorporate classified or sensitive information in a system functioning in an open environment unless a significant risk of accidental disclosure can be accepted.<sup>26</sup>

For most of the 1970s, securing systems depended on what Michael Warner termed “hygiene over hardware.”<sup>27</sup> Most administrators focused on encryption, privileged access, and hashed passwords rather than chip design, telecommunication, or computer engineering.

Simultaneously, concerns about the government’s relationship with the nascent computing industry garnered serious attention. When the National Bureau of Standards called for an encryption algorithm to safeguard government information, IBM developed the Digital Encryption Standards (DES) in collaboration with the NSA.<sup>28</sup> The relationship was as successful as it was controversial. Fear over the NSA’s role in potentially manipulating a backdoor into the DES prompted an investigation by the Senate. While the committee did not find anything to corroborate the rumors, it became the first investigation into the inevitable tension between the openness of the internet, perceptions of its insecurity, and fears of governmental overreach in the guise of protection.<sup>29</sup> A government-sponsored internet network created more connections and inevitably, more concerns. The greatest leap for networking came when ARPA decided to connect the timesharing projects it had incubated at MIT, UCLA, Berkeley, and Stanford.<sup>30</sup> While many networking projects were being seriously tackled by private institutions and governments across the world, by 1978 the United States discovered a way to connect all of those disparate systems. Advances in communication protocols allowed ARPA to communicate between systems that were using different algorithms, even if they were running on different infrastructures.<sup>31</sup> The new standards started to slowly introduce computing and the new methods of communication into the mainstream.

The advent of personal computers further democratized the internet beyond the academy’s wildest imagination. Through the bulletin board system (BBS), Compu-serv and BBS became the first online communities to create communal forums for sharing information about the newly emerging computer world.<sup>32</sup> BBS allowed users to connect to a

system, upload and download content, and exchange messages with other users. To give a sense of the internet's early popularity, by the summer of 1984, CompuServe had 130,000 subscribers and 26 mainframe computers.<sup>33</sup> While the internet was far from becoming mainstream, the self-selected community of tinkerers and "hackers" had begun experimenting with the limits of permissible online access.

One of the first "unauthorized computer access" cases to confirm the theoretical suspicions of the RAND researchers occurred in 1984. A group of high school students from Milwaukee referring to themselves by their area code—the 414s—used the Telenet networks to access various computers across the country, including the unclassified military networks at the U.S. National Laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico.<sup>34</sup> The case quickly captured the public's attention. A congressional report from 1984 mentioned that the case "was reported in virtually every newspaper and television news program in the country. Interviews were conducted on national television programs, and Johnny Carson included the incidents in his monolog."<sup>35</sup> Since no laws regarding proper computer access had existed prior to this moment, the case was shrouded in genuine confusion. The incident highlighted both the ambiguity of computer-related legal statutes and popular perception of the ethics involved in entering a foreign computer system. When a congressman asked Neal Patrick, the leader of the 414s, when he knew that they stepped out of bounds, Patrick responded: "when the FBI showed up at my door."<sup>36</sup> The public scrutiny of the case demanded answers. Numerous media outlets pointed blame directly at government administrators. In a September of 1983 story on the 414s, the *New York Times* pointed out that the Department of Defense has become "increasingly concerned about their future security," doubting that their 8000 networked computers were, in fact, impregnable.<sup>37</sup> Donald Latham, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence told the *Times* that "there'll be more of these hackers, and we're going to have to deal with their increasing sophistication."<sup>38</sup> But none of the 414 hackers were ever charged or sentenced for their curious exploits.

Legal institutions across the country were slow to catch up to the emergence of computer crime as a serious standard of analysis. From the 1970s to the 1980s, most legal conversations grappled with questions of trespassing. Can information stored within interconnected and accessible networks be considered private property? Is entering someone else's computer from the other side of a country the same as walking into someone's house? How important is intent for effective and just prosecution? For most of the early 80s, computer crime was prosecuted under almost 40 different statutes.<sup>39</sup> Minnesota was the first state to pass a law specifically related to computer crime in 1982, but they did so by merely extending wire fraud, embezzlement, and theft statutes to a new vocabulary terrain: "computers."<sup>40</sup> Comprehensive federal legislation did not come about until the 414s made computer crime impossible to ignore.

The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, passed in 1984, responded to growing pressure to secure federal networks. The virtual break-in by high school students into the Los Alamos National Laboratories, coupled with extensive media scrutiny and pressure from reports by

the American Bar Association, pushed Congress to define computer crime as a separate legal category.<sup>41</sup> The law focuses on three narrow issues.

First, the Act made it a felony to knowingly access a computer without authorization in order to obtain classified United States military or foreign relations information with the intent or reason to believe that such information would be used to the detriment of the United States. Second, the Act made it a misdemeanor to knowingly access a computer without authorization to obtain information protected by federal financial privacy laws. Finally, it created a misdemeanor to knowingly access a federal government computer without authorization and thereby use, modify or destroy information therein, or prevent authorized use of such computer.<sup>42</sup>

The act was extremely limited in scope, reflecting much of the popular doubt that computer systems would ever seriously extend outside of academic and government use. Immediate legal criticism also highlighted its lack of a broad definitional reach or use for prosecution.<sup>43</sup> An amendment passed in 1986 raised the criminal standard from “knowingly” to “intentionally,” clarified certain definitions, and added three new offenses.<sup>44</sup> But the jurisdiction remained only pertinent to cases related to federal interest.<sup>45</sup>

For the first time, a popular case created room to discuss internet security with genuine federal urgency. The year of the Los Alamos hacks, Ronald Reagan passed the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) to protect federal information systems. Almost overnight, NSA became responsible for overseeing, researching, and protecting all “government telecommunications systems and automated information systems.”<sup>46</sup> While testifying to a House committee, Donald Letham emphasized that “virtually every aspect of Government and private information is readily available to our adversaries” and “unfriendly governments and international terrorist organizations are finding easy pickings.”<sup>47</sup> In the eyes of many critics, the federal government used the urgency of the catastrophic vision media outlets constructed out of the 414 incident to grasp greater control of internet networks.

Many in Congress pushed back against what seemed like a clear governmental overreach. Several pieces of legislation were brought up to challenge Reagan in meetings held by the House Government Operations committee between 1985 and 1987. One of the NSA’s most ardent critics, Rep. Jack Brooks called the NSDD “an unprecedented and ill-advised expansion of the military’s influence in our society.”<sup>48</sup> A diverse concoction of interest groups argued that the NSA presents serious dangers to the future of the internet. Lobbyists ranging from “the American Bankers Association to the American Civil Liberties Union urged Congress to limit the Defense Department’s powers to cite national security grounds in restricting public access to online information.”<sup>49</sup> The 1980s began to outline the boundaries of permissible dialogue about internet access, civil liberties, and the Government’s stake in regulation. It would not be the last time internet security went through the incident-panic-response model of regulation.



In the same year that the vision of the RAND scientists came true with the 414s, a computer scientist from USC demonstrated another, palpably worse security scenario of the future. At a security conference at Lehigh University, Fred Cohen, at the time a Ph.D. student at USC, demonstrated how a code inserted into a computer system connected to the internet can easily spread to everyone connected on the network.<sup>50</sup> Two years later, in his Ph.D. dissertation, Cohen coined the term “virus” or “a program that can ‘infect’ other programs by modifying them to include a possibly evolved version of itself.”<sup>51</sup> He expands on the process by pointing out “with the infection property, a virus can spread throughout a computer system or network using the authorizations of every user using it to infect their programs. Every program that gets infected may also act as a virus and thus the infection grows.”<sup>52</sup> The term virus did not gain popularity until its “existence in the wild” would be confirmed three years later.

A student armed with a computer, curiosity, and access to Cornell’s computer system would confirm Cohen’s fears and create a new problem for legislators and bureaucrats alike. The history of computer crime cannot be told either as a uniform manifestation of bureaucratic whims nor a technological wild west. The way security officials and the American public perceived the internet and its security were colored by the militarized history of the internet, anxieties of the 20th century, and administrative tug-o-war for control of a growing industry. This section provided the context for the proliferation of internet crime, legislative responses, and popular perceptions just before the internet as we know it would take over the world. By looking closely at the Morris Worm in the next section, this paper will highlight how conversations regarding poorly understood technology rely on metaphors of contagions, as well as how this discourse impacts institutions.

### The Target and The Source

When the Morris Worm struck in early November of 1988, the computer science community was genuinely perplexed. By the end of the decade, questions of computer insecurity had started to seriously proliferate throughout research circles. A popular film, a few headline-grabbing computer attacks, and a myriad of legislation concerning computer security defined the early years of the 1980s. But the Morris Worm was different because of its target; it went after the institutions that created the internet. Within three days of its launch, the Worm disabled more than 6,000 government and university computers.<sup>53</sup> While previous cases relied on accessing a computer system physically, Morris’ code replicated autonomously and moved through the communication channels usually reserved for official business unnoticed. The meeting organized by the National Computer Security Center in response to Morris brought the foremost experts on computer security together to discuss American internet concerns, and deal with the Worm’s public spillover. The experts in the meeting cemented the discourse of computer crime. While Morris did not single-handedly

create the securitized internet familiar to us now, he brought it to the forefront, becoming a conduit through which previously inaccessible conversations could take the public stage.

The self-propagating virus was the first of its time to take on a life of its own after creation. Unlike previous intrusions that had to penetrate the hardware of a computer, the Morris Worm spread seemingly on its own accord. The code targeted three applications, and while it did not explicitly harm operations like access information or delete files, it ended up consuming so much of a computer's resources that it prevented it from carrying out any other function.<sup>54</sup> Within a matter of fifteen hours, over six thousand computers—about 10% of all computers connected in the United States, including those at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the Army Ballistic Research Lab, and several NASA facilities - were shut down.<sup>55</sup> While Morris quickly came up with an antidote to the code, he could not distribute it to the network because all of the communication channels were shut down.<sup>56</sup> It took three days for the Worm to be neutralized and the operation of ARPANET to return to normal.

The author of the code, Robert T. Morris Jr, was a graduate student at Cornell when he released his creation into the wild. In an interesting turn of events - and one that would fuel endless conspiracy theories—the creator turned out to be the son of Robert Morris Sr., a chief scientist of the NSA Computer Security Center and the architect of the UNIX system.<sup>57</sup> An internal investigation at Cornell University determined Morris' actions to be “a juvenile act that... may simply have been the unfocused intellectual meandering of a hacker completely absorbed with his creation and unharnessed by considerations of explicit purpose or potential effect.”<sup>58</sup> Due to the nature of the code, it was unclear how much Morris should be chastised or thanked. In a presentation regarding the attack, Clifford Stoll, a scientist at Harvard who engineered a solution saved his last slide to pontificate “Did this guy do us a favor by showing our vulnerabilities? Was it necessary? A month ago, cover of time [sic] magazine was about viruses!”<sup>59</sup>

Like the experts, historians have covered Morris' Intention with notable contradiction. While some have chosen to focus extensively on the accidental nature of the code, others have squarely placed blame on the author for not properly anticipating its effects.<sup>60</sup> A few historians have attempted to spin the graduate student as a benevolent explorer, who has been forced to take computer security of the country into his own hands after managers of the UNIX software refused to fix several vulnerabilities he had pointed out to them.<sup>61</sup> One writer even painted Morris as an attention seeker trying “to get away from his father's image and have one of his own.”<sup>62</sup> Regardless of his genuine motivation, the divergent narratives of why Morris wrote the code say more about an author's imagination of proper internet behavior than the perpetrator themselves. Self projections and imaginations of the internet's nature shine in the discussions of the affected scientists.

*The Post-Mortem and Contagion Discourse*

In response to Morris, seven days after the attacks, the federal government organized an impromptu conference with affected parties to understand the consequences of the internet's security vulnerabilities. Coordinated by the National Computer Security Center (NCSC), the meeting included members of security, internet operation, and academic institutions.<sup>63</sup> Representatives from the Air Force, Army, DARPA, DCA, ASD, DOE, NSA, FBI, NIST, NSCS, and academics from Harvard, Berkeley, MIT, and Stanford each brought their unique perspective, imagination, and interest to the meeting.<sup>64</sup> The way these experts discussed the internet, computer viruses, and their personal role elucidated how biological language is imprinted onto technical systems. Their language painted the internet as a living, breathing body, while they became the doctors ready to heal. The authority of natural science permitted security experts to imbue their work with certain social significance while allowing computers, the internet, and the nation “to be articulated in the idiom of organic nature, an idiom that can often obscure the historical and cultural specificity of such conceptions.”<sup>65</sup>

From the start of the meeting, computers are referred to almost exclusively as biological entities. William Sherlin, on behalf of the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, outlines subheadings in his presentation that might as well be from a medical textbook:

1. THE VIRUS
- 1.2. SYMPTOMS AND BEHAVIOR
- 1.3. METHOD OF ATTACK
- 1.4. ESTABLISHING THE INFECTION
- 1.5. DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS
- 1.6. IMMUNIZATION AND PREVENTION
- 1.7. ASSESSMENT AND RECOVERY<sup>66</sup>

The DARPA team fully embraced the idea of a living virus. They extend the metaphor, pointing out “the principal symptom of the virus... [is] degradation of system responses.”<sup>67</sup> The computer code itself, removed from the author, became endowed with agency to the point where “the principal activity of the virus [was] to replicate itself and spread to other machines... with resultant degradation of performance.”<sup>68</sup> Michael Muuss of the US Army Ballistic Research Laboratory went a step further to define a virus: “From Latin: slimy liquid, poison, stench... Complex molecules, capable of growth and multiplication only in living cells.”<sup>69</sup> The viral contagion became seemingly imminent, it lacked a subject or a source, holding within itself only a goal of destruction.

In a world where the goal of computer code is “infection,” the defenders become first responders ready to administer the antidote. The DARPA researchers assure listeners that “immunization and/or prevention measures were developed.”<sup>70</sup> Michael Muuss, of the US Army Ballistic Research Laboratory, nicknamed his scientists the “antiviral team” and the



management “virus busters.”<sup>71</sup> In almost every sense, the danger of the virus to the communal immunity can only be thwarted by experts with the tools who understand the body.

Ballistic Corp simultaneously demonstrated concern regarding public perception. An aura of public spectacle hung over most of the presentations. In the final report about the meeting, NSCS highlights a need for “a single USG focal point at the national level to interact with the press.”<sup>72</sup> While the final editors emphasized the need for efficiency and coordinated messaging, some presenters expressed concern over a possible panic. Anticipating that his biological metaphors might be too successful, Muss wrote “My fear: these headlines: ‘Computer Virus Spreads to Humans: 96 left dead...[sic].’”<sup>73</sup>

The construction of a vulnerable body internet is significant for the solutions that the metaphors demand. Contagion metaphors on the internet are intimately tied to the bodily anxieties of the 20th century. When the rise of virology as a field coincided with the McCarthy trials, “viruses increasingly assumed the characteristics of communists; they were devious and sinister, forming a kind of fifth column.”<sup>74</sup> The viral model of a healthy body fighting off an infection is imbued with a number of assumptions about sovereignty, foreignness, and immunology. The viral contagion demands an “enormous quantity of centrally, if not globally, managed funds and research as well as the institutionalization of global biopolitical strategies of surveillance, diagnosis, containment, eradication, and therapy.”<sup>75</sup> A backbone of vigilance is installed, turning every internet user into a potential organism that is a bundled potential of viral energy.<sup>76</sup> The NCSC experts were inadvertently mobilizing fear and anxiety, aware that it must contaminate other discourse if it is to be successful.

### Judicial, Legislative, and Bureaucratic Spillover

The discussions of computer viruses, the internet, and viral immunity extended far beyond the insular confines of the NCSC meetings. Experts present at the meetings provided legal advice, advised members of Congress, and went on to head leading cybersecurity firms. The rhetoric of contagion and immunity metaphors had a broad-reaching impact on court precedents, on internet legislation across the country, and on the ways American citizens interacted with their computers. The following section traces the discursive spillover into the popular consciousness. The Morris incident became the vehicle to bring private conversations that computer experts had been having regarding perceived internet vulnerability into the public. It was this spillover that would have the most lasting effect on legislation, legal precedents, and an emerging computer security industry.

#### *Judicial Discourse*

Three years after it was passed, Robert Morris became the first person to be prosecuted under the 1986 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. The Northern District of New

York indicted Morris on misdemeanor and felony provisions of the Act, which finds any person guilty if that individual:

[I]ntentionally accesses a Federal interest computer without authorization, and by means of one or more instances of such conduct alters, damages, or destroys information in any such Federal interest computer, or prevents authorized use of any such computer or information, and thereby

(A) causes loss to one or more others of a value aggregating \$1,000 or more during any one year period.<sup>77</sup>

Morris' defense disputed the indictment, arguing that under the law "he not only had to intentionally access a federal interest computer, but he also had to intend to prevent authorized use of those computers."<sup>78</sup> The cases rested on the argument that Morris did not exceed his authorized access as a student with full access to the computer networks of Cornell University and did not intend to cause damage since he attempted to release a fix.<sup>79</sup> After the district judge ruled that no legislative history was required because the CFAA seemed "unambiguous," he ruled against Morris, deciding that intent "requirement did not apply to the damage clause."<sup>80</sup> The appellate court disagreed with the district court's decision regarding the Act's "unambiguous" clarity, reviewing the case in the context of the vagueness of the punctuation in the Act, and whether "intentionally" only modified the "access," or included the "damage" clause.<sup>81</sup> Upon review of the legislative history, the appellate court concurred with the district court, concluding that only intent to access is necessary to prosecute under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

The prosecution of Morris became pivotal for future computer crime cases. While the Supreme Court refused to hear the case without comment, the appellate decision set two important legal precedents.<sup>82</sup> First, they established the minimum prosecutorial requirement for the Act to be intentional access rather than intentional damages. Second, they cemented the definition of an "outsider" as anyone who uses a computer program or accesses a computer network without authorization, creating a bubble of legal sovereignty around each individual computer system and program.<sup>83</sup> Judge Jon Newman ruled:

Morris did not use either of those features [the email and directory applications] in any way related to their intended function. He did not send or read mail nor discover information about other users; instead he found holes in both programs that permitted him a special and unauthorized access route into other computers.<sup>84</sup>

The issue was not that Morris failed to get permission to tinker with the programs from Cornell University, but rather that the designers of the exploited programs did not intend users to interact with their applications in the way he did.

The sentencing of the case also charted new territory. While the prosecution attempted to impose a twenty-seven-month prison sentence, the defense vied for six. The judge expressed the difficulty of finding a precedent for sentencing such a new crime, saying “the dollar loss overstates the seriousness of the offense.”<sup>85</sup> Many critics expressed dismay in private, one saying “if a person hasn't acted with malicious intent, it's not quite clear what you're trying to deter.”<sup>86</sup> At the end of the trial, the judge concluded that, in order to prevent future “hackers” from attempting to access unauthorized domains, Morris was sentenced to three years probation, 400 hours of community service, and a fine of \$10,050.<sup>87</sup> The case highlighted the difficulty of prosecuting such a new realm, applying legal concepts to an undefined and misunderstood domain, as well as the limits and ambiguities of the 1986 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

The incident brought conversations about computer viruses to Congress. Like the 414s that inspired the 1986 legislation, Morris would usher in a new era of computer virus discourse in Congress. After the attacks gained national attention, the Senate Judiciary Committee established a subcommittee on Technology and the Law, which started holding hearings on “Computer Viruses” in May 1989.<sup>88</sup> During the testimony of the first panel, William Sessions, the Director of the FBI, opened by highlighting the limitations of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and first uttered the word “virus” on record.

In the context of our investigative responsibilities, we have found that existing federal statutes are generally adequate when the computer-related criminal acts parallel common law crimes such as embezzlement, fraud, theft, and destruction of property... Existing criminal statutes [sic] however, are not specific on the question of whether unauthorized access is a crime where no theft or damage occurs, and there is no statute specifically addressing viruses. Current criminal statutes, by and large, address the issue of computers as the vehicle of the crime... we have seen an increase in crimes in which the computer or computerized information is the target of the crime. Computer viruses present one such example... With today's technology, viruses can begin the infectious process from a home personal computer, an office, an academic institution, or from almost anywhere in the world.<sup>89</sup>

Sessions addressed all the issues highlighted throughout Morris' court proceedings and urged Congress to pass legislation that would target viruses directly.<sup>90</sup> During the second panel testimony, Clifford Stoll, who wrote the code that stopped the Morris Worm at Harvard, spoke of the virus incident without ever mentioning it by name. At the end of his testimony, he reiterated the hypothetical question he posed to the NCSC related to Morris' guilt: “Or might this virus be a useful way to raise our consciousness of computer security? A quaint attempt to tell us to secure our computers? We don't thank burglars for reminding us that our houses are insecure... There are more ethical ways to spread the word.”<sup>91</sup>

The court case and congressional hearings would herald a new era of computer crime legislation. The Morris case highlighted the inadequacies of the computer laws that were

drafted without considerations that internet technology would ever spread outside of military and scientific circles. The conversations around computer insecurity that had gained traction within specialist circles as early as 1966 found an official outlet through the attention-grabbing mistake of Robert Morris. The security imagination, rhetorical metaphors, and institutional demands of computer scientists and investigative bureaus played a major role in the securitization of computer networks.

### *Legislative Discourse*

Legislation introduced at the end of the 1980s directly referenced the legal challenges surrounding viruses and Morris. Subsequent federal bills attempted to extend the scope of older statutes. Representative Wally Herger introduced the Computer Virus Eradication Act (CVEA) of 1989 to amend the CFAA with the section:

Whoever knowingly inserts into a program for a computer, or a computer itself, information or commands, knowing or having reason to believe that such information or commands may cause loss, expense, or risk to health or welfare -

- (i) to users of such computer or a computer on which such program is run, or to persons who rely on information processed on such computer; or
- (ii) to users of any other computer or to persons who rely on information processed on any other computer; and provides (with knowledge of the existence of such information or commands) such program or such computer to a person in circumstances in which such person does not know of the insertion or its effects; if inserting or providing such information or commands affects, or is affected or furthered by means of, interstate or foreign commerce [shall be punished as described].<sup>92</sup>

The bill attempted to expand oversight beyond just federal computer networks, putting private firms within its purview. To elucidate technical aspects of computerized systems and extend understanding to the private domains, legislators often borrowed the medicalized rhetoric of computer scientists. Compelling cases centered on drawing direct connections between the urgency of internet security and the contagion outbreaks of the decade. In her statements on the necessity of the CVEA, Herger made an explicit link to HIV, saying “Some have called [a virus] the AIDS of the computer world.”<sup>93</sup> Such discourse quickly trickled down to the state and local level.

State legislatures across the country began to explicitly and expeditiously legislate computer crime. Prior to 1989, no state had directly mentioned a computer “virus” and few had the means to even attempt to prosecute it; two years later, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas, California, Illinois, and West Virginia enacted laws making the release of a computer virus a crime.<sup>94</sup> Minnesota, a state with one of the earliest statutes on computer crime,



enacted the Computer Virus Act in August of 1989, explicitly defining a destructive program.

A computer program that performs a destructive function or produces a destructive product. A program performs a destructive function if it degrades performance of the affected computer, associated peripherals or a computer program; disables the computer, associated peripherals or a computer program; or destroys or alters computer programs or data.<sup>95</sup>

The debates of the definition relied heavily on legal and scientific testimonies heard in Congress that year.<sup>96</sup> More explicitly, the law's language is almost indistinguishable from the definitions of a virus provided by experts during the NSCS meeting. It's difficult not to see similarities between Minnesota's law and William Sherlin's testimony on behalf of DARPA: "the principal activity of the virus is to replicate itself and spread to other machines... with resultant degradation of performance."<sup>97</sup> In the early 1990's, the medicalized rhetoric of computer technicians began to be directly inscribed into the legal code of the United States, giving popular anxieties and contagion metaphors tangible, and institutional expression.

At the helm of the Morris Worm, computer crime started to pique international attention. In 1989, the Council of Europe published a report urging countries to create a unified set of principles to ensure efficient response to cybercrime.<sup>98</sup> As more countries began to seriously adopt internet protocols, a push for legal standardization accelerated. In 1990, the United Nations' Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders called on countries to "combat cybercrime by modernizing their law, improving computer security and promoting a comprehensive international framework of standards for preventing, prosecuting, and punishing computer-related crime."<sup>99</sup>

### *Bureaucratic Intervention*

The expansion of legal coverage into private domains coincided with the birth of a computer security industry. In the process of the medicalization of computer security, academics and security officials suggested a security-umbrella approach to protecting national networks. When the virus was constructed as a body without organs, a top-down panic created a need for an orchestrated and efficient response. The recommendations from the NCSC post-mortem meeting outlined the strokes of an institution to coordinate the security of the national internet. The meeting gave birth to two structures that continue to impact the direction of computer security: the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the commercialization of computer security.

The NCSC meeting identified the decentralized network of computer scientists that helped thwart the Worm. Those invited to the meeting were the wounded parties, but also the source of the virus' solution. The academics from Harvard, Berkeley, MIT, Stanford, and auxiliary institutions were termed the "old boy network": partly representative of the computer science demographics and partly reflecting the government's relationship with the

academic research circle.<sup>100</sup> The fourth recommendation outlined the need to centralize and maintain the “technical relationships with the computer science ‘old boy network,’” emphasizing that their “consensus, support, and trust is required” for government security offices.<sup>101</sup> The parties represented at the meeting, from the broad range of universities to the military research institutions, became the vanguard for securing American networks. The connections have often obfuscated the scientists’ self-perception of themselves as purely independent actors.<sup>102</sup>

The coordination between researchers and the military was quickly institutionalized. The NCSC was intentional in emphasizing the need for more than an informal network of computer security. The first recommendation emphasized the need for an establishment of a “centralized coordination center” managed by the NSA and NIST, serving as a “place to report problems and request solutions,” with potential to evolve into a “national-level command center supporting the government and private sector alike.”<sup>103</sup> A month later, DARPA established the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) at Carnegie Mellon University to coordinate nationwide network security. Beyond just being a repository of security experts, the organization became responsible for “reporting incidents, conducting security research, and educating the computer user community about security issues.”<sup>104</sup> Funded by the Department of Defense, CERT focused exclusively on ARPANET and MILNET, reiterating the government’s focus on federally valuable networks. Prior to the birth of a popularly accessible internet, DARPA predicted the need for a more expansive security apparatus, announcing in their press release “each major computer community may decide to establish its own CERT.”<sup>105</sup> That is exactly what happened.

The birth of the World Wide Web created a private computer security industry. During the early 1990s when the internet was starting to take shape as a popular application, the emergence of corporate connectivity online raised immediate vulnerability concerns. Commercial anti-virus and computer security systems first became available to enforce rules about who was authorized to access certain resources on a network: focusing on password security and the source of internet traffic.<sup>106</sup> Many of these early firms emphasized their ability to keep a private network isolated from outside intrusions, referring to their systems as “firewalls.”<sup>107</sup> Usually regarded as a marketing ploy used to emphasize the conceptual parallels between physical damage and cyber intrusions, firewalls became technical arbiters of who belonged on a network and who was considered a “foreigner.”<sup>108</sup>

Private firms continued to capitalize on accepted computer security metaphors to make the technical aspects palatable to corporate buyers. Danny Hillis, an early computer security entrepreneur and a 1988 graduate of the MIT computer science department, emphasized the need for biological metaphors after the Morris incident.

So long as formats like UNIX become a universal standard, we’ll have awful problems with viruses no matter how many vaccines and quarantines we come up with. What we want in networked computing is a diversity of operating standards.



We want each computer to be a slight variant of the standard, maybe one that is slowly evolving.<sup>109</sup>

The computer security industry focused on making their software a medical necessity by highlighting the similarity to contagion risks from biological epidemics. One of the largest firewall firms of the 1990s wrote in a promotional research booklet that “like the human AIDS virus that mutates frequently to escape detection by the body’s defenses, the polymorphic computer virus likewise mutates to escape detection by anti-virus software that compares it to an inventory of known viruses.”<sup>110</sup> The parallels of HIV imagery and computer viruses quickly spilled over into the marketing firewall systems in terms of prophylactic software, like Virusafe, Flu Shot +, Vaccinate, and Disk Defender.<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

The Morris Worm was the event to catapult insulated contagion rhetoric to the public. Through legal and commercial channels, metaphors of the body, immunity, and medicalization became institutionalized. The laws passed after the Morris incident defined the internet before it gained serious popularity in the 1990s. And the redefined private industry and security relationships to the internet continue to influence private interactions with computerized networks. Robert Morris was not the cause of this evolution. As early as the 1960s, internet researchers were aware of the infrastructure’s vulnerability. But it was the particular popularity of the incident that formed the umbrella of institutional anxiety.

It is vital to acknowledge the contingent elements Morris created. The ways in which CFAA was enforced by placing security responsibility on the users rather than program designers is both responsible for the rapid, unabated growth of the internet and simultaneously its tendency to scapegoat actors outside of the computer officialdom. The narrative of internet security is as rhetorically constructed as it is technically mediated. Insecure by design, the internet vanguard has laid the “infrastructure of surveillance, vigilance, and counter-epidemic action,” making anxiety the driving force of the internet’s globalization.<sup>112</sup> But even as the internet exists in a permanent state of emergency, immunity is perpetually latent. To defend the internet from foreign bodies encroaching on its freedom, the internet itself must be quarantined, protected, and surveilled. Jacques Derrida aptly notes that in the process of immunity, “a living being, in a quasi-suicidal fashion, ‘itself works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its ‘own’ immunity.”<sup>113</sup> In an ironic fashion, it is most often the metaphors used to liberate technology that binds it the most.<sup>114</sup>

The constraints of American technological industries do not end at the border. Important dilemmas lie in understanding how domestic rhetoric promulgates outside of national boundaries. As early as 1996, Russian and Chinese leaders reiterated concerns about the connection between American security agencies and privately exported

infrastructure. In a 1996 *Pravda* interview, a general at the Chamber of Trade and Commerce said:

Many people are happy that they got access to the Internet Web, but the owners are American, not us. Now in Russia lots of American servers have been set up, and they supply their equipment for low prices... We must remember about the 'logical bombs' inlaid in their programs. Can you imagine what would happen if one day on a special command all the equipment will be paralyzed?<sup>115</sup>

Similar worries were raised in a 1996 article in China's *Liberation Army Daily* that pointed out the concerns with new communication networks, saying "an information war is inexpensive, as the enemy country can receive a paralyzing blow through the Internet, and the party on the receiving end will not be able to tell whether it is a child's prank or an attack from its enemy."<sup>116</sup> Chinese and Russian officials express the same concerns that the U.S. Congress, academics, and security officials have voiced since the 1970s. An investigation into the potential spillover of security rhetoric and ideological exportation could reap useful insights about the impact of nascent technological discourse on global political exchanges.

The discourse of nascent technology also shapes the boundaries of permissible user relationships. The fact that the scope of legal and executive reactions to large scale computer threats has not changed since Morris should be a signal of the nation's imaginative bog.<sup>117</sup> Exacerbating encroachment on personal information and the commercialization of surveillance pose threats to the growth of the internet as well as the narrative of its liberalizing potential. As the Morris Worm demonstrated, every future attack is a potential for federal aberration from legal norms, civil rights, and due process. At the end of his Senate testimony, Clifford Stoll shed light on the important dilemma that internet regulators have inherited from Morris: "Yet how should we react? One response is to slam doors and build barriers against outsiders. This will make it tougher for the virus-writers. It'll also make life difficult for those who need to exchange information."<sup>118</sup>

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- <sup>71</sup> Muuss, *Site Experience*, 8.
- <sup>72</sup> National Computer Security Center, "Proceedings of the Virus Post-Mortem," 89.
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- <sup>79</sup> Ibid, 271.
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- <sup>89</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology and Law, *Hearings on Computer Viruses*, 101 Congress, 1st session, May 15, 1989 (opening testimony of William Sessions).
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- <sup>94</sup> Kluth, *The Computer, Virus Threat*, 308.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid, 310.
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- <sup>114</sup> Colleen Bell, "War and the Allegory of Medical Intervention: Why Metaphors Matter," *International Political Sociology* 6, no. 3 (2012): 325–28; Mariarosaria Taddeo, "On the Risks of Relying on Analogies to Understand Cyber Conflicts," *Minds and Machines* 26, no. 4 (2016): 317–21. Both offer useful insight into the effects of language on defining the boundaries of user interaction.
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- <sup>116</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>117</sup> Joshua Hill and Nancy Marion, "Presidential Rhetoric on Cybercrime: links to terrorism?," *Criminal Justice Studies*, 29:2 (2016), 163-177; Larry Boettger, "The Morris Worm: How It Affected Computer Security and Lessons Learned by It," *Global Information Assurance*, December 20, 2000; John Rollins and Anna Henning, *Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative: Legal Authorities and Policy Considerations*, 2009, Congressional Research Service, U.S. Library of Congress. All have tracked the lack of progress or innovation on national cybersecurity policy.
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# REPRESENTATIONS OF THE *BUMIDOM*: REEMBODIED HISTORIES IN JESSICA OUBLIÉ AND MARIE-ANGE ROUSSEAU'S *PÉYI AN NOU*

*Ellen Weaver*

**Abstract:** Between 1963 and 1981 the French state agency, *Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d'outre-mer* (Bumidom) organized the migration of over 160,000 French citizens from the overseas departments (DOM) to mainland France. Created in response to a demand for a disposable workforce in metropolitan France, Bumidom also aimed to solve the supposed “demographic problem” in the DOM and appease situations of social unrest provoked by deep inequality between the DOM and metropolitan France. The history of Bumidom is one thread within the fabric of postcolonial migration histories that have been erased from, or eclipsed by, the French national narrative. The workers and families whose migration Bumidom organized from the DOM to metropolitan France provided an essential labor force for the postwar modernization project. Yet, this generation’s contributions to the sociopolitical, and cultural landscape of contemporary France remain absent from the popular French consciousness. In Jessica Oublié and Marie-Ange Rousseau’s *bande dessinée* (graphic novel), *Péyi An Nou*, Oublié marshals her family history as a lens through which she explores the experience of *Bumidom* migrants across the Antilles, and the enduring effects of its legacy on subsequent generations. This article argues that histories that have been repressed and marginalized, both in the official French narrative and through feelings of trauma, can be reembodyed through the multilayered form of the *bande dessinée*. I will end with an intertextual, comparative reading of Fabienne Kanor’s work, placing *Péyi An Nou* in a broader context of cultural production relating to the experiences of the post-Bumidom generation and their navigation of the French Republic.

**Key words:** Bumidom, *Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d'outre-mer*, migrant laborers, postcolonial migration, postwar France, *Péyi An Nou*, Jessica Oublié, Marie-Ange Rousseau

## Introduction

Between 1963 and 1981, Bumidom, the French office for the development of migration in the overseas departments (DOM), organized a mass relocation of young French citizens from the overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Réunion Island to mainland France. Following the process of departmentalization in 1946, the *vieilles colonies* were fully integrated as departments into the French Republic. Within the twenty-year period of Bumidom's existence, more than 160,000 citizens of the DOM had been relocated to metropolitan France, a large portion of whom settled in the Parisian region.<sup>1</sup> A study carried out by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies shows that in 2008, 365,000 people born in a French overseas department lived in metropolitan France, translating to one in four Antilleans and one in seven Reunionese. This ratio had not changed since the early 1980s, when the Bumidom agency was dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

Bumidom migration has played an essential role in the making of contemporary France. The so-called *domiens* brought to mainland France filled low-skilled, low-paid civil service jobs, forming a distinct workforce that supported the modernization of metropolitan France. The enduring Antillean and Reunionese presence in mainland France demonstrates the significant role that Bumidom migration has played in the demographic composition of contemporary France. Despite the major contribution of the Bumidom generation to the modernization, social fabric, and cultural identity of mainland France, Bumidom remains a forgotten and invisible part of French national history. Those affected by Bumidom are relegated to the social, political and spatial peripheries of French society. Mass migration is also considered by some a social and cultural trauma for the DOM and those whose migration it organized. This is reflected in a lack of representation of Bumidom experiences in cultural production, and the limited scholarly attention that has been afforded to Bumidom migration.

*Péyi An Nou* is a *bande dessinée* (BD), or French graphic novel, written and illustrated by Jessica Oublié and Marie-Ange Rousseau that presents the personal, social and political experiences and histories relating to Bumidom. Prior to the *bande dessinée*, Oublié (1983–) wrote for the journal *Africultures* and worked in cultural and linguistic fields in the Central African Republic and Benin.<sup>3</sup> Marie-Ange Rousseau (1990–) is a graphic designer and illustrator. *Péyi An Nou* offers an interdisciplinary and multifaceted account of Bumidom experiences by drawing on the archive; individual, familial and social memory; and academic research. Written from a position of a third-generation descendent of a Guadeloupean migrant of the Bumidom era, Oublié's family history provides a lens through which to explore the wider experience of Bumidom across the Antilles, and the effect of its legacies on post-Bumidom generations. *Péyi An Nou* is structured by a self-reflexive telling of Rousseau and Oublié's process of writing and composing the *bande dessinée*. The narrative follows the characters, Jessica and Marie-Ange, through the conversations, interviews, oral histories, and archival research conducted during their quest to write a family history and a history of the Antilles.

Critical writing about *Péyi An Nou* is limited to an article by Antonia Wimbush, ‘Depicting French Caribbean migration through bande dessinée.’ While Wimbush recognizes the importance of *Péyi An Nou* in raising awareness of Bumidom migration, she argues that the text does not “seem to engage fully with the ways in which *bande dessinée* creates meaning through the composition of both the textual and pictorial layers.”<sup>4</sup> Wimbush’s scepticism of the way in which the authors make use of personal testimony in the BD also does not seem to register the complex nature of trauma and fragmented memory. The layers of meaning created in the BD are more multifarious than Wimbush allows. While her argument and approach to *Péyi An Nou* is grounded in the French tradition of *bande dessinée* studies, much of her criticism around the text is based on elements of *Péyi An Nou* that in fact diverge from such traditions. Since the publication of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* in 1980, there has been an increasing trend of graphic novels that navigate previously untold individual and collective histories that are in some way traumatic. According to Martha J. Cutter, this form of graphic narrative “presents history as a site of struggle where new configurations of the past can be manipulated and alternative conceptualizations of present and future histories might be envisioned.”<sup>5</sup> By acknowledging that *Péyi An Nou* relates to both the tradition of the French BD as a specifically French, popular form, *and* in relation to the growing practice of what Cutter calls the “multi-ethnic graphic narrative,” we can more attentively read the text’s subversive potentials.<sup>6</sup>

*Péyi An Nou* provides a starting point to problematize the overall context within which Bumidom was created and its place in colonial and postcolonial France. The first part of this article will ground the policy born in 1960 in the context of the process of departmentalization that took place in 1946, exploring the biopolitical nature of the state migration policy and drawing attention to its gendered and racialized dimensions. Engaging with close analysis of the graphic novel, I will demonstrate how *Péyi An Nou* offers a prism through which to explore the gendered and racialized treatment of Bumidom migrants through their testimonies, in particular through the testimonies of women in a training centre in Crouy-sur-Ourcq. The second part of this article will focus on *Péyi An Nou*’s engagement with Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory recall. I will argue that Oublié and Rousseau’s representation of migrant testimonies through the act of illustration in the BD constitutes a means of reembodying a traumatically disembodied history and restoring agency to marginalized voices. Finally, I will read *Péyi An Nou* in relation to the performance documentary *Des pieds, mon pied* (Some Feet, My Foot) by Martinican-Parisian artist Fabienne Kanor. By drawing examples from other forms of cultural production relating to the post-Bumidom generation, I hope to demonstrate how it is possible to create a dialogue between testimonies and texts that serves to inform, corroborate and nurture one another, situating these texts within a trend of alternative representations of marginalized histories.



## Contextualizing Bumidom

Though politically assimilated into French national structures, the inferiority of the overseas departments is sustained in metropolitan narratives of progress and modernity, narratives that are themselves founded on the nineteenth-century French colonial discourse. In *Péyi An Nou*, Jessica's character speaks with Monique Milia-Marie-Luce, history lecturer at University of the Antilles, who argues that the departmentalization law was passed under the French colonial concept of assimilation, suggesting that the "desire of the State [was] to treat citizens of the metropole and citizens of the colonies equally"; in reality, the newly named citizens of the territories "have nothing of citizenship but the name."<sup>7</sup> Though some infrastructural investment was extended to the newly named departments, including the building of roads, schools and clinics, the extension of social security from the French government to the departments was slow, and for the majority of people living conditions remained miserable.<sup>8</sup> Bumidom is one of many French histories that have been subject to a process of systematic amnesia, with colonial histories ignored in favor of sustaining "the myth of race-blind universalism."<sup>9</sup> Ann Laura Stoler argues that, further than collective amnesia or forgetting, France's colonial history has involved a process of aphasia: "a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating vocabulary [...] and most importantly, a difficulty comprehending what is spoken."<sup>10</sup> It is from this difficulty to speak and comprehend the colonial past, and to produce a vocabulary that does not speak against the nation's foundations of republican universalism that Frances' inability to address disparities between the DOM and metropole, and its differing treatment of citizens stems.

The inferiority of the overseas departments in French political and historical narratives has often been communicated through an excessively gendered family rhetoric. In discourses around the process of departmentalization and the relationship between France and the DOM, Guadeloupe and Martinique were cast as the "twin sisters" or the "illegitimate daughters" now able to share in French inheritance.<sup>11</sup> The normalization of such metaphors cemented the inferiority of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the paternalistic narrative of the "big French family," and naturalized unequal power relations between France and the former colonies.<sup>12</sup> Kristen Stromberg Childers has written about the demographic studies that reported on family structures in the departments, which often refer to the "casual nature of unions," "high numbers of illegitimate children," and how they differed from the "nuclear family" favored in metropolitan France.<sup>13</sup> The preoccupation with family structures as a social and moral issue in the DOM is an essential element of a larger biopolitical concern affecting France's former colonial territories. Integration through departmentalization presented a newfound possibility for progress and equal treatment in the DOM. However, France maintained a form of delayed equality, enforcing colonial distance and difference on the overseas departments through gendered, familial and reproductive discourses, demanding the progress of colonized peoples under a doctrine of assimilation as a condition for equality.<sup>14</sup>



The persistent denial of France's colonial history manifests in the exclusion of the testimonies and representations of those affected by former French colonial rule in the national historical narrative. France's inability to recognize its colonial past feeds a general ignorance about its contemporary postcolonial situation.<sup>15</sup> Republican ideologies with colonial foundations have been molded to fit the political fabric suitable for their approach to the former colonies in any given period. France remains blind to the contemporary manifestations of its colonial history, from the persisting inequalities between nonwhite French citizens in both the mainland France and the *DOM*, to the peripheral position of the *banlieues* and the *DOM* in France's political concerns.<sup>16</sup> This blindness has also resulted in the colonial foundations of exploitative and gendered nuances of Bumidom migrant experiences remaining unquestioned on an institutional level.

In *Péyi An Nou* Stéphanie Condon, gender equality supervisor at the National Institute for Demographic Studies, is illustrated presenting the gendered way in which Bumidom migration was organized. Condon states that contrary to other male-targeted labor migrations half of Bumidom migrants were female.<sup>17</sup> Single women as well as men were encouraged to migrate to France with the hope of undergoing training to become teachers, secretaries or nurses. In reality, they were proposed one of two paths: women with qualifications could enter into hospital work but were rarely able to progress further than the position of healthcare assistant; and women without qualifications were directed towards domestic work that was presented by the Bumidom agency as a way to "familiarize oneself with metropolitan ways of life."<sup>18</sup>

Though Bumidom is primarily thought of as a labor driven migration movement, the gendered and racialized division of bodies by the agency reveals the Foucauldian biopolitical nature of France's relationship with and treatment of its former colonies. Foucault states that biopolitics "deals with the population, with the population as a political problem [...] as a biological problem and as power's problem."<sup>19</sup> On the surface, Bumidom functioned within a relationship of supply and demand between the overpopulation and high unemployment rates of the *DOM* and the postwar climate of mainland France, which lacked a French work-force willing to fill a sector of low-paid public service positions.

Article Three of the decree for the creation of Bumidom states: "The objective of the society is to contribute to solving the demographic problems concerning the overseas departments."<sup>20</sup> The high levels of poverty experienced in the overseas departments were attributed to high birth rates and overpopulation of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and La Réunion. To solve the problem, the French state encouraged both women and men to migrate through Bumidom to mainland France. Proposing the movement of people away from the islands as a means of solving the "demographic problem" is representative of the approach taken by France towards the *DOM* as "impossible to develop."<sup>21</sup> The only solution was to empty the islands through a gendered and racialized migration process targeting the young, uneducated, and poor population of color on the islands. The way in which France decided to "deal" with "population problems" is precisely as Foucault states: as a political problem, a biological problem, and a problem of power.<sup>22</sup>

Behind the discourse of the “demographic problem” lies the continuation of an ideological opinion that identifies working class women of color as the root cause of poverty in the DOM—an opinion that has been gradually normalized in the French metropolitan worldview.<sup>23</sup> The broader climate of the treatment and policies determining women’s reproductive rights in France and the DOM in the 1960–70s situates Bumidom as merely one part of a larger biopolitical project concerned with the control, displacement and distribution of populations. Vergès states that in both France and the DOM, “women’s bodies are instrumentalized in the interest of the State.”<sup>24</sup> In the modernizing moment of France post-Algerian independence, the next body to be controlled was that of the woman. Kristen Ross argues that French society during this time underwent a “transfer of colonial political economy to a domestic one”—the energy that had been put into “disciplining a colonial people and situation” was instead directed at the everyday life of metropolitan existence.<sup>25</sup> This “transfer” constituted a “new emphasis on controlling *domesticity*,” and a concentration of political economy now directed at the household. An efficiently run, harmonious home was considered a national asset, the quality of a domestic environment influencing the health of the nation.<sup>26</sup>

The influx of female workers from former colonies through Bumidom presented a new population towards which an alternative postcolonial and domestic energy could be directed. The differing treatment of women from mainland France and women of color in the DOM demonstrates the prevalence of intersecting racial and gender inequalities in one’s perceived social position. The power dynamics present in Bumidom migration and its treatment of migrants were riddled with capitalist ideologies of a racialized, gendered, disposable work force—ideologies whose legacy can be found in the transatlantic slave trade. The centers promoting assimilation to the metropolitan way of life were a realization of the fundamental difference in colonial power dynamics that France made significant efforts to sustain. Despite their status as French citizens, residents of the overseas departments continue to be subject to the racialized, colonial dynamics prominent before departmentalization.

Between 1962 and 1981, 20,000 migrants passed through the “professional training centers for adults” set up by Bumidom for both men and women, also known as “centers for adaptation to metropolitan life.”<sup>27</sup> The training and work placements assigned to the migrants fell in line with this new obsession with the domestic health of contemporary France, as female migrants learnt to cook French food, clean, iron, and sew to then be placed in wealthy Parisian households. In *Péyi An Nou*, Oublié and Rousseau investigate the female training centre in Crouy-sur-Ourcq from a number of perspectives: Brigitte, a Reunionese woman who was sent to the centre in 1978 when she was twenty-one years old; Nadia, a French woman who worked for Bumidom as a secretary in Crouy-sur-Ourcq; and Mme X, who had recruited a house worker through Bumidom in the 1970s, and preferred to remain anonymous. The presence of multiple testimonies discussing the training centers is an example of Oublié and Rousseau’s approach to representation that facilitates discussions of nuanced experiences at Crouy-sur-Ourcq across the multiple agents of a French Republican

setting. Rather than alienating any one position, these previously diverging perspectives are brought into contact in the BD. The reader is encouraged to decipher their own stance on the question, while being guided by the particular expressions and questions posed by Jessica and Marie-Ange.

Brigitte's oral history presents her individual experience, as well as referring to the experiences of other women in the center and the procedure they went through. The first panel illustrates women who have arrived being told that they were there "to learn the ways of metropolitan life" over a two-month training period and would then search for work.<sup>28</sup> Brigitte states that on leaving Réunion, many girls did not know that they were only given a one-way ticket.<sup>29</sup> She explains that for those who had family in France, the experience was different. But the women were not paid in the training centers, meaning that "when you had no money, and no family, you really had nothing."<sup>30</sup> Some women, Brigitte states, left for France hastily without informing their relatives, leaving from situations of true distress. She insists, however, that there were also women who felt "liberated from everything once they arrived here."<sup>31</sup> Some women considered their uprooting through the Bumidom agency to be traumatic, but the realities of this migration are contrasting: Condon states that for women in search of greater autonomy, the low-skilled jobs constituted a real opportunity.<sup>32</sup>

The biopolitical axes of Bumidom migration extend to the involvement and intervention of the French state in the reproductive politics of women from the DOM—a treatment that was also extended to the women in Crouy-sur-Ourcq. In Nadia's interview, she explains how the center would help women find placements after their training, their levels of education determining how long they would remain in the center and which jobs they would be offered. Nadia continues, "by contrast, there were others, when they arrived who... were pregnant."<sup>33</sup> She explains that "when a young woman told us this [...] the mayor's office of Crouy sent a social worker and a termination was scheduled in Paris," swiftly adding that it was "with the young girl's consent of course!"<sup>34</sup> Nadia explains that, seeing the pregnancies, classes teaching contraception were introduced in the training center. Jessica and Marie-Ange are illustrated looking at each other with expressions that are both concerned and perplexed, suggesting more behind this narrative than first appears.

The organized interventions in migrant pregnancies is an example of contradictory policies in place concerning the treatment of the female body in metropolitan France and the overseas departments: certain French women were encouraged to reproduce while the State worked actively to prevent or interrupt the pregnancies of others. In mainland France, contraception and abortion were illegal, as the State encouraged metropolitan women to have children in the postwar period of a depleted population and strong Catholic family values. In the DOM, however, aggressive anti-natal propaganda was put in place, in addition to a systematic delay in implementing laws to protect pregnant women.<sup>35</sup> The coexistence of such differing reproductive politics demonstrates a fundamental interest in the control of female reproduction that varies from one extreme to another across different French territories. An extreme example of this anti-natal action occurred in Réunion, where "abortions and forced sterilizations were practiced on 8000 women during the 1970s."<sup>36</sup>



Reunionese newspapers reporting the scandal revealed that abortions had been practiced without consent on women who were three to six months pregnant, and who were often sterilized during the procedure, also without consent.<sup>37</sup>

*Péyi An Nou* presents the subject of the abortion and sterilizations in Réunion through Françoise Vergès' lecture. Vergès highlights how Michel Debré, the former Prime Minister for de Gaulle turned Deputy of La Réunion in 1963, encouraged abortion and contraception in Réunion, yet it was criminalized in France. The illustration of two pregnant stomachs side by side, one depicting a white woman's stomach and a thumbs up, and the other a Reunionese stomach and a thumbs down (Fig. 1) communicates the fundamental inequality and distinctions made in the agendas being imposed by the French government. An additional panel is placed next to the Reunionese woman's stomach, indirectly illustrating the abortions through the image of a pool of blood between a woman's legs dripping from below the knees (Fig.1). The depiction of the scandal is an invitation to further explore and analyze the decisions taken by the French government as presented from the critical perspective of Vergès. She argues fervently that France was obsessed with controlling female reproduction and the "demographic problems" of Reunion and the Antilles. She implicates Debré in the events that took place in Reunion—from the sterilization scandal to the "Children of la Creuse,"<sup>38</sup> and the central role of Debré in the creation of Bumidom. When viewed in this broader context of France's treatment of former colonial subjects and the contradictory policies towards female reproduction in the DOM and the metropole at the time, Bumidom migration can be read as merely one piece of a much larger metropolitan agenda and ideological worldview in which the formerly colonial female body is controlled by the State.

### Disembodied Histories

In the first meeting between Jessica and Marie-Ange in *Péyi An Nou*, Jessica states: "What I want, is to lead an investigation, give a voice to the people... to see what is hiding behind it."<sup>39</sup> Jessica is referring to Bumidom migration, a history that she senses to be the "big absence that haunts all Antillean families."<sup>40</sup> Oublié's position as a third-generation descendant of a Bumidom-era migrant, and the concern with next-generation navigation of their personal and cultural heritage, situates family as a central site of mediation for disembodied histories in *Péyi An Nou*. Aleida Assmann argues that family is a privileged site of memorial transmission, particularly for memories "impaired by traumatic experience."<sup>41</sup> It is through family that "social memory" is carried on in the transfer of embodied experience to the next generation.<sup>42</sup> The traumatic nature of the Bumidom experience has resulted in the disembodiment of a social and cultural history through the break in intergenerational memory engendered by its repression and silence. Its dual repression on the one hand by state historical narratives, and on the other by those whose migration was organized by Bumidom leaves the gendered and racialized treatment of bodies unquestioned on an institutional level, while histories remain disembodied on individual and social levels.



*Péyi An Nou* is particularly invested in rescripting historical narratives through its concern with the dually repressed nature of Bumidom within them. This comes in part from the memory repression of Bumidom experiences, which, according to psychoanalyst and professor of clinical psychology Yolande Govindama, became “a mechanism of psychological survival” for those affected.<sup>43</sup> The personal amnesia of such a history marks the traumatic nature of the Bumidom experience as it is perceived in the individual, familial, and cultural memory of the overseas departments. Jessica’s aim to reconcile the “great absence haunting Antillean families” and “give the people a voice” faces difficulties when searching for individuals to interview about Bumidom.<sup>44</sup> Marie-Ange is illustrated trawling the internet for testimonies or documentation and contacting relevant associations. Meanwhile, Jessica’s attempts through social media and telephoning potential subjects is initially unsuccessful – met with uncertain or evasive responses, voicemails, or meetings that the interviewee does not attend.<sup>45</sup>

The silence around Bumidom testimonies has been attributed to feelings of uprooting, exploitation and trauma associated with the migration. The “feelings of shame” held by Bumidom migrants have been attributed to the “fear of being identified as poor Antilleans who were saved by the Bumidom.”<sup>46</sup> Having read about Bumidom, and that it coinciding with the year of her own family’s migration, Jessica tentatively asks her grandfather, “was it... Bumidom that organized your departure?”<sup>47</sup> The acronym is met with immediate hostility, provoking a defensive rejection of having had anything to do with Bumidom. Jessica’s grandfather turns to her: “Bumidom? Bumidom?!” then turns away, denying having had anything to do with the initiative.<sup>48</sup> Tonton Albert’s remark, “kids... [...] if you were born in France... blame Bumidom!”<sup>49</sup> haunts Jessica on her return journey to France as she is illustrated thinking through the words of her Uncle: “if you were born in France...” The grey palette of the plane is juxtaposed with the green and orange associated with Guadeloupe (Fig.2). While asleep, Jessica is haunted by the ghosts of Bumidom lurking in the airplane window. Her sudden awakening marks an upheaval in Jessica’s perception of herself and her identity after discussing Bumidom with her own family.

Oublié and Rousseau’s project aims to reconcile the breach in knowledge and history engendered by the dual repression of Bumidom. *Péyi An Nou* is concerned with the relationship of the “generation after” to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of those who came before, taking the form of what Marianne Hirsch defines as “post-memorial work” that:

strives to *reactivate* and *re-embody* more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic representation.<sup>50</sup>

For Jessica, the revealing of family histories relating to Bumidom-era migration constitutes the new possibilities of reconciling an intergenerational breach. The visual and verbal dualities of both the BD and the documentary present a hybrid form through which a

dislocated and disembodied family and social history can be reawakened. In *Péyi An Nou*, the distant memory of the Bumidom generation can be reactivated and reembodyed through Jessica's intergenerational mediation. The reembodyment of social and family history in the BD occurs, in part, through the very illustrations of individuals and bodies that are rarely seen represented. The audience does not merely read a report of the words that individuals spoke in interviews and oral histories but witnesses a representation of the act of annunciation. The unrepresented stories of the subjects of the *Péyi An Nou* are visualized, verbalized, and reembodyed through the aesthetic rendering of their individuality facilitated by the tactile, self-conscious nature of the *bande dessinée* form. Oublié and Rousseau's *bande dessinée* engages in what Cutter describes as a practice of "multi-ethnic graphic novels [that] represent a unique and increasingly popular genre on which to map alternative political genealogies and critical historiographies."<sup>51</sup>

At the dinner table with Jessica's extended family in Guadeloupe, the BD illustrates the exchange of differing perspectives and opinions between cousins, aunts, and uncles concerning those who left Guadeloupe. The exchanges about Bumidom present a fragmented narrative made up of multiple and differing perspectives and opinions of family members relating to reasons for leaving Guadeloupe. Such multiplicity and fragmentation are rendered visually through the numerous speech balloons extending from twelve different talking heads across a double page of panels. Jessica asks her aunts and uncles of the hard times that her parents experienced, who explain that her grandfather worked in a warehouse and that "he liked the life in Guadeloupe" but with "nine children to feed" it was difficult. Though some family members consider it "a lucky opportunity to be able to leave," Uncle Wali defends the position of those who remained: "Lucky?! Let's not exaggerate... Look at us now! Of course there was a future to be had here."<sup>52</sup>

The discussion of this family in Guadeloupe reveals the lived experience of Bumidom in many of its complexities. The migration of Jessica's grandfather in 1974 is not organized by the Bumidom agency but belongs to a trend of Bumidom-era migration that followed the direction of organized migrations and was subject to the same difficulties and pressures in Guadeloupe and mainland France. The experience of and attitudes towards Bumidom within Jessica's family stand as a microcosm for the greater social experience of Bumidom migration lived by approximately 160,000 Antilleans and their families during the state agency's lifetime.<sup>53</sup> Oublié's project to "write the family history" becomes a project to "write the history of Antilleans in France."<sup>54</sup> Jessica's family history is a starting point from which a history that was often hidden within families can be reawoken and reembodyed by individuals and social networks, bringing agency and the possibility of self-reparation to the Bumidom generation and its descendants.

### Reembodyed Histories: The Bande Dessinée as a Site of Memorial Construction

*Péyi An Nou* decenters narratives of French history and identity from the "*grandeur de la France*," to the histories and experiences of those residing in the peripheries of French

society. The spaces separating panels in bande dessinées are often referred to as “margins” or “gutters.”<sup>55</sup> Through the BD form, *Péyi An Nou* relocates marginal histories usually found in the “gutters,” to the center of the panel. Illustration, annotation, and self-conscious reading incited by the *BD* allow marginalized narratives to occupy a central and active space. The illustrated, but static aspect of panels requires the audience to engage in the process of making meaning. The illustrations, panels and bubbles organized across pages invites a nonlinear reading and interpretation of the *BD*. The reader’s eyes can move across the page and flip back and forth between chapters, panels, and texts.<sup>56</sup> This flexibility of reading allows for multiple narrative temporalities and spaces to be simultaneously inhabited: the illustrations of Jessica in metropolitan France on the phone to Edouard in Martinique, who responded to a call for Bumidom testimonies on Facebook, allow the reader to inhabit both spaces in their autonomous readings of the text (Fig.3).<sup>57</sup> The plurivocal, nonlinear treatment of history breaks with the static, homogenized linearity of time as it is projected from the Western colonizer’s perspective, leading to a questioning of the linear conceptualization of time regarding the periods of slavery, colonial, and postcolonial societies. Through the carefully drawn architecture of the page, *Péyi An Nou* destabilizes hierarchies determining periphery and center, redefining the balances of what should be looked at and instigating a dialogue in place of hierarchies of domination. Throughout the *BD*, the different framing of panels helps to demarcate different temporal and spatial settings. While square panels with a black outline tend to illustrate the narrative journey of Oublié and Rousseau in writing the *BD*, curved panels with pale backgrounds signal the visualization of individual stories being told. It is in this way that the visual and verbal potential of the bande dessinée allows for multiple layers of meaning and plurivocal storytelling to take place.

Oublié and Rousseau explore alternative sites of history and memory through a biographical lens, situating *Péyi An Nou* within a trend of graphic novel publications that present “graphic accounts marrying the personal to the political, and [...] the political to the autobiographical,” and demonstrate a profound interest in “questions of memory and historiography.”<sup>58</sup> The bande dessinée constitutes a hybrid space in which underrepresented histories can undergo a self-determined, self-reflexive process of visualization and verbalization. Hilary Chute states that “the most important graphic narratives explore the conflictual boundaries of what can be said and what can be shown at the intersection of collective histories and life stories.”<sup>59</sup> Illustrating and verbalizing the histories of Bumidom migrants that have been shaped by persistent colonial practices transgresses the norms of “what can be said and what can be shown”<sup>60</sup> within a French Republican framework, disturbing the assumptions of center and periphery essential to this framework.

The hybrid rendering of Antillean history in *Péyi An Nou* explores the ways in which members of the Bumidom generation worked to carve out spaces for themselves within a society that denied them space and agency. The French Créole title, *Péyi An Nou*, translates to “Our Country” and announces the *BD*’s project to reclaim space—be that space in historical narratives, in cultural representation, or the physical space of the page. The presence of



Créole throughout the BD constitutes a subtle yet significant form of resistance to linguistic and cultural hegemony that is asserted in the Eurocentric popular French Republican imaginary. Antillean culture asserts itself within a French Republican framework as the title of each chapter is written in Créole, and characters code-switch between it and French. Translations are provided in lighter colored print, usually beyond the panel limits at the bottom of the page, allowing Créole to assume its space as a central and legitimate means of communication. Through the use of Créole, its speakers assume a place within a national French discourse that has historically attempted to erase regional dialects and viewed Créole as a “bastardised form of standard French.”<sup>61</sup>

Examples of this code-switching are seen when Jessica visits a friend of her grandfather, Léo au Gosier, in Guadeloupe. This chapter presents the testimonies of Gilda, Suzy, Martial, and Léo, all of whom migrated to France and later returned to Guadeloupe. In this exchange between old friends, multiple and differing perspectives are brought to life in a depiction of the complexity of Bumidom experiences in a similar way to Jessica’s family meal in Guadeloupe at the beginning of *Péyi An Nou*. The friends reminisce of their time shared in France as Jessica asks what their first jobs were on arriving, what their accommodation was like, and what they did outside of work. The group mimics dances and music and speaks of how “we would dance all night to the sound of beguine.”<sup>62</sup> The conversation slips in and out of confrontations with harsher realities as Gilda refers to the “bad moments” also experienced. They speak of their encounters with racism: Léo states, “I discovered that I was black once I arrived in France,” and experienced feelings of estrangement having been told that “France is your home...,” then to be confronted with a different reality.<sup>63</sup> At the end of the chapter, Martial speaks of how it pained him to hear of women who “worked the streets, facing the realities of Bumidom migration.”<sup>64</sup> The final page of the chapter reads “and when I discovered that some had even committed suicide, I decided to stay to lay Bumidom to rest!”<sup>65</sup>

This section exemplifies how, through verbal and visual representation, graphic novels mediate identity and perform memory.<sup>66</sup> The fluidity of movement between the panels in this testimony of Bumidom migration reactivates and reembodies distant individual memory in a collective exchange between friends. The shifts between different aspects of their experiences represents the fragmentation that is fundamental to memory recall. The final panels of the chapter are close-up illustrations of Gilda, Suzy, Martial, and Léo’s faces (Fig.4). As Rousseau mimics the lines, contours and expressions unique to each face, the reader is brought into intimate contact with each former Bumidom migrant in an almost filmic close-up. The recorded performance of memory in this section bears witness to the difficulties and trauma faced by Bumidom migrants, and the means of survival and solidarity employed by individuals and collectives alike.



## Conclusion: Questioning Republican Discourse

*Péyi An Nou* is highly critical of a number of discourses relating to the biopolitical and colonial nature of Bumidom migration, weaving them together in an account that aims to introduce a dialogue around Bumidom into the public sphere. Oublié and Rousseau's aim is not to widen the colonial fracture, but to initiate a process of reconciliation and reparation within the communities struggling against persisting forms of colonial racism and oppression exerted by mainstream French ideologies.<sup>67</sup> The bande dessinée form lends itself to this nuanced and carefully constructed approach to addressing the politics of Bumidom in contemporary France and rendering visible the history of the overseas departments. The distribution of illustrations and text across pages allows for questions to be raised, rather than asserting historical "truths"—furthering the inquiry into the process of historiography and memory enabled by the graphic narrative.

Oublié and Rousseau's collaboration on a project to write the history of Bumidom constitutes a call for alternative, more collaborative methods of writing history. Rousseau is not personally involved in the history of Bumidom but is essential to the composition of the BD. The absence of histories such as that of Bumidom from the school syllabus or mainstream representation is acknowledged at the beginning of the BD, and the reader is invited into the narrative of research, discovery, and inquiry with Jessica and Marie-Ange in an attempt to reconcile this gap in knowledge. The reader is not bound by any single narrative thread but invited into the conceptualization of history itself as "polyvocal, intertextual, and metatextual, mediated through the act of 'redrawing' and comprehended via the public practice of reading."<sup>68</sup> The attention drawn to different voices and forms of representation allows for a text that is not bound by aesthetics of the traditional bande dessinée, but conducts a process of creating its own form, and its own codes of representation.

Wimbush criticizes the ambiguity of personal testimony in the bande dessinée, arguing that "*Péyi an nou* not only removes the agency of the very people it aims to empower, but also weakens the power of these individual stories."<sup>69</sup> However, this statement imposes an expectation of coherent testimonial and narrative composition in *Péyi An Nou* that denies the very nature of traumatic memory recall as both fractured and ambiguous. It is precisely through these diverse testimonial accounts that agency is afforded to Bumidom migrants and marginalized histories are restored through the intergenerational transferral of memory. Oublié and Rousseau demonstrate an awareness of the limits of representation and the problems of articulating trauma, engaging with a visual retracing of traumatic aspects that is "enabling, ethical and productive."<sup>70</sup> They provide a site for disembodied histories to breach the *fracture* engendered by cultural trauma, and take on a reembodied form through the visual and verbal revisionist rendering of a marginal history.

The cover illustration of *Péyi An Nou* is an image of a sandy beach with footprints leading to the sea, across which we see an image of a compressed Parisian skyline (Fig.5). The image reflects a haunting presence, or absence, of those who took the journey to

mainland France, with Paris situated as a wistful far-off land. The cover illustration of *Péyi An Nou* has been criticized as reproducing the stereotype of the French Caribbean tropical paradise.<sup>71</sup> But we can also view the image in the light of the opening frame of Fabienne Kanor's performance documentary, *Des pieds, mon pied* (2009), allowing for a more nuanced reading of the image. In the opening frame of Kanor's documentary, a pair of feet are resting on a window.<sup>72</sup> Through the window, a social housing tower block (HLM) occupies half of the frame, while in the other half a view of the Parisian skyline extends far into the distance (Fig.6), much like the cover of *Péyi An Nou*. The footprints shown in the cover image of *Péyi An Nou* are now found in their embodied form, geographically closer but equally distant from the image of France promoted to them pre-departure. The migrants are instead situated behind a wall of the HLM, marginalized and uprooted within myriad Parisian suburbs.

The parallels between these two images establish an intertextual discussion and enrich our understanding of *Péyi An Nou* as a postmemorial work of the post-Bumidom generation. The footprints left by Bumidom migrants in the DOM mark the intervention of a neocolonial, biopolitical agenda on the part of the French state to control population and manage growing independentist struggles. Meanwhile, the feet behind the Parisian HLM are situated in what Anny D. Curtius describes as "places of an ambiguous exile."<sup>73</sup> The documentary explores Kanor's position as a descendent of Bumidom migration, and the difficulties she has faced integrating into French society despite having been born in France. Each image is representative of the enduring marginalization of former French colonial subjects in a postcolonial France. As female descendants of Bumidom-era migration, Oublié and Kanor are navigating their personal identities and family histories through hybrid forms of representation and communication across generations.

*Péyi An Nou* constitutes an initial and important step towards the recognition of the overseas departments in mainstream French discourses, providing a starting point from which readers must further investigate and interrogate dominant historical narratives. The conversation that *Péyi An Nou* inaugurates is concerned with disrupting traditional processes of historiography through the reembodiment of a marginal family history and reconciliation of fractured intergenerational memory. However, it is not enough to merely continue adding forgotten chapters to historical narratives. Vergès calls for the need to "question the very structure of the narrative" and to problematize the assumption underlying North Atlantic narratives of modernity, progress and decolonization.<sup>74</sup> The trope of the DOM as "impossible to develop" is an example of the ways in which such normative ideals have informed and consolidated "the idea that non-independent societies suffer from a form of arrested development."<sup>75</sup> Bumidom is merely one of many postwar labor driven migration movements to North America and Europe, originating particularly from Caribbean islands, in which former colonial subjects were called upon as a supplementary modernizing force. By paying close attention to the differing post-war migration movements from the Caribbean to colonial or former colonial territories, a better appreciation can be gained of the extent to which contemporary European and North American societies have been

shaped by these movements. Understanding the specificities of the relationships between the former French colonies and France, and with any colonial power with their former colonies, is essential to identifying and combating the racializing and colonising elements of these relations that find new forms of expression in the twenty-first century.

A cross-Caribbean approach to postwar labor migration would be a fruitful framework through which to further problematize former colonial relations and understand the many ways in which these migration movements continue to shape the contemporary metropolitan existence. There remains much to learn from a comparative approach that would bring Windrush and Bumidom, or Bumidom and Puerto Rican migration to the United States into dialogue, shedding light on this pivotal twentieth century moment of global population redistribution, cultural and political change.



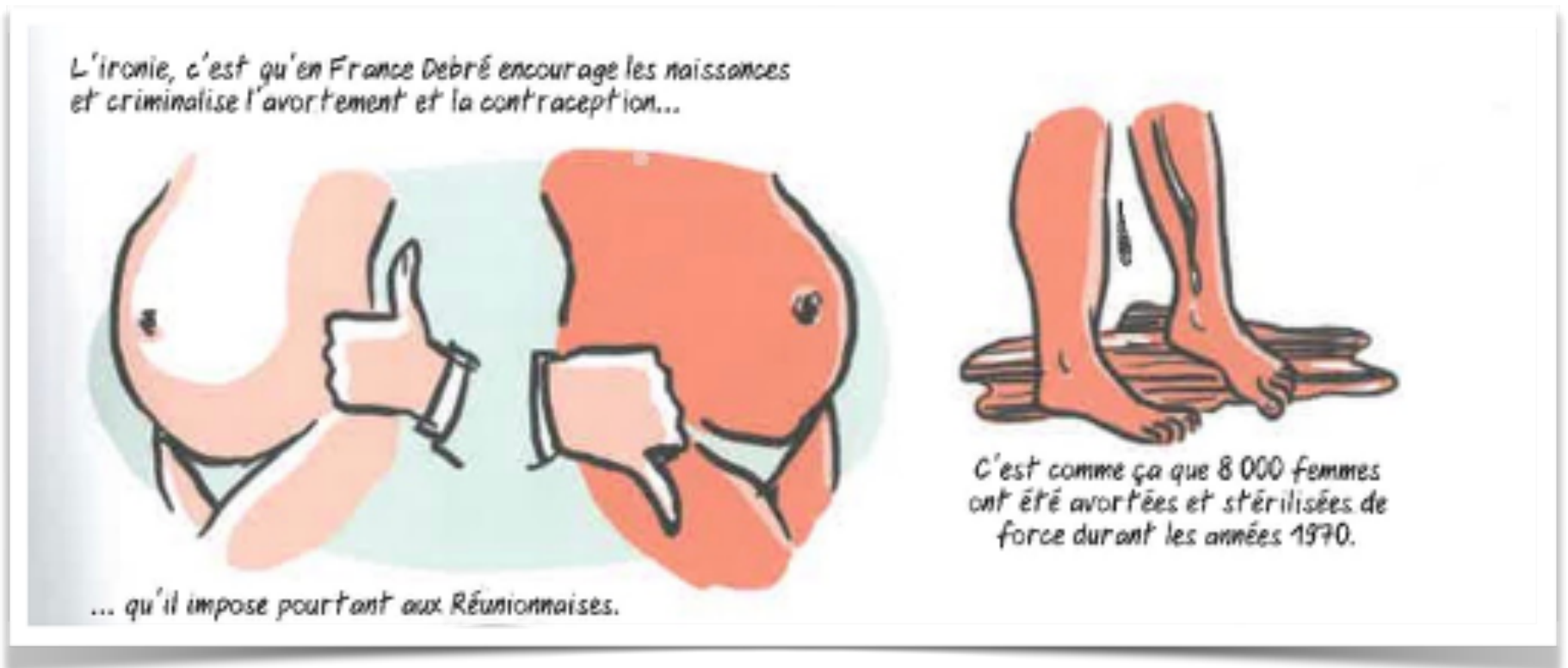


Figure 1. Jessica Oublié and Marie-Ange Rousseau, *Peyi An Nou* (Paris: Steinkis, 2017), 41.



Figure 2. Oublié and Rousseau, *Peyi An Nou*, 13.



Figure 3. Oublié and Rousseau, *Peyi An Nou*, 65.Figure 4. Oublié and Rousseau, *Peyi An Nou*, 120.



Figure 5. Oublié and Rousseau, *Peyi An Nou*, Front Cover



Figure 6. Fabienne Kanor, *Des pieds, mon pied* (2009)









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<sup>16</sup> The *banlieues* translates to suburbs but has gained negative connotations of underprivileged housing estates usually populated by working class immigrant groups.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 162.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Vergès, *Le ventre des femmes*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Vergès in PAN, 41.

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“A COLORED GIRL, OF VERY  
SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS”:  
VIRGINIA’S PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THE  
FANCY TRADE, 1831-1839

*Madeline de Figueiredo*

**Abstract:** After Nat Turner’s Rebellion in 1831, the steady economic decline and newfound fear toward insurrections by “surplus” Afro-Americans signaled to white Southerners a looming crisis. In this precarious moment, slave traders in Richmond took advantage of white public fear by expanding the “fancy trade,” the formal sex-slave trade that gained momentum in Virginia and flourished throughout the South until emancipation. While many rightfully esteemed and established historians argue that the Atlantic and interstate slave trades were primarily spurred on by the rise of global capitalism, I contend that the situation is different for the fancy trade, as it did not directly involve the economics of cotton, the central commodity of the nineteenth century that exemplified capitalism’s dependence on enslaved labor. In this paper, I will argue that the fancy trade ultimately emerged out of Southerners’ fear of violence by the enslaved. The desire for a re-stabilized slavocracy in the post-Nat Turner period gave rise to restrictions to the interstate slave trade, as several Southern state legislatures believed they would help prevent the rise of surplus enslaved people, deemed to be the root of insurrections. The fancy trade, in essence, emerged out of a time when Southerners were trying to figure out how to preserve their way of life without endangering their lives. Here I will illustrate that slaveholders’ heightened desire for control over the enslaved—the very labor force responsible for America’s rapid rise in the global market—shifted sexual violence against enslaved women, especially lighter-skinned girls, from the realm of “hush-hush” to that of acceptable, or even desirable. This paper aims to illuminate how slave traders’ commodification of enslaved women’s bodies carved out a space where white men could allay their fear for slavery’s decline and publicly compete over unspeakable sexual violence.

**Key words:** Fancy Trade, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, Virginia, Isaac Franklin, Rice C. Ballard,



## Introduction

For much of the early nineteenth century, sociopolitical, economic, religious, and moral attacks on slavery left American slaveholders fearing for the security of their society. Their collective fear intensified on August 22, 1831, when Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton County suddenly cast the "primacy of slavery within Virginia" into question. Pressure against slavery came from multiple nodes. Across the Atlantic, slavery was on the cusp of eradication, with Britain just two years away from passing the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Domestically, political discussion about the future of the "peculiar institution" in the United States became more frequent and volatile. Indeed, centered around the North, anti-slavery sentiments gave rise to immediatism, an abolitionist ideology that called for the "immediate end to slavery," which spurred the establishment of a number of abolitionist publications in the 1830s like William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*.<sup>1</sup> Prior to such a conspicuously expanding movement against slavery, Southerners had stood by the institution as a "necessary evil."<sup>2</sup> However, Southern planters and slave traders now took up a new rhetorical tack; they argued that slavery was a "positive good."<sup>3</sup> Such a proslavery ideology was not yet widespread by the time of Nat Turner's rebellion and the insurrection's infamy prompted a serious debate about the future of slavery which subsequently unfolded in the Virginia legislature during 1831 and 1832. Considered the "first free and full legislative discussion of abolition in the South," the Virginia Slavery Debate was a pivotal moment that instilled a deep fear about the end of the slaveholders' regime.<sup>4</sup>

While Virginians grappled with the political and economic implications of this historic debate, a nascent slave trading company run by Virginians Rice C. Ballard (1800-1860) and Isaac Franklin (1789-1846) capitalized on the public's palpable fear. Taking advantage of the precarious moment, Ballard and Franklin launched an enterprise that channeled planters' fears of losing power into profit through the public spectacle of the sex slave auction. Both Ballard and Franklin were traders and planters that kept regular correspondence with other planters, slave traders, and government representatives across Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Virginia. Franklin's plantation was based in Natchez, Mississippi and he had partnered with John Armfield in 1819 to develop a slave trading firm in New Orleans. In 1831, it was through this company that Franklin and Ballard first began to build one of the most successful fancy trade channels—a formal sex-slave trade of primarily lighter-skinned enslaved women—in the South.<sup>5</sup> The shift Ballard and Franklin made to the fancy trade business was also an expression of their own anxieties. Within the first few years of partnership, their business relationship proved successful, and the pair acquired more enslaved people for trading and expanded their business from Virginia to Mississippi.<sup>6</sup>

As their business developed, Ballard and Franklin adapted to the shifting political anxieties about slavery by growing their operations in the fancy trade.<sup>7</sup> The aforesaid Virginia Slavery Debate had consumed the attention of all Virginians and changed the marketplace for the enslaved by making the public uneasy about slavery. In response, Ballard

and Franklin altered their commercial strategies. Instead of focusing on the sale of enslaved people for agricultural or domestic labor, they made an effort to sell more “fancy girls” for sexual labor, since the price for the former was falling at the time and the latter entailed a messier entanglement between slavery and the South. In short, the fancy trade grew because of public debates and fears.<sup>8</sup> As Southerners faced the potential decline of their central institution—slavery—they exploited it in more outright ways so that it would be inseparable or irreplaceable.

Indeed, the success of the fancy trade was rooted in slave traders’ and planters’ desire to gain and maintain power over slaves. Following the national Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves in 1807, planters turned even further inward for the reproduction and growth of their labor force. Planters’ power over slaves gave way to both a market that rewarded “slave breeding,” a commodification of enslaved women’s reproductive capacities, as well as the public display of sexual violence on the auction block.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary historians of the American slave trade have argued that the increasing commodification of slaves in the New World was fueled by growing global capitalism, but the rise of the fancy trade after 1831 was driven by slaveholders’ fears of the end of their slavocracy. The slave trade grew to solve the problems of allocation during a time when slaveholders needed to expand their power towards the southwest. Ultimately, the true genesis of the fancy trade lay in white Southerners’ desire for a stable slavocracy based on white supremacy in the post-Nat Turner period as well as slaveholders’ desire for control over the enslaved that both gradually shifted sexual violence against enslaved women, especially lighter-skinned girls, from the realm of “hush-hush” to acceptable, or even desirable; it was not the expansion of global capitalism. As such, this desire was heightened when slavery, and planters’ control of the South and entire nation, appeared under threat.

But the fancy trade could not simply grow in broad daylight. Slaveholders had to develop a rhetorical shroud for their depraved domination in order to maintain public respectability. By concealing the fancy trade through new vocabulary and gendered spaces, slaveholders reinforced existing divisions in slave society, particularly those of public and private spaces. The growth of the fancy trade created new vocabularies of the slave trade that emerged to strengthen the existing contours of the slaveholding South. These vocabularies were absorbed into Southern culture to reinforce power of the planter household.<sup>10</sup> Traders “manipulated buyers’ fancies” and this tactic bore a new rhetoric: the terms “fancy girl” and “fancy maid” began appearing in the interstate slave trade during the 1830s.<sup>11</sup> They used the auction block to put on a spectacle about the physical domination of slavery and the psychological pleasure of power.<sup>12</sup> In gendering this space, slaveholders rejected the “rules of evangelical public propriety” in the fancy girl auction and redrew the boundaries of Southern respectability in Virginian homes.<sup>13</sup> In carving out a distinctly male space, traders and bidders built a public domain for sexual violence. However, as the fancy girl moved from a public space to a private space, such as a planter’s residence, the ultimate denial and unspeakability that came with bondage catalyzed a public erasure that not only

silenced discourse among the white Southern community, but also obscured these women from the archive.

In the development of the fancy trade, the Upper South played an essential role. Scholars like Emily Clark have produced insightful research into the New Orleans markets, considered the epicenter of the fancy trade, to study the “making” and the “selling” of the fancy girl.<sup>14</sup> However, by overlooking the fancy girl trade in the Upper South, they fail to present a complete understanding of the market for the interstate slave trade. Virginia had been a slave-breeding center since the seventeenth century. With the largest population of African Americans in the country and with decreasing “agricultural productivity per laborer” since the late seventeenth century, Virginia planters turned to slave breeding.<sup>15</sup> American territorial expansion and growing international textile markets created the demand for slaves.<sup>16</sup> As the slave labor force grew, Virginian slave traders and ‘breeders’ depended on the future demand for slaves in the Lower South and a corresponding increase in prices. This paper examines the unique position of Virginia in the fancy girl trade as producing and commodifying new forms of female labor. Centering around Richmond, it will explore the role of the state in molding the marketing, advertising, and trading practices of fancy girl traders, many of whom traveled from all over the South to this depot of slave trading.

Lastly, the paper will focus on how traders made a public spectacle of fancy girl auctions in order to profit off of slaveholders’ desire for domination specifically in the 1830s. While sexual exploitation existed in American slavery from its beginning in the seventeenth century, Edward Baptist has shown that the fancy trade gained a distinct momentum in the 1830s when “the new trade branded and marketed the ability to coerce sexuality.”<sup>17</sup> Between 1831 and 1839, Richmond slave traders relied on gendered rhetoric to construct a marketplace for economic and sexual power that paternalism struggled to justify. Due to Virginia’s role as the United States’ largest supplier of enslaved labor, the standards and techniques that local traders used to sell, trade, and advertise fancy girls in Richmond influenced the development of fancy girl auctions across the South—from Louisville, Kentucky to Natchez, Mississippi. In all these auctions, slave traders and auctioneers channeled white man’s fear of losing power into the sexual, physical, and financial domination of enslaved women, through the public spectacle of the auction block.

### **I. “She is inclined to be compliant”: A Cultural Campaign for Dominance**

The twin shock of recession and Nat Turner’s Rebellion forced the slaveholders’ to consolidate their regime and change American slavery. As recession forced planters to suffer economically in the beginning of the 1830s, the news of Nat Turner’s Rebellion advanced beyond Virginia across the Upper and Deep South, spreading fear and informing drastic legislative reactions, such as temporary suspensions of interstate slave trading in the states of the Deep South. The legislature further amplified these fears and fed public panic in the Virginia Slavery Debates of 1831. The House of Delegates formed a special committee to negotiate the issues of slavery and emancipation and draft competing resolutions to put



before the general assembly. Authored by William Goode and Thomas Randolph respectively, the two resolutions represented the divergent results of politicking and discussions among the select committee. Whereas Goode asserted that all future petitions calling for emancipation should be rejected, Randolph countered Goode's proposal and asked the House of Delegates to prepare an emancipation plan to go before Virginia's voters.<sup>18</sup> This public discussion of emancipation came at a moment when Southerners already faced economic instability. Though the formal political debate ultimately fizzled when the proposal died, the underlying threat to slavery laid the groundwork for the public spectacle of the fancy trade.

States' reactions to the Nat Turner's Rebellion deepened the economic decline of the South. The region depended upon an interstate slave trade and restrictions made it difficult for traders to get slaves from Virginia to the Mississippi Valley.<sup>19</sup> Virginian slave traders had exercised significant influence over the national slave trade market. Resellers dominated Richmond markets, offering Richmond traders the platform to guide intra-regional trading practices.<sup>20</sup> Their influence affected the Lower South markets to such a degree that "slaves were designated by geographical origin in the market...with Virginia[-born] slaves commanding a premium."<sup>21</sup> Nat Turner's Rebellion compromised decades of economic dominance for the slave traders of Virginia.

As the export economy struggled and Southern politicians openly discussed the fate of slavery, Virginian slave traders searched for an economic opportunity to redirect widespread fears towards profitable opportunities. They achieved this through the fancy trade. This developing industry was protected from the woes of crop yields; even as cotton production declined and the general slave trade suffered, the fancy trade thrived as a new category of labor. In a moment of political, social, and economic uncertainty in the Deep South, the fancy trade mitigated the overwhelming fear from planters that they were losing control over their slaves. Ultimately, a crisis in the slaveholders regime of the American South brought about changes to slavery.

The crisis of 1831-1832 further commodified enslaved women's sexual capacity, which those like Franklin and Ballard actively sought to exploit. In *Laboring Women*, Jennifer Morgan traces how slaveholders' economic gain they would achieve through an enslaved woman's reproduction.<sup>22</sup> This paper analyzes a moment that falls outside the scope of her research. The sex-slave trade met planters' various personal and economic demands and in this paper I am concerned with the broader dialogue about the role of sexual violence in the Southern slave trade, specifically the fancy trade that commodified enslaved women to satisfy the slaveholders' desire for sexual pleasure and domination. Slave traders and owners considered any resultant reproduction an ancillary benefit of fulfilled sexual and psychological desire.

Therefore, between 1830 and 1835, as the price of field hands rapidly depreciated, Franklin turned to fancy girls to compensate for the diminishing profits his business suffered.<sup>23</sup> In 1833, Franklin wrote to Ballard, outlining the landscape of the slave trade in New Orleans and stating, "we would like to have as many negroes of the right kind as we



can get.”<sup>24</sup> Here, the “right kind” of slaves were those that yielded the best profits: fancy girls. Whereas Franklin sold most of the enslaved women in the initial shipment from Richmond in 1833 for prices between \$600 and \$650, he “sold [Ballard’s] fancy girl Allie for \$800” and speculated “that a likely girl and a good seamstress could be sold for \$1000.”<sup>25</sup> The term “likely girl” was frequently interchangeable with “fancy girl.” Both terms indicated sexual availability and, in the words of William S. Kiser, “whenever a potential buyer read an advertisement describing a slave woman as ‘likely’...he could be fairly certain that she was young, physically attractive, and vulnerable to being raped.”<sup>26</sup>

Recall that the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832 precipitated the first public debate about slavery in Virginia’s government since Bacon’s Rebellion.<sup>27</sup> Prior to that moment, debates over the end of slavery often took place within private quarters of abolitionists and the enslaved. The 1831 proposals regarding emancipation from Goode and Randolph violated slaveholders’ silent agreement to keep slavery out of the public eye and thrust the uncomfortable yet inevitable discussion before the public.<sup>28</sup> Letters between Franklin and Ballard reveal the visceral fear that white Southerners felt in response to the political climate as well as their decision to shift to the fancy trade. In their correspondence, they speculate that falling prices of cotton could be connected to the precarious state of slavery and mutually decide that channeling energy into the fancy trade could compensate for diminishing profits elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> The confluence of social and legislative tensions over slavery unfolding before the public facilitated the cultural rupture in Virginia in which the fancy trade emerged as an avenue for white men to manage their fears about their waning power.

Owing to Virginia’s centrality in the marketplace of the enslaved as well as its status as the birthplace of American slavery, the rekindled uncertainty about the peculiar institution’s future in the state quickly spread to other parts of the South and the fancy trade followed suit. More than anyone, the slave traders understood how spreading fear could affect interstate trading networks and they articulated their concerns about legislative changes in Louisiana and Mississippi. Furthermore, Ballard and his colleagues were acutely aware of the fact that their business depended on the Deep South’s steep demand for slaves. Reflecting upon the few years prior to the 1830s, Franklin found “a bad market [for slave traders]...the cause of the rise of slavery had been lost by the fall of cotton and everything that made slaves valuable des appeared.”<sup>30</sup> Recognizing the political and economic turmoil at the beginning of the decade, he “anticipate[d] tolerably tough times...for one-eyed men”—a term Franklin and Ballard used to refer to slave traders—in the spring of 1832.<sup>31</sup>

In light of their expanding uncertainty, slaveholders’ violence over the enslaved exacerbated, arguably facilitating the expansion of sexual slavery as well as the exacerbation of sexual violence. The first iteration of this greater domination came in response to insurrections like Nat Turner’s Rebellion, after which vigilante militias slaughtered over 100 Afro-Americans, even those who did not participate in the uprising.

The second came through the courts. With judicial precedents that incrementally allowed greater violence over the enslaved, the path toward the fancy trade’s success seemed

to be secured.<sup>32</sup> Landmark judicial decisions came out of the Upper South reinforced the elite's collective search for the reassertion of white power. The 1830 case *North Carolina v. Mann* ruled that slave owners could not be found guilty of committing violence against their slaves. North Carolina Supreme Court Judge, Thomas Ruffin, argued that "the power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect."<sup>33</sup> Likewise, a Virginia case, *Turner v. Commonwealth*, protected the master's right to inflict violence upon his or her slave without any limitation.<sup>34</sup> Virginia Judge Dade concluded that the violence inflicted against Turner's slave was "the same... if a horse had been so beat."<sup>35</sup> The Virginia and North Carolina courts employed different doctrines to reach the same conclusion: slave owners were publicly licensed to exert violence against their slaves.

However, securing the public right to violence, Southern state legislators believed, did not sufficiently allay the white public fears of slave revolts that seemed to arise along interstate slave-trade routes. Following Nat Turner's Rebellion and a poor crop year, the legislatures of Louisiana and Mississippi openly considered closing the interstate trade networks. Fearful that slave resistance would spread from the Upper South to the Lower South, Louisiana held a special session within its legislature during 1831, "eager to protect the state's white population against insurrection."<sup>36</sup> Likewise, Mississippi's Governor Gerard Brandon expressed unease that the state had "become a receptacle for the surplus black population of the Middle States."<sup>37</sup> Both Louisiana and Mississippi aimed to restrict professional traders from conducting interstate business, instead limiting "citizens and immigrants who intended to settle permanently...to bring slaves into the state."<sup>38</sup>

The legislators' fear of the surplus population of the enslaved threatened Ballard and Franklin's nascent business. In one letter to Ballard, Franklin specifically explained the significance of Louisiana's possible closing. He wrote:

"I will have a petition tomorrow before the house for our relief—should that fail god knows what will be the consequence. I will do the best I can for all concerned & if nothing better can be done I will declare myself a citizen of the state. I am much depressed & if we have to rely entirely on the Mississippi market we have more in this shipment than can be sold to advantage."<sup>39</sup>

Although Franklin had prepared to become a citizen of Louisiana, much to his dismay, both Louisiana and Mississippi instituted restrictive legislation that largely prohibited the importation of slaves from other states. During a special session of the Louisiana legislature in 1832, the house passed legislation that outlawed professional slave traders from entering Louisiana.<sup>40</sup> Citizens of Louisiana and migrants hoping to permanently settle in the state could bring slaves, but they had to appear before "parish judges."<sup>41</sup> In 1832, Mississippi also outlawed "the introduction of slaves [into the state] as merchandise," banning the importation of slaves for sale. In a moment when slave traders

from all over the South were converging upon Richmond to acquire fancy girls and bring them to sell in the Deep South, this government decision severed Richmond from New Orleans' fancy markets. These legislative efforts from states like Louisiana and Mississippi compromised the success of the fancy trade.

Richmond traders, however, identified legal loopholes to preserve their growing profits and the burgeoning market for sexual violence; while states were fearful of the surplus population of the enslaved, they deemed the teenage population to be young enough to be docile and old enough for intense labor. Legislators of Louisiana, for example, considered enslaved teenagers to be sufficiently mature for fieldwork, but "assum[ed] that they...were of better character and less likely to incite rebellion" owing to their youth.<sup>42</sup> Franklin and Ballard recognized this loophole in the legislation early on. The former wrote to the latter in an 1832: "They have a bill before the house...[for] the introduction of certain slaves into this state and it has passed the first reading. I do not know the nature of the bill but I suppose it will permit all under certain ages say from 15 to 11 years."<sup>43</sup>

Thus, two of the country's most powerful and twisted slave traders began bringing "young Fancy Girls" into markets of the enslaved, especially those of the Lower South.<sup>44</sup> In 1833, Ballard began shipping lighter-skinned girls from Richmond to Natchez and Louisiana. At first an experiment to gauge interest from planters, the "young Fancy Girls" soon became central to the trading company's profits. Within a few months, Franklin was regularly writing to Ballard, requesting new shipments of young fancy girls. In November 1833, Franklin wrote that he had "no young Fancy Girl on hand but your Girl Minerva."<sup>45</sup> Prices of enslaved girls soared in response to the new demand. Richmond traders, knowing the potential profit of the teens and the value of the fancy girl auction, relied on loopholes in Louisiana's legislation to embolden the commodification of a younger generation of women.

Interest in fancy girls spread across the broader slave-trading network. While Franklin's letters to Ballard from Mississippi and Louisiana do not speak directly to the trade of "young Fancy Girls" outside of the two states, newspaper advertisements published in the year following Louisiana's restrictive legislation gesture to a broader trend emanating from Richmond.

#### CASH FOR NEGROES.

I wish to purchase from 75 to 100 Negroes, of bothsexes, from the age of 8 to 25 years, for which I will pay liberal prices. I can always be found at Owing's Globe Inn, corner of Howard and Market streets, Baltimore; and in my absence at any time, a lien left at the bar will be attended to, immediately on my return.

HOPE H. SLATTER



N.B. I wish particularly to purchase several seamstresses and likely small fancy girls. I will also purchase several families.<sup>46</sup>

Slatter's "particular" interest in the "small fancy girls" highlights the reach of Virginia's influence in the market.<sup>47</sup> It also shows that these girls were not only being sold in Richmond and other regions, but slaveholders were specifically seeking to purchase them. As Virginian slave traders adapted their sales to accommodate the interstate traders from Mississippi and Louisiana they auctioned the young girls in front of large audiences—from Maryland, to Kentucky, to Alabama—in a spectacle that focused on their "youth, girlish ways, and likely looks."<sup>48</sup> The adult men that engaged with these younger women described their behavior as "boyish," infantilizing themselves to justify the sexual violence they committed against the body of children.<sup>49</sup> The demand for these teens, driven by traders from the Deep South, was wicked and contagious. The public competition for young fancy girls between Mississippi and Louisiana traders piqued the interests of other traders and encouraged them to participate in this emerging trade.

The aforesaid fear of Southern legislators toward the surplus enslaved population, in part, paved way for the traders' obsession with fancy girls; within a few years, young fancy girls were being advertised across the South and the trade expanded to include not just teens, but prepubescent girls. A November, 1836 issue of the *Cheraw Gazette* based in Cheraw, South Carolina, for example, ran an advertisement for an exceptionally young "likely girl."

Sale of Valuable Negroes  
Will be sold at the Market House in Cheraw, on  
Saturday, the 31<sup>st</sup> December next, at 12 o'clock, M.  
the following valuable Negroes...Mary, a likely little  
girl about 5 years old.<sup>50</sup>

This advertisement attests to the shockingly young ages of enslaved girls who were forced to stand on the auction block. Throughout the 1830s, Franklin wrote to Ballard about the advertisements across Southern newspapers that listed the girls he sold—all of ages between five and thirteen. Over the course of decades, this egregious expansion of the fancy trade developed across the South into the Civil War. The *Cheraw Gazette* captured the extremes to which the fancy trade pushed the boundaries of commodification and exemplified one of U.S. history's most odious moments. As political and economic tensions continued to develop, slave traders and planters were left to reconcile the barbarity of slavery with renewed debates about the institution. The fancy trade became a major outlet for white southerners to reaffirm their commitment to enslaved labor over free labor, even if it entailed the normalization of child rape.



### III. "I shall expose to public sale": Gendered Space in the Public Auction

As slave traders expanded the fancy trade and the broader institution of sex-slavery in the U.S., they normalized sexual violence against the enslaved to the extent that it became the object of reverence—a coveted luxury afforded to the wealthiest, most masculine, and therefore the best men of the American South. While the term “fancy girl” or systemic sexual violence against enslaved women predate the 1830s, several historians indicate that both the practice of the fancy trade and the use of its language increased dramatically in the post-Nat Turner period, which likely suggests an increased public acceptance and legitimization of sexual violence against young Black girls.<sup>51</sup> To this end, Richmond fancy traders played a central role by popularizing spaces—the *public* auction blocks—that celebrated and showcased sexual violence in front of large crowds of men. Ultimately, just as lynching became a public spectacle in the post-Emancipation and post-Reconstruction eras, the fancy girl auctions in the decades before the Civil War did just that: they created an audience, engrossed the assaulter-traders, and rendered auction houses perfect for men’s display of power and prestige masked behind the guise of business.

The high prices attributed to fancy girls affirms this point and implies that the fancy trade inevitably inspired public competition between white men in the South in the public space that was the auction block. The fancy girl embodied white assaulter-traders’ sexual vision of the slave market and her auction represented the public display of what Edward Baptist highlights as the intersection between “sexual fetishes and commodity fetishism.”<sup>52</sup> As Baptist lucidly explains, coerced sex became an additional, formalized avenue for the commercialization of human beings and rape became the mechanism of commodification.<sup>53</sup> The spectacle of the auction represented the white man’s claim to “the right to rape a special category of women marked out as unusually desirable.”<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, in the 1830s, Richmond slave traders and auction houses began submitting advertisements to local papers *publicly* announcing the sale of enslaved “fancy girls” at unusually high prices. In 1836, a local Richmond advertisement listed the price of fancy girls, particularly “house girls,” to be greater than that of other enslaved women.<sup>55</sup> Rees W. Porter, a prominent Upper South slave trader, published an advertisement titled “Fifty-Five Negroes for sale,” in which he announced, “for sale, fifty-five Negroes consisting of men, women, and children, several good blacksmiths, and, a No. 1 Fancy Girl...also, several good House Girls, and they are bound to go.”<sup>56</sup> In this specific advertisement, Porter listed the enslaved women at \$500 while the “No. 1 Fancy Girl” was listed from \$800 to \$1,100. As noted already, the fancy girl’s high price tag indicated that only a select few, the richest slaveholders and traders, could publicly compete for sexual domination over her.

Moreover the fancy girl and her cost entailed the active participation in the competition for masculinity. Bidding among white men for the purchase of fancy girls undeniably represented the contest “not only of desire but [for] dominance.”<sup>57</sup> The high prices for fancy girls in the public auction offered white men an opportunity to dominate an enslaved woman sexually while simultaneously providing a venue to publicly dominate

other white men financially.<sup>58</sup> The fetishization of lighter-skinned women, or that of violence, drove the competition. The product of that competition, the purchase of her body, signaled and *publicized* intimacy and luxury.

Take, for another example, an 1839 issue of the *Richmond Enquirer* that published an advertisement submitted by the Dabney Slave Trading Company for a local fancy girl auction. The issue, juxtaposed with similar advertisements for other routine slave auctions, demonstrates the ways in which the *public* spectacle of the fancy girl auction differed from a routine slave auction:

Cash Sale for Negroes

PURSUANT to a decree of the County Court of King William, will be sold, at Ayletts, King William county, on Saturday, the 2d day of February next, at public auction, for cash... a very likely mulatto Girl about 18 years of age.<sup>59</sup>

Here, the advertiser notes that the “very likely mulatto Girl about 18 years of age” will be sold “at public auction.” Now consider one of countless advertisements for a regular slave auction published by *Richmond Enquirer* in the same year as the one above:

CASH SALE OF NEGROES.—I will see, to the highest bidder, for cash, at Lawrenceville, on the 26th of November next, twenty negroes, consisting of men, women, girls, and boys.

ANDREW McNEILL.<sup>60</sup>

Overwhelmingly, advertisements like this second one publicizing regular auctions without fancy girls for sale omitted details about the specific physical characteristics of the enslaved.<sup>61</sup> While this advertisement takes on the same heading as that for the fancy girl—“Cash Sale for Negroes”—it omits descriptions of the enslaved’s physical characteristics. The advertiser, McNeill, groups enslaved people into general categories of “men, women, girls, and boys” without descriptives like “likely” or “mulatto.” The linguistic differences highlight how traders differentiated two categories of enslaved people, the fancy girls representing the more desirable and profitable category. Learning from the Virginians like MacNeil, Franklin, and Ballard, assaulter-traders from across the South differentiated and prioritized the sale of the fancy girl through linguistic and performative means. They understood how public display—on the auction blocks and newspaper pages—conferred the trade greater visibility and increased demand in a way that maximized profit from the fancy girls.

While much of the sociopolitical and economic forces behind the expansion of the fancy trade is explainable, one question remains: how did the South, notorious for its standards of chivalry, honor, and respectability, reconcile its “culture of honor” with white

men's heinous assaults on enslaved women as well as the entire fancy girl trade? How did the public spectacle of the fancy girl auction establish itself so firmly when just decades before Thomas Jefferson was actively denying and hiding his assault of, and children with, Sally Hemings? While no exact explanation sufficiently or accurately resolves this tension, Historian Walter Johnson explains that, following the purchase of a fancy girl in this period, "the silence of politeness" gave way to a "kind of magical denial that allowed a white household to persist in its public performance" of Southern respectability and elite culture.<sup>62</sup>

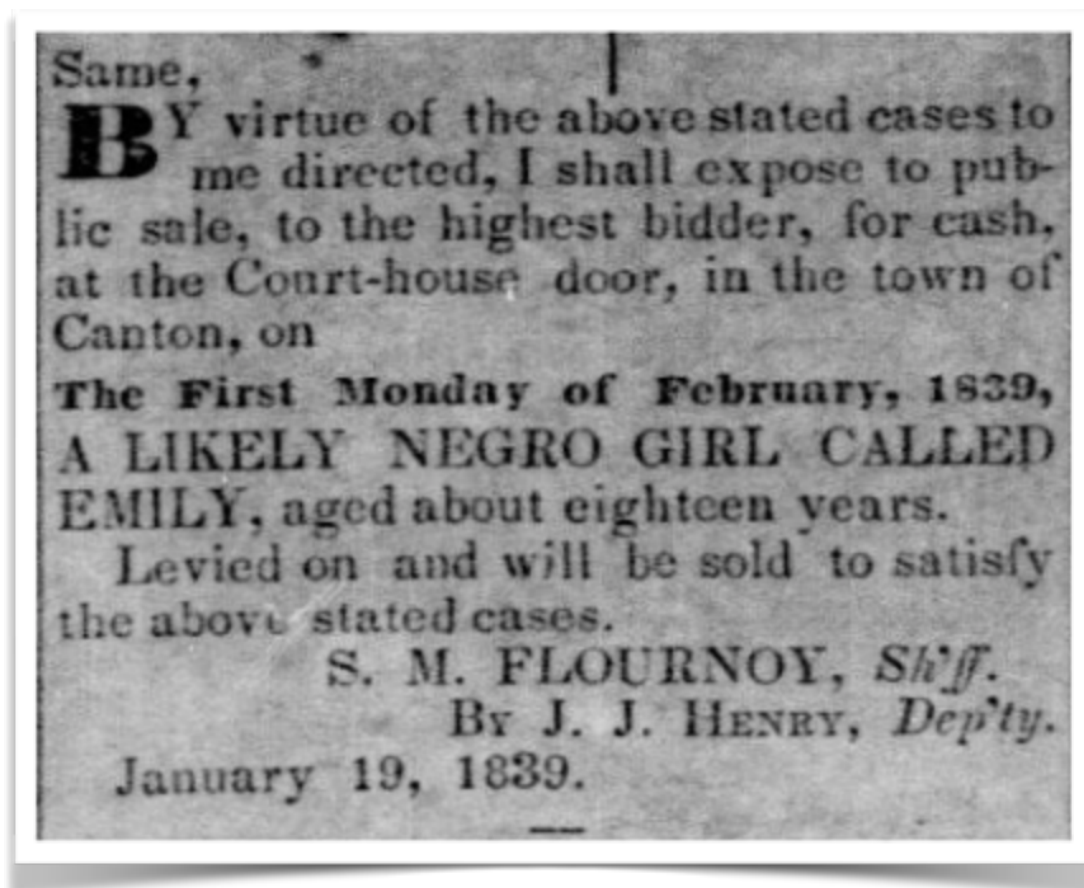
To fully grasp the formation of the South's standards of respectability in the nineteenth century, one must understand white, middle-class domestic politics in Victorian Britain that parallel those of the South.<sup>63</sup> As Daniel Walker Howe notes, "Victorianism was a transatlantic culture" and "the most obvious geographical subculture of American Victorianism was the South."<sup>64</sup> The traditions of Victorian Britain informed the cultural ideals of the Southern planter class through the "British-American Protestant heritage."<sup>65</sup> Examples include the dualistic attitude toward society perhaps best embodied by *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as well as the normative division between men and women through the distinction of public and private spheres, respectively. As slavery "came to symbolize all that was right or wrong about Southern race relations, culture, politics, and livelihood," planters and traders both leaned into the aggressive mentality that honor demanded and ceded religious propriety depending on the occasion.<sup>66</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues in his foundational text, *The Shaping of Southern Culture*, that Southern honor directly shaped the "world of public performance," including men's presentation of themselves as chivalrous gentlemen as well as their active participation in violent spectacles.<sup>67</sup> He illuminates the close relationship between Southern honor and white supremacy that offered white men the latitude to wage extreme violence despite what some psychologists call a "culture of honor" that they preserved selectively in certain contexts, such as that of the family or the church. Here, the fancy girl auction represented just one of the many manifestations of the dualistic relationship between honor and domination.

Victorian sumptuary codes taught Virginian slave traders that private domestic spaces were feminine and religious. The latter frequently illustrated in letters their associations between white femininity and morality. As such, domestic boundaries largely silenced the sexual competition of the fancy girl auction. Public newspapers advertising fancy girls allowed the private depravities of slaveholders to enter public spaces briefly, excused as simple participation in the market. In the context of the fancy trade, Walter Johnson argues that despite the odious phase of competition in the slave auction, after purchase, "slaveholders' 'fancies' existed in a state of public erasure: they were unspeakable."<sup>68</sup> Richmond slave traders used their unique position within the Southern market to transport fancy girls across public and private spaces: from their private quarters, to public auction blocks, to a slaveholder's residence, and so on.

Unlike the enslaved people in field labor whose value was associated with product yield and the global market, fancy girls and their value were closely connected to what white



traders appraised as sexual worth. As the aforementioned advertisements and price comparisons demonstrate, the inflated price and “value” of the fancy girl stemmed from her commodified sexuality. However, another layer of the advertisement begs analysis. In the context of the advertisement, not only was the fancy girl’s body valuable, but the public auction itself represented a space that slave traders admired and aimed to preserve. The fancy girl auction allowed ‘improper’ encounters and encouraged the public competition for sexual domination of an enslaved woman. The auction excused slave traders and owners from the rules of Southern religious propriety that dictated Virginian society. Men involved in the slave trade worked to preserve the solidifying intersection between Southern business, sexual violence, and the public commodification of sex through public spectacle. The strategies Richmond traders used to forge public spaces for the spectacle of commodified sexual violence followed the auction’s spectators and participants, primarily other slave traders, further south. They created a new public institution, thus further entrenching slavery even among men who were not purchasing slaves.



The audiences of the slave auctions expected their quests for power to be realized in the fancy girl auction. The display of the white trader’s power on the auction block was critical to the successful sale of the fancy girl. The fancy girl’s submission on the auction block was the product of slave traders’ violence for a twofold purpose: one, their own efforts to reclaim power via violent sexual gratification and, two, the fancy girl’s “compliance” was central to the “process of commodification” and the slave traders’ conquest for control.<sup>69</sup> As Virginian slave traders transported fancy girls between auctions in the Upper South and Lower South they “were the legal owners of the slaves they were selling.”<sup>70</sup> This ownership afforded them the latitude to abuse slaves in their shipments however they saw fit.



During the journey from Richmond to New Orleans or Natchez slave traders raped the fancy girls—an act they considered the essential mechanism in transforming the fancy girl from woman to commodity. Traders, including Ballard and Franklin, claimed ownership of the fancy girls and used them for their own gratification. In one letter to Ballard, Isaac Franklin's nephew and apprentice, James Franklin, vividly detailed his rape of a fancy girl named Caroline. He wrote,

"I have seen a handsome girl since I left Va that would climb higher hills and go further to accomplish her designs than any girl to the North & she is not too apt to leave of loose her gold The reason is because she carries her funds in her lovers purse or in Bank & to my certain knowledge she has been used & that smartly by a one-eyed man about my size and age, excuse my foolishness. In short I shall do the best with and for the fancy white maid and excellent cook that I can."<sup>71</sup>

This passage demonstrates the ways in which slave traders saw their role in owning, transporting, and commodifying fancy girls. In the past, historians have analyzed it as an "extended metaphor [that] tells a lyricized version of the rape of the light-skinned "fancy white maid" by the phallic "one-eyed man."<sup>72</sup> They have missed that the metaphor blatantly equates rape to market exploitation. To James Franklin and his colleagues, the "boyish" behavior that slave traders indulged in was just an element of their ownership in transit from the Upper South to the Lower South.<sup>73</sup>

As ownership and sexual exploitation went hand in hand in the fancy girl trade, the assertion of this dominance found its way into the regular rhetoric of slave traders. In letters exchanged between Franklin and Ballard, named fancy girls always followed a possessive pronoun. Franklin repeatedly referred to "your fancy girl Allie," he warned Ballard that "your girl Minerva is a caution"—a word used to describe an exceedingly difficult woman, and he requested from Ballard "your Charlottesville maid that you promised me."<sup>74</sup> Slave traders reinforced themes of control and ownership in this rhetoric, connecting the fancy girls to the men that raped them. In a moment where their power was threatened by slave insurrection, immediate abolition, and discussions of abolition in their own state's legislature, slave traders sought control in extreme ways and worked to use that control to produce a good for consumption by elite white men.

Fancy girls were coerced into complying with the public auction. Slave traders raped them en route to the Deep South, an act of violence and mechanism of discipline that was, in the words of Ned and Constance Sublette, "seen as adding value as part of the slaving process."<sup>75</sup> When Franklin labeled Minerva a "caution" he expressed concerns about the slave's value on the auction block and her value for slave traders' use as object of sexual violence. Ballard and Franklin frequently remarked on the deference and obedience of fancy girls as a metric of commodification. Unlike Minerva, Franklin considered most fancy girls "compliant." In an 1834 letter to Ballard, James Franklin wrote that "the Old Man sent me your maid Martha...She is inclined to be compliant."<sup>76</sup> The possessive pronoun indicated

that Ballard previously sexually abused Martha, perhaps an act of violence that further contributed to her “compliance.”<sup>77</sup>

Slave traders used this process of valuation to submit fancy girls to complete domination so that when they stepped on the auction block in New Orleans or Natchez they would have already been, in the words of Constance and Ned Sublette, “broken in.”<sup>78</sup> The fancy girl’s compliance was not only essential to her market value, but it was also crucial for her presentation in the auction. Jason Stupp argued that the various forms of humiliation, such as physical “inspections” that “lapsed easily into a form of public sexual abuse,” enacted in the fancy girl auction “created two kinds of spectators: potential buyers and entertainment seekers.”<sup>79</sup> Under the command of slave traders and auctioneers, fancy girls, as well as other slaves, were “made to strip, or coerced into dancing or singing” on the auction block.<sup>80</sup>

The performance of the slave auction was thoroughly orchestrated by the slave traders and auctioneers so that “the sale of...relatively white women into sexual bondage raised the erotic stakes higher in a public, democratic spectacle that rival[ed] all but the most private of pornographic exhibitions.”<sup>81</sup> As slave traders manipulated the bodies and movements of fancy girls on the auction block, they drew an audience to watch a physical spectacle of white male domination. The fancy girl was contorted for the indulgence of a public crowd consisting of the slaves’s betters. Throughout the 1830s, white men gathered to witness the spectacle of their control and invest economically and socially in this public claim to dominance as they purchased fancy girls, loudly competed for ownership, and came to witness the spectacle sport of the auction.

Over the course of the decade, the rhetoric of the fancy trade emerged in advertisements across the Lower South and the public presence of fancy girls rapidly increased. By 1839, advertisements touting the vulgar spectacle of the fancy girl auction had reached Louisiana and Mississippi. In Canton, Mississippi, the *Madison Whig Advocate* adopted, and amplified, advertising strategies from Richmond traders to promote not only the fancy girl herself, but the venue of her sale.

I shall expose to public sale, to the highest bidder,  
for cash, at the Courts-house door, in the town of  
Canton, on The First Monday of February, 1839, A  
LIKELY NEGRO GIRL CALLED EMILY, aged about  
eighteen years...

S.M. FLOURNOY, Sh’ff

By J.J. HENRY, Dep’ty <sup>82</sup>

Advertisements like these ran regularly. Each announcement offered the time and place of the slave auction and details on the slave for sale. However, notices that advertised enslaved people in field labor opened with “I will sell to the highest bidder...”<sup>83</sup> In the same newspaper, published in the same column, another advertisement publicized the sale of three men with notable differences in diction.

I will sell to the highest bidder, for cash, at the Courthouse door in the town of Canton, Madison county... On the Second Morning of, 1839, Three Negro Slaves, to-wit: GEORGE, TOM AND JOHN...

W.M. GWIM...<sup>84</sup>

As suggested, the advertiser omits physical descriptions of “George, Tom and John.” They are not “likely” or “mulatto” and not once does the advertiser mention that “[he] shall expose [them] to public sale...”<sup>85</sup> What is absent in this advertisement is language that signals a physical “exposure” of the woman’s body in the auction space for public consumption. Such language immediately introduces the theme of spectacle and it explicitly foreshadowed the public display of the fancy girl’s sexuality, shaping not only the reality of violence and domination, but also the imagination of them by the “highest bidder.”<sup>86</sup>

This sexually charged language facilitated the construction of ideologically-gendered spaces. Auction houses and slave traders deliberately used suggestive language to publicly validate rape and encourage dominance economically and sexually. Drawing on the culture of Richmond traders, Canton’s traders built a marketplace, outside of Southern standards of respectability, where they were able to earn more money by leveraging white buyers’ desire not only to rape women, but to be publicly viewed as the most competitive, forceful, and dominant rapist. This was largely achieved through the prevailing conception that masculinity characterized financial transaction. Slave traders across the South used the auction—a space that was already considered a place of masculinity through economic competition—and transformed it to a space of sexual domination.<sup>87</sup>

## Conclusion

As slaveholders in the Upper South and Lower South clamored to assert their masculinity in these emerging markets and auctions, Richmond slave traders desperately tried to keep up with the “great demand for fancy maid[s].”<sup>88</sup> Writing from Natchez in November 1833, Isaac Franklin assured Rice Ballard that the “first shipment [of slaves from Virginia] ha[d] sold all of our negroes for Good prices and Good profits.”<sup>89</sup> His letter outlined the rate at which slaves were sold and their respective market values. Old slaves sold with difficulty while “large and likely” women reaped considerable profits, Franklin noted. He advised Ballard that his partner “must ship all the first rate house servants.” Franklin uses the coded terminology “first rate house servants” to indicate fancy girls, frequently referred to as “fancy maids” in Ballard’s letters with Franklin. Franklin further emphasized the urgency of the shipment as he admitted that he had “no fancy girl on hand.” In the founding year of Franklin and Ballard’s trading company, they shared an extensive dialogue regarding the fancy girl trade. Franklin sold his slaves more quickly than he had anticipated and as he sought to replenish his supply he articulated the most profitable



commodity: the fancy girl. As the demand for personal sex slaves grew in the Deep South, auction houses, slave traders, and slaveholders looked to Virginia.

The growing demand for sex slaves ensured that fancy girls consistently remained the most expensive. While Ballard and his colleagues largely conducted business with other slave traders, the fancy girl traders that sold directly to slaveholders faced a new level of demand. In North Carolina, a report on the success of slave markets emphasized the profits of demand. One newspaper published:

The market of the “peculiar institution” was never more active, nor prices more buoyant than at the present time. At the sale of Messrs. Lee and James yesterday, the prices ranged as followed: Best men 2200 to \$2500; fair ditto, 1900 to \$2100; best girls 1700 to \$1900; fair ditto, 1500 to \$1700; fancy girls, 2000 to \$2500, according to appearance and qualifications; good boys and girls, 10 to 12 years, 1200 to \$1400; ditto 12 to 15, 1400 to \$1800. There were isolated sales above and below the regular quotations give. One very likely fancy girl (mulatto) brought \$2900. The offerings are large, and the demand equally heavy.<sup>90</sup>

The demand for fancy girls outpaced that of other enslaved people and the prices reflected this trend.<sup>91</sup> Within a decade of the development of “fancy girl” language, the public competition for rape led to steep costs. Richmond slave traders sat at the apex of this expansive market, influencing the advertising strategies, prices, and auction spaces of the fancy trade.

This interstate market offered a new method for the public display of slaves, and specifically fancy girls, beyond the auction block. Richmond slave traders, such as Isaac Franklin, transported slaves from Virginia to the Mississippi delta through “long-distance overland trek in coffles.” The interstate slave trade presented various fora—public transportation, auction houses, and trading depots—for the public display of fancy girls. In each forum, the women’s public presentation represented further commodification of her sexuality. Slave traders and planters located between the delta and Richmond, in states such as North Carolina, witnessed the movement of fancy girls, sought to establish a culture of fancy girl trading and purchasing in their own communities, and participated in fancy girl auctions along “transportation routes.”<sup>92</sup> As traders moved across the South, the language of the fancy trade, emanating from Richmond, followed them.

The public language used to advertise fancy girls and the fancy trade developed in the 1830s; traders and auctioneers amplified this rhetoric in the decades that followed. The fear that catalyzed the rapid development of a publicly-accepted, formal sex slave trade only grew as political and social instability spiraled towards the Civil War. “An Auction” highlights the ways in which the language of the fancy trade, established in the 1830s, persisted and escalated in the ensuing years—even by those that opposed the peculiar institution.

As he “exposed [the fancy girl] to public sale,” the assaulter-trader dehumanized, exploited, and commodified the violence against, and the bodies of, enslaved women to



fulfill a new category of labor designed to reaffirm the slaveholder's power.<sup>93</sup> The body became the locus for the reassertion of domination through sexual violence. The rhetoric used in advertisements established the gendered spaces where men could publicly gather to collectively search and compete for the pleasure derived from unspeakable physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Slave traders, planters, and auctioneers alike connected dominance to masculinity. The precariousness of slavery in the 1830s left white men desperately searching for a way to reassert their power. Slave traders built the fancy trade around this anxiety as they sought to reaffirm traders and planters' power in gendered and sexual ways. They leveraged gendered rhetoric to carve out masculine spaces for competition over Black women's hypersexualized body. Rape, the most egregious sexual violation, became the most sought after means of domination.

## REFERENCES

*Tap to jump to the Bibliography*

- <sup>1</sup> Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 17. The growing popularity of immediatism proceeded from the rise of capitalists social relations.
- <sup>2</sup> James Oakes, " 'I Own My Slaves, But They Also Own Me': Property and Paternalism in the Slave South," *Reviews in American History* 38, no.4 (2010), 587.
- <sup>3</sup> Harold D. Woodman, "The Profitability of Slavery: A Historical Perennial," *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 3 (1963), 317; James Oakes, "'I Own My Slaves, But They Also Own Me': Property and Paternalism in the Slave South," *Reviews in American History* 38, no. 4 (2010), 587.
- <sup>4</sup> Joseph Clarke Robert, *The Road From Monticello: A Study of the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1832* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1941), 37; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 52. More than anything, this debate signaled a crisis in the antebellum South. Though the debates around emancipation were never seriously considered, they put into question the South's central institution.
- <sup>5</sup> Edward Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men': Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001), 1628; Sharony Green, "'Mr. Ballard, I am compelled to write again': Beyond Bedrooms and Brothels, a Fancy Girl Speaks," *Black Women, Gender and Families* 5, no. 1 (2011), 6; Invoicing from 1832-1834, Folder 470, Volume 2, Rice C. Ballard Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Hereafter, "Ballard Papers." Within the first few years of business, Ballard and Franklin were shipping up to 1,000 slaves per year from Richmond to New Orleans. Edward Baptist outlines the increase for demand in "fancy maids" during the 1830s. He writes that slave traders, such as Franklin and Ballard, "passionately wanted 'mulatto' women, and black people generally: as bodies to rape and bodies to sell" at a moment when "the rapid commercial expansion reached a peak during the 1830s."
- <sup>6</sup> Series 1.1 and Series 1.2, Ballard Papers.
- <sup>7</sup> Franklin to Ballard, 28 February 1831, 1 November 1833, Folders 1 and 12, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers; Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men,'" 1635. Ballard and Franklin articulate anxieties about the interstate slave trade and financial viability of laboring slaves that support fieldwork, but also maintain the success of the fancy trade arm of their business. "In early 1834, Isaac Franklin reported that 'the [potential] rise of slaves had been lost by the fall of cotton.' James Franklin concurred, noting that 'Cotton is only 13? to 14? which makes Negroes dull.'" Although those enslaved people who harvested cotton were considered economically "dull," Franklin wrote to Ballard in the same year that there was "a Great demand for fancy maid."
- <sup>8</sup> Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 243.
- <sup>9</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2015). The term "slave-breeding" was one used by planters, slave traders, and Congress in the 1830s. Sublette and Sublette describe the word as "an ugly term that described a horrific reality" (20). Horrific, indeed.
- <sup>10</sup> The confluence of the legislative, rhetorical, and spatial shifts evident in the early 1830s mark 1831 as a propitious historical moment to begin this study.
- <sup>11</sup> Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 242; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 17, 88. To understand how the fancy trade made "a slaveholder's desire...material in the shape of a woman," the public and private boundaries of the slave market and public auction require further investigation. In *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, Walter Johnson argues that the public competition of the fancy girl auctions exemplified the "essence of the transaction," a contest between white men that manifested itself in the body of an enslaved woman.
- <sup>12</sup> Johnson provides a rare historiographical intervention in the fancy trade using space as his unit of analysis to understand how fancy girls' presence in public and private spaces informed both Southern culture and the experiences of the enslaved. This articulation, of how the fancy trade leveraged spectacle in the open auction of fancy girls to appeal to the public competition for sexual domination over the enslaved body, offers an initial understanding of the role of the fancy girl trade in easing the anxieties of white planters and traders alike.
- <sup>13</sup> Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 241.
- <sup>14</sup> Emily Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013). In this text, Clark focuses on the New Orleans sex market and the sexual fantasies that brought white men to New Orleans from across the country to engage in the buying and selling of "quadroons." Scholars like Clark consider New Orleans and the Lower South "perpetually foreign" for their involvement in the fancy girl trade. In contrast, those like Sharony Green reposition the analysis of fancy girls within more northern spaces like Ohio and challenge the North-South binary in historical narratives. By situating complex interracial relationships in the Midwest, primarily in Cincinnati, Green demonstrates a rather porous regional border in terms of attitudes toward slavery. I contend that these two large camps of scholars tend to offer a nuanced analysis on the contributions of the Upper South.
- <sup>15</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 11.
- <sup>16</sup> Green, "'Mr. Ballard, I am compelled to write again,'" 23. Sharony Green notes that the 1830s was a peak time for Virginia slave traders and exporters as the demand for slave labor increased with the need to "clear land in the Southwest" for territorial expansion.

<sup>17</sup> Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 240. Baptist notes that "Starting in the 1830s, the term "fancy girl" or "maid" began appearing in the interstate slave trade." While the fancy trade in practice predated this decade, the formalized vocabulary emerged as a sign of the popularity and momentum of the business. As Baptist says, "Fancy branded slave trading as sexy for sellers and buyers." He highlights the 1830s as the critical decade for the dance trade because "In the 1830s, when the real-world test subjects of slavery's entrepreneurial frontier, primed by the sexual arousal built into the human-commodity market, met with opportunities to buy more slaves, take out loans to expand their operations, or sell cotton, they were more likely than ever to chase short-term gains with little thought for the future."

<sup>18</sup> Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 167

<sup>19</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 481.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 83, 80, 77. When a slave trader or auctioneer sold a woman, or a planter passed her down to another person, the recipient not only owned her body, but her "increase." This illustrated the ways in which domination of the female body "stood alongside branding" as a way that slaveholders marked enslaved women as chattel. Reproduction thereby became economic and pregnancies among enslaved women became what Morgan referred to as the "mathematics of mastery." Though reproduction was a secondary consideration in the fancy trade, *Laboring Women* exemplified the ways in which historians have expanded the types of labor commodified in the slave trade.

<sup>23</sup> Franklin to Ballard, 9 January 1832, 10 March 1834, Folders 5 and 13, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers. Evidence of these reduced prices can be found in a series of letters between 1831 and 1834. For example, in an 1832 letter regarding Louisiana's legislative restrictions on slave importation Franklin writes to Ballard: "I fear you mite think I have ...forgotten you all, but from seeing the Louisiana law you mite know that at the passage I had 240 slaves to sell in thirty days...[I will slaves] buy at reduced prices and continue to purchase and ship as usual until further advised. The prices here may be reduced for first rate men at \$600 Girls and ordinary women at \$300 to \$400 and a few of superior appearance at \$500 but few remaining of the latter." According to Franklin, these prices continued after the legislation was repealed. In an 1834 letter from Natchez he writes: "slaves are frequently sold at the reduced prices and the paper taken at [illegible]% interest the traders will be all laid out this season will have no money to purchase with and the price will be very low in your Market I would be moore pleased if I could sell for least the ballance on hand."

<sup>24</sup> Franklin to Ballard, October 29, 1833, Folder 11, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Franklin to Ballard, November 1, 1833, Folder 12, Series, 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>26</sup> William S. Kiser, *Borderlands of Slavery: The Struggle Over Captivity and Peonage in the American Southwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 61.

<sup>27</sup> Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 167.

<sup>28</sup> Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution*, 167. The resolutions were authored by William Goode and Thomas Randolph. Goode asserted that all future petitions calling for emancipation should be rejected, Randolph countered Goode's proposal and asked the House of Delegates to prepare an emancipation plan to go before Virginia's voters.

<sup>29</sup> Franklin to Ballard, 28 February 1831, 18 January 1832. Folders 1 and 4, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers; Green, "'Mr. Ballard, I am compelled to write again.'"

<sup>30</sup> Franklin to Ballard, March 18, 1834, Folder 5, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Franklin to Ballard, March 28, 1832, Folder 5, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers; Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men,'" 1639. The symbol of the one eyed man referred to the male sex organ or a "phallic representation," as Baptist refers to it. "But who, or what, were 'one-eyed men'? Both the older and the younger Franklin used the phrase to describe themselves, their associates, and indeed all white men who bought or sold on the slave markets of the South... a phallic "one-eyed man"...leads one into the complex of remembering and forgetting that structured these slave traders' understandings of sexuality and self."

<sup>32</sup> Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 240. Baptist notes that "Starting in the 1830s, the term "fancy girl" or "maid" began appearing in the interstate slave trade."

<sup>33</sup> *North Carolina v. Mann*, 13 N.C. 263; Andrew Fede, "Legitimized Violent Slave Abuse in the American South, 1619-1865: A Case Study of Law and Social Change in Six Southern States," *The American Journal of Legal History* 29, no 2 (Apr 1985), 133-135.

<sup>34</sup> 26 Va. 560, 5 Rand. 678 (1827).

<sup>35</sup> 26 Va. 560, 5 Rand. 678 (1827); the conclusion of the case operated under a set of legal parameters that did not consider the humanity of Turner's slave, whom Turner beat using "certain rods, whips and sticks" to "wilfully and maliciously, violently, cruelly, immoderately, and excessively beat, scourge, and whip."

<sup>36</sup> Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "Making the 'White Man's Country White: Race, Slavery, and State-Building in the Jacksonian South," *The Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 4 (University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 727.

<sup>37</sup> Brandon quoted in Charles Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi* (Gloucester, MA, 1933), 161-162.

<sup>38</sup> Ford, Jr., "Making the 'White Man's Country White,'" 728. This is a topic that was also explicitly discussed in one of Franklin's letters to Ballard: "This will inform you that the Legislature of this state has passed further restrictions relative to the introduction of laws which are that no citizen should have a...agent to buy Negroes for him in any way whatsoever and that he shall go in person to the...states not already excluded. Shall by himself & introduce such a being brought into the state they have also excluded the state of Tennessee... commence buying at the reduced prices."

<sup>39</sup> Franklin to Ballard, February 28, 1831, Folder 1, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Ronald L.F. Davis, "The Black experience in Natchez, 1720-1880 : Natchez, National Historical Park, Mississippi," (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993), 90.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ford, Jr., "Making the 'White Man's Country White,'" 729.

<sup>43</sup> Franklin to Ballard, January 18, 1832, Folder 4, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>44</sup> Franklin to Ballard, November 1, 1833, Folder 12, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "Cash for Negroes," Baltimore Republican & Commercial Advertiser (Baltimore, MD) Feb. 2, 1835. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Franklin to Ballard, undated, 1837, Folder 5, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Franklin to Ballard, March 28, 1832, Folder 5, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.

<sup>50</sup> "Sale of Valuable Negroes," Cheraw Gazette (Cheraw, SC) Jan 3, 1837. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<sup>51</sup> Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 241.

<sup>52</sup> Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men,'" 1621.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 1643.

<sup>55</sup> "Fifty-Five Negroes for Sale," *Richmond Enquirer* (Richmond, VA.), 11 March 1836. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 113.

<sup>58</sup> Kimberly Hoang, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).

<sup>59</sup> "Cash Sale for Negroes" *Richmond Enquirer*, Jan 26 1839 Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<sup>60</sup> "Cash Sale for Negroes," *Richmond Enquirer* (Richmond, Va.), 26 October 1838. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<sup>61</sup> The quote above is just one of many examples.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 115.

<sup>63</sup> Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 12.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 5 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 508, 519.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 520.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 177.

<sup>67</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s*, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), xvii.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 115.



- <sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Brown, "The Valuation and Commodification of Slave Women in the New Orleans Market," Dissertation Collection, (Wellesley College Digital Scholarship Archive, 2013), 76.
- <sup>70</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 485.
- <sup>71</sup> Franklin to Ballard, March 27, 1832, Folder 5, Series, 1.1, Ballard Papers.
- <sup>72</sup> Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men,'" 1639; Calvin Schermerhorn, *Unrequited Toil: A History of Slavery in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 119.
- <sup>73</sup> James Franklin to Ballard, March 27, 1832, Folder 5, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers. James Franklin wrote in a letter to Ballard that his uncle, Isaac Franklin, was preoccupied in the nights with "very boyish" tendencies with his "stock." This language implied that Isaac Franklin spent his nights raping the fancy girls that they were trading. Additionally, the words "boyish" and "girlish" appear in multiple letters to describe the desires of white men, searching for younger women and girls and the sexual behavior of men. The slave traders' decisions to refer to white men's sexual behavior and their fetishization of young fancy girls in terms of "girl" and "boy" indicates the role of age in traders' and planters' perception of their own sexuality as well as that of the fancy girl. This topic could benefit from future research.
- <sup>74</sup> Franklin to Ballard, 1 November 1833, 11 January 1833, Folder 12, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.
- <sup>75</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 486.
- <sup>76</sup> James Franklin to Ballard, March 7, 1834, Folder 1, Series 1.1, Ballard Papers.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>78</sup> Ned Sublette and Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 486.
- <sup>79</sup> Jason Stupp, "Slavery and the Theatre of History: Ritual Performance on the Auction Block," *Theatre Journal* 63, no. 1 (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 69, 70; James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 24.
- <sup>80</sup> Stupp, "Slavery and the Theatre of History," 81.
- <sup>81</sup> Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 215.
- <sup>82</sup> "A Likely Girl," *Madison Whig Advocate* (Canton, Ms.), 19 January 1838. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.
- <sup>83</sup> "Sheriff's Sale," *Madison Whig Advocate* (Canton, Ms.), 31 January 1839. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.
- <sup>84</sup> "Marshal's Sale," *Madison Whig Advocate* (Canton, Ms.), 11 May 1839. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.
- <sup>85</sup> "A Likely Girl" and "Sheriff's Sale," *Madison Whig Advocate*.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>87</sup> Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture*, xvii, 177. White elites relied on Southern traditions of honor and gendered standards of conduct to merge space with masculinity. In his foundational text, *The Shaping of Southern Culture*, Bertram Wyatt-Brown argued that Southern honor directly shaped the "world of public performance." As slavery "came to symbolize all that was right or wrong about Southern race relations, culture, politics, and livelihood," planters and traders alike leaned into the aggressive mentality that honor demanded and ceded religious propriety.<sup>#</sup> Wyatt-Brown illuminated the close relationship between Southern honor and white supremacy that offered white men the latitude to wage extreme violence—the fancy girl auction was just one of the many manifestations of this relationship.
- <sup>88</sup> Franklin to Ballard, November 1, 1833, Folder 12, Series, 1.1, Ballard Papers.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> "The Negro Market," *Fayetteville Observer* (Fayetteville, NC.), 2 March 1839, *North Carolina Digital Heritage Center*, page 3. The "present time" referred to in the advertisement is understood to be the 1830s.
- <sup>91</sup> Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid, 37.
- <sup>93</sup> "A Likely Girl," *Madison Whig Advocate* (Canton, Ms.), 19 January 1838. Accessed through *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

# CLAIMING CAPITAL: EXCHANGING BEAUTY FOR MONEY AT THE FARO TABLE IN 1790S BRITAIN

*Hayle Meyerhoff*

**Abstract:** After watching the French monarchy succumb to peasants across the channel, the British monarchy grew fearful of a revolution taking hold in Britain. To head off any revolutionary activity, the British monarchy employed the press to discredit those who threatened social order. One group of female gamblers—The Faro Ladies—came under scrutiny for their rejection of domestic ideals in favor of monetary power. Criticism of these women manifested in discussion around their appearances, and popular literature of the time suggested that women who gambled were trading away their physical beauty in exchange for money. Analyzing discourse around these women ultimately reveals how notions of beauty were weaponized in this time to undermine transgressive women and maintain social order.

**Key words:** Faro, Faro Ladies, 1790s Britain, gambling, criminalization

## Introduction

On October 16, 1773, French revolutionaries beheaded Marie Antoinette. At her trial, the French people ridiculed her for innumerable crimes, including “squandering in a shameful manner the money of the state” and allegedly having a “veritable orgy.”<sup>1</sup> These accusations followed in the tradition of the revolutionary pamphlets that had accused Marie Antoinette of vanity and hypersexuality.<sup>2</sup> The once admired beauty of the young Austrian princess had become her downfall.

Across the channel in Britain, monarchical rule was under threat. In the wake of the American Revolution and amidst the raging French Revolution, the British monarchy would have needed to act quickly to avoid a fate like France’s. In this context, discussions of liberty and democracy dominated intellectual and political debate in eighteenth century Britain.<sup>3</sup> While the Tories, led by William Pitt, maintained that the natural state of its citizenry was one of obedience and submission to a benevolent monarch (as well as to the church and a parliament elected by property owners), radical Whigs questioned the foundations of British

government.<sup>4</sup> The urban center of London was a hub for discourse with philosophers like Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Thomas Paine ferociously debating the rights of the citizen.<sup>5</sup>

Anxious that these intellectual debates might transform into action against the crown, the British monarchy was determined to suppress revolutionary sentiments.<sup>6</sup> In France, pamphlets and other media, including those that denigrated Marie Antoinette's hypersexuality, played an important role in disseminating revolutionary ideas and precipitating the revolution itself. Thus, in addition to militaristic scare tactics and arresting radicals, the Pitt administration worked with the monarchy to launch a press-based propaganda campaign.<sup>7</sup> The campaign smashed printing presses, burned "literature deemed 'seditious,'" and recruited writers and artists to publish work that promoted the monarchy.<sup>8</sup> One such artist was the famed James Gillray, a political cartoonist who the monarchy hired "to show, as graphically as possible, what would happen should a revolution happen in Britain."<sup>9</sup> By harnessing the press as a political tool, Britain forestalled a France-like situation where writers and artists used their pens to discredit royal rule.

In the midst of this cultural turmoil, social structures, political hierarchies, and gender roles became increasingly stringent.<sup>10</sup> As a popular pastime for the British aristocracy, gambling had long been a source of moral contention in Britain, but the increased focus on social order renewed concerns that gambling corrupted society. Gambling became a lightning rod for moral criticism with a fixation on a group of female gamblers who played the imported French game Faro.

Shortened from the original name Pharaoh, Faro—which referred to the image of an Egyptian Pharaoh on one of the cards—was among the most popular gambling games in Britain, but the gambling women known for playing Faro were far from beloved. The 'Faro Ladies,' as they were called, became targets of public criticism for violating ideals of domestic womanhood by spending their nights at the gambling tables, rather than tending to their families, and transgressing the boundaries of public and domestic space by bringing gaming tables into their homes.<sup>11</sup> James Gillray, the same cartoonist who had been hired by the monarchy to stem revolutionary activity, played a central role in discrediting the Faro Ladies. Two of his most prominent targets were the aristocratic women, Lady Sarah Archer and Albinia Hobart. Analyzing Gillray's representations of these women, contemporary literary and journalistic critiques of the Faro game, as well as historical analyses of gender, politics, and gambling in eighteenth century England, this paper argues that the fears of revolution crystalized in discourse around these female gamblers' appearances. A moralistic British public viewed women who gambled as corrupt individuals enticed by the Faro Table to sacrifice their innocence, virtue, and beauty in favor of monetary power. With this new power, these women no longer relied on beauty as their only capital, thereby giving them an autonomy that threatened to topple the gendered hierarchy of British society.

## Literature Review

Historians of late eighteenth century Britain have argued that witnessing the failure of French monarchy prompted the British monarchy to take steps to protect itself from the same fate. One such step was to reinforce British social order. In particular, gender roles became a focus point for anti-revolutionary propaganda, and campaigns against transgressive gender expression played out on women's bodies in political cartoons. The British monarchy tightened its grasp on power by reinforcing gender hierarchies and emphasizing the importance of family in British society. As the historian Marilyn Morris notes, King George III himself responded to "the French Revolution's assault on traditional hierarchies" by "endorsing a model of manliness based on familial responsibility." He regularly appeared in public with the queen and children in tow, allowing the loyalist press to represent him as the devoted father of his people."<sup>12</sup> King George III set an example of the ideal man: a head of the family who took care of his dependents.

Morris's book, *Sex, Money and Personal Characters in Eighteenth-Century British Politics* identifies the eighteenth century in Britain as a turning point wherein public personas (such as the one King George III portrayed) were of increasing interest to the public. Morris argues that in this time, the public grew preoccupied with the private lives and public reputations of the aristocratic class. It is within the context of this collision between private and public that the Faro Ladies entered the spotlight as dangerously transgressive women. As John Ramsbottom writes, 18<sup>th</sup> century British wives were to be "economically dependent, confined to the home, and committed intellectually and spiritually to their own subordination."<sup>13</sup> In a society that was terrified of revolution, fixated on images of the elite, and where gender roles were increasingly rigid, a group of women asserting their independence by running gambling tables out of their homes was bound to provoke an uproar. Morris and Ramsbottom have made critical arguments about the centrality of gender in 18th century British politics. This paper builds off of their work by arguing that through political cartoons, women's bodies became not only reflections of the political unease and social backlash, but scapegoats for Britain's failings and vectors for anti-revolutionary sentiments.

### The Faro Ladies' Gambling Ring

Despite a cultural shift toward scrutinizing the elite, aristocratic female gamblers maintained impunity through the early 1790s. Although a 1739 "act for the more efficient preventing of excessive and deceitful gambling" had promised fines for those who hosted and attended gambling tables, the British aristocracy's monetary and political power shielded them from prosecution, and they continued to gamble regularly.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the 'fashionable class' felt so immune to retribution for their law breaking that it was not unusual to find a Faro table schedule published in the newspaper. One schedule from December 26, 1792 read,



FARO BANK: The following are the arrangement of the principle Banks for the present Winter:—Monday's and Friday's, at Mrs. Hobart's, St. James Square. Tuesday's and Sunday's at Mrs. Stuart's, in the same square—Thursday's at the Duchess of Cumberland's, Pall-Mall—Saturday's at Lady Archer's. This Lady has only one route each week on account of ill health.

Besides these, there are scores of banks of inferior note, under the title of Sacred Music; Concerts; Conversations, &c. Of these, those held at Lord Hampden's and Sir Watts Horton's take the lead.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to listing the main houses for Faro playing that winter, the announcement referred to “scores of banks of inferior note” which were also printed in the papers, but disguised as “Sacred Music; Concerts; Conversations, &c.” The term ‘inferior’ might suggest less popular, less wealthy attendees, or smaller Faro banks with less money to be gained from playing. That the superior banks blatantly published their names in the paper, while these inferior banks announced their events incognito suggests that the smaller banks feared that police might intervene if they found out about the tables, but the more prominent banks had no such fears. The fact that gambling, an activity popularly recognized as being immoral, was disguised as ‘Sacred Music,’ was irreverent, suggesting that these pseudonyms were a shared joke among the elite and emphasized their enjoyment of blatantly breaking the law without retribution. It is also worth noting that the schedule above describes a rotation of Faro venues in different *women's* homes. Female gamblers were restricted from gambling in the public venues alongside their male counterparts, so they took it upon themselves to set up their own gambling rings right in their own homes.

### Two Sides of a Coin: Lady Archer and Mrs. Hobart

Two hosts listed in this announcement, Lady Sarah Archer and Mrs. Albinia Hobart (also known as the Countess of Buckinghamshire) were prominent members of the gambling community. As hosts, they controlled their own Faro banks which put them in a position of power often denied to women. As the press and public increasingly viewed women gamblers as particularly immoral, Archer and Hobart became the face of sinful aristocratic gambling. In her monumental article on the Faro Ladies' role in British politics and economy, Gillian Russell notes that these two women were “iconographic counterpart[s].”<sup>16</sup> Where Hobart presented “corporeal excess,” Archer embodied “emaciation.”<sup>17</sup> Caricaturist James Gillray took pleasure in depicting these two women's contrasting physiques and features.

Although Gillray's depictions likely influenced the general public's opinions and therefore provide insight into public perception of these women, it is important to remember that Gillray was not neutral—he had his own stake in politics. In 1793 for “practical and patriotic” reasons, Gillray publicly aligned himself with the Tories.<sup>18</sup> When asked about his stance, he answered honestly and pragmatically, “now the Opposition [the Whigs] are poor, they do not buy my prints and I must draw on the purses of the larger

parties.”<sup>19</sup> Gillray aimed his work at a literate audience of “more than average means” who could afford to purchase his prints.<sup>20</sup> While he criticized the elite in his prints, his opinions were complicated by the fact that it was often this very class of people that supported his livelihood.

Two of Gillray’s earliest images of Lady Archer and Mrs. Hobart were printed in quick succession in 1791. “The Finishing Touch,” depicting Lady Archer adorning herself at her toilette, was printed on September 29, 1791.<sup>21</sup> Just a few days later on October 3, Gillray followed up with “Le dernier ressource,” a similar portrait of Mrs. Hobart putting on garters.<sup>22</sup> Lady Archer and Mrs. Hobart represented contrasting images of the British aristocracy: where Lady Archer stood tall and thin with bony hands and a long, hooked nose, the Countess of Buckinghamshire was squat and round, her small nose disappearing into her plump cheeks.



“The Finishing Touch” featuring Lady Sarah Archer (Gillray, September 29, 1791)



“Le deniere ressource;-or- Van Buchell's garters” featuring Mrs. Albinia Hobart, Countess of Buckinghamshire (Gillray, October 3, 1791)

Their stark differences, exaggerated in the images, emphasized how they both, in their own way, failed to achieve ideal femininity and embodied sinful behavior. In “The Finishing Touch,” Lady Archer puts a last stroke of rouge on her already dark red cheeks, suggesting a vain over-enthusiastic application of makeup. Lady Archer had once been a fashion and beauty icon among the British aristocracy, with newspapers printing detailed



descriptions of her dresses and poetic odes to her beauty.<sup>23</sup> As an older woman however, Lady Archer was often criticized for her use of makeup. Thomas Rowlandson's print, "Six Stages of Mending a Face" emphasized Archer's reliance on makeup to maintain her appearance, or what Russell aptly calls "prosthetic self-creation."<sup>24</sup> In the image, Lady Archer gets ready for the day, waking up with a bald head, no teeth, and only one eye, and putting on so much makeup that she eventually looks like a young woman.<sup>25</sup> This notion that Lady Archer would be a bald, toothless and eyeless woman without her makeup created an image of someone who could not be trusted. After all, she was lying about her appearance—what else might she be hiding? Thus, political cartoons that emphasized Lady Archer's excessive use of makeup insinuated that she was not only woefully ugly underneath her makeup, but also untrustworthy, an accusation that would become even more relevant as Gillray criticized Archer's activity around the Faro table.

Mrs. Hobart was equally criticized for failing to achieve ideal femininity, but where Lady Archer's appearance suggested deceit, Mrs. Hobart's perceived sin was moral weakness. Gillray's prints, and others, criticized her for being too corpulent, or, in the Enlightenment term, obese. Georges Vigarello traces the history of obesity, and notes that it was in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that fatness became medicalized as a health concern. Scientists in the 1770s posited that too much fat on a body pushed on nerves, causing a "loss of 'vibrancy,' and an absence of 'tonic force.'"<sup>26</sup> In other words, the emerging science of the day argued that having too much fat made a person weak. In light of these new arguments, Mrs. Hobart's appearance as a stout woman reflected physical weakness. In his images, Gillray elaborated this physical weakness to denote a moral weakness as well. As Hobart became well known as a gambler, this perceived weakness also became a signifier of her personal lack of will power and perhaps her inherent inadequacy as a Faro banker.

This image of Mrs. Hobart portrays her putting on garters from Dr. Van Butchell. Van Butchell was a famous doctor known as "the inventor of Elasticbands." He marketed these "Spring band Garters" by saying they "will help to make [the ladies] (as they ought to be!)—superlatively happy!"<sup>27</sup> One analysis of the Gillray image suggests that Hobart donned the garters as a last attempt to rescue her health enough to produce a male heir to her husband's title (she had given birth to two sons who had died). If this was the case, then Gillray portrayed Mrs. Hobart desperately trying to fulfill her duty as the wife of a Count, emphasizing how she not only failed to look as a woman should, but also failed to complete a woman's domestic duties of motherhood.

Gillray used clothing to further amplify the polarity of Hobart and Archer's bodies. He dressed Lady Archer in masculinized jackets with lapels and coat tails that matched her sharp features. In "The Finishing Touch," the tall black hat and pointed equestrian style boots complete her masculine attire. In contrast, Mrs. Hobart wears layers of ruffles with soft edges that match her round body. Though she too wears a tall hat, it is made of straw with a high crown and a veil that flows from it, a feminine contrast to the feathers atop Lady Archer's top hat. Mrs. Hobart's dainty red shoes finish off her feminine look.

Gillray used the backgrounds of the prints to emphasize the women's personalities. Visible through Lady Archer's window is her high phaeton, her beloved carriage that she was known to drive. This detail explains the outfit she wore, as this particular type of outfit was popular for travel and driving. The frame behind Mrs. Hobart is labeled "Nina," referring to the popular French story that was turned into a play. In the image, the character Nina is terrified as she looks upon the man who kneels before her, for she believes he is the ghost of her lover.<sup>28</sup>

Mrs. Hobart was very fond of "Nina." In fact, in 1787, she obtained one of the few translated copies of the play that was based on the story. The dedication inside her copy read, "to the Honorable Mrs. Hobart, this translation of Nina, a work that is much indebted to her for the fame it has received in this country."<sup>29</sup> Based on this dedication, it is likely that Mrs. Hobart performed the character of Nina, as she was known for performing in small theaters. The image of Nina not only refers to Mrs. Hobart's love of French theater (an affinity that would have been scrutinized in the anti-French political climate), but also reinforces the bodily contrasts so often used to depict Mrs. Hobart. The 'Nina' figure's body is similar to Mrs. Hobart's body, with the kneeling man's spindly form in stark contrast. Gillray often emphasized Mrs. Hobart's corpulence by placing her next to smaller figures, particularly men. In Gillray's "A sphere, projecting against a plane" from January 3, 1792, Gillray exaggerated Hobart's round shape against the lanky Tory, William Pitt. Mrs. Hobart was an avid supporter of Pitt's political rival, the Whig Charles James Fox, and the confrontation in the image is Gillray's imagining of how a real-life confrontation might have looked.<sup>30</sup>

Gillray published this cartoon about a year before he publicly aligned himself with the Tories, and his political bias is on display in this image. If Mrs. Hobart and William Pitt represent two sides of government, then according to the image, Pitt's was the superior side. Although painfully thin, Pitt stands tall and looks over the red-faced Mrs. Hobart, apparently ignoring her presence and looking on to more important things. In contrast to Pitt's indifference, Mrs. Hobart glowers up at Pitt with a look of vindictive hatred. With no legs, she is consigned to be pushed around on a cart, thus lacking the most minimal personal agency of movement.





In Gillray’s representations of Mrs. Hobart and Lady Archer, he emphasized how their bodies failed to conform to ideal standards of female beauty and therefore reflected their moral failings. Looking at “The Finishing Touch” and “Le dernier ressource:-or- Van Buchell’s garters” side by side, we see that the floor patterns in these two images match, as does the color and design of the footstools. This further emphasizes the women’s connection and suggests that these two activities could have taken place in the same room, perhaps at the same time. In this way, Gillray placed his subjects in an insular world to highlight their similarities as much as their differences, and portray them as two parts of an aristocratic whole. In images of the Faro Ladies, Gillray used the same physical tropes to distinguish Lady Archer and Mrs. Hobart from the crowd. In “Modern Hospitality,” Archer’s sharp lapels and crooked nose stand out, as does Mrs. Hobart’s round face and pastel yellow and lace-covered dress.<sup>31</sup> The two women dominate the frame, just as they might have dominated the Faro Table.



**Modern Hospitality, or, A Friendly Party in High Life.** To those earthly Divinities who charmed, 20 years ago, this honorable method of banishing mortifying reflections, is dedicated. (March 31, 1792)

The caption of this image summarizes the social concerns over women gamblers. The line, “O Woman! Woman! Everlasting is your power over us, for in youth, you charm away our Hearts, and in your after-years, you charm away our Purses,” argues that in youth, women used their wiles to make men love them, and in old age, they used their charm to take their money. This trope of beauty in youth and money in old age dominated discussions regarding the Faro Table. The Faro Table gave women access to monetary power when their beauty, their original form of capital, had faded. As Faro bankers, women like Mrs. Hobart and Lady Archer were in charge of enormous sums of money, giving them power over the male and female guests who came to play at their homes. The caption explained the sarcastic tone of the title. ‘Modern hospitality,’ was not hospitality at all, but rather a plot to exploit guests for their money. Yet again, the Faro ladies corrupted a domestic virtue (in this case, hospitality) through their insatiable appetite for gambling.



## Popular Criticism of Faro

As Gillray's cartoons brought the Faro Ladies' to the public's attention, the game of Faro became notorious as a corrupting force, and thus a popular topic for moralizing texts. One such text was a book called *The Faro Table: or the gambling mothers*, written by the pseudonymous Charles Sedley in 1808. Sedley used the real-life Faro Ladies to ground his fictional text about dangers that gambling posed for young women. This popular scandal novel told the story of Eloisa, who, when she marries and moves to the city, is exposed to the "vortex of fashion, gaiety, and dissipation."<sup>32</sup> At the core of Sedley's text is a concern over the relationship between beauty and money that echoes the caption in "Modern Hospitality."

Gambling gave women access to money, thereby making them less reliant on their beauty as their primary source of capital. When Eloisa first arrives in London, a woman named Mrs. Fortescue introduces Eloisa to the fashionable world, explaining,

"I will tell you, my dear—a beautiful woman, new upon the town, will always collect a crowd; but a rich woman—though she were as ugly as a Hecate; or as vulgar as an oyster-woman—who opens her purse strings in imitation of the famed Deity and the Cornucopia, attracts the votaries of fashion to share the golden spoil."<sup>33</sup>

In this seductive but sinful urban setting, an ugly woman could have just as much value as a beautiful one, so long as she is rich. Thus, money replaced beauty, giving rich women value based on wealth rather than appearance. The promise of a new capital entices and corrupts Eloisa, which Sedley demonstrated through a description of the Faro table:

"[at the Faro table], a woman pledges her honor, ruins her husband, and beggars her children, by the turn up of a card, unconscious, at the moment of infatuation, of the mighty ruin she is preparing; and, though she repent in the morning—she sins, again, at night, as long as money can be procured—no matter how."<sup>34</sup>

Sedley suggested that a woman who gambled at the Faro table not only corrupted herself, but also ruined her family. His moralizing language of 'repent' and 'sin' emphasized how gambling was not only immoral, but anti-moral. A woman who gambled became addicted and could not stop, thereby poisoning the morality and virtue that she once possessed, or, was supposed to possess. In the end of the story, Eloisa's husband, Mortimer, realizes he has corrupted Eloisa by introducing her to the commercial world of London. He reminisces about the pure woman he had met in the countryside: "Her form was as perfect, as her soul was spotless... I have been her bane—her eternal ruin."<sup>35</sup> Mortimer's sentiment reinforces the notion that once a woman was corrupted by Faro, there could be no return. His comments also create a dichotomy between the countryside where Eloisa grew up and the urban society that corrupted her. As urban capitals, like London, became industrialized sites of political discourse, they represented a particular threat to a young and innocent

woman who only knew country life. In Sedley's tale, the city itself represents the inevitable corruption when a woman has access to freedom and capital.

Sedley was not the only author concerned with the exchange of feminine beauty for masculine money at the Faro tables. For Mary Darby Robinson, beauty at the Faro Table was bait. She referred to "the destructive vortex of the faro table; where beauty is held up as a lure to enthrall the senses, while avarice and fraud take advantage of its fascinations, and every moral virtue trembles at its triumphs."<sup>36</sup> The titles of both Sedley's text and Robinson's emphasize the conflict inherent in a woman gambler. Sedley's "gambling mothers" implicitly reject their motherly duties in favor of the evil gambling, and Robinson's "Domestic Story" warns that the Faro table could take away domestic virtues.

In her text, Robinson also pointed to the unequal treatment of gamblers based on class, noting that "though the magistrates have endeavored to check its [gambling's] progress among the subordinate ranks of society, it is still not only winked at, but tolerated, in the higher circles."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, as Robinson noted, the elite Faro tables were largely ignored up until the late 1790s. However, as Enlightenment principles encouraged "relatively high literacy rates," the public began calling for more accountability for aristocratic gamblers, demanding that the Faro Ladies be punished first.<sup>38</sup>

### The Faro Ladies' Punishment

During the second half of the 1790s, an increasingly literate public became more critical of the police's negligence. Newspaper clippings began urging the police to take more action against the elite Faro tables. An outraged writer in the *True Briton* wrote in 1796, "FARO—how long will the vice of Gaming be suffered to disgrace the Metropolis...?"<sup>39</sup> For this writer, gambling was not only bad for the gamblers, but a stain upon London itself. The same year, a writer for the *Oracle* took a different tact, criticizing the morality of the players themselves. He lamented, "those unblushing HARRIDANS who earn a livelihood by keeping a FARO TABLE, not only lure the unwary into their infernal vortex...but publicly proclaim their triumphs, and exult in the losses of their best friends! How long is this shameless practice to be tolerated?"<sup>40</sup>

The outrage against the Faro tables was explicitly gendered and classed. On January 23, 1796, one writer synthesized the growing outrage over the Faro tables in a scathing admonishment:

Street beggars and female gamblers are two nuisances, of which the Magistrates should take cognizance. The former class demand our money... the later enchant it with the assistance of wine and harmony. Our Lady gamesters now advertise their banks; they know that Justice is blind...These Faro Meetings, at which Gentlemen and Ladies promiscuously assemble for revelry, plunder and dissipation, are generally called by the name of—"The Cock and Hen Clubs!!"<sup>41</sup>



By comparing female gamblers to street beggars, this author suggested that both were parasites to society—the only difference being that beggars demanded money and female gamblers enchanted it. The author noted that these female gamblers used their feminine wiles of ‘enchantment’ to take advantage of being in justice’s blind spot. That each of these admonishments call for police intervention signals the police’s role as a paternalistic presence in the city. Asking police to enter these women’s homes to regulate them was an explicitly gendered request. The police, as a masculine force, were being asked to discipline these women and force them back into their proper domestic roles, and subsequently restore social order to the city. It is also notable that the police at this time were known to invade brothels, a fact that further degraded these women by comparing them to prostitutes. The reference to the “cock and hen club” and the use of the word, ‘promiscuity’ furthered this comparison, inferring that, despite the class disparity, the Faro Ladies, who exchanged their beauty for money, were akin to prostitutes who exchanged their bodies for money.



“The Exaltation of FARO’s Daughters”  
featuring Mrs. Albinia Hobart (left) and Lady  
Archer (right) (May 12, 1796)

This was not the first time that the Faro Ladies had been publicly compared to prostitutes. On May 7th of the same year, a few months prior to the arrests at St. James-street, the Chief Justice, Lord Kenyon, made a public statement directed at the Faro ladies. He admonished the Faro ladies for using their class privilege to break the law, and threatened them with pillory, the common form of punishment for “unruly women such as prostitutes, brothel keepers, and confidence tricksters.”<sup>42</sup> Gillray, always quick off the mark, published his “Exaltation of Faro’s Daughters” just five days after Kenyon made his statement. Gillray chose to represent the group of Faro daughters through his favorite contrasting duo, Mrs. Hobart and Lady Archer. The image depicts the two older women with their hands and heads in the pillory and the surrounding crowd throwing things at them. The two women’s large earrings and exaggerated feather headpieces accentuate their ostentatious wealth, and Gillray draws upon bodily humor by making Mrs. Hobart stand uncomfortably on tip-toe to reach. In front of the platform is a posted sign that reads, “Cure for Gambling Publish’d by Lord Kenyon in the Court of Kings Bench on May 9th 1796.”<sup>43</sup>

This depiction represented Lord Kenyon’s threat, one that never materialized. However, the visual pillory delivered by Gillray and other caricaturists was sufficient to publicly shame the Faro ladies and further rouse the public who viewed the prints through shop windows. The public anger that ensued after Gillray published this piece scared Archer and Hobart so much that they purportedly hired guards to protect themselves.<sup>44</sup>



Discipline a la Kenyon (Gillray, March 25, 1797)



The Faro ladies evaded legal action for a year after Kenyon's statement, but it was not to last. In early 1797, Mrs. Hobart reported that the Faro bank had been stolen from Lord Buckinghamshire's house, setting off a string of events that ultimately led to the ladies' demise.<sup>45</sup> This was not the first time Mrs. Hobart had made this accusation. In fact, the Faro women had been known to pocket the bank's money and claim that it had been stolen. Two of Mrs. Hobart's footmen, who had been accused of the crime, came forward and made statements to the authorities. Gillray took the opportunity to remind Lord Kenyon of his promise to punish the ladies. He published "Discipline à la Kenyon," a bloody depiction of Lord Kenyon whipping Mrs. Hobart across the back while Lady Archer and another Faro lady stand in the pillory, awaiting their turn.<sup>46</sup> Following Kenyon's promise to treat the women as any other unruly woman would be treated, Mrs. Hobart is also tied to a cart to be taken through the streets, a common method of shaming prostitutes.<sup>47</sup>

Ultimately, on March 11 of 1797, the Faro ladies were punished with a fine of £50 each for playing the game of Faro.<sup>48</sup> This was a meager punishment, as an article from the *Whitehall Evening Post* a few weeks earlier had stated that "The penalty for keeping an illegal gambling house is £200 for each offense and the players are liable to a fine of £50 for every time they play at such games."<sup>49</sup> Thus, the most damning punishment remained in Gillray's brutal depictions. Later that same month, Lady Archer, apparently suffering from the humiliations of the past few years, decided to leave her city dwelling and retire to Ham Common in Surry. Her escape to the countryside signaled that the punishment had succeeded: Lady Archer had finally rejected the sinful city and escaped to the domestic countryside where, according to Lloyd's evening post, she intended to "lead a private life."<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

In a society where women were valued for their appearance and submission to male authority, the Faro Ladies became targets of ridicule for violating the code of feminine behavior. The texts and images concerning these women and the game they played revealed stark dichotomies between morality and corruption, countryside and city, and beauty and money. Across the channel in France, Marie Antoinette suffered similar humiliation at the hands of the press. For the Faro Women, it was their *lack* of beauty that made them threatening to British social structures, while for Marie Antoinette, it was her *excess* of beauty that made her a political target. In Antoinette's case, pamphlets and cartoons exaggerated her sexuality, suggesting that her excessive beauty made her sexually promiscuous and therefore immoral. Her beauty signaled her own supposed immorality, and by extension, the immorality of the monarchy as a whole.<sup>51</sup>

In both the case of the Faro Ladies and that of Marie Antoinette, the construction of beauty was weaponized as a means to prevent unruly women from claiming power. Both Marie Antoinette and the Faro Ladies attempted to grasp more power than typical feminine roles permitted, which threatened to erode the social order. In both cases, whether they were being derided for being too pretty or too ugly, appearances were merely a scapegoat for the deeper fears about gender transgression. Critiques of their appearances, therefore, were

really a manifestation of a fear that transgressive women would topple the social structures in place.

The treatment of the Faro Ladies' and Marie Antoinette should not be side notes in French and British history. These women and their bodies were central to the French and British political conflicts in the late 18th century, and should be recognized as such. Although many historians have written on gender in the French Revolution and in late 18th century Britain, their work remains largely misunderstood as being peripheral to political histories of power struggles. Having revealed the Faro Ladies centrality in late 18th century British history, this paper calls on scholars to correct mainstream discussions of politics by re-centralizing women in political narratives. Further, the Faro Ladies' story reveals the need for historians to view beauty not as an arbitrary aesthetic category but rather as a social construction deployed to justify political goals. Future scholarship must give women adequate space in political histories, and continue investigating the way that beauty and appearances construct, and are constructed by, politics.



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*Tap to jump to the Bibliography*

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## SPARTAN AUSTERITY AND BRIBERY

*Chasen Jeffries*

**Abstract:** Popular perception of ancient Sparta is that of a belligerent polis with austere men and an invincible army. But according to Xenophon, Spartan ideals of austerity, equality, and honor declined especially during the Peloponnesian War. This paper confirms Xenophon's theory of decline using relevant primary sources—Herodotus, Thucydides and more—that document Spartan corruption and bribery. Although there is evidence of corruption from our earliest sources on Spartan history, it became more widespread, both on campaign and within Sparta, during the fifth century. This paper begins by introducing the concepts of the Spartan mirage and Xenophon's decline theory. The Spartan mirage describes the idealized version of Spartans, while Xenophon's decline theory proposes that the mirage was shattered circa 400 BCE. Although some scholars, such as Hodkinson and Cartledge, discussed financial causes to this decline, past analyses overlook bribery cases. This paper analyzes several case studies split into four distinct categories: bribery and financial upkeep of the spartan military, bribery to alter military plans, bribery of oracles, and outlier cases. These case studies work together to reveal the deep history of corruption and bribery that dispels the Spartan mirage.

**Key words:** Spartan mirage, Ancient Sparta, Spartan Ideals, Bribery, Corruption, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides

### Introduction

The Spartan mirage, a popular narrative of fifth century Sparta that rhapsodizes and mythologizes the polis, shrouds the reality of the ancient city state.<sup>1</sup> As one of the leading scholars of ancient Sparta, Paul Cartledge, argues, it represents “the idealization of Sparta in Greek antiquity, the distorted or imaginary literary tradition about ancient Sparta.”<sup>2</sup> Ancient historians like Herodotus and Xenophon, described the three principles of Spartan society as austerity, equality, and honor.

Herodotus tells us Spartans scorned personal pride and property. Money, according to the Spartan mirage, was not a motivating factor in Spartan society; honor was supposedly



worth more than wealth. Herodotus states in *Lycurgus*, which describes the creation of the Spartan ideal by the ancient, semi-mythical, Spartan King Lycurgus,

“he [Lycurgus] undertook to divide up their movable property also, in order that every vestige of unevenness and inequality might be removed . . . In the first place, he withdrew all gold and silver money from currency, and ordained the use of iron money only . . . For who would steal, or receive as a bribe, or rob, or plunder that which could neither be concealed, nor possessed, nay, nor even cut to pieces with any profit?”<sup>3</sup>

The creation of iron currency decreased money’s liquidity and inconvenienced its possession, while government policy was undertaken to physically redistribute wealth. Herodotus utilizes the formal element of a rhetorical question to demonstrate Lycurgus’ motivation, asking the reader “who would steal, or receive as a bribe, or plunder,” as if those otherwise advantageous actions now seemed so obviously senseless and antithetical under the Spartan ideal that he did not have to explain and answer. Therefore, the reforms of Lycurgus sought to remove money as a motivation for Spartan action.

Herodotus further states the goal of Lycurgus’ reforms as creating an ideal society of equals: “to live with one another on a basis of entire uniformity and equality in the means of subsistence, seeking preeminence through virtue alone, assured that there was no other difference or inequality between man and man than that which was established by blame for base actions and praise for good ones.” The ideal that the only “difference or inequality” in Sparta was not through wealth but “virtue” and “blame and praise”, led to the assumption that Spartans were incorruptible to wealth, and purely driven by their honor.

From a historiographical standpoint, when evaluating Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, it is clear that they perpetuate and emphasize aspects of the Spartan mirage.<sup>4</sup> But it is equally clear that they also put forth doubts about the Spartan mirage. Through close reading, this article reveals aspects of the Spartan reality compared to those depicted in the Spartan mirage.<sup>5</sup> Most of the primary source writers were unaffiliated with Sparta—only Xenophon lived in Sparta briefly. While they might have interacted with Spartans to a minor degree, it is likely that they did not have a full view of Sparta and its culture.<sup>6</sup> They wrote primarily for audiences in Athens and other Greek (non-Spartan) *poleis* and would not have expected Spartans to be among their audience. In fact, the Athenian background of historians describing Sparta, factoring in Athens’ animosity for Sparta for much of its history alongside the recent trauma of the Peloponnesian War, would alter their perceptions of the rival polis, especially in depicting Sparta’s treacherous interactions with Persian wealth and their actions against Athens on campaign. As such, many of their histories are written through a perspective of someone outside the Spartan polis.

However, even primary sources put doubt into the Spartan ideal; throughout the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, Xenophon states he has little certainty as to whether the Spartan mirage was the reality of the situation. Xenophon says: “Whether the laws of Lycurgus still remain unchanged at this day, I certainly could not say that with any

confidence whatever.”<sup>7</sup> He explained that the characteristics of Sparta displayed to him differed from the Spartan mirage. He continued by countering the famous austerity of early Sparta, and further emphasizes the differences between the Spartan ideal and the reality he perceived: “And I know too that in former days they were afraid to be found in possession of gold; whereas nowadays there are some who even boast of their possessions.”<sup>8</sup>

Xenophon theorizes that, after the Greco-Persian War, Sparta continuously declined until its eventual subjugation by Phillip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great.<sup>9</sup> The Peloponnesian War was thought to have hastened the Spartan decline.<sup>10</sup> He evaluates contemporary Sparta and how it compares with Sparta a generation prior. He illustrates that several specific aspects of Spartan culture had changed while acknowledging that he cannot say conclusively that it has changed one way or another because he had limited knowledge of the Sparta of his time and only stories of the Sparta in the generations prior. These differences between Xenophon’s contemporary Spartans and their austere forefathers, alongside the ravages of natural disasters and wars, in Xenophon’s view contributed to Spartan decline.<sup>11</sup>

Prior historians have looked into Sparta and the validity of Xenophon’s decline theory.<sup>12</sup> Stephen Hodkinson in *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* focuses on the financial aspects of private Spartans and accuracy of the Spartan mirage’s austerity. These analyses of Sparta often overlook cases of bribery and how they impact the Spartan mirage of austerity.<sup>13</sup> This article aims to differentiate the Spartan mirage on private wealth and bribery using the reality seen through key primary sources.<sup>14</sup> The case studies depicting bribery and corruption despite the Spartan ideal provide authentication to Xenophon’s decline theory, leading to a continuous breakdown of Spartan might and institutions after the Greco-Persian War until its eventual subjugation by Phillip of Macedon. This decline in the Spartan mirage manifested itself in an elevated dependence on money, especially foreign money that resulted in political turmoil.<sup>15</sup>

## I. Bribery and Financial Upkeep of Spartan Military

During military campaigns, money and wealth played a prominent role in allowing the Spartans to function to their maximum potential. This wealth can be classified in three different forms: money in exchange for mercenaries, pay for military upkeep, and financial incentivization.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the fifth century, there were many instances of Spartans employing mercenaries or serving as them.

Money exchanged for mercenary labor in Sparta first appears in Herodotus’ writing in the case of Gorgo and King Kleomenes in the early fifth century. In *Histories*, Herodotus reports that when Aristagoras, a leader of the Ionian Greeks in Asia Minor, came to persuade Sparta in 491 BCE to aid the Ionian cities revolting against Persia, Aristagoras attempted to negotiate with Kleomenes, one of two Spartan kings. He had discussed the vast wealth the Persian Empire offered; as Aristagoras states: “Once you have taken this city [Susa, a strategic center of the Persian Empire], you can be confident that you will rival Zeus

in wealth. . . cease fighting against the Arcadians and the Argives, who have no gold or silver.”<sup>17</sup> Kleomenes only lost interest and stopped him when he heard of the journey’s distance.<sup>18</sup> The following day, Aristagoras attempted to bribe Kleomenes:

So Aristagoras began by promising him ten talents if he would fulfill his request. Kleomenes refused, and Aristagoras increased the sum step by step, until he had raised the offer to fifty talents. At this point the child blurted out, “Father, your guest-friend is going to corrupt you unless you leave and stay away from him.”<sup>19</sup>

This passage demonstrates that the desire for wealth was a still motivating factor for Spartan kings despite the laws that upheld the Spartan ideal. Gorgo, Kleomenes’ daughter, embodies the Spartan ideal of austerity.<sup>20</sup> Though, as this passage indicates, Kleomenes refused the bribe, he allowed Aristagoras to increase the offer several times without stopping him. At last, Gorgo forced an end to the conversation. However, Kleomenes’ continuation of the conversation, along with his reluctance to shift its topic, indicates that he, at the very least, considered using Spartans as mercenaries, was tempted by the bribe, and may have had a price at which he would have agreed to take part in the Ionian cities revolt against Persia. The simple fact that Kleomenes was tempted to accept Aristagoras’ offers before his daughter’s intervention presents Sparta’s reality outside of the ideal.<sup>21</sup> This is surprising and important for two key reasons. First, these conversations transpired within the Spartan polis itself and not on campaign elsewhere in Greece. While it is one thing to be susceptible to bribery on campaign away from Sparta with less public oversight, it is another for a Spartan king to be susceptible to bribery within the Spartan polis. Having king Kleomenes entertain the prospect of bribery in the heart of his city state makes it equally, if not more likely that such bribery often took place outside of the city. Second, this occurred within the highest level of Spartan society, as Kleomenes was one of its kings.

Another reason this case is important lies in the presentation of using Spartans as mercenaries in the first place. There must have been a precedent or prior consideration for mercenary use by the Spartans, or else such an idea proposed by a foreigner would have been dismissed outright given the alleged nature of Spartan culture that focused on honor, austerity and the good of the Spartan state. Had this culture been the norm, Kleomenes would not have entertained, nor would Aristagoras suggested, the concept of using their soldiers as mercenaries in a foreign war for money. This line of reasoning suggests that the concept of bribery was not completely foreign to Spartans, reinforcing that there were cracks within the Spartan mirage of austerity.

Another prime example of bribery for Spartan military action, as told by Thucydides, was an attempt to hire Spartans as mercenaries in 457 BCE. Megabazus, a Persian satrap under the direction of the Persian king, attempted to bribe Sparta into fighting Athens to draw the Athenians out of Egypt.<sup>22</sup>

First the Athenians were masters of Egypt, and the King sent Megabazus, a Persian, to Sparta with money to bribe the Peloponnesians to invade Attica and so



draw off the Athenians from Egypt. Finding that the matter made no progress, and that the money was only being wasted, he recalled Megabazus with the remainder of the money.<sup>23</sup>

This case illustrates a clear instance of bribery within the Spartan polis itself. The bribery was not ultimately successful in accomplishing the Persian goal of a Spartan invasion of Athens likely due to the lack of overall support for the invasion of Attica at this time. That being said, it is important to note that bribery did take place. Megabazus believed that his money “was only being wasted,” thus implying money was being used. It appears that Megabazus bribed Spartans to lobby for a particular course of action. Similar to the aforementioned case of Kleomenes, this was not a case of a king on campaign miles away from Sparta, but rather, it shows an instance of bribery within the heart of Sparta itself. Temptation by bribery within the polis exemplifies the cracks within the Spartan mirage as these same Spartans would be equally, if not more, susceptible on campaign outside of the polis. Furthermore, this case illustrates that Spartan citizens, not just a Spartan king as in the case of Kleomenes, could be bribed in the Spartan polis, in the heart of a society that supposedly emphasized austerity and honor.

The aforementioned examples presented by Herodotus and Thucydides reveal that the Spartan people were susceptible to bribery and lacked austerity within the Spartan polis itself. They represent cases of initial ideations towards the use of the Spartan military in cases that are not directly tied to Sparta’s success; rather, the military is used in exchange for money or other benefits. One of the best examples of this ideation in Sparta occurred in the early fourth century when Spartans and other allies fought in Persia for Cyrus following the end of the Peloponnesian War. In the disastrous 10,000 Campaign, vast numbers of Spartans died aiding Cyrus in a Persian civil war that was not directly related to Sparta. This example illustrates that *some* Spartans were willing to use hoplites as mercenaries to fight for non-Spartan objectives; however, given that this partial willingness did not manifest itself completely, one can assume that such a practice had not yet become pervasive throughout the whole of Sparta.

Among the best documented use of mercenaries by Sparta as reported by Thucydides occurred with Brasidas, a Spartan leader, prior to campaigning in Northern Greece. In this campaign, Spartan hoplites, the Spartan citizen-soldiers who trained in the *agogē*, were not deployed to fight. Rather, a combination of Spartan helots and mercenaries were to fight under Brasidas’ leadership. In 424 BCE, Brasidas, upon being sent to campaign in Thrace with a meager force of helots, recruited Peloponnesian mercenaries to supplement his army: “The Spartans now therefore gladly sent seven hundred Helots as hoplites with Brasidas, who recruited the rest of his force by means of money in the Peloponnesus.”<sup>24</sup> This change in Spartan military campaigning from a force reliant on Spartan hoplites to a force reliant on mercenaries and money illustrates the changing role of money in Sparta culture. The role of money in military campaigns was growing, indicating that the culture of Spartan austerities and its distrust and neglect of money was evolving. It is important to note that during



Brasidas' campaign his Athenian adversary was Thucydides himself, the author of our primary source. Taking this into account, it is likely that Thucydides' representation of Brasidas could harbor bias given their adversarial relationship. Thucydides could have embellished Brasidas to minimize his own failures, depicted him negatively due to their adversarial history or depicted him accurately, having first-hand knowledge of his tactics and the campaign.

Thucydides' quote reveals that part of Brasidas' force consisted of Peloponnesian mercenaries. While it is unclear if he hired the mercenaries himself or with public funds, Brasidas' campaign required financing from both Spartan and foreign sources.<sup>25</sup> This was in direct contrast to the traditional Spartan style of campaigning of using Spartan hoplites that Sparta had relied upon for prior wars in the fifth century BCE, such as the Greco-Persian war. This change in the Spartan style of campaigning and the role money played within it was an initial step in the Spartan cultural change around money and austerity.

The evolving role of money and austerity on Brasidas' campaign continued when Brasidas proceeded through Northern Greece on the same campaign in 424 BCE with a force of helots and mercenaries. Thucydides explains that upon arriving in Thrace one of the Thracian kings, Perdiccas, helped to pay for Brasidas' mercenaries: "While he, Perdiccas, was paying for half of his army it was a breach of faith for Brasidas to parley with Arrhabaeus."<sup>26</sup> In this case, a foreign king paid for the military upkeep of Spartan forces led by Brasidas, an officer who was educated and trained through the *agōgē*, and had the Spartan ideals of honor and austerity drilled into him. Perdiccas helped fund the campaign, and, in doing so, it is conceivable that he attempted to affect Brasidas' strategy altering the Spartan focus and goals through his financial means. This represents an additional change in the Spartan use of money on campaigns from Spartan funded mercenaries to foreign funded mercenaries on the side of Sparta. Perdiccas argued against Brasidas' meeting with Arrhabaeus, the other Thracian king, based on the premise that the financial ties between Perdiccas and Brasidas allowed him to alter the focus or strategy of the Spartan campaign. In theory, if Brasidas secured alternative funding for his army, he would not have to heed to Perdiccas' direction. Despite Perdiccas' objection, Brasidas' decision making remained unaffected; he ignored Perdiccas and parleyed a meeting with Arrhabaeus. Although Perdiccas failed to affect Brasidas' strategy in this instance, this trend of a foreigner paying for the military upkeep of Spartans and attempting to sway Spartan decision-making foretells a similar relationship between the Spartan Lysander and the Persian prince Cyrus. This latter relationship will be discussed later in this article.

The next set of examples pertaining to money and wealth used in unique circumstances appear in Thucydides' description of Brasidas' campaign in northern Greece and Thrace in 424 BCE: "If Brasidas, instead of stopping to pillage, had advanced straight against the city, he would probably have taken it."<sup>27</sup> Although Brasidas' forces had not been trained in the *agōgē*, the fact that Brasidas himself, who trained in the *agōgē*, allowed pillaging or plundering cannot be overstated for its clear lack of austerity. Brasidas, motivated by financial gains through his plundering, represents a key shift in the driving

force of this campaign; for him, money, not upholding the ideals of Spartan austerity, became the priority. Brasidas' decision making during the campaign is, perhaps, indicative of the larger change of culture at play in Sparta. That is, it seems that the importance placed on upholding austerity was lessening, while the focus on money seemed to be increasing in Spartan society.

The next case can also be traced back to Brasidas' campaigns in Thrace in 424 BCE. This particular instance represents an additional aspect to the Spartan lack of austerity by illustrating a specific example of financial incentivization: "Brasidas had proclaimed in the moment of making the assault that he would give thirty silver minae to the man first on the wall."<sup>28</sup> Through this quote, the reader is able to see Brasidas' incentivize his men to fight by offering his private wealth as a reward. However, this action clashes with Spartan ideals. That is, soldiers should not fight for the acquisition of money or wealth, but for honor. The usage of private wealth as an incentive, as can be seen through this particular scenario, and the way wealth affected Brasidas' decision making throughout the campaign, in the aforementioned instance, presents for a case illustrating the lack of austerity from Brasidas and his men.

Using money and offering incentives to mercenaries is surprising because it emphasizes the role that wealth has on campaigns. That is, the well-off Spartans or foreign benefactors funding the campaigns inherently have sway and influence because of their financial contribution. Traditionally, the Spartan culture of austerity aimed to minimize these contributions, as they potentially threatened the integrity of these military operations. The then newly established trend of using mercenaries in conjunction with Spartan hoplites was in response to dwindling numbers of Spartans during the second half of the fifth century BCE, as prior scholars have noted.<sup>29</sup> This trend of finding military men other than Spartans for Spartan military use is highlighted with the growing trend of *mothakes*, or non-Spartans who were trained in the *agogē*. *Mothakes* were deployed more and more frequently as the Peloponnesian War went on.<sup>30</sup> As Sparta began to rely on forces other than Spartan hoplites, military matters became codependent with foreign money in warfare instead of relying on Spartan hoplites and Peloponnesian allies.<sup>31</sup> Using mercenaries as a Spartan force goes against the Spartan mirage culture of military as it makes Sparta more dependent on money and wealth for campaigns than it had been previously.<sup>32</sup> This increasing reliance on wealth rendered Spartans more and more vulnerable to the potentially corrupting influence of those providing them with these funds.

Similar to Brasidas, Lysander was also a Spartan general who plundered in the eastern Aegean during the third phase of the Peloponnesian War in 405 BCE. That being said, one notable difference between the two scenarios is that while Brasidas did so with a force composed of helots and mercenaries, Lysander plundered with a force of Spartan hoplites.<sup>33</sup> Lysander's men "attacked Lampsacus and captured it by force, and the soldiers plundered the city, which was rich with wine and grain and full of all the other necessities."<sup>34</sup> While one could have presented the argument that the decline in Spartan austerity was solely due to a presence of mercenaries and helots (who were not familiar with the principles taught in

the *agoge*), Lysander's campaign indicates otherwise. That is, given that Spartan hoplites took part in the plundering, this incident illustrates a key example in which Spartan actions violated their own culture and ideals of austerity instilled in the *agoge*.

One aspect Xenophon focuses on is the plundering of wine, which is notable because compulsory drinking was not allowed in Sparta and drunkenness was heavily frowned upon.<sup>35</sup> While many of the plundered goods might have been campaign necessities, such as food, wine was not among them. This reveals that a portion of the focus in plundering is not just on campaign necessities but also wealth and luxury.<sup>36</sup> This case, along with the prior case of Brasidas plundering, are both instances where Spartan leaders focused on distinctly non-Spartan ideals (luxury and wealth) while on campaign, illustrating just how far the Spartan mirage ideal of austerity had deteriorated.

During the campaign in the eastern Aegean, Lysander asked Cyrus, a Persian prince and Spartan ally, for financial assistance for Spartan military upkeep during the Peloponnesian War:

He went to Cyrus to ask for money, but Cyrus told him that all the money from the King had been spent - indeed much more than the King had given; he also indicated to him what had been provided to each of the previous Spartan admirals. In spite of this, Cyrus gave the money to Lysander.<sup>37</sup>

Xenophon reports that Cyrus gave the money even though he was hesitant, and this is just one of several mentions of the close, personal relationship between Cyrus and Lysander. This incident further illustrates that Cyrus was already paying for a large portion of the Spartan upkeep to allow the Spartans a greater chance at victory in the Peloponnesian War after decades of limited progress, "He assigned to Lysander all the tribute from the cities which was considered his personal property, and he gave him in addition surplus money from his treasury. Reminding him that he was a friend of both the city of Sparta and Lysander personally."<sup>38</sup> These quotes, in demonstrating Lysander's repeated asks for money, demonstrate a complete lack of Spartan austerity by reinforcing the changing role of money in Spartan military campaigns, as will be seen in the coming paragraphs. In particular, the emphasis Cyrus puts on the friendship granted by this financial assistance hints towards a similar relationship between Lysander and Cyrus as the one described earlier with Brasidas and Perdiccas.

As in the case of Brasidas and Perdiccas, the supply of money affected the decision-making of Lysander, as Xenophon indicates, "When Lysander arrived, Cyrus forbade him to fight a battle against the Athenians until he had many more ships at his disposal."<sup>39</sup> While he did not directly obey Cyrus, Lysander did alter his strategy by refraining from attacking Athenian troops as he had originally wanted and opting to attack the Athenian ally instead.<sup>40</sup> However, Cyrus affected Lysander's strategy through his financial influence.<sup>41</sup> While this shift in strategy was likely in the best interest of Sparta, this is another example of military strategy being affected by non-traditional Spartan methods, which could lead to trouble in



the future if the goals of Persia and Sparta do not align. This is best exemplified in the previously mentioned disastrous 10,000 campaign into Persia.

Whether Sparta hired mercenaries for campaigning, financial incentivization, or attempted usage of Spartans as mercenaries it is clear that money played a major part in various stages of Spartan campaigns, within the fifth century BCE, especially during the Peloponnesian War.

## II. Bribery to Alter Military Plans

Bribery of Spartan leaders while they were on campaign was an additional tactic employed as a means of influencing their actions. The previous section showcased the Spartan reality through emphasizing the potentially corrupting influence of those who paid for military upkeep, provided financial incentives, and gave bribes in hopes of stimulating Spartan military action or giving rise to the use of mercenaries. On the other hand, this section deals with cases of bribery that specifically cause an end to the military campaign and facilitate a return to Sparta. As such, these instances of bribery explain altered military plans and campaigns that *further* divert from the Spartan ideal of austerity. These cases often follow a linear trend whereupon a Spartan military campaign would be on track to succeeding before a Spartan leader would choose to avoid capturing a city-state or further subjugating the enemy and, when the army would return home to Sparta, the leader would be put on trial for bribery.

The first instance of bribery to alter military plans occurred when Kleomenes campaigned against Argos in 494 BCE. Argos, a city, was the main Spartan rival within the Peloponnese; defeating it would be a major victory for Sparta. Specifically, Kleomenes was tasked with defeating Argos and imposing a thirty year peace upon them, but refrained from doing so.<sup>42</sup> Herodotus states, "After [Kleomenes'] return, his enemies brought him to trial before the ephors, claiming that he had accepted bribes to refrain from taking Argos when he could easily have captured it."<sup>43</sup> The ephors, who were five Spartans chosen yearly to protect the Spartan polis and acted as a magistrate, collectively arrived at a likely conclusion. They believed that Kleomenes was bribed into returning home with a victory that weakened, but did not fully destroy Argos.<sup>44</sup> This accusation, mentioned in the quote, is of utmost importance as it took place within the first decade of the fifth century BCE, when the Spartan mirage was at its strongest. Given the prevalence of the Spartan mirage, all Spartans were thought to be uniquely austere and incorruptible. Being susceptible to this kind of bribery would indicate that Kleomenes put his needs above those of Sparta.<sup>45</sup> This is evidence of a departure from the ultimate Spartan ideal of putting Sparta and her needs above any individual, even a king. Since this happened during campaign against Sparta's key Peloponnesian rival, this would appear to be a far more severe crime than if done on campaign against a minor power. However, later on in the passage, Herodotus muddled the bribery charges, stating, "Which I cannot judge if it was a lie or the truth."<sup>46</sup> This is the beginning of a trend within Sparta where military leaders who did not follow their orders to the letter would be charged with bribery by the ephors and put on trial. Herodotus later



states that the charges against Kleomenes were dismissed; Kleomenes delivered a convincing defense, claiming he read an omen that prompted him to return home.

Herodotus illustrates another charge of bribery against Kleomenes which took place during the first Greco-Persian War. After Athens claimed that the Aeginetans, the people of a strategically vital island near Attica, had submitted to Persia after Darius, a Persian king, demanded submission of Hellas in 491 BCE, Kleomenes went to arrest the accused Aeginetans:

But when he tried to arrest them, other Aeginetans showed up to oppose him, foremost among them one Krios son of Polykritos, who said that Kleomenes would not get away with seizing even one Aeginetan, he had no authority from the Spartan government for doing this, but had been swayed by Athenian money; otherwise, his fellow king of the Spartans would have accompanied him to make the arrests.<sup>47</sup>

During the Greco-Persian wars, many poleis chose to side with Persia, yet Kleomenes personally went to oversee the arrest of individuals in Aegina. Kleomenes's involvement is unusual because Aeginetan was an island; Sparta, unlike Athens, was not known for exerting its power through naval coercion. It is also important to note that the Spartans, at this stage in the Greco-Persian Wars, had played a very limited role in fighting the Persians. In fact, they refused to aid the Athenians in the pivotal battle of Marathon that occurred shortly after. Despite this precedent of unwillingness to aid Athens, the Spartan king Kleomenes had made the seemingly illogical decision to help Athens in this particular mission.<sup>48</sup> These factors, in combination with Athens leading the call for the persecution of Aeginetans for aligning with Persia, lead to the conclusion that an agreement or collaboration between Athens and Kleomenes had been made; that Kleomenes, as the quote indicates, "had been swayed by Athenian money."<sup>49</sup>

Another example of this can be seen with Kleomenes' co-king, Leotychidas, who was arrested while on campaign in Thessaly. Herodotus summarizes this event:

Leotychidas did not grow old in Sparta but paid the penalty for what he had done to Demaratos in the following way. He had led the army of the Lacedaemonians into Thessaly, and although it would have been possible for him to subjugate all of that land, he accepted a large bribe instead and was caught in the act, sitting in camp on a glove full of money.<sup>50</sup>

Leotychidas was caught red-handed with money, put on trial, and then sent into exile after he was found guilty of bribery.<sup>51</sup> This case follows the same three-part storyline as Kleomenes, but unlike in Kleomenes' situation there is clear evidence in the form of money found in campsite. Leotychidas represents one of the first concrete examples of the Spartan lack of austerity; his ability to be bribed during his campaign illustrates a fundamental break from the ideals taught in Spartan culture and proves that Spartans could be bribed for their

own personal benefit. This case occurred prior to the battle of Thermopylae as emblematic of the height of the Spartan mirage, demonstrating a key point against the mythos of the Spartan mirage of austerity and honor. The bribery charges concluded when Sparta demolished Leotychidas' house and exiled him.

A key case of bribery to alter military plans involves Pleistoanax while he campaigned against Athens in 431 BCE. He led Spartan hoplites into Attica during the first year of the Archidamian phase of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides explains:

It was remembered that Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of Sparta, had invaded Attica with a Peloponnesian army fourteen years before, but had retreated without advancing farther than Eleusis and Thria, which indeed proved the cause of his exile from Sparta, as it was thought he had been bribed to retreat.<sup>52</sup>

This case parallels Kleomenes' first case; it was a campaign against the key Spartan rival, Athens, a rival for hegemony over Greece. As such, Sparta likely encouraged Pleistoanax to defeat Athens as thoroughly as possible.<sup>53</sup> Since Pleistoanax left prior to a decisive engagement, the Spartan ephors and assembly members concluded that he had been bribed. Specifically, Pleistoanax had left Attica willingly, without losing a battle or facing the main Athenian army which Pericles kept behind the long walls.<sup>54</sup> Pericles, the leading Athenian statesman, likely bribed Pleistoanax with a payment of money or political favor; Plutarch, a Greek philosopher, believed it to be a combination of the two: "Pericles entered into secret negotiations with this person [Pleistonax]. In a very short time, he had succeeded, by bribery and corruption, in inducing him to withdraw the Peloponnesian army from the soil of Attica."<sup>55</sup> This is important to acknowledge, as with no clear justification for Pleistoanax's return to Sparta, the conclusion of bribery made by the Spartan ephors proceeds logically. Pleistoanax was sent into exile shortly thereafter, based on bribery charges.

This trend suggests a culture where leading Spartan generals were susceptible to bribery and altered their military campaign plans due to bribery. At the very least, this proves that not all Spartans were pristine and austere; rather, some Spartans failed in honoring the ideals put forth by the Spartan mirage. All instances of bribery on campaign described in this article took place far from Sparta and were subject to less oversight than they would have been within Sparta; based on this evidence, it seems Spartan leaders took greater liberties away on campaign. Overall, the trend of military leaders, specifically Spartan kings, accepting bribes while on campaigns is reflective of the prioritization of the individual over the state. In other words, it is a blatant violation against Spartan ideals.<sup>56</sup>

### III. Bribing Oracles

One bribery trend that also played a role in shaping Sparta was bribery of oracles. Oracles often took part in deciding cases that were controversial or had no clear solution.<sup>57</sup> Lycurgus, by creating new laws, set the precedent for the Spartan use of oracles in helping decide important cases.<sup>58</sup> Bribery, on a number of occasions, was used to sway oracles in

their decision-making on matters that were of particular importance to Sparta. Those who accepted the bribes, as well as those who proposed them, defied the Spartan ideals of austerity by putting their own needs above those of Sparta.<sup>59</sup>

The first case involves Kleomenes. Herodotus explains that the question of whether or not Demaratos was the son of Ariston, a king of Sparta, was very contentious within Sparta. In fact, it seemed that the question could only be answered by referring it to an oracle. Herodotus tells us:

It was Kleomenes who had come up with the idea to refer this question to the Pythia, and he next gained the support of Kobon son of Aristophantos, who wielded the greatest influence at Delphi and who then persuaded Perisallos the Pythia to proclaim what Kleomenes wanted her to say.<sup>60</sup>

Though Kleomenes did not bribe Perisallos the Pythia directly, he indirectly influenced the decision to proclaim in his favor through bribing Kobon. The fact that Herodotus does not question the truth of this episode, as he does in the prior case of bribery involving Kleomenes, further validates this case.<sup>61</sup> The ability to influence a decision that was considered so important is groundbreaking. As can be seen from this example, Kleomenes directly influenced the identity of the second king within Sparta, and the audacity of Kleomenes in distorting the highest levels of the Spartan polis through bribery cannot be overstated. Here, as in other cases mentioned in this article, Kleomenes does not act in the Spartan mirage manner of austerity. Rather, he used bribery to mold Sparta for his *own* good, not the good of Sparta. Later, when Kleomenes' actions were discovered by the Spartans, both Kobon and Perisallos, Kleomenes' agents in Delphi, lost their positions and Kleomenes had to flee into exile in Thessaly from fear of arrest.

Thucydides explains that a similar case of bribery occurred when Pleistoanax, the Spartan king who was bribed to retreat from Attica years earlier, successfully instigated his return home by influencing an oracle at Delphi in his nineteenth year of his exile:

Pleistoanax, on the other hand, was assailed by his enemies for his restoration, and regularly criticized by them in front of his countrymen for every reverse that befell them, as though his unjust restoration were the cause. They accused him and his brother Aristocles of having bribed the prophetess of Delphi to tell the Spartan deputations which successively arrived at the temple to bring home the seed of the demigod son of Zeus from abroad, else they would have to plough with a solver share.<sup>62</sup>

This case, allegedly involving Pleistoanax, is less transparent than that of Kleomenes, as it is conveyed through whispers and rumor. No formal legal action was taken against Pleistoanax, as it is not explicitly verified that he was the one doing the bribing. Because the accusations come directly from Pleistoanax's enemies, it is possible to examine this accusation as pure factionalism and rivalry. That being said, the word choice of the prophecy



lends credibility to the idea that Pleistoanax *did* bribe the oracle. Specifically, the words “the demigod son of Zeus from abroad,” could only refer to a former king of Sparta, as the two Spartan dynasties were descendants of Heracles; given Pleistoanax’s title and location abroad, taken alongside Thucydides’ identification, one can reasonably assume that the prophecy likely is in reference to him.<sup>63</sup> The method by which both Kleomenes and Pleistoanax bribed oracles, with neither bribing the prophetess *directly*, is an important trend to note. While Kleomenes used a contact within the oracle community to bribe the prophetess, it appears the Pleistoanax used his brother to bribe the prophetess. Both instances indicate a carefully orchestrated bribe, intended to bring about a specific personal goal. This method of bribery exhibits a clear break from the Spartan ideals of austerity, honor, and Sparta first as they act for their own benefit and use money to achieve their goals.

The most surprising case of bribing an oracle comes from Diodorus’ account of Lysander. When Lysander was at the peak of his power, just after the Peloponnesian War, he attempted to reform the Spartan government by transforming kingship from a hereditary office to an elected one: “Knowing that the Lacedaemonians gave very great heed to the responses of oracles, he attempted to bribe the prophetess in Delphi, since he believed that, if he should receive an oracular response favorable to the designs he entertained, he should easily carry his project to a successful end.”<sup>64</sup> Lysander understood the crucial role that the oracles and their prophecies played in affecting Spartan reform, dating all the way back to the time of Lycurgus.<sup>65</sup> He not only attempted to bribe the oracle at Delphi, but also the oracles at Dodone and Cyrene.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Lysander attempted to bribe the prophetess directly, and then, like Kleomenes and Pleistoanax, indirectly through a middleman.<sup>67</sup> It was likely that bribery was the intention with the oracles as Diodorus communicates, “When he could not win over the attendants of the oracle, despite the large sum he promised them... the overseers of the oracle sent ambassadors to lay charges against Lysander for his effort to bribe the oracle.”<sup>68</sup> The labelling of Lysander’s attempts to garner the support of the oracle as ‘bribery,’ along with the resulting charges brought against him, confirms that Lysander failed to gain the support of any of the oracles to prophesize in his favor. Similar to Kleomenes, Lysander represents the antithesis of the Spartan ideal because he put his own goals ahead of Sparta’s goals. Diodorus explains that Lysander aspired to become the king of Sparta: “For he hoped that the kingship would very soon come to him because of his achievements.”<sup>69</sup> As shown in this scenario, Lysander did not embody the austere Spartan that he is often idealized to be. He went on to lose his power and fade from relevance within Sparta just a few seasons later.

Although these cases of bribery involving oracles varied, they all are centered around leading Spartans who put their own needs above those of Sparta. The oracle represented the highest power of decision making for the Spartan polis, especially on contentious issues of the utmost importance. Because of the influence held by the oracles within Spartan society, it is extremely important to identify when there are attempts (successful or otherwise) to corrupt their integrity. Furthermore, while bribing oracles started with kings, as the fifth



century BCE progressed it expanded to other leading Spartans, including Lysander, a former *mothax*. This indicates that Spartans of many origins were acting in austerere and lacked the Spartan mirages ideals. The break in the Spartan mirage extended to multiple levels of Spartan society, not just the pinnacle with the kings.

#### IV. Outliers

The final cases are outliers that do not categorically fit into the prior sections of this article, but they still conform to the theory of decline; that is, they still represent key cases of Spartan bribery or lack of austerity by Spartan leaders. In particular, this section focuses on several cases involving the cases of King Pausanias and Brasidas.

In the first case, Pausanias returned to Sparta after being accused of taking a bribe while on campaign in Northern Greece in the years following the Greco-Persian War: “Anxious above everything to avoid suspicion, and confident that he could quash the charge by means of money, returned a second time to Sparta...he soon compromised the matter.”<sup>70</sup> The quote, in other words, describes Pausanias’ return to Sparta, in which he successfully bribed individuals within Sparta to drop prior accusations of bribery. This case is important as it took place within the Spartan polis, under the watchful eye of all five ephors. Due to the specific wording provided in the primary source,, “χρήμασι,” it is clear when translating that he intended to bribe officials to quash the charges. This fundamentally changes our understanding of the issue of bribery in Sparta; that is, if Spartans were susceptible to being bribed in order to quash as serious a charge as a king taking a bribe on campaign, then it is conceivable that cases of lesser importance could be acquitted through bribery.<sup>71</sup>

While on the same campaign, Pausanias corresponded with the Persian ruler, Xerxes. Thucydides recalls Pausanias’ Offering: “Pausanias, the general of Sparta, anxious to do you a favor, sends you these his prisoners of war. I propose also, with your approval, to marry your daughter, and to make Sparta and the rest of Hellas subject to you.”<sup>72</sup> In his attempt to gain marriage with Persian royalty, the letters, and specifically, Pausanias’ efforts to placate Xerxes, indicate that he acted in his own interest, not in Sparta’s. In particular, he offered Xerxes prisoners of war and the whole of Greece<sup>73</sup>. Making “Sparta and the rest of Hellas” subject to a foreign ruler is, surely, not in the best interest of Sparta. Concurrently, he attempted to join with Persian royalty both as a literal path to luxury and wealth but also as an expression of his ties with the East.

One specific instance of the corruption of Pausanias, as Thucydides explains, occurred on campaign in Northern Greece in the early fifth century BCE. This example depicts how corrupted and extravagant Pausanias became and how Pausanias likened himself to Xerxes:

Went out to Byzantium in a Median dress, was attended on his march through Thrace by a bodyguard of Medes and Egyptians, kept a Persian table, and was quite unable to contain his intentions, but he betrayed by his conduct in trifles what his ambition looked one day to enact on a grander scale.<sup>74</sup>

This section of Thucydides highlights that Pausanias lacked austerity, specifically through highlighting the grandiose way in which he lived on this campaign. Specifically, this extravagance is represented by Median dress, a luxury that broke from the Spartan traditional clothing, and a Persian table. Through emphasizing Pausanias' focus on wealth, it seems that Thucydides is illustrating Pausanias as susceptible to this luxury, and therefore, also as someone who is drifting from traditional Spartan ideals of austerity.

A similar corruption of Brasidas occurred while he was on his Thracian campaign and met with the Scionaeans. During his interactions with the Scionaeans, Thucydides depicts a bedecked Brasidas: "They welcomed Brasidas with all possible honors, publicly crowning him with a wreath of gold as the liberator of Hellas; private persons crowded round him and decked him with garlands as though he had been an athlete."<sup>75</sup> The Scionaeans treated Brasidas like royalty, similarly to Pausanias in the prior case; however, in this case, Brasidas did not ask for it or require it as Pausanias did. While Brasidas did not initially ask for or expect the Scionaeans' extravagant welcome, the decadence that they showered upon him possibly affected his mindset and actions. For example, when news of a key Spartan-Athenian truce arrived, Brasidas lied and broke the truce with the Athenians in order to defend the Scionaeans.<sup>76</sup> This truce would be reconstituted immediately after the death of Brasidas.

As the fifth century BCE progressed, this behavior became characteristic of leading Spartans such as Brasidas and Lysander, who were not kings. Specifically, Lysander trained in the *agoge* as a *mothax* and, as such, his corruption proves that even Spartans of non-royal origins were at risk of going down a similar path, riddled with bribery and profiteering after they achieved a leading role within Sparta.<sup>77</sup> This illustrates that a lack of austerity was not limited to one class of people; rather, it was transcended to the larger Spartan system and society. All this being said, it is clear that luxury and wealth played a far greater role in Spartan campaigning than depicted in the Spartan mirage.

While the cases in this section of the article differ from those outlined in sections I and II of this paper, they, ultimately, do support Xenophon's theory of decline as analyzed through the lens of corruption and bribery. The case of Pausanias and his bribery of Spartan leaders is representative of a unique case of corruption. The other cases illustrate the further in austerity of Pausanias and the lack of integrity shown by Brasidas, where they are both influenced by wealth or foreigners. These cases are all indicative of the divergence between the Spartan mirage and reality.

## V. Conclusion

There are a number of nuances in the argument that provide starting points for additional research.<sup>78</sup> One important nuance in this argument is that many of the charges against the kings and leading Spartans came from the ephors, who gained increasing power throughout the fifth century BCE: "The Ephors are competent to fine whom they choose, and have authority to enact immediate payment."<sup>79</sup> It is possible that they put kings on trial, and prosecuted them for bribery as a way of diminishing the king and curbing their power

(rather than for the sole reason that the kings had actually committed bribery).<sup>80</sup> Sometimes this resulted in the exile of kings, while in other cases it appeared that the ephors might have taken wealth in exchange for allowing the accused to be acquitted. This tactic, in which the ephors curbed the power of leading Spartans, originally just included Spartan kings. However, as the fifth century progressed other non-kings who amassed great power were pushed out by the ephors as well.<sup>81</sup> This point suggests that the corruption in Spartan society was not solely limited to royalty and other men who accumulated power; rather, the ephors were also hungry for power and wealth, and susceptible to this same bribery. Further exploration can be done on corruption related to the ephors; however, exploring this topic in depth is beyond the scope of this specific article, which has specifically focused on the corruption of Spartan kings and other leading Spartans.

Spartans illustrated greater susceptibility to the influence of bribery and corruption than is commonly associated with Sparta, as shown by the primary sources cited in this paper. This common association of austerity, equality, and honor can be traced back to the Spartan mirage and orthodox historical accounts. This greater susceptibility to the influence of bribery and corruption, as described in events presented by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon supports the latter's decline theory, revealing the moral fiber of leading Spartans in the late fifth century BCE to be questionable at best. While the cases have been split into multiple categories: bribery and financial upkeep of Spartan military, bribery to alter military plans, bribing oracles, and outliers, all the cases depict Spartans as willing to be bribed and bribing others for their personal benefit. Though kings, originally, were the only ones shown to be subject to corruption, towards the end of the fifth century BCE, this corruption had extended its reach to many leading Spartans. As the Peloponnesian War came to an end, it became clear that wealth and money played a significant role in Sparta's military strategy.



## REFERENCES

*Tap to jump to the Bibliography*

- <sup>1</sup> J. Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," in *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind Her Success*, (New York: Routledge Revival, 2014), 122-141, 136. "For many years, even when the current behavior of the Spartans flagrantly contradicted the 'Lycurgan' ideal."
- <sup>2</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*. (London: Duckworth, 2001), 163.
- <sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, Chapter 9, Section 1, Page 231.
- <sup>4</sup> Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," 130-135. Hooker discusses when the Spartan mirage started and aspects of it.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert B. Strassler ed. *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*. Translated by John Marincola. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009). This quote shows the dual sided view the Spartan mirage shows about Spartan life. As Kleomenes proved to be the austere but deeply feared that many within Sparta would not be so austere if tempted in the same way. Xenophon Constitution of the Lacedaemon's 185 illustrates a clear instance of the unknown nature of the Spartan mirage and how unclear it was seeing the reality of Sparta from the mirage.
- <sup>6</sup> Charleton L. Brownson, *Xenophon: Anabasis*. (London: Heinemann, 1968), 5.3.7. Xenophon had interactions with the Lacedaemonians during his time in Scillus in the Peloponese. "He was living at Scillus, near Olympia, where he had been established as a colonist by the Lacedaemonians."
- <sup>7</sup> Xenophon, and Donald F. Jackson. *The constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. (Lewiston.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 185. This may also be an indicator of Xenophon's decline theory with more publicized grandeur and connection with wealth.
- <sup>9</sup> Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," 136. Hooker relates Xenophon's decline theory with Plato's view of Sparta.
- <sup>10</sup> G. L. Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," *The Classical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1983): 385. Cawkwell focuses on one aspect of the decline of Sparta, especially the decline in Spartan hoplites or Spartiates from several thousand to little over a thousand by the end of the fifth century. He further discusses the concept of Neodamodeis and Inferiors and how they supplemented the loss of Spartan manpower, 392-394.
- <sup>11</sup> S. Hodkinson, "The imaginary Spartan Politeia" in *The Imaginary Polis* (Copenhagen: Historisk Filosofiske Meddelelser, 2005), 91. Hodkinson addresses Xenophon's theory of decline through the view of several ancient Greek historians.
- <sup>12</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 BC*. (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- <sup>13</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*. (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009).
- <sup>14</sup> Claire Taylor, "Bribery in Athenian Politics Part I: Accusations, Allegations, and Slander," *Greece & Rome* 48, no. 1 (2001): 53-66. This study investigates common forms of Athenian bribery, including Greek terminology used to describe specific types of bribery.
- <sup>15</sup> Michael A. Flower, "Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 37, no. S58 (1991): 93. Flower discusses the decline of Spartan morals, especially the role wealth and luxury played in this decline. He further explains the Greek outlook on the negative moral aspects of prosperity and wealth.
- <sup>16</sup> Mercenaries being defined as any group who fought with the Spartans, who weren't a part of the Peloponnesian League or allied to Sparta, in exchange for wealth and thus bound to go to war with the Spartans.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, 5.49.4.
- <sup>18</sup> It was uncommon for the Spartan military to venture far from their homelands on long campaigns due to the constant of a Helot revolt.
- <sup>19</sup> Robert B. Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, trans. Andrea L Purvis, (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 5.51.2.
- <sup>20</sup> Hansen, Mogens Herman, and Stephen Hodkinson, "The Imaginary Spartan Politeia," In *The Imaginary Polis: Symposium*, (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske videnskabernes selskab, 2005), 224-225. Hodkinson addresses the dualities involved in the primary sources on Sparta, especially how they depict the Spartan mirage and reality.
- <sup>21</sup> F.D. Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," *History of Political Thought* 6, no. 1/2 (1985): 108. Harvey references the Hypereides Principle, which mentions that Athenians would be tolerant of bribery so long as it was in Athens best interest. This principle is interesting to further put our focus of Spartan bribery in proper context, especially whether bribes taken were in the best interest of Sparta or not.
- <sup>22</sup> Not exactly Spartan hoplites as mercenaries but bribery to cause Spartan military action as they would still be under Spartan command and with Spartan goals in mind (as long as they were fighting Athens in Attica).
- <sup>23</sup> Robert B. Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley, (New York: Free Press, 1996), 1.109.2-3.
- <sup>24</sup> Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 4.80.5. elots were Spartan slaves that worked in the polis and fields around Sparta. While they usually did not train in the Spartan *agogē*, some did train in the *agogē*. As such, the majority of Spartan helots were untrained in the arts of war.
- <sup>25</sup> This assumption being that Sparta likely provided limited funds for this purpose. The reason he likely received limited funding was due to the lack of broad support for his northern campaign.
- <sup>26</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 4.83.5.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 4.104.2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 4.116.2.

<sup>29</sup> G. L. Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta." *The Classical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1983): 385-400.

<sup>30</sup> Cartledge, Paul and Massimo Nafissi, "Sparta," In *Sparta: New Perspectives*, edited by Hodkinson Stephen and Powell Anton, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 129; Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," 393-394. It was possible for non-Spartiates to be trained in the *agoge*, these fall into two categories: *mothakes* or Inferiors and *neodamodeis* (freed helots of military service). While much is still unknown about the exact nature and origin of these individuals it is clear that they were non-Spartiates trained in the *agoge* who were then used in Sparta's military. This started in the middle of the Peloponnesian War. Nafissi addresses other reasons why the number of Spartiates declined, especially the inability to pay the tax necessary to remain a full Spartiate.

<sup>31</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*: 2.9.1. The Peloponnesians alliance to the Spartans in the Peloponnesian League led nearly all the Peloponnese to ally and aid Sparta during times of war.

<sup>32</sup> Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," 385. Cawkwell explains that the Spartans relied upon hoplites during the majority of the fifth century until the number of hoplites declined significantly.

<sup>33</sup> Robert B Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*, trans. John Marincola (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009), 2.1.18. Xenophon explains that Lysander sailed down the coast with his men before meeting up with another contingent of Spartan-led troops before attacking Lampsacus. Some of the troops were not Spartan hoplites.

<sup>34</sup> Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 2.1.19.

<sup>35</sup> Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 155; Kathleen M. Lynch, *The Symposium in Context: Pottery From a Late Archaic House Near the Athenian Agora*, (Princeton: *Hesperia Supplements*, 2007). While Strassler writes that "Another of [Xenophon's] reforms was the abolition of compulsory drinking," symposia, or drinking parties, which included compulsory drinking, were a social aspect of ancient Greek culture.

<sup>36</sup> While they could have sold these other forms of wealth to help supply their campaign further, no mention of this is given in Xenophon's *Hellenika*.

<sup>37</sup> Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 2.1.11.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 2.1.14.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 2.1.14.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 2.1.15.

<sup>41</sup> Flower, *Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta*, 92. Flower goes into detail about the question of what to do with wealth after the Peloponnesian War ended. This highlighted the change in culture the Spartans had experienced during the fifth century BCE.

<sup>42</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 5.14.4. Thucydides mentions the thirty years peace Sparta had enforced on Argos after Sparta's dominant victory in 451; Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," 99-100. Harvey gives several examples of why a retreat might be tactical and not necessarily resulting from a bribe.

<sup>43</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.82.1.

<sup>44</sup> Argos was forced into a significant peace by Sparta in another campaign later in the fifth century BCE.

<sup>45</sup> Hodkinson, *Properties and Wealth in Classical Sparta*. Hodkinson discusses at length how individuals within Sparta were never put above other Spartans—even Olympic winners only received minor honors.

<sup>46</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.82.1

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 6.50.2.

<sup>48</sup> Herodotus states, "The source of Krios' assertion was a letter from Demaratos." Demaratos was the other King of Sparta. The source claiming Kleomenes' mission lacked authority and backing of the Spartan government comes from the other king of Sparta, a legitimate source. Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.50.3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 6.49.2

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 6.72.1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," 94-95. Harvey references this accusation, but does not agree that the case is definitive and that the Spartans were capable of rigging a trial.

<sup>52</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 2.21.1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 1.114.1-2. Thucydides explains that Pleistoanax led an army into Attica after the revolt of Euboea and Megara, probably thinking the revolts had weakened Athens during this early stage of the Peloponnesian War.

- <sup>54</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 2.21.3-2.22.1. Thucydides explains that Pericles kept the Athenians from going out to meet the Spartans in open battle.
- <sup>55</sup> Plutarch and W. R. Frazer, *Plutarch's Lives. Alexander. Pericles. Caius Caesar. Aemilius Paulus*. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906), 119. Whether that be favorable terms in a treaty outright or a silent agreement with Pericles, the man theorized to have bribed him. It is possible that a xenia relationship would have played a factor in this interaction. Malkin, Irad, "Lysander and Libys," *The Classical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1990). Malkin discusses xenia relations with foreigners and the role he played in Lysander's bribery of oracle, however if we think about the role of xenia relations this may have played a part in the bribe Pleistoanax received. Xenia relations are further discussed in Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: some aspects of bribery in Greek politics" 107.
- <sup>56</sup> "He would not suffer the names to be inscribed, except only of men who fell in the wars, or women who died in a sacred office." Lycurgus only allowed those who died in childbirth in battle to have gravestones, because they died in direct service of the polis. Plutarch, John Dryden, and Arthur Hugh Clough. *Plutarch's Lives, the Dryden Plutarch*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, ltd, 1932, 288.27.2.
- <sup>57</sup> Hooker, J, "Spartan Propaganda," 132. Hooker illustrates the precedent Lycurgus set down by going to the oracle prior to reforming Sparta.
- <sup>58</sup> The origin of the use of oracles to enact government reform goes back to Lycurgus. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedemonians* 164: "before delivering his laws to the people he paid a visit to Delphi, accompanied by the most important citizens, and inquired of the god whether it was desirable and better for Sparta that she should obey the laws that he himself had framed. Only when the god answered that it was better in every way did he deliver them."
- <sup>59</sup> Hooker, J, "The Life and Times of Lycurgus the Lawgiver," *Klio*, 70 (2016), 340-341. Hooker explains the origins of going to oracles to enact Spartan reform and how Lycurgus used an oracle.
- <sup>60</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.66.2.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 6.82.1
- <sup>62</sup> Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 5.16.2.
- <sup>63</sup> The lore of Sparta describes the descendants of Heracles —the Agiads and Eurpontids—that were the two dynasties that produced Spartan kings. By focusing on looking for a demigod son of Zeus abroad, the oracle had a highly specific focus that indicated Pleistonax alone.
- <sup>64</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.3.
- <sup>65</sup> Malkin, "Lysander and Libys," 542; Flower, "Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta," 81. Flower goes into detail about how Lysander understood the way to enact reform within Sparta, specifically through the usage of oracles.
- <sup>66</sup> Malkin, "Lysander and Libys," 542.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 542. Malkin discusses the role of xenia relations and how Lysander may have used a xenia relation in his attempts to bribe oracles.
- <sup>68</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.3-47.7.
- <sup>69</sup> Diodorus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.2.
- <sup>70</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.131.2.
- <sup>71</sup> Taylor, *Bribery in Athenian Politics*, 54. Taylor refers to the term *sykophancy* "can be described as a form of bribery (paying money to someone to avoid a court appearance)."
- <sup>72</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.128.7.
- <sup>73</sup> Hooker, *Spartan Propaganda*, 125. Hooker discusses Thucydides depiction of Pausanias.
- <sup>74</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.130.1.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 4.121.1.
- <sup>76</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 5.16.1.
- <sup>77</sup> Cawkwell, *The Decline of Sparta*, 394. A *mothax* is someone who was not a full Spartan citizen (or Spartiate) who underwent the training in the *agoge*. It was thought Lysander was a *mothax*, Cawkwell mentions several sources that indicate in the affirmative
- <sup>78</sup> H. W. Parke, "The Deposing of Spartan Kings," *The Classical Quarterly* 39, no. 3/4 (1945): 109-110. Parke addresses a number of possible nuances that explain the deposing of Spartan kings for bribery.
- <sup>79</sup> Strassler, *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*, 163.
- <sup>80</sup> Cartledge and Nafissi, *New Perspectives on Sparta*, 131. One such example was Pleistoanax after altering his military campaign by leaving Attica early. Nafissi addresses the role of the ephors and how they interacted with other Spartan individuals and bodies (*gerousia*, kings, etc).
- <sup>81</sup> Hodkinson, *The Imaginary Spartan Politeia*, 240-241. Hodkinson addresses the evolving role of ephors and kings.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y



# THE MORRIS WORM: CYBER SECURITY, VIRAL CONTAGIONS, AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, 1945-1989

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# REPRESENTATIONS OF THE *BUMIDOM*: REEMBODIED HISTORIES IN JESSICA OUBLIÉ AND MARIE-ANGE ROUSSEAU'S *PÉYI AN NOU*

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