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EDITOR'S NOTE

This year's edition of The Forum represents hours of research, days of writing, and years of anticipation. Many students of history dream of publishing their work in a journal, and the students whose work is included in this journal have achieved that goal today.

This journal features students who are just beginning to understand what it means to be a historian, as well as students who identify as historians after years of honing their craft. It highlights many different areas of history, including women's history, American history, European history, Russian history, local history, and even historical theory. Similarly, each author offers a unique writing style and perspective.

The production of this journal provides an unparalleled opportunity for history students to live out the Cal Poly motto, "Learn by Doing." We believe that enlarging the pool of historical scholarship that our journal represents will only enhance the production process. Thus, we are proud to announce that our journal broke new ground this year by accepting a submission from outside of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. As we look toward the future, we hope to incorporate scholarship from many colleges and universities.

The Forum has truly been a labor of love this year. We have grown as students of history and editors throughout the production process. Most importantly, we have a renewed respect for the production of history and its importance. We sincerely hope that you enjoy this edition of The Forum.

Sincerely,
Laura Neylan and Nicky Williams
Executive Editors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRONT MATTER

- iii | Journal Staff
- v | Editor's Note
- viii | Article Summaries

ARTICLES

- 3 | School of the People: The Progressive Origins of Cal Poly | *Andrew Gorman*
- 19 | Worthy of Veneration or Skepticism?: How Europeans Regarded Relics During Medieval and Renaissance Europe | *Kevin McLaren*
- 29 | Twentieth Century Mermaids: American Women on Display | *Soquel Filice*
- 43 | This Small World: The Legacy and Impact of New York City Hardcore Punk and Straight Edge in the 1980s | *Alan Parkes*
- 89 | Echoes of a Dying State: Perestroika Propaganda in the Soviet Foreign Press | *Matthew Brown*

BACK MATTER

- 116 | Acknowledgements
- 119 | Information for Authors

ARTICLE SUMMARIES

School of the People: The Progressive Origins of Cal Poly | *Andrew Gorman*

The Progressive Era began in the United States in the 1890s and lasted through the 1920s. The ultimate goal of the movement was to re-establish the respectability and sovereignty of the individual, who had slowly been losing his/her identity to the mass production model of factories. Beginning as far back as the 1840s, education served as one of the primary means to re-assert these qualities. This paper argues that Cal Poly, though traditionally viewed as a conservative school, was not immune to these Progressive influences and was in fact established with Progressive goals. By utilizing early course catalogs, Polytechnic Journals, and various other newspaper articles and previous research on the Progressive Era in the United States, this paper strives to show the connections between Progressive ideology and Cal Poly's educational goals.

Worthy of Veneration or Skepticism?: How Europeans Regarded Relics During Medieval and Renaissance Europe | *Kevin McLaren*

"How Europeans Regarded Relic Veneration" is intended to allow readers to better understand the role of relic veneration during the Renaissance and Reformation. The paper is designed to inform the reader about relics, their ancient and medieval justifications, how peasants viewed them, and the evolution of attitude changes toward relics. Prior to the Renaissance, many Europeans strongly believed in the restorative powers of relics. Over time, relic veneration became a source of conflict. During the Renaissance and Reformation, their role and purpose were controversial and questioned.

Twentieth Century Mermaids: American Women on Display | *Soquel Filice*

The bathing suit is a fashion piece that, in its complex and paradoxical nature, both liberated and inhibited the blossoming identities of early

20th century American women. Annette Kellerman, the Australian woman who inspired women to don this new fashion trend in the United States, encouraged these same women to think about swimming as a sport that was not just for men. Instead, it was a way to be recognized as the ideal woman during this time: slender and graceful. She also encouraged American women to wear form-fitting swimsuits instead of bulky corsets and petticoats. As more women decided to enjoy maritime leisure activities such as yachting, swimming, bathing, and sailing, they were not only liberated by their change in clothing, but also stereotyped as “mermaids” thanks to Kellerman’s contributions. “Mermaids of the Twentieth Century: American Women on Display” explores the paradoxes, paradigms, and factors that defined American women when they started to become more independent and wanted to enjoy maritime leisure on their own for the very first time.

This Small World: The Legacy and Impact of New York City Hardcore Punk and Straight Edge in the 1980s | *Alan Parkes*

In New York City, at the start of the 1980s, “the kids” would make hardcore punk their own. While it faced the same problems that the subculture was challenged with in L.A. and almost any other city, violence and condemnation, in New York City, hardcore punk formed out of the ruins of the City, making it unique amongst all other scenes. Thus, for its members, its value was in its escape from larger society. The scene sought independence through a do-it-yourself ethic, rebellion at its core by choosing not to adhere to the social structures in society. This caused the music and its members to not only dissociate with cultural norms, but also to begin to question them and even the scene to which they were a part. Critical of the hardcore punk scene to which it was born into, by the mid-decade, straight edge hardcore members gave rise to a new emphasis on self-analysis and ethics. While the growth of straight edge and its expansion into militant forms would challenge and contradict its original intent, for early New York straight edge members, it often created a foundation for the rest of their lives. Thus, while mem-

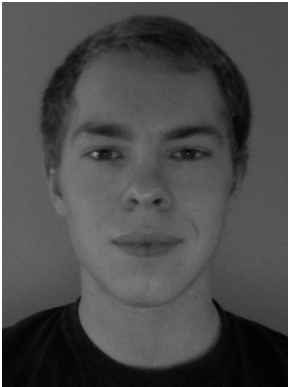
bers moved on from the scene, the thoughts and ideals of it transcended through them, and the music continues on acknowledging New York City's contribution to a misunderstood and misrepresented subculture.

Echoes of a Dying State: Perestroika Propaganda in the Soviet Foreign Press | *Matthew Brown*

During the Gorbachev period of the late 1980s, the Soviet Union underwent a massive campaign for reform. Known as perestroika, this program aimed to revitalize and restructure Soviet society, politics, and economics while ushering in a new era of prosperity. The way in which the Soviet foreign press presented these reforms to the international community reveals the nature of Soviet society at the time, and ultimately illustrates the gradual decline and destruction of the Soviet Union. Utilizing publications produced for Western consumption, this piece analyzes the extent to which Soviet society shaped reform propaganda, and uses the propaganda itself to track the undoing of Soviet state power as the reforms progressed.

ARTICLES

CONTRIBUTOR BIO



ANDREW GORMAN is studying for a Bachelor of Arts in history with a potential minor in English. His interests range from the history of labor movements in the United States to the history of religion in medieval Europe. Drew hopes to one day work in the publishing and editing business. His interests include reading fantasy and science fiction, listening to music, running, and watching sports.

SCHOOL OF THE PEOPLE: THE PROGRESSIVE ORIGINS OF CAL POLY

By Andrew Gorman

On January 31, 1903, Leroy Anderson took the rain-drenched podium to deliver a speech at Cal Poly's corner-stone laying ceremony. Gathered before him were the school's Board of Trustees, officials from other schools, residents of San Luis Obispo, and future students. The atmosphere was dense with the winter weather and barely-contained excitement. Anderson gazed out over the assembled crowd and said: "The education of the youth has ever been a subject near to the hearts of the progressive citizens of San Luis Obispo. ... There came a desire for a wider education—a training that would deal more particularly with the labors and activities of the every day life of man and woman."¹

Other speakers would rise to deliver speeches, including the president of the University of California, Benjamin Idle Wheeler, who said: "There is a greater force than might: it is right."² Wheeler would go on to speak about the necessity of bringing everyone up to the middle class to allow them an equal opportunity to prosper and make a good living, but not at the expense of tearing

¹ Leroy Anderson, "Address delivered Jan. 31, 1903, on the occasion of the laying of the corner stone," Presidential Papers 144.01, University Archives, Robert E. Kennedy Library, 1.

² Orrin Henderson, "My First Opinions and Experiences of the Polytechnic School," *Polytechnic Journal* 1, no. 3 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, March 1906), 4.

others down. This was a crucial component of Progressive philosophy, which focused on re-establishing individual liberties and wealth in response to the de-individualizing and monopolistic effects of corporations. Given the events of the period and region in which it was founded, it is clear that Cal Poly was born of the Progressive movement.

In the 1890s, California experienced both a recession—in step with a national trend—and a drought, which left farmers struggling to make ends meet and made Californians worse off financially. Simultaneously, the Midland Pacific, Southern Pacific, and other corporations were approaching monopoly status and tightening their financial hold on farmers. Resistance to monopolization goes as far back as 1862 with the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Act. Some believed it was passed to elevate the status and negotiation power of farmers, others that it was to improve the life of the common man by providing a sound education.³ This belief surged again in the 1890s as the Progressive Era began. Education was to be used to improve the lives of those less fortunate than the middle class and wealthy. Around this time, Myron Angel began advocating for a school in San Luis Obispo to bring wealth and population to the rural town.

There are understandably few documents about Cal Poly's early political affiliation. Known traditionally as a conservative and agricultural school, not much attention has been given to the admittedly brief period that Cal Poly spent associated with the Progressive Era. Histories do exist, several written by Myron Angel, Robert E. Kennedy, and Margaret Chase, but they offer a documentation of events rather than an analysis of the forces behind the school's foundation.

Other authors have given substantial attention to the Progressive Era. It is widely accepted that the movement wanted to improve the quality of life for working-class people, but historians differ on the particulars. In *A Very Different Age*, Steven J. Diner argues that agricultural and vocational schools were established to benefit corporations and cities. Robert Mann, in *The Progressive Era*, holds the Progressive movement to be one initiated by the upper-middle class to move the poor to middle-class status to avoid social unrest. Kevin Starr then asserts in *Inventing the Dream* that these schools were meant to modernize farmers so they could keep up with the rapidly industrializing world. When

³ Roger Geiger, "The Rise and Fall of Useful Knowledge: Higher Education for Science, Agriculture, and the Mechanic Arts, 1850-1875," in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Geiger (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 153.

schools are mentioned in terms of Progressive education in California, however, the only school sufficiently addressed is the University of California.⁴ Overall, there has been little attention given to Cal Poly's political origin and its place in the Progressive Era.

Background of the Progressive Era

Beginning in 1890, the Progressive Era started as a reaction to the rapid industrialization of the United States. Corporations had been growing from the mid-nineteenth century and, with the advent of new technologies, began to monopolize and use the expanding railroad system to ship goods across the country. Businesses grew rapidly as a result, creating an unregulated industry where corporations took advantage of farmers. Those who protested this power, such as Mary Lease of the Farmers' Alliance in rural Kansas, believed this concentration of wealth "demanded government response," as farmers were forced to pay back loans with "money dearer than that which they had borrowed."⁵

In California, the ability of farmers to influence legislation and control their own business was crucial. This was particularly important in California since agriculture had replaced mining as the chief industry of the state by the 1880s.⁶ Following the panic of 1893, California farmers struggled to gain political superiority against railroads.⁷ The Southern Pacific, for example, controlled nearly 10 million acres of land in California by 1882. Through the 1880s, Southern Pacific made leaps in political influence and was able to raise the price of land in Tulare County from "\$2.50 upward" to "from \$17 to \$40 an acre" near the King's River.⁸ Most certainly, there was a pressing need in agriculture and other industries to limit the power of monopolies to help the individual regain independence and wealth.

As argued by Mann, the desire for farmers to control their own fate was a reflection of a greater political movement begun by the upper-middle class, which sought to halt the "drift" between "capital and labor" that penetrated "to almost every level of California life."⁹ This attempt to unify classes was

⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵ Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 16-17.

⁶ Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 128.

⁷ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 16, 22.

⁸ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 165, 201.

⁹ Arthur Mann, *The Progressive Era* (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1975), 15.

brought on by a view that corporations were arrogant and had no concern for the well being of a man, his work, or his family. Progressives united against these looming tyrants, determined to keep their integrity and independence.

Education was a main route of unifying the public and empowering the individual. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, believed firmly in education's ability to lift and unite social classes.¹⁰ He was not alone in this belief, which especially gained traction in California due to the seemingly limitless potential of the state's environment, size, and resources.

It was not always easy to establish education for the benefit of the people. Many farmers did not consider agricultural education necessary. Indeed, progress would require reform in farmers' education and threatened the autonomy of rural people, who had long controlled the schools in their towns. The argument for this reform was farmers "either do not realize their own needs or the possibilities of rural education."¹¹

Despite resistance, a noticeable effort to establish agricultural education programs was present, particularly among university educators, many of whom identified as Progressive. UC President Wheeler was engaged in this endeavor.¹² In this environment of industrialization and social mobilization to develop education and combat monopolies, Cal Poly was signed into law by Governor Gage in 1901.¹³ Even before the school's foundation, Progressive influences and the economic condition of California can be seen as affecting the goals of education reformers. Through this school, they hoped to establish an institution to educate farmers and citizens who needed an alternative to traditional education to move upward in society.

Establishing Cal Poly

Years after Cal Poly's inception, Margaret Chase would look back and call the school's statement of purpose "to contribute to the...welfare of California...largely a happy accident."¹⁴ She voiced this thought because the school was

¹⁰ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 224.

¹¹ Diner, *A Very Different Age*, 120.

¹² Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 227.

¹³ Morris E. Smith, "A History of the California Polytechnic State University: The First Fifty Years 1901-1951" (M.A. Thesis, University of Oregon, 1957), 13.

¹⁴ Margaret Chase, foreword to "History of Cal Poly," Presidential Papers, University Archives 144.01, Robert E. Kennedy Library.

originally intended to exclusively be a normal school to train teachers. The idea to put it in San Luis Obispo was first presented by Myron Angel in 1895 to State Senator S.C. Smith of Bakersfield.¹⁵ After visiting his hometown of Oneonta, New York, and seeing the prosperity brought by the normal school there, Angel decided that such an institution should be brought to San Luis Obispo. He wanted to bring “population and wealth” to San Luis Obispo, “but also the presence of an institution which should bring ‘learning and refinement and exert an influence...[on] the town and surrounding county.’”¹⁶ Upon his return to California, Angel began planning the school.

There were three bills presented to establish the school, with the first unsuccessful two in 1897 and 1899.¹⁷ Governor Budd, a notorious penny pincher, shot down the proposal on the grounds that it would only increase taxation.¹⁸ Budd also noted what he thought to be a lack of desire for agricultural education, citing the minuscule enrollment in the University of California’s agriculture program.¹⁹ Support grew steadily among San Luis Obispo’s merchants and larger community, particularly with the wealthy Sinsheimer family,²⁰ who believed in the school’s ability to bring economic prosperity to the city. In 1899, Senator Smith presented the idea of a switch to a polytechnic school to Angel, but the State Assembly again rejected this new proposal.²¹

Another reason Angel wanted a school in San Luis Obispo was because of the rumors surrounding a new Midland Pacific track, which would be built “across the country from Port Hartford to Bakersfield” and was rumored to cost upward of \$2,000,000.²² Angel believed the city and school would benefit greatly from proximity to a railroad, and he wanted the school to provide additional incentive for the track to become reality. Indeed, it appeared that the Southern Pacific had something similar in mind. Rumor had it that one day, W.H. Mills, the land agent for the Southern Pacific, called Mr. Herrin, the chief lawyer

¹⁵ Leroy Anderson, “California Polytechnic School Pioneers,” February 25, 1941, Presidential Papers, University Archives 144.01, Robert E. Kennedy Library, 1.

¹⁶ Chase, *History of Cal Poly*, 1.

¹⁷ *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years* (San Rafael: Bolton Associates, 2001), 14-15.

¹⁸ Smith, “A History of the California Polytechnic State University,” 10.

¹⁹ Chase, *History of Cal Poly*, 2.

²⁰ *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years*, 14.

²¹ Smith, “A History of the California Polytechnic State University,” 9.

²² Chase, *History of Cal Poly*, 2.

for Southern Pacific, after a friendly argument with Benjamin Brooks about the possibility of the school actually happening. Upon the conclusion of the call, Mills said: "The governor will sign the bill." Southern Pacific had recently completed a railroad from Santa Margarita to San Luis Obispo at the rough cost of \$1,744,000 and wanted to make some money from it.²³ It would then appear that Cal Poly's origins accord with Diner's argument of schools being established to benefit corporations. But what needs to be remembered is that Cal Poly was founded near the beginning of the Progressive Era, whereas many other agricultural schools had been founded from the 1840s to the 1870s²⁴, and the school's mission statement would reflect the political fervor associated with the movement.

Now desperate to pass a bill for the school, Angel sought to expand Cal Poly's purpose and claimed in 1901 that "a number of schools in California [are] for the arts and sciences, but none of them fulfill the requirements of the progress of the age."²⁵ This reflected a budding concern that the state's rural population would fall behind technologically, rendering themselves incapable of finding work or making a good living once scientific advancement finally outpaced them. Labor, he believed, was "the source of all wealth... The future of our country depends upon its labor, therefore labor should be educated."²⁶ Thus, he wanted to ensure a sound education to the laborers and farmers of California. In this school, Angel recognized that a classical education was "not necessary nor desirable to the great mass of people," who simply wanted their "share of what the government provides."²⁷ This is when Cal Poly's message was put onto paper and pushed through the California state legislature.

To improve the school's chances of being signed into law, it was believed that the school's purpose should be "liberally construed, to the end that the school may at all times contribute to the industrial welfare of the State."²⁸ Angel admitted the phrasing was indeed "ambiguous,"²⁹ but this was done so the school could be built without feeling limited to agriculture alone, which was initially

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Geiger, "The Rise and Fall of Useful Knowledge," 155-160.

²⁵ Myron Angel, *History of the Polytechnic School at San Luis Obispo* (San Luis Obispo: Tribune Print, 1908), 38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁸ Forward to Presidential Papers, University Archives 144.01, Robert E. Kennedy Library.

²⁹ Angel, *History of the Polytechnic School*, 61.

a fear held by some locals and prospective students.³⁰ So, on March 8, 1901, Cal Poly was signed into law with the purpose of training students in “the arts and sciences, including agriculture, mechanics, engineering, business methods, domestic economy and other such branches...to fit the non-professional walks of life.”³¹ It was ambiguous, yes. But only because “non-professional” can include many fields, and it would grow to include many indeed. With this liberal construction, the school was able to let its students determine the purpose and meaning of their education.

Cal Poly’s Early Years and the Influences of Progressivism

January 31, 1903. On an overcast, rainy day, the residents of San Luis Obispo, the school’s Board of Trustees, Presidents Wheeler of Berkeley and Jordan of Stanford gathered for the corner-stone laying ceremony. Anderson, the school’s first Director, had naturally prepared a speech, the first line of which encapsulated the aspirations of its future students: “The education of the youth has ever been a subject near to the hearts of the progressive citizens of San Luis Obispo.”³² And like that, the first class of students, the citizens of San Luis Obispo, and the gathered officials knew that the school would be one for the betterment of the individual and society as a whole.

The first several years were rough, as interest from prospective students remained low, invigorating critique of the school’s necessity. A *Los Angeles Times* article noted this: “There is no pressing demand for such a school in California...it only had about forty students last year, although it was designed to accommodate 400.”³³ But the school’s supporters were adamant. The purpose of the school was vague, and the school was located in a remote area, but those who trusted in the school’s ability to grow in population and influence devotedly believed “Our greatest industry must be agriculture. That our state has forethought enough to recognize this...is but another evidence of her desire to stand at the head of the workers of the world.”³⁴ Phrasing the mission of the school this way puts emphasis on its Progressive roots. By wanting to represent

³⁰ Chase, *History of Cal Poly*, 5.

³¹ Anderson, “Address delivered,” 2; *First Annual Course Catalog of the California Polytechnic School* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing, 1903), 7.

³² Anderson, “Address delivered,” 1.

³³ “The California Polytechnic School,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1905, 16.

³⁴ Katherine Chandler, “California’s Polytechnic: The Work Being Done By the New State School,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1904, 15.

the common laborers, the progressives who supported the school showed their desire to combat the sweeping power of monopolies. They wanted to be individual workers, united for the public good.

By 1906, the fear that the school would be limited only to agriculture was dwindling. Courses were offered in mechanics, agriculture, and domestic science. Supplementary courses included geometry, history, physics, and English.³⁵ Additionally, the school's population had leapt from just about sixty (in 1905) to a little over one hundred.³⁶ This increase correlated with the beginning of the first *Polytechnic Journal*, a student-run journal that compiled stories, news, and editorials from the student body. The *Journal* quickly adopted a Progressive ideology.

The first issue opened with a story in which a poor farmer's son, William Osborne, wants to marry Edith Carroll, the daughter of a wealthy banker. She professes her love, but they cannot marry until he has proven himself worthy—as stipulated by her father.³⁷ William knows he will never be more than a farmer, but Edith does not see this as detrimental. In fact, she's exhilarated, saying, "What a noble choice. The farmer gets more pleasure out of living than can be found in any other vocation in life."

William bitterly replies, "You little realize the position that the farmer is in at the present time. Soils often depleted, a lack of knowledge of irrigation, proper cultivation and fertilization; markets which are surrounded by tricky brokers...and thieving railroads makes the life of the producer something hard."³⁸ He believes educating farmers is all that will ever restore the common man to a place of honor. After careful thought, he decides to go to Cal Poly.

In the second issue, the story is resolved. Captain Carroll, Edith's father, goes to Washington to sit in on a debate over a piece of legislation that would establish a more extensive, state-funded postal system. After long hours of heated discussion, the representative from California steps forward. He takes the floor and the room settles down: "For one hour he spoke and during the whole time

³⁵ *Circular of the California Polytechnic School 1906-1907* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing, 1906), 13.

³⁶ *Circular of the California Polytechnic School 1905-1906* (Sacramento: Superintendent State Printing, 1905), 18-19; *Circular of the California Polytechnic School 1906-1907*, (Sacramento Superintendent State Printing, 1906), 19-20.

³⁷ "Manufactured Opportunities," *Polytechnic Journal* 1, no. 1 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, January 1906), 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

hardly a person moved. At the close of his speech the applause was terrific.”³⁹ Captain Carroll is astonished to find the speaker is William Osborne. He took advantage of his education at Cal Poly and was then able to go on and make a serious difference nationally for middle-class and working Americans. And he got the girl.

In these documents, the students’ clear focus on Progressive advancement is made evident. The fourth issue contained an article praising Joseph Folk, the governor of Missouri known for trust-busting and convicting corrupt politicians. He was a man of the people who “[had] started out in his campaign for governor with money, machine, and everything against him.” But Folk didn’t give up. By “going directly to the heart of the Missouri farmers...he was elected.”⁴⁰ Trust-busting played a significant role in Progressive philosophy, as breaking up tyrannical corporations gave smaller businesses owned by individuals a chance to thrive.

Attention was always given to the plight of farmers, such as one issue that sought to further improve the farmer’s condition by expanding Cal Poly’s offered courses. Farm quality suffered even though production was up, which weakened the bargaining power of farmers. The solution was to offer more updated courses, along with classes in American history and government, since “the study of industrial development holds an important place with political development.”⁴¹ The beneficial effects of these courses when applied were also praised, particularly in conjunction with the “Reclamation Act,” which had the enthusiastic support of President Theodore Roosevelt and was passed in 1902 to improve water circulation in western states like Nevada.⁴² These new scientific practices helped Nevada produce a wide variety of crops, leading to a population boom and a dramatic increase in wealth.

Cal Poly students, as a result, adored Roosevelt. Known for being tough on monopolies, he was a hero of the people and a Progressive leader. He visited Cal Poly in May of 1903 to comment of the valiant cause of the school, saying

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁰ “Joseph Folk,” *Polytechnic Journal* 1, no. 4 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, April 1906), 17-18.

⁴¹ “Department of English and History,” *Polytechnic Journal* 2, no. 4 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, February 1907), 8.

⁴² “What Irrigation Can Do,” *Polytechnic Journal* 3, no. 4 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, January 1908), 3.

“there should be the same chance for the tiller of the soil to make his a learned profession.”⁴³ His efforts at conservation were followed by the students as well, as one article brought attention to the “ruthless mining practices” destroying California’s natural beauty and resources. The article went on to say that “the government must shoulder the responsibility for this great enterprise,” but that we must also “each, as individual units in organized society, throw all of our power and influence into this movement.”⁴⁴ Students at Cal Poly were reminded of the beauty of their state by their toil in the fields and the plentiful produce that grew throughout the state. The protection of this natural wealth was in the interest of the students, the state, and the nation. As Progressives saw it, this issue was one of “public interest,” as opposed to “selfish interest,” which characterized the conduct of corporations.⁴⁵

Myron Angel’s influence became noticeable again when he returned to the school to deliver an address on Founder’s Day—an annual school holiday that celebrated the tireless efforts of those who made the school possible. In his speech, he compared Cal Poly to Rome, saying that in Rome, “he who had done a great work was held in higher honor than one born of noble blood.” Angel spoke about the necessity of a morally just and educated population, and how Cal Poly was established to fulfill this need in society. After all, “this school at San Luis Obispo is the school of the people.”⁴⁶

The early population of Cal Poly knew what they were capable of and what they were trying to prevent: the monopolization of the state’s agriculture and other industries. They were to rise from poor farmers and townspeople to be middle-class, educated Americans capable of making a difference for the benefit of the national welfare—and all with the preparation provided by a Cal Poly education.

The Fall of Progressivism

The Progressive surge would not last. It was evident that by 1912, reformers were losing steam in California. The “oligarchy had had enough” by 1909, and

⁴³ *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years*, 13.

⁴⁴ “Conservation of Natural Resources,” *Polytechnic Journal* 5, no. 1 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, October 1909), 1-3.

⁴⁵ Mann, *The Progressive Era*, 44.

⁴⁶ “Address By Hon. Myron Angel,” *Polytechnic Journal* 3, no. 6 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, March 1908), 4-5.

actions were taken by powerful conservative forces to push Progressives out of office. The chief reformist in California, George Alexander, lost a municipal mayoral election in San Francisco in 1906. Another loss followed his second term as mayor in Los Angeles to a Socialist-Democratic coalition in 1913. The city prosecutor and Progressive successor to Alexander, Guy Eddie, was arrested and left California Progressives without a viable alternative.⁴⁷

Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party, established in 1912, had separated from the main Republican Party and weakened the political influence of Progressives, who now had to contend against Democrats, Republicans, and Socialists. When World War I broke out in 1914, Roosevelt made a sharp turn to the right. Many Progressives followed his lead, as they "[sensed a] conservative drift for the nation at large [and] were quietly drifting back to the regular Republican Party." By 1916, Progressives had lost most of their political influence.⁴⁸

A similar trend can be seen at Cal Poly, where conservative influence was taking hold in 1913 with Director Smith's trip to eastern schools to examine how they were run and how he could apply those practices to Cal Poly.⁴⁹ Military classes were introduced in 1915 to prepare students for military service. Following this, the school became noticeably stricter. The 1915 school catalog was the first to completely remove the wording of the original mission, instead saying the school was "designed for young men and women...more closely identified with the farm, shop and home life." Discipline became a larger focus as well. Whereas it had required only a single paragraph in earlier catalogs, the 1915 *Bulletin* spent a solid page warning students about the consequences of misconduct.⁵⁰

This shift in focus to a more conservative national picture also correlated with a decline in student participation on campus and a drift away from individual Progressive values. The *Polytechnic Journal* shortened to delivering a single issue a year and spent most of it focusing on the accomplishments and dreams of the seniors. Even before then, however, the lack of interest in

⁴⁷ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 268-270.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 270-272.

⁴⁹ Leroy Burns Smith, "To the Board of Trustees," December 13, 1913, University Archives 144.01, Robert E. Kennedy Library, 1-10.

⁵⁰ *Bulletin of the California Polytechnic School: A State School of Agriculture, Mechanical Arts, Domestic Science* (San Luis Obispo: California State Printing Office, 1915), 7-21.

communal Progressive matters was apparent. Beginning around the time the *Journal* decided to produce fewer issues, the editorial section was being used to berate students for not contributing enough to the *Journal* or participating in other school activities.⁵¹

Cal Poly, the “school of the people,” was falling in line with other schools of the time by conforming to a more standardized curriculum. As Progressives fell in California, so too did the enthusiasm that followed them. This decline is reflected in the *Polytechnic Journal* and in documents that suggest officials of the school were contemplating a conservative shift.

Cal Poly did, however, begin as a Progressive school. As evinced by the *Journal*, Angel’s speeches, and those involved in founding the school, Cal Poly was an institution in which the “happy accident” of its “ambiguous” statement of purpose allowed the students to apply their own concrete ideas to their education. For a brief period in the school’s early years, this manifested itself as Progressive dreams and goals. Because of its location in rural California between two hubs of Progressive politics in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and its formation just as Progressive politics obtained increasing national momentum, Cal Poly was unique in *beginning* as a child of the Progressive movement, as opposed to later adopting its values.

It must be noted, however, that this argument does not account for a conservative presence or influence at Cal Poly. The student body was likely not uniform in its political views, and neither were the faculty. Documents from students are limited, with the bulk of material coming from issues of the *Polytechnic Journal*. It would be a mistake to say this journal, which likely selectively published to enhance its own political views, contained the full spectrum of political thought at the school.

Cal Poly students were not apparent activists, further limiting the source material that could potentially identify the extent of Progressive activity on campus. However, the lack of material does not necessarily reflect negatively on the progressive nature of the school. What is available shows a distinct identification with Progressivism, even if no fanatical participation was present. Given the period and the people associated with the school, Cal Poly was indeed a child of the Progressive Era.

⁵¹ “School Spirit,” *Polytechnic Journal* 6, no. 5 (San Luis Obispo: Daily Telegram Press, February 1911), 16-17.

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WORTHY OF VENERATION OR SKEPTICISM?: HOW EUROPEANS REGARDED RELICS DURING MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE EUROPE

By Kevin McLaren

Relics are the (apparent) remnants of Christ, Mary, a saint or a martyr that have been preserved and are said to be imbued with magical powers for the purpose of healing or absorbing virtues.⁵² They are material objects, such as bones, tombs, body parts, jewelry, clothing, canes, equipment, or books that once belonged to a particular individual, most likely a saint. There are early examples of relics in the Bible, such as 2 Kings 13:21, which tells a story of a dead man touching the bones of a virtuous person and coming back to life.⁵³ In medieval and renaissance Europe, different relics had different specified powers, depending on the saint to which they belonged. Different saints provided different powers for whatever circumstances a Catholic endured. For example, Catholics venerated the mummified body of St. Chiara in order to purify the body to keep chastity among nuns, while they venerated the clothing of St. Cuthbert in order to cure

⁵² Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *The Renaissance and Reformation: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 89.

⁵³ 2 Kings 13:21 (King James Version).

sickness.⁵⁴ Relics were encased in special decorated boxes, statues, tombs, vials, chests and specialized altars.⁵⁵ Some churches and/or monasteries in medieval and renaissance Europe were dedicated completely on the basis of a particular relic or were dedicated to the remains of a particular saint.

Although the people of Europe carried out pilgrimages to visit relics to absorb their virtue during medieval and early-renaissance Europe, attitudes toward relics changed during the Renaissance. Relics, reliquaries and the act of pilgrimage obtained importance in medieval Europe because of their mystical, spiritual and healing nature. The Catholic Church justified their veneration. Relics and reliquaries were prevalent in renaissance and reformation Europe until certain theologians began to question the validity, practicality, and true purposes of relics. These theologians emphasized an individual's faith in God rather than faith in relics, which in turn resulted in a renaissance movement away from reliance on relics.

Among scholars, analysis of renaissance relics has oftentimes become contextually muddled because of confusion with other various Catholic images.⁵⁶ This scholarship is also fraught with bias because many of the scholars are Catholic or Protestant, and thus have an opinion about whether the use of relics is right or wrong. Additionally, scholars often under-analyze the evolution of the theological and ideological usages for relics between medieval and renaissance Europe. My survey of Catholic relics provides some contextual history of relics in Europe, but concentrates specifically on the change in perspective regarding relics during the Renaissance.

Medieval justification for the usage of relics began early in the history of Christianity. St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) was a major supporter of the usage of relics in early Christianity and his theological writings became the basis for the use of relics as a means for healing and as tools to better humankind's connection with God. St. Augustine was a strong believer in the magical properties of relics—though he was initially skeptical of their magical properties—and wrote that remains, clothing, and belongings of saints and martyrs essentially held their essence, and therefore, also held the powerful essence of

⁵⁴ Wilfrid Bonser, "The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages," *Folklore* 73, no. 4 (Winter 1962): 234.

⁵⁵ Wiesner-Hanks, *The Renaissance and Reformation*, 89-90.

⁵⁶ John Dillenberger, *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14.

God since saints were God's chosen messengers on earth.⁵⁷ In *The City of God*, Augustine wrote first-hand accounts of relics healing the sick, feeding the poor, and converting non-believers.⁵⁸ Though a strong believer in the magic of relics, Augustine made sure to clarify in *The City of God* that relics should not be worshipped as gods or idols because doing so would be a pagan practice. Rather, St. Augustine suggested that one should venerate relics knowing that they are imbued by the one, true, God.⁵⁹ The strong emphasis that Augustine placed on the veneration and usage of relics was fundamental to the European belief that relics had the ability to heal and should be sought after through pilgrimage.

St. John of Damascus (676-749 CE) was another early defender of relics; he believed they could better support and empower the Christian faith. St. John of Damascus substantiated the influence of relics by placing their importance at the same level as the church or monastery that housed them. He also strongly promoted the idea that God imbued the saints with powers of good as messengers of salvation, and that therefore, their remains forever held God's powers.⁶⁰ For St. John of Damascus, veneration of the dead resulted in miracles and the remains of the dead could be used as a sort of medium to communicate with God or the saint to which they belonged. St. John's *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* became a central text along with St. Augustine's *The City of God*; these texts would cause the Catholic Church to make relic veneration an official practice, as decided during the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.⁶¹

The primary theological text of Medieval Europe that supported and justified the use of relics was St. Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274 CE) *Summa Theologica*. It would also become the primary Catholic defense for relics during the Reformation. As an encyclopedia-like manual that provided theological guidance on the Catholic Faith, *Summa Theologica* combined elements of many previous important promoters of relics to come to a solid foundational conclusion about the veneration of relics. Part III of *Summa Theologica* explains that relics should be venerated symbolically so as to honor the saints and martyrs that

⁵⁷ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* (Lawrence, Kansas: Digireads.com Publishing, 2010), 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 608-617.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 617-618.

⁶⁰ John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, trans. E.W. Watson and L. Pullan (Buffalo, New York: Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2012), 269-271.

⁶¹ Bonser, "The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages," *Folklore* 73, no. 4 (Winter 1962), 236, accessed February 5, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1258503>.

they represent. Because God blessed the saints in a remarkable way, Catholics were to honor their souls, which were now in Heaven, closest to Him.⁶² St. Thomas Aquinas utilized quotes from St. Augustine to provide legitimacy of his claims about relics and to demonstrate the practical use of relics.

St. Augustine, St. John of Damascus, and St. Thomas Aquinas all believed in the magical nature of relics, but they also all professed that relics were not to be worshipped as gods or idols, but instead praised for being blessed by God. The three theologians all made the point that the relics themselves were not what was being worshipped; instead, Catholics worshiped God and honored the saints by venerating relics. These commonalities between Augustine, John of Damascus and Aquinas would be the theological defense for the veneration of relics when reformers challenged the practice later in the Renaissance and Reformation.⁶³ Until later in the Renaissance, however, the ideology put in place by these men would firmly secure the use of relics in the Catholic Church.

Due to the Catholic Church's endorsement of relics, their use became extremely important to European culture and daily life. Medieval Europeans depended on relics in order to heal their ailments, better their lives both financially and romantically, and have personal revelations from God or a saint.⁶⁴ Though medieval theologians made sure to separate relic veneration from worship, it is likely that most medieval Europeans did not think similarly. Rather, they worshipped the relics and reliquaries like idols in order to fulfill personal wants because, as uneducated believers, they did not know the thoughts of the elite theologians. At the height of medieval relic use, thousands of relics were spread throughout the Catholic network of churches, monasteries, chapels and shrines.

Relics revolving around Jesus Christ were extremely popular throughout medieval Europe. Christ's relics included vials of blood, sweat and tears, clothing, and items from the last supper. People flocked to touch or see supposed pieces of the True Cross, the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Other relics

⁶² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Part III (Tertia Pars) From the Complete American Edition*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 2012), 4589-4610.

⁶³ Nerida Newbigin, "Del grasso di Lorezno un'ampolletta': Relics and Representations in the Quest for Forgiveness in Renaissance Rome," *Journal of Religious History* 28, no. 1 (February 2004), 51, accessed February 5, 2013, EBSCOHost.

⁶⁴ Bonser, "The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages," 235-236.

revolving around the Passion were popular as well, such as the nails from the crucifixion, Longinus' spear, or the crown of thorns.⁶⁵ Second to only to relics of Christ, relics of the Virgin Mary drew large crowds throughout medieval Europe, especially among women. Many of the Virgin Mary's relics were bodily relics, such as hair, fingernails, breast milk, and stools. However, Mary's material relics, such as clothing, satchels, hairpins and shoes, also gained popularity.⁶⁶ Relics of the saints ranked just below those of Christ and Mary. The constant flow of pilgrimages to visit these relics demonstrates the European dependency on the objects. The Catholic Church monopolized this dependency and used it to better their establishments and gain influence. The medieval practice of utilizing relics to gain popularity, power, riches and political prestige would become the primary reason for the questioning of relics by renaissance and reformation theologians.

By the time of the Renaissance, some theologians began to question the true purpose of relics. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536 CE), for example, wrote in his *Handbook of the Militant Christian* that relics were unnecessary for achieving true faith and piety, and he wrote that relic veneration convoluted the original messages of Jesus.⁶⁷ Erasmus was concerned that relics and saint veneration provided unnecessary obstacles and diluted the messages about how to achieve salvation.⁶⁸ However, Erasmus kept true to the Augustinian argument that as long as veneration and symbolic regard of relics were separate from worship, then relics were acceptable. Erasmus promoted the inspiration that one may acquire from a relic or saint, but Erasmus still placed emphasis on the individual's piety as the most practical approach to salvation.⁶⁹ Though Erasmus condemned use of false relics such as fake pieces of the True Cross, he did not advocate for their destruction. Erasmus did not intend for these relics to be destroyed because he believed that they could serve another purpose.⁷⁰ When confronted by Protestants later in life, Erasmus suggested moving away from dependency on relics in order to keep the Church unified.⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 238-243.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 243-245.

⁶⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Essential Erasmus*, trans. John P. Dolan (London: Meridian, 1983), 65.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 65-67.

⁶⁹ Dillenberger, *Images and Relics*, 174.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Though it was a gradual conclusion, Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) condemned the use of relics by the mid-1520s because he believed that relics were being used incorrectly. Before declaring that the Catholic Church could not be saved in the 1520s, Luther wrote *An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom*, in which he clarified his opinion of relics; he articulated that they were marked by greed, corruption and a competitive drive for power.⁷² To Martin Luther, relics were merely an abused tool of the church to keep people in control and unequal in their quest for salvation. Martin Luther later called for a complete removal of relics and images because he considered them merely a distraction when trying to connect with God.⁷³ Luther saw relics, like indulgences, as a means of fundraising that had become an irrelevant and evil practice of the Catholic Church. He also did not believe that relics had magical properties.⁷⁴ Luther claimed that these relics should be removed in order to restore individualistic faith.⁷⁵ His skepticism toward relics would lead to iconoclastic movements to destroy relics throughout Europe, though he did not necessarily encourage this behavior.⁷⁶

Andreas Karlstadt (1486-1541 CE) was a German theologian and contemporary to Martin Luther. Karlstadt took Luther's message to the extreme and began to preach for the total destruction of relics and images.⁷⁷ He understood veneration of relics to be pure worship of idols and pagan practice. Karlstadt started movements in the Holy Roman Empire to raid churches and destroy all relics, pictures, and sculptures that he considered blasphemous. He wrote *On the Removal of Images* to spark other iconoclastic movements throughout Europe, which it succeeded in producing. Movements to destroy relics spread throughout Europe in the 1520s and faded in the 1570s. Other Protestants followed in the footsteps of Karlstadt, such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, both of whom condemned the usage of relics as a pagan practice of idolatry and called for their destruction.⁷⁸

⁷² Martin Luther, *Selections From His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 458.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Wiesner-Hanks, *The Renaissance and Reformation*, 87.

⁷⁵ Dillenberger, *Images and Relics*, 89.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 176-181.

Catholics retaliated against Protestant movements to remove relics from use. For example, Hieronymus Emser wrote *That One Should Not Remove Images of the Saints or Dishonor Them, and that They are Not Forbidden in Scripture* as a direct argument against Karlstadt's *On the Removal of Images*. Similarly, Johannes Eck wrote *On Not Removing the Images of Christ and the Saints*.⁷⁹ Though the two were more primarily concerned with preserving images such as paintings and sculptures of Christ and saints, the two revived the arguments of Aquinas to justify the use of images, and therefore also revived the argument that would be used to defend relics as well. Because the Catholic Church stood its ground on their traditional use of relics, the issue became a primary reason for the split between Catholics and Protestants. Catholics insisted on the traditional arguments of Augustine, John of Damascus, and Aquinas—that relics were in fact acceptable scripturally and spiritually—whereas Protestants regarded the veneration of relics as blasphemous and heretical. Despite movements in certain parts of Europe away from relic veneration, Catholic areas continued to value relics as spiritually important objects.

Though the Renaissance and Reformation saw a gradual change of attitude toward relics for some Europeans, this period saw the opposite effect for Catholics. Whereas many reformers in the German region viewed relics as blasphemous obstacles to faith, the people of Spain maintained the traditional purposes of relics. Philip II of Spain was an avid collector of relics, which he used for religious, political, royal, and secular purposes.⁸⁰ Philip II is an example of a king that took advantage of the use of relics in order to better secure his monarchical rule, gain better support among his subjects, and firmly ground himself as a Catholic king to gain divine loyalty.⁸¹ By maintaining Spanish belief in relics, gathering relics for his own personal collection, and allowing people to see his relic collection, Philip II was able to firmly unify his lands.⁸² Phillip II revolutionized the use of relics in that his collection formed a sort of museum that benefited the economics and education of Spain. Philip II's

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁸⁰ Guy Lazure, "Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II's Relic Collection at the Escorial," *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 58, accessed February 5, 2013, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ren/summary/v060/60.1lazure.html>.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 58-85.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 85.

interest in relics shows an evolution in the use of relics for Catholics, as he did not merely use relics for ideological or spiritual purposes.

Catholic maintenance of relics and Protestant rejection of relics resulted in the eventual division between the Christians of Europe. The split between Protestants and Catholics had a long-term effect on the use of relics. A decline in relic veneration occurred even among Catholics because of their inability to carry out pilgrimages. Going on a pilgrimage became risky due to the threat of Protestant attack.⁸³ The Catholic reformation movements, which attempted to dissolve the use of false relics, led to the identification of Rome as the home for authentic relics.⁸⁴ Because Rome housed these major relics, and not all Catholics could go to Rome, Catholic dependency on relics decreased overall.

Relics in the medieval world were unquestioned because of their justification by medieval theologians such as St. Augustine, St. John of Damascus, and St. Thomas Aquinas. The Renaissance and Reformation saw changes in how people, especially theologians, regarded relics and their purpose. Whereas medieval theologians saw relics as useful tools for absorbing the virtues and spiritual essence of Christ, Mary, saints, and martyrs, renaissance and reformation theologians had various understandings of relics. While Erasmus saw them as unnecessary but symbolically sound, Luther saw them merely as obstacles in the way of God. Relics became an important element in the split between Catholics and Protestants, as some saw relic veneration as heretical and others preserved the medieval mentality of relics as spiritually important. Ultimately, Relics had a profound impact on Europe because of the way they shaped theological philosophy and the way they affected the daily lives of Europeans.

⁸³ Dillenberger, *Images and Relics*, 90.

⁸⁴ Wiesner-Hanks, *The Renaissance and Reformation*, 97-99.

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TWENTIETH CENTURY MERMAIDS: AMERICAN WOMEN ON DISPLAY

By Soquel Filice

Before the late 1890s and into the twentieth century, men and women did not enjoy the oceans and the seashore for pure leisure. In the United States, this trend followed suit. Up until the late nineteenth century, it was not culturally acceptable for women to participate in maritime activities such as sailing, yachting, swimming, and bathing. American society considered these activities masculine until one brave Australian woman, Annette Kellerman, toured the country and claimed swimming to be “the best sport in the world for women.”⁸⁵ She courageously donned a “form-fitting men’s style bathing suit”⁸⁶ at beaches around the nation and encouraged American women to swim at beaches and participate in what was previously considered a man’s sport. This created controversy and redefined values in American society by challenging typical roles for women based on class, race, age, and marital status. During this period, American society also objectified females and treated them as scandalous

⁸⁵ Annette Kellerman, *How to Swim* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 38.

⁸⁶ Syd Syramalia Lindsley, “Girl Pictures: The Politics of Sexuality and Female Display in the Twentieth-Century United States,” *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 2011, accessed May 2, 2013.

sexual commodities in performances and advertisements.⁸⁷ This paper explores the paradoxes and paradigms that defined early twentieth century American women and their pursuit of independence and leisure in the maritime sphere. By analyzing several newspapers and images from this time period, I provide insight into how changing social norms and gender roles affected American women. In the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the ocean constituted not just a neutral geographic region, but also a space for constructing race, class and gender. The adoption of new women's swimsuits both allowed for the expression of female individuality and fashion, but also stereotyped American women as graceful beings with an utmost sense of poise, confidence, beauty and dignity.⁸⁸

Before this time period, the average American viewed the sea as a treatment for the sick and the lame. Doctors often recommended that patients be plunged into the water until they started shivering because the cold water would toughen the patient and give life and vigor to the body.⁸⁹ Physicians brought their female patients down to the beach in "bathing-machines" and dipped them into the water to protect their modesty and fragility, whereas men "remained free to pit themselves against the waves and to test their energy against that of the ocean."⁹⁰ Alain Corbin argues that therapeutic bathing transitioned into a pleasurable experience because of this gender distinction at the beach. American society thought that it was acceptable to section women off into a certain area of the water, usually closer to the shore, creating a spectacle for the men to look at. This created a need for women to find a new, modest way to dress because their bodies and clothing would be soaked by the waves. Christine Schmidt, a fashion researcher who has done extensive work on the evolution of the swimsuit, describes early women's bathing garments as

A yoked dress that was pleated, long sleeved, and belted. Drawers that extended to the ankle were attached to the dress to ensure that the body was

⁸⁷ Angela J. Latham, "Packaging Woman: The Concurrent Rise of Beauty Pageants, Public Bathing, and Other Performances of Female 'Nudity,'" *Journal of Popular Culture* 29, no. 3 (December 1, 1995): 156, Academic Search Elite, EBSCOhost.

⁸⁸ Annette Kellerman, *Physical Beauty: How to Keep it* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 86.

⁸⁹ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 73-74.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

not exposed. These garments were generally made of wool or cotton and were cumbersome—restricting movement in the water...and could weigh up to thirty pounds when wet.⁹¹

These garments effectively protected women from any peeping eyes at the seashore, but limited the activities that they could enjoy. Annette Kellerman, in her book *Physical Beauty: How to Keep it*, says that “American women have too long been handicapped in the enjoyment of this excellent sport [swimming] by silly styles in bathing costumes that make swimming well nigh impossible.”⁹² Even as late as 1910, photographs show California women swimming in the San Francisco Bay fully clothed with handkerchiefs on their heads⁹³.

Annette Kellerman was the first woman to debut her one-piece form-fitting suit in vaudeville performances, long distance swim competitions, silent films, and on beaches. Kellerman is the individual who contributed most to the evolution of the swimsuit into a unisex one piece style.⁹⁴ She was born in Sydney, New South Wales Australia, in 1887. Her story is one that inspired American women because she started as a crippled little girl who was afraid of the water and bloomed into a confident, daring woman who amazed audiences not only with her “men’s” swimsuit, but also with her diving and swimming feats. Even today, a children’s book called *Mermaid Queen*, was written about “The spectacular true story of Annette Kellerman, who swam her way to fame, fortune, and swimsuit history!”⁹⁵ Her significance is largely known for debuting the one-piece swimsuit, but she is also significant for the paradox that she created for twentieth century American women.

Kellerman pegged swimming as a “woman’s sport”⁹⁶ in her books *How to Swim* and *Physical Beauty*. She reinforced the American ideal of beauty by categorizing women as graceful, slender, poised, and confident. Kellerman encouraged the idea of swimming as an alternative to other sports and described

⁹¹ Christine Schmidt, *The Swimsuit: Fashion from Poolside to Catwalk* (London: Berg, 2012), 7.

⁹² Annette Kellerman, *Physical Beauty*, 88.

⁹³ “Never Too Cold to Swim in the Bay,” *San Francisco Call* 107, no. 61, January 30, 1910, California Digital Newspaper Collection, accessed May 28, 2013, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cdnc>.

⁹⁴ Christine Schmidt, *The Swimsuit*, 23.

⁹⁵ Shana Corey, illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham, *Mermaid Queen: The Spectacular True Story of Annette Kellerman, Who Swam Her Way to Fame, Fortune, and Swimsuit History!* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2009).

⁹⁶ Annette Kellerman, *How to Swim*, 38.

women as “a differently organised creature, and only makes herself ridiculous when she attempts to compete man-fashion in man’s sports.”⁹⁷ From a twenty-first century perspective, this quote seems very sexist. In fact both of her books that suggest that women need to be slender, beautiful, athletically fit, and not competitive with men seem sexist. However Kellerman’s new bathing suits also empowered women to have their own arena to compete in and a new activity to enjoy without the restriction of “awkward, unnecessary, lumpy ‘bathing-suits.’”⁹⁸ Annette Kellerman’s life and writings suggest that bathing suits both stereotyped and gave freedom to twentieth century women. Kellerman was a controversial figure when she first set foot on American beaches because of the popularity she received and the cultural phenomenon she created. American women did not widely adopt her style of swimming suit until the 1920s, so the media used her popularity to advertise other products to women until it became culturally acceptable to wear these new swimsuits.⁹⁹ Her influence spurred American women to start wearing form-fitting swimsuits, but did not necessarily provide them with more independence.

Since no other American women were wearing these types of suits at the time, some women looked to break cultural norms by wearing men’s suits. A newspaper article with an unknown author in the *San Francisco Call*, published on July 6th 1913, exemplifies this transition between the earlier style women’s suits and the more functional men’s suits. The article states that on the Fourth of July, “hundreds of swimming folk” invaded Alameda Beach in California.¹⁰⁰ The women, who arrived to the beach first, rejected their traditional bulky swimsuits and instead asked to wear the more slim-fitting men’s suits. When the men arrived to the beach later in the day, there were no more men’s suits, so they wore some of the women’s suits into the water. The author of the article compares the sight of Alameda Beach on the fourth of July to the “Horribles,” an annual parade where people dress up in grotesque costumes and walk in the streets on Independence Day¹⁰¹.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁹ Christine Schmidt, *The Swimsuit*, 57.

¹⁰⁰ “Skirtless Suits Chosen by Fair Swimmers: Male Patrons of Alameda Bathing Resort Compelled to Drape Limbs or Stay Ashore,” *San Francisco Call* 114, no. 36, July 6, 1913, California Digital Newspaper Collection, accessed May 28, 2013, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cdnc>.

¹⁰¹ “Skirtless Suits Chosen by Fair Swimmers,” *San Francisco Call*.

Ironically, this event happened to take place on Independence Day. Although it was not published on that date, the fact that women asserted their independence by wearing non-traditional swimwear is groundbreaking. The men played along with this break in social norms and decided to jump in the water in women's suits. This event clearly broke social norms as reflected in the author's tone and declarations about this event. *The San Francisco Call* classifies the women who wore men's swimsuits as feminists and declares their actions to be "masculine tricks played by feminine tricksters."¹⁰² The author also emphasizes the risqué nature of this act when he or he describes the men's suits as "the scant garment of the more undraped sex."¹⁰³ These specific phrases allude to the early twentieth century social norms against cross-dressing, and more specifically showing too much skin. Additionally before the actual text of the article, a small phrase appears in parentheses that states, "Special Dispatch to the Call."¹⁰⁴ This text reveals that the "Alameda Independence Day Parade" was such a scandal that it had to be included in a special edition to the local newspapers.

Not only does this article reveal how women used bathing suits to express their newfound independence to break cultural norms, but it also reflects a new twentieth century ideal of fitness, feminine beauty, and bodily ideals.¹⁰⁵ The author of the *San Francisco Call* article describes the women that chose to wear men's suits as "mermaids" and "sea nymphs." This article also mentions "the pretty girls in men's suits" towards the end of its text.¹⁰⁶ Although these daring ladies surprised *The San Francisco Call*, their feminine qualities gave them an opportunity to be noticed for breaking social norms in these more revealing suits. With the new, more revealing style of swimsuits, American women had to be more concerned about the way that they looked because they revealed more skin than they were used to. This was a freeing experience for some, including a woman quoted in the *San Francisco Call* who said, "This is the first real Independence day costume I have ever worn."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Christine Schmidt, *The Swimsuit*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ "Skirtless Suits Chosen by Fair Swimmers," *San Francisco Call*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

While some white women were experiencing more independence through maritime activities such as swimming, other women were not. An important lens to look through is what the author omits from this article: that maritime leisure was a new experience for some, but it excluded others. Upper-class women had time and money to experience leisure at the sea shore and wear new bathing garments such as the twentieth-century swimsuit, while African Americans and lower class women did not. African American women even had trouble trying to find a place to enjoy leisure on the beach because whites did not want to swim near them.

On June 17, 1912, Mrs. W. A. Bruce (an African American woman) fought to keep her property to provide leisure for African Americans in Redondo Beach.¹⁰⁸ Mrs. Bruce and her friends agitated white property owners who believed swimming next to minority races not only contaminated the water, but also their social reputation. “Constables” guarded the white landowner’s property, specifically a Mr. George H. Peck, and sectioned it off to be a no-trespassing zone. This zone blocked the African-American bathers from going straight out to the seashore, so much so that they had to find a different route to make it to Mrs. Bruce’s property. This article alludes to the racism at the time that banned African-Americans from swimming at the “white” resorts along the coast. Mrs. Bruce even stated that if African-Americans tried to buy property to create their own resort, realtors rejected their paperwork.¹⁰⁹ This event in Redondo Beach, California is a glimpse into early twentieth century maritime leisure. Social constructs such as race, class, and gender defined maritime leisure and made it quite a homogeneous affair.

A previous article published in the *Los Angeles Times* titled “They Dashed into the Sea with their Dresses On,” details an event that characterizes American maritime leisure for upper-class, white members of society. On July 9, 1902, a group of “romping, rollocking, unsophisticated girls” went to the beach with the Salvation Army.¹¹⁰ Approximately 226 women attended this brunch by the seashore including an “Indian woman and her little babe.”¹¹¹ At a first glance,

¹⁰⁸ “Colored People’s Resort Meets with Opposition,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1912, ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881-1989), accessed May 28, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ “Colored People’s Resort Meets with Opposition,” *Los Angeles Times*.

¹¹⁰ “They Dashed into the Sea with their Dresses On,” *Los Angeles Times* July 9, 1902, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1989), accessed May 28, 2013.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

this article displays how everyone enjoyed maritime leisure in the twentieth century. After further consideration, “They Dashed into the Sea with Their Dresses On” is an example of how the opposite is true. The author categorizes the Indian woman and her baby not as equal members of society, but as “representative” of their race. Race not only added to the segregation that happened in a maritime setting, but also further defined the controversy and paradox that American women experienced at this time.

Socioeconomic class influenced women’s maritime leisure as well. Before Annette Kellerman classified swimming as a “women’s sport,”¹¹² many rich, white women enjoyed yachting and sailing. They had earlier access to the sea and participated in maritime activities before middle-class women did.¹¹³ Women who wanted to go sailing or yachting had to know how to dress and how to act while navigating a boat. American society looked at these women like novelties because they navigated boats like men, yet conducted themselves with beauty and grace. Yachting and sailing allowed these women to experience the freedom of the open sea, but men continued to stereotype them as graceful beings that still needed instruction on how to navigate the ocean.¹¹⁴

Fathers and husbands usually supervised and patronized a rich, white woman’s access to the maritime sphere. A 1914 article from the *Ogden Standard Newspaper* titled “Daughters of Neptune” reveals the reluctant, paternalistic attitudes that men held about women enjoying maritime activities. Some of the women who joined yacht clubs and sailing clubs to compete with the men included Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Mrs. Robert Goellet, and Mrs. John R. Drexel.¹¹⁵ These women had permission to sail around the bay

¹¹² Annette Kellerman, *How to Swim*, 38.

¹¹³ For more examples of this phenomenon see “Daughters of Neptune,” *The Ogden Standard*, August 15, 1914, accessed April 29, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058396/1914-08-15/ed-1/seq-13.pdf>; “And Their Brother Sailors,” *San Francisco Call*, August 11, 1901, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1901-08-11/ed-1/seq-11.pdf>; Madge Moore, “The Etiquette of the Yachting Girl,” *San Francisco Call*, September 6, 1903, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1903-09-06/ed-1/seq-9.pdf>; Alice De Berdt, “The Social Aspect of Yachting,” *The Wichita Daily Eagle*, October 1, 1899, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014635/1899-10-01/ed-1/seq-16.pdf>; “Which Outdoor Pastime is the Greatest Beauty Maker for Women?” *The Sun*, August 27, 1905, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1905-08-27/ed-1/seq-26.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ “Daughters of Neptune,” *The Ogden Standard*.

because of their strong familial lineage and upper-class privilege. The pictures of these women clearly show their inherent wealth because of the excessive jewelry, purses, and crowns that they wore.¹¹⁶ “Daughters of Neptune” reflects the worries that men had about changing gender roles when it states, “man will have to surrender another one of his activities... Woman is going to run the yachts in a few years and send mere man back to the business office to make more money.”¹¹⁷ The author is upset by the fact that woman is yachting and that man is going to be sent back to work. Throughout the article, the author grows more accustomed to these brave yachtswomen and says, “It is nothing unusual for a skipper to meet women of the sea far out of sight of land, fearing nothing.”¹¹⁸

American society reacted similarly when women started wearing bathing suits and swimming more regularly. When some California women swam in the San Francisco Bay during winter and a group of New Yorkers passed by, they were very surprised to see so many women in the water. The *San Francisco Call* chronicled their reaction when these bystanders stated, “Are they mermaids or human beings, or is it an optical delusion or a mirage?”¹¹⁹ Americans were not really sure what to do when women started to wear what most people considered “men’s suits.” American women who participated in water sports were seen as anomalies, just like Annette Kellerman, who inspired them to wear form-fitting suits that they could move in.

Although the early twentieth century is seen as a period where American women started to express their independence through politics, fashion, and sports, I would call this periodization into question because of a lack of individual expression and equality to men. Paternalistic attitudes and reluctance to accept women into the maritime sphere restricted some women from enjoying yachting and sailing, while giving freedom to others. Race and socioeconomic class further defined the exclusivity of the maritime because minority and poor women had limited access to the beach. Swimming and other maritime leisure activities created an arena where women were put on display and seen

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ “Never Too Cold to Swim in the Bay.” *San Francisco Call*.

as anomalies like the vaudeville performances of Annette Kellerman.¹²⁰ Early twentieth century American women started to wear more revealing swimwear that allowed them to move freely in the water, but these changes did not completely eradicate earlier stereotypes given to women. Kellerman opened up the conversation to change this stereotype, but it would take decades for these same women to be considered equal members of American society.

¹²⁰ Katherine H. Adams, Michael L. Keene, and Jennifer C. Koella. *Seeing the American Woman, 1880-1920: The Social Impact of the Visual Media Explosion* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012).

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THIS SMALL WORLD: THE LEGACY AND IMPACT OF NEW YORK CITY HARDCORE PUNK AND STRAIGHT EDGE IN THE 1980S

By Alan Parkes

Punk rock is known for its raw energy and archaic simplicity, overlooking a history of complexity, diversity, and evolution by an almost constant and uniform perception from outside sources as the essence of the mantra, “sex, drugs, and rock & roll.” With this, a spirit of social change in hardcore punk is generally unaccounted for in the media’s perception of nihilism and violence in the music and subculture. The aim of my research is to examine punk and hardcore subculture in a holistic manner and to identify how this group of bands, promoters, and fans was an anomaly in youth culture that has largely been overlooked and replaced by the media’s portrayal. This has been particularly true of the scene in New York City. In the 1980s, the City revealed itself to be a bastion of unique hardcore punk rock that attempted to tackle the problems of inner-city life and soon after embraced much larger social and ethical issues. My research is focused on New York’s inner city, bands, venues, promoters, and the “kids” who created a radical and socially conscious hardcore punk scene in New York City from 1980 to 1991 with an emphasis on straight edge.¹²¹

¹²¹ To be straight edge is to refrain from drugs, alcohol, and promiscuous sex.

The crux of a study on such a unique subculture is determining why it existed, understanding what its value was to participants, and clarifying how New York's hardcore and straight edge scene transcended beyond the city both physically and ideologically to perpetuate its existence.

In the early 1970s, a small music venue on 315 Bowery Street in Manhattan opened its doors to a new style and sound. This relatively small venue, CBGB, became synonymous with the origin and development of punk rock, watching it grow into a unique and diverse community. It was here that Patti Smith, Ramones, The Misfits, and numerous other bands and musicians played some of their first performances and took their place as originators of punk rock. The term "punk" was first used to describe music in 1970 by *Creem Magazine* in an article written about Iggy Pop and the Stooges to characterize their high energy and primitive sound.¹²² However, what became distinctively punk did not come to fruition until a few years later, forming out of a garage rock sound, a more aggressive and distorted rock & roll. As it had in New York, a punk sound and style sprouted in London almost simultaneously, introducing bands such as The Police and The Clash. Diverging from the modernist style of their peers, British punk band, Sex Pistols, took on an intimidating appearance that consisted of ripped clothes, studs, leather, and often Nazi imagery. This was fused with less structured song writing and discordant vocals. This gave punk a cultural identity that further set it apart from social norms and encouraged youth in search of a unique identity to take part. From there, punk as a form of youth rebellion spread rapidly through America, ushering in a new dynamic subculture of diverse principles and ideologies. This was merely a start to a complex, contradictory, and evolving new subculture.

In New York City, at the start of the 1980s, the kids would make hardcore punk their own. While it faced the same problems as the subculture in Los Angeles—and almost any other city—violence and condemnation, in New York City, hardcore punk formed out of the ruins of the City, making it unique amongst all other scenes. Thus, for its members, its value was in its escape from larger society. The scene sought independence through a do-it-yourself ethic, rebellion at its core by choosing not to adhere to the social structures in society. This caused the music and its members to not only dissociate with cultural norms, but also to begin to question them and even the scene to which they

¹²² Lester Bangs, "Of Pop and Pies and Fun," *Creem Magazine*, November 1970, 39.

were a part. Critical of the hardcore punk scene to which it was born into, by the mid-decade, straight edge hardcore members gave rise to a new emphasis on self-analysis. While the growth of straight edge and its expansion into militant forms would challenge and contradict its original intent, for early New York straight edge members, it often created a foundation for the rest of their lives. Thus, while members moved on from the scene, the thoughts and ideals of it transcended through them, and the music continues on acknowledging New York City's contribution to a misunderstood and misrepresented subculture.

Historiography

While there have been a few sociological researchers examining hardcore punk through a contemporary ethnographical lens, little scholarship has been conducted on hardcore punk. Historians have tended to focus on larger events and have overlooked this relatively young phenomenon with few exceptions.¹²³ What has been written about early hardcore punk is almost all personal accounts or dialogue from interviews with members of bands after the 1980s. The understanding of both the sociological studies and the words of participants from the early 1980s hardcore movement reveal the complexities of the scene but also help to establish a foundation from which to examine New York City's hardcore punk scene from a historical perspective.

Early hardcore punk in America is generally classified by one of two waves, the first being the late-1970s to 1986 and second being 1986 to 1991. Forming in 1976, Black Flag in Los Angeles, and in 1977, Bad Brains in Washington D.C., ushered in a new form to the genre of punk, characterized by an increase in tempo and more aggressive vocals, often yelling. This new form became known as hardcore punk, or simply "hardcore."¹²⁴ Both of these bands peaked in popularity in the early 1980s and influenced a new generation of hardcore punk. As Steven Blush writes in his book, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*, "hardcore generated a lifestyle stripped down to the bare bones. Its intensity

¹²³ Notable exceptions include Dewar Macleod's writing on LA's early punk scene and James Ward's writing on NYC punk, both referred to here. There are numerous histories on punk that are not written by historians with a focus generally on the 1970s. See Tricia Henry, *Break All Rules: Punk Rock and the Making of a Style* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989); Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York: Grove Press, 2006).

¹²⁴ Hardcore is often used synonymously with punk. To determine the distinctions between each is a precarious task, as those within the subculture may not agree. For the sake of clarity, this paper uses "hardcore" and "hardcore punk" synonymously as distinct from "punk."

exposed raw nerves. Everyone was edgy and aggressive.”¹²⁵ Hardcore introduced a physical and emotional energy that added a new dynamic to the music. Often this was conveyed through more serious lyrical content and anger. Described by Blush as something that alienated punks adopted by necessity, hardcore was “an infectious blend of ultra-fast music, thought provoking lyrics, and fuck-you attitude.”¹²⁶ He describes the first wave of hardcore as an era of rebellion created by “irrational kids with an unfocused rage.”¹²⁷ However, by 1986, Blush argues that hardcore ended. He writes, “several things marked ’86 as the end. Black Flag, DK’s and The Misfits had all fallen apart. Minutemen’s D Boon died in a December ’85 car crash. Hüsker Dü signed to mainstream Warner Bros. Minor Threat evolved into the less-visceral Fugazi. Circle Jerks and TSOL were ‘going metal.’”¹²⁸ He asserts that the end of hardcore came with the end or change of its most influential bands and members. As a book compiled of interviews with the individuals who had the biggest impact on the first wave of hardcore, his assertion seems to suggest that new members to the scene would not perpetuate its existence. Not only were bands and scenes changing, the people within the individual scenes were dropping out. However, this proved not to be the case in some cities and amongst a younger crowd who were still being introduced to the hardcore subculture and carrying on its ideals. Thus, the conclusion of Blush’s book and description of the *end* of hardcore overlooks the new scenes and bands that broke new ground quickly while still adhering to the underground and rebellious ethos of the first wave.

Craig O’Hara links the ethos of the two early waves of hardcore in his book, *The Philosophy of Punk: More Than Noise!* O’Hara primarily dedicates his writing to the assertion that hardcore and punk should be classified as a movement. He also dismisses earlier books for their lack of content outside of photographs. O’Hara’s argument is primarily supported by personal experience and analysis. As O’Hara writes, “No books have tried to capture the philosophy of the ever changing... punk scenes.”¹²⁹ Thus, O’Hara writes on the prevalence of anarchism, environmental concern, skinheads, and straight edge in hardcore as diverse and evolving components. His book explains that hardcore is “not

¹²⁵ Steven Blush, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001), 9.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹²⁹ Craig O’Hara, *The Philosophy of Punk: More than Noise* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1999), 17.

something that fits neatly into a box or category.”¹³⁰ As he contends, there is an ever-presence of revolutionary ideas that make punk and hardcore a movement. O’Hara’s broad look at punk and hardcore presents a good understanding of the self-significance of a subculture throughout its existence in the United States. However, O’Hara’s writing overlooks the detail of examining specific scenes in exchange for an overview approach, paying little attention to New York City’s impact on punk and hardcore.

Focusing on New York City, James Ward’s article, “‘This is Germany! It’s 1933!’ Appropriations and Constructions of ‘Fascism’ in New York Punk/Hardcore in the 1980s,” explores early New York punk’s use of Nazi imagery and predisposition to leftist political ideologies.¹³¹ By the time hardcore punk took root in New York City in 1981, the seeming endorsement of racist and fascist ideology through imagery was replaced by the call for unity within the scene. Ward specifically mentions Agnostic Front and WarZone, two skinhead hardcore punk bands that scolded their peers for ignoring the real problem—class war—to which race hostilities were merely a distraction.¹³² Ward notes that the early punk’s use of Nazi symbols as an endorsement of chaos transitioned toward opposition to local government. The punks compared local leaders to Nazi leaders and began to portray the city as being controlled and destroyed by fascism. No band made a point of this more than Missing Foundation. As they asserted about New York in 1988, “This is Germany. It’s 1933!”¹³³ This exclamation was made amidst increasing conflict between police and hardcore punks.

Contrary to Ward’s assertion that New York City hardcore punk was primarily leftist, Blush argues that just prior to the *death* of hardcore in 1986, New York’s hardcore punks “more likely embraced seemingly Right-Wing philosophies—overrun with Skinhead gangs and Straight Edge zealots.”¹³⁴ Declaring that hardcore punk died in 1986, Blush has little interest in examining New York hardcore’s “Right-Wing philosophies” beyond its *death*. Instead, Blush merely makes a distinction between hardcore in the rest of America, generally

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³¹ James Ward, “‘This is Germany! It’s 1933!’ Appropriations and Constructions of ‘Fascism’ in New York Punk/Hardcore in the 1980s,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 30 (Winter 1996): 161.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 164.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹³⁴ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 173.

left leaning, and New York's hardcore community. He writes, "just as New York differed from any other place in America, [New York hardcore] differed from all other regional experiences."¹³⁵ One difference was the City's embrace of skinhead culture. Though the skinheads of New York were generally vocally non-racist, they were easily lumped into the category of right wing. This could often be attributed to their national pride, which they represented through imagery that displayed the American flag and patriotic symbolism. Moreover, by the time of the second wave, an athletic and jock-like appearance that developed simultaneously with an increase of straight edge members on the scene. Like skinheads, this appearance was often used as a basis for a conservative characterization, whereas New York hardcore's more punk looking counterparts from other regions were recognized as clearly more leftist. Straight edge itself had the same effect by contributing to New York hardcore's conservative image. Each of these factors further pushed New York to the political right in the eyes of many participants in hardcore scenes throughout America, including Blush.

Whether New York's hardcore scene was thought to be politically right or politically left, there was something more localized and social that made it significant as a part of New York City's culture. Bri Hurley argues for this in her book *Making A Scene: New York Hardcore in Photos, Lyrics & Commentary*. As a photographer, Hurley displays the social relationships, style, and demeanor that characterized New York hardcore. Hurley conveys the community at the core of the scene as one that was formed by members who were "unhappy with what they [saw] around them."¹³⁶ The lyrics included in her book reflect this unhappiness as well as a demand for change. Such demands are evidence of O'Hara's assessment of hardcore punk as a movement. Conflicting with Blush's claim that New York hardcore began to embrace right-wing ideologies in its second wave, declarations from bands and the scene's most influential members often, though not exclusively, represented leftist ideals even though the members retained a conservative appearance. This diversity, compiled with social concern, in itself could be characterized as an anomaly in hardcore, but it was an anomaly that extended to all youth subcultures. One conviction, seemingly conservative but in actuality liberal, was straight edge.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Bri Hurley, *Making A Scene: New York Hardcore in Photos, Lyrics, & Commentary* (Harrisburg: Butter Goose Press, 2011), 7.

Whether straight edge had a positive or negative impact on hardcore is up for contentious debate. Both O'Hara and Blush are critical of straight edge participants. O'Hara considers straight edge members conformists in opposition to punk rebellion, writing that straight edge "went from being a minor threat to a conservative, conformist no threat."¹³⁷ Though this is his analysis of straight edge in general, not exclusive to New York, it is relative to Blush's perception of mid-1980s New York hardcore as being conservative. Nonetheless, Blush does not make the association between conservative ideology and straight edge. Basing his criticism of straight edge on different grounds, Blush contends that "Little difference existed between Straight Edge dogma and drugged buffoonery. But to define oneself exclusively in such terms [was] totally passé. Somewhere along the way, Straight Edge evolved into a mean-spirited, super-strict form of morality in Hardcore's temple of doom."¹³⁸ While a morality definitely played a role in straight edge, not all who have written on the movement have shared Blush's negative opinion. Sociologist Ross Haenfler described the same era that Blush writes about as having "a certain lightheartedness" in his book *Straight Edge: Clean-Living Youth, Hardcore Punk, and Social Change*.¹³⁹ By all accounts, straight edge brought more to hardcore than the three rules it was formed under: "don't smoke, don't drink, don't fuck," as band Minor Threat stated.¹⁴⁰ As a contemporary ethnographical researcher on Colorado's straight edge scene, Haenfler recognizes the negative aspects in individual scenes where violence has persisted, but his primary argument is that straight edge was and remains to be a positive form of youth subculture.

Sociologist Robert Wood suggests that straight edge is not homogeneous; thus, it cannot be simply categorized as a positive or negative form of youth subculture.¹⁴¹ Wood makes the case that the only value that persists throughout straight edge is refraining from the use of drugs. While Blush condemns straight edge for its moralistic militancy, Haenfler acknowledges the many negative

¹³⁷ O'Hara, *The Philosophy of Punk*, 142. This quote is a reference to seminal straight edge band Minor Threat.

¹³⁸ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 28.

¹³⁹ Ross Haenfler, *Straight Edge: Clean-Living Youth, Hardcore Punk, and Social Change* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 14.

¹⁴⁰ Minor Threat, *Out of Step* "Out Of Step," Dischord Records, 45 RPM vinyl, 1983.

¹⁴¹ Robert Wood, *Straight Edge Youth: Complexity and Contradictions of a Subculture* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

aspects of straight edge and its complexity, but ultimately argues that the positive aspects, generally ignored by outsiders, overshadow the negative aspects. Wood, like Haenfler, recognizes how broad straight edge is. Thus, he suggests characterizing it is better done on a small scale to account for individual scenes.

In New York City, particularly during hardcore's second wave, the straight edge philosophy took flight in a manner that could not have been foreseen at its inception. While straight edge had spread nationally, sometimes taking on the negative form described by Blush, New York welcomed a form mirroring the positive aspects outlined by Haenfler. Other writers and researchers have laid a groundwork for understanding the background of hardcore punk and straight edge on a broad scale, but none have focused on the anomaly of New York City's cultural phenomenon in its underground music venues, DIY record labels, DIY zines, and kids that made New York City hardcore and straight edge a scene unlike any other, thus ensuring its lasting existence and impact. The following sets out to answer how and why such a unique form of youth subculture took root in New York City.

Social Structures of Hardcore: The Pit, DIY Ethic, and Community

In the early 1980s, hardcore punk had constructed itself around dissociation with cultural norms, and, for that, it seemingly welcomed opposition and criticism. In addition to appearance and attitude, there were other less visible aspects of hardcore's oppositional structure. These would have only been noticeable in the social settings in which hardcore punk took place. It was the sporadic intense dancing known as slam dancing, 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) ethic, and the relationships that formed individual scenes that were centered on a hardcore lifestyle. Though hardcore was never exclusive, it was a distinct subculture in which few associated. While negative perceptions from outside came naturally, what produced these perceptions were the same factors that constructed and solidified a hardcore identity and community.

One aspect of hardcore specific to the subculture was slam dancing. Slam dancing formed out of the characteristic punk dance, the pogo. While pogoing was generally to the beat of the music, slam dancing was more sporadic and violent. Though it seemingly had no structure, members of hardcore scenes recognized an order to slam dancing on the dance floor or in the pit. As anthropologist Bradford Scott Simon asserts, "the slam-pit expresses the potential

for attaining uneasy unity.”¹⁴² As a result, Simon contends, “The punk and hardcore club environment stand in opposition to that outside, in the world. Slam-dancing allows people to interact not as role-players in a structured and continuously structuring society... but as equals bonded together in a group.”¹⁴³ This was certainly the case in New York, where slam dancing in the pit may have been violent, but members recognized it as unifying and unique to their community. Moreover, members did not make violence the purpose of entering the pit. If a member fell, others were quick to pick that member up; if a member got hurt, others would make sure the hurt member made it out of the pit. Members viewed the dance as a form of expression and physical release of emotion rather than just violence. Undoubtedly, the media used the chaos of the pit as evidence of punk and hardcore’s violence in its negative characterization of the subculture.¹⁴⁴ Witnessing the pit firsthand likely would not have changed these perceptions. Though the media did not portray it, etiquette and purpose permeated the pit, further defined punk and hardcore as distinct from social norms, and solidified a sense of community through a common practice.

As much as slam dancing was essential to hardcore, a DIY ethos was the heart of the subculture. In producing music, recordings, writing, and putting on performances, DIY was necessary in maintaining the distinction of the subculture as unique and separate from cultural norms. While punk had established commercial success in the 1970s, hardcore in the 1980s sought independence from conventional music structures. The result was the creation of record labels by bands and local members of the scene themselves. While Bad Brain released their debut single, “Pay To Cum,” themselves, Black Flag released music on their guitarist Greg Ginn’s label, SST records. Likewise, Washington D.C.’s The Teen Idles posthumously released their e.p. and formed a record label with the money that they had made while in the band. This label, Dischord Records, would become the template for DIY hardcore punk labels, releasing fundamental hardcore records from bands such as State of Alert and

¹⁴² Bradford Scott Simon, “Entering the Pit: Slam-Dancing and Modernity,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 31, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 159.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Civarelli, interview by Denise Richardson, *Good Day New York*, Fox, May 6, 1992.

Minor Threat.¹⁴⁵ In New York, the DIY ethic was instrumental in the scene. Jordan Cooper and Ray Cappo from the hardcore band Youth of Today formed Revelation Records and began putting out seminal New York hardcore albums from bands such as WarZone, Sick Of It All, Side By Side, Gorilla Biscuits, Youth of Today, and Judge.

Not only was the DIY ethic central to hardcore, it was also a learning experience. Jordan Cooper recalls, “I just learned about everything as it was being done.”¹⁴⁶ Likewise, artists and writers created “zines,” self-published fanzines compiled of art and written articles, to display their work. Furthermore, shows were held in makeshift venues, basements, and anywhere a band could play, and promoters were often just fans doing whatever they could to help a band play a show. Thus, the structure of hardcore depended on its DIY form. As Mark Stern of L.A.’s Youth Brigade put it, “We were about doing it yourself, thinking for yourself, believing that no matter how fucked up the world is and how fucked up the situation around you, that you can make a difference and can affect change and inspire people.”¹⁴⁷ This was as true in New York as it was anywhere.

Both slam dancing and the DIY ethic characterized hardcore because they solidified a sense of community in the scene. These were things that set hardcore apart from cultural norms; thus, they were things that only members could identify with. This simple truth held true for hardcore scenes throughout the country. This was community that could not be recognized by outside observers. While this was particularly true in New York City, there was more to this community that formed around the City itself.

The Emergence of New York Hard Core

The New York City hardcore punk scene of the 1980s reshaped what it meant to identify with the hardcore subculture. The punk scene of the mid and late 1970s that spawned the Ramones seemed to have been replaced by the emergence of bands with a harder edge. By the early 1980s, those involved in the

¹⁴⁵ Kevin Dunn, “If It Ain’t Cheap, It Ain’t Punk’: Walter Benjamin’s Progressive Cultural Production and DIY Punk Record Label,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 24, no. 2 (June 2012): 219.

¹⁴⁶ Beth Lahickey, *All Ages: Reflections on Straight Edge* (Huntington Beach: Revelation Books, 1997), 52.

¹⁴⁷ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 275.

punk scene of New York City felt that they could not relate to the aimless direction of their local predecessors and sought the harder sound and more relevant content of bands that sprung up in California, Washington D.C., and Boston. While Black Flag and Bad Brains had introduced a faster, more aggressive, and much angrier sound than the punk that predated it, such bands as The Teen Idles, from Washington D.C., and Society System Decontrol, from Boston, began to promote ideas that seemed relevant to the social issues faced by the attendants of their shows. There was something that needed to be said on a more personal level for the hardcore punks who were truly influenced by living in New York City when racial tensions, poverty, and urban neglect were problems they witnessed daily. The New York City kids, who often found themselves squatting in abandoned buildings or in brawls on the street, found an affinity for punk's harder side. Hardcore, as a divergence from punk rock, was in its infancy in 1980 but was soon to be adopted and transformed by the venues and streets of New York City.

Distinct from punk, hardcore at the start of the 1980s set out to further establish itself as a phenomenon that was fundamentally different than any other youth subculture. As historian Dewar Macleod writes, "Hardcore took the stripped-down music of punk and stripped it down further."¹⁴⁸ Perhaps ironically, those that identified with hardcore particularly wished to distance themselves from what they witnessed in the punk scene. According to the singer of one of the original New York City hardcore bands, Roger Miret of Agnostic Front, "we started using the term 'hardcore' because we wanted to separate ourselves from the druggy... [punk] scene that was happening in New York at the time."¹⁴⁹ Hardcore kids, as they generally considered themselves, hoped to find camaraderie in New York City's Lower East Side. Freddy Cricien, brother to one of the members of Agnostic Front, writes that in New York hardcore "there was a family vibe amongst most of [the] rebellious and disenfranchised kids."¹⁵⁰ The relationships these hardcore kids formed were part of a process of identity-construction dependent on the realities of life in New York's inner

¹⁴⁸ Dewar Macleod, *Kids of the Black Hole: Punk Rock in Postsuburban California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁴⁹ Jason Buhrmester, "Agnostic Front's *Victim in Pain* at 25," *VillageVoice.com*, December 1, 2009, accessed November 1, 2013. <http://www.villagevoice.com/2009-12-01/music/agnostic-front-s-victim-in-pain-at-25/>.

¹⁵⁰ Hurley, *Making A Scene*, 4.

city. As put by one member of the early New York hardcore scene, “it was this club where no one ever took membership and there was no barrier to entry. The fact of your being there meant you were accepted.”¹⁵¹ Harley Flanagan, founding member of influential New York hardcore band Cro-Mags, considered the scene to be very inclusive, claiming “you [could] relate to the people and the bands.”¹⁵² Inclusion was fundamental for the growth and survival of hardcore in New York. As put by John Porcelly, member of multiple New York hardcore bands, “Being a hardcore punk during the heyday of the CBGB’s era meant it was you against the world. Cops, hip-hop kids and drug dealers basically wanted you out and you had to be hard to survive those days. It influenced the sound and also brought the scene together because we just had each other back then.”¹⁵³ The acceptance within encouraged a drive for change beyond the walls of such venues as Max’s Kansas City, A7, and CBGB.

The role of New York’s social and structural environment in hardcore had just as much, if not more, influence as did hardcore bands from outside the City that were lighting the way through the uncharted ground of hardcore music. That is to say, New York hardcore was its own breed. The Lower East Side displayed the corrosion of a long neglected urban area nestled between high rent properties, a textbook image of gentrification in the 1980s.¹⁵⁴ The area was “infested with drugs and despairs, sadness, decimation and extreme unrest and trepidation.”¹⁵⁵ And as racial tension grew, hardcore found a rallying cry for unity and community to combat it. Fueled by the working class pride and hard-style look of skinheads, WarZone, a Lower East Side band founded in 1982, called for an end to what they classified as “the war between races.” In their song by the same title they declared, “Your prejudiced ways / are so fucked up/ Your mind’s so dense,” and demanded, “look inside yourself!”¹⁵⁶ Racial tension in the inner-city gave hardcore singers an issue that their fans could identify with. Though it was primarily dominated by white males, hardcore’s

¹⁵¹ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 174.

¹⁵² *New York Hardcore*, In Effect (New York: In Effect Records, 1991) VHS.

¹⁵³ John Porcelly, interview by author, Santa Ana, CA, November 5, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Caitlin Cahill, “Street Literacy: Urban Teenagers’ Strategies for Negotiating Their Neighbourhood,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 3, no. 3 (September, 2000): 251-277.

¹⁵⁵ Joel Rose, “Lower East Side: Directors Love It To A Fault,” *New York Times*, May 7, 1989.

¹⁵⁶ WarZone, *Lower East Side crew* “War Between Races,” Revelation Records, 45 RPM, 1987.

natural critical reaction to external factors attempted to construct an inclusive platform in comparison to the streets of the Lower East Side.

The community that grew from hardcore was one that flourished in the streets colored by graffiti, poverty, and drugs. The hardcore kids often lived as squatters or in low rent “punk houses” where multiple people shared crammed living spaces. The area was vital for the small venues that hardcore bands called home. As put by John Porcelly,

The lower east side of Manhattan in the 80’s was basically a wasteland, nothing like it is now. It was all lower income Spanish and Puerto Rican families, many homeless people, and drugs, especially crack, was widespread. The upside to this was that although it was dangerous, the rents were super cheap and attracted a lot of artists and musicians. It was a very creative time in NY.¹⁵⁷

Thus, New York’s inner city gave hardcore members not only lyrical content, but it provided space that allowed for the music to grow without restriction. In essence, hardcore made the space its own, beholden to no one other than the kids. This was the necessary environment for hardcore members to form their scene. The deterioration that encouraged artistic expression and the gang and drug related violence that encouraged camaraderie produced the two necessary ingredients for a burgeoning hardcore scene.

Any space that would allow for a show to be held brought outside inspiration from touring hardcore bands and created a foundation for locals. For example, A7, a 200 square foot venue in New York City’s East Village has been labeled by Steve Blush as both a “shithole” and New York hardcore’s “spiritual home when hardcore was introduced to New York in 1981.”¹⁵⁸ Both labels characterized an ideal space for shows. It took 75 people to fill A7, but more well-known bands, such as Bad Brains or Black Flag, would fill the room beyond capacity. Parris Mayhew of the band Cro-Mags recalls, “There’d be ten bands a night for three bucks. There’d be a sheet of loose-leaf paper with the bands’ names. You’d knock on the door and enter this little world where there were 70-100 kids.”¹⁵⁹ The construction of “this little world” by and for hardcore kids made

¹⁵⁷ John Porcelly, interview by author.

¹⁵⁸ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 177.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

it a unique subculture that was completely independent. The music had no intention or interest in expansion beyond venues such as A7 or the basement on 171 Avenue A, which doubled as a record store.

While New York's first wave of hardcore introduced quintessential bands and venues, after the establishment of a vibrant scene, the focus on its creation and unity were lost. By 1985, older members felt that new kids entered the subculture taking it for granted. Pete Steele of the New York band Carnivore recalls, "The scene started to attract so much attention that the hardcore kids got out of it and bowed out. You'd have kids showing up that looked like Skinheads but weren't really skinheads. It was just style... it got exploited."¹⁶⁰ Early New York bands created a precedent for second wave bands, but by 1985, the scene had changed and seemed to be self-destructing. Nonetheless, while some members may have become disillusioned with the scene, the second wave would introduce a new sense of urgency that would advance many of the fundamental ideals established in the first wave.

Youth Crew: New York Hardcore 85-90

Unfortunately, by 1985, hardcore in New York resembled what it had first intended to escape: a drug infested and aimless scene. John Porcelly describes the condition of hardcore in 1985 as a mirror image of the things he despised outside the scene that had first led him to hardcore. Hoping he would escape social norms through hardcore, Porcelly ironically found that in New York hardcore "the clothes were dirtier and people had weirder haircuts, but basically they were doing the same things that every burnout in my high school was doing – listening to music, getting drunk, and getting in fights."¹⁶¹ As original New York hardcore members had wanted to dissociate from what they saw in the punk scene at the start of the decade, Porcelly and other younger members of the scene sought to establish themselves with new sound, content, and style that was distinct from what was already taking place in hardcore.

By mid-decade, the early bands that had formed New York's hardcore scene had seemingly begun to cross over into a more metal and commercial sound. This meant a broader audience and the necessary shift of lyrical content to cater to a wider range of fans. For Agnostic Front, this meant that their earlier cries

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁶¹ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 130.

for local unity were overshadowed by a growing national audience and lyrics critical of the inhabitants of the low-income neighborhoods from which they came. For example, their song, "Public Assistance," was an attack on public welfare programs: "Uncle Sam takes half my pay/ so you can live for free/ I got a family and bills to pay/ No one hands money to me."¹⁶² The song received much criticism from within the scene on a national level. While this conservative shift inspired some New York bands and helped to categorize New York's scene politically, a growing subgroup of hardcore kids wanted to reestablish what they believed to be the inherent nature of the music.

Porcelly's band, Youth of Today, ushered in the second wave of hardcore in New York City that once again set out to establish an identity for hardcore punk that was distinct from cultural norms. Porcelly and charismatic front man Ray Cappo wanted to bring a positive message to the hardcore scene that would challenge the prevailing norms of the mid-1980s. Like Porcelly, Cappo began associating with hardcore in the hopes of escaping the drug and party-centered lifestyle of his peers. Cappo attended his first hardcore show in New York City at age fifteen. Seeing English band UK Subs and New York locals The Young and The Useless, Cappo recalls, "was a show that served as a spring board for me to dive head first into American Hardcore... I fell in love with hardcore." However, Cappo was unsure about the direction the scene was headed in the mid-1980s. He was unique amongst hardcore members. He writes, "I was athletic. That wasn't [hardcore]. I always despised lethargy, violence and intoxication. I was vexed and confused how these things were such a dominating force in my alternative scene. That shit was happening in the regular scenes of the suburbs. I wanted an alternative."¹⁶³

Cappo, Porcelly, and Youth of Today took it upon themselves to create an alternative in the New York hardcore scene. They were heavily influenced by Nevada's 7 Seconds, an early hardcore band that preached the importance of including women in hardcore, peace, sobriety, and an intrinsic value of youth as a state of questioning social construction. Cappo and Porcelly felt that these points were necessary characteristics of hardcore; without them there would be little distinction between what existed beyond and within the four cramped walls

¹⁶² Agnostic Front, *Cause for Alarm* "Public Assistance," Combat/Relativity Records, 45 RPM, 1986.

¹⁶³ Lahickey, *All Ages*, x-xi.

of CBGB's Sunday matinees. Thus, with the heavy-hitting sound of ultra-fast drumbeats, heavily distorted guitar tones, and vocals that generally sounded like chaotic shouting and growling, Youth of Today was formed.

While the music's staccato structure was important, the most significant departure was not the sound; it was the message. Their first release on a hardcore colleague's record label, Positive Force Records, made this clear. Amid calls to end conflict within the scene, and messages of faith and trust in peoples' capacity to do good, Cappo spawned a rallying cry for hardcore kids. He declared, "to the positive youth my heart I pledge / X on my hand now take the oath/ to positive youth to positive growth / to positive minds, to pure clean souls / these will be all my goals" and encouraged those who listened to "walk with me and my crew."¹⁶⁴ Youth crew was thus formed and took on questions of ethical significance while adhering to optimistic perspectives. Furthermore, Youth of Today, and youth crew was characterized by a new appearance and style.

In 1985, hardcore bands in the city and its surrounding area began to embrace an image that simply was *not* hardcore as it was known in New York. Similar to members in Boston's Society System Decontrol and Southern California's Uniform Choice, Youth of Today mirrored the image of high school jocks that they despised more than drugged-out hardcore kids they associated with. In running shoes, Champion brand pullovers, collegiate sweatshirts, and sportswear, there was a new intensity in their appearance that expressed a sense of urgency to the scene. Many young participants chose to follow Cappo and his crew, and new youth crew bands sprang up quickly. Bands such as Bold, Side By Side, and Gorilla Biscuits embraced the new form of hardcore that spread throughout New York City. Each of these had one common thread: promotion of straight edge ideology.

Straight edge was in many ways the nucleus of New York City's youth crew scene and second wave of punk, but it was also a contentious and complex topic. Washington D.C. Band Minor Threat first established straight edge. Beyond the intentions of Minor Threat's singer, Ian Mackaye, straight edge became something of a movement within hardcore. When Mackaye had first written the words to "Out of Step" and "Straight Edge," two straight edge anthems critical

¹⁶⁴ Youth of Today, *Can't Close My Eyes* "Youth Crew," Revelation Records, 45 RPM, 1988.

of conventional uses of drugs, alcohol, and an overemphasis on sex among his peers, he did so out of personal reflection. He did not believe his words would grow into the movement that would come of it. Straight edge would not reach New York in any influential form until hardcore's second wave. Ray Cappo recalls being brushed aside by a local show promoter who told him, "If you think you're going to start a straight edge scene in New York, you're a joke.... There's too many drugs,"¹⁶⁵ The fact remained that New York had in many ways closed its doors to new ideas by the mid-1980s and had largely returned to a state of complacency similar to the 1970s, only with a harder sound. However, just as the scene had been ripe for a drive against racial inequities and urban strife at the start of the 1980s, it was now the perfect opportunity for young bands to reform the apathetic scene. Moreover, straight edge became a tool for reflection on issues that did not directly impact the scene and inner city culture. It cultivated distinct concern for issues relative but beyond the immediate interest of New York hardcore. Its distinction was solidified by its style, imagery, and symbolism.

From inception, straight edge members chose the symbol of an X to represent them. If a club held a show, the club often refused to admit fans under drinking age.¹⁶⁶ Some clubs, however, let these kids in but marked their hands with an X; straight edge members soon adopted this symbol as their own. Ian Mackaye recounts that being marked by an X "[was] just what kids... had to deal with just to see music, to be free."¹⁶⁷ Reallocating its purpose, band members or fans would willingly draw X's on their own hands in an intended defiant manner. The symbol represented that whether they were of legal age to drink or not, they were proud to be sober. The stigma of being underage was thus turned into a source of pride and source of defining grounds for solidarity, as suggested by Youth of Today. The symbol eventually evolved into XXX. The three X's represented the three components of straight edge. As Haenlfer writes, "The basic tenets of [straight edge] are quite simple: members abstain,

¹⁶⁵ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 24.

¹⁶⁶ In both Washington D.C., where straight edge originated, and New York, the legal drinking age was eighteen at the start of the 1980s. Joshua Barbanel, "Issue and Debate: Raising New York Drinking Age to 21," *New York Times*, May 28, 1984.

¹⁶⁷ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 100.

completely, from drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and usually reserve sexual activity for caring relationships, rejecting casual sex.”¹⁶⁸ Ian Mackaye stated the rules of straight edge more bluntly: again, “[1] don’t drink, [2] don’t smoke, [3] don’t fuck.”¹⁶⁹

The style, symbols, and tenets of straight edge represented a new rebellion. As New York hardcore member Beth Lahickey writes, straight edge was “an untraditional form of rebellion... rebelling against the traditional forms of rebellion.”¹⁷⁰ It was a rebellion against New York’s drug culture, as well as hippy counterculture; thus, recognizing the value of counterculture by rejecting one aspect of one counterculture to form another. As Haenfler suggests, straight edge formed as a sort of culmination in skinhead, punk, and hippy ideals, all embracing rebellion.¹⁷¹ While drug use had seemingly been synonymous with rebelliousness, straight edge members contended that mind-altering drugs, alcohol, and overemphasis on sex inhibited true rebellion. As New York show promoter Dave Stein recalls, “the rebellion, the angst, the being fed up with the status quo – lost all of its validity when people were doing all these things that destroyed themselves.”¹⁷² Those that adopted straight edge did not want to inhibit their rebellion by obscuring reality through mind-altering drugs and addictions. Expressed in Minor Threat’s “Straight Edge,” such inhibitors merely constituted a crutch.

Nevertheless, reasons for becoming straight edge were as complex as hardcore itself. Along with a sense of defiance against the status quo within and beyond the hardcore scene and camaraderie, many straight edge members identified it with a sense of freedom from larger cultural values. Nonetheless, many straight edge members did not identify as straight edge with the pretense of rebellion or freedom at all. These members, just lacked interest in what straight edge opposed. Many straight edge members, perhaps validly, were accused of simply following a hardcore trend or of being attracted to the label and identity that being straight edge brought with it. Of course, no one would admit this, as hardcore members were particularly critical of trends. Whatever the case, reasons behind membership did not divide the members; following the three

¹⁶⁸ Haenfler, *Straight Edge*, 10.

¹⁶⁹ Minor Threat, *Out of Step*.

¹⁷⁰ Lahickey, *All Ages*, xviii.

¹⁷¹ Haenfler, *Straight Edge*, 174.

¹⁷² Lahickey, *All Ages*, 27.

tenets were the essence of straight edge solidarity. According to John Porcelly, "People became [straight edge] for many different reasons. Some wanted to get off drugs, some wanted to be cool, some wanted to live a healthy lifestyle. Whatever the reason, straight edge helped them navigate their adolescence in a much clearer way and had a far reaching, positive impact on the scene."¹⁷³

This attitude reflected the complexity of straight edge and the national climate into which it was born. Associating straight edge with the conservative political ideology in hardcore was easy on face value; however, the diversity of its members and issues straight edge bands addressed proved it to not be so easily classified. As Haenfler acknowledges, straight edge's "emphasis on clean living, sexual purity, lifetime commitment, and meaningful community was reminiscent of youth evangelical movements, while the focus on self-control suggested Puritanical roots."¹⁷⁴ Moreover, a more contemporary and immediate association could be made between Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign during the 1980s and straight edge. As sociologists Patrick Williams and Heith Copes recognize, "straightedge came to be viewed by many pundits (including some punks) as a perverse form of Ronald Reagan's neoconservative politics."¹⁷⁵ However, perhaps more appropriately in New York, straight edge also represented New Left radicalism on moral and humanitarian grounds. This opposition resulted in emotional satisfaction from members that derived from expressing personal values in action.¹⁷⁶ The action was hardcore.

While straight edge was diverse and not exclusive beyond its three tenets, in New York City, as in many other cities, the hardcore scene did not accept it. As straight edge began to grow from 1986 onward, resentment boiled in those who had been a part of the scene since its inception. To them, it seemed as though the scene had been taken over by kids that were ignorant of its past. Many others felt that straight edge members maintained too much pride in such a minor and personal choice to be straight edge. In 1988, Steve Martin of Agnostic Front in 1988 said "Everyday there is like a new straight edge band

¹⁷³ John Porcelly, interview by author.

¹⁷⁴ Ross Haenfler, "Rethinking Subcultural Resistance: Core Values of the Straight Edge Movement," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33 (2004): 416.

¹⁷⁵ Patrick Williams and Heith Copes, "How Edge Are You? Constructing Authentic Identities and Subcultural Boundaries in a Straightedge Internet Forum," *Symbolic Interaction* 28 (2005): 70.

¹⁷⁶ Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism; The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1968), 41.

playing. Their songs are just retreads of what has been said before a million times better back in 1983 when straight edge wasn't so fashionable."¹⁷⁷ Martin represents many within the scenes who dismissed straight edge as a fad, and again criticized any type of fashion forming out of hardcore. He asserted, "A lot of these kids just jumped on the band wagon, that's the best way of putting it. I really don't like the way a lot of these kids will turn their nose up at a band if they don't have the straight edge look, or if they don't sing songs about straight edge."¹⁷⁸ Undoubtedly, some straight edge members took on the label with a perception of moral high ground, and many who were not straight edge attacked its perceived narcissistic badge of honor. However, its critics were generally dissociated from, and ignorant of, the individual character of each member of straight edge. What would come out of straight edge in New York would prove to be in line with the fundamental ethos of hardcore.

Regardless of its critics, straight edge took New York hardcore by storm, adhering to hardcore punk ideals at its core. Youth of Today emphasized this connection through lyrics that expressed the need for unity and community inside and outside of the scene. In their song, "Break Down the Walls," they urged whoever listened to "Look beyond the fashion or crowd that they're in/ Look beyond their riches or the color of their skin/ Look beyond appearance and the truth you will find/ Look for what's inside before you make up your mind."¹⁷⁹ As Youth of Today suggested, Straight edge had in no way broken off from the ideals that Minor Threat had advocated and had in no way split from the ethos of social change that had spirited the birth of New York hardcore. While New York's scene had in many ways become stagnant by 1985, straight edge showed that rebellion remained the true nature of hardcore. This rebellion was wrapped in a cloak of positivity during the second wave. Along with being labeled as youth crew bands, many of the same bands began to be characterized as 'positive bands.' As members of the growing straight edge, youth crew, and positive scene began to take on an identity distinct from their peers, they nevertheless embraced their value within hardcore. Straight edge

¹⁷⁷ Roger Miret and Vinny Stigma, interview by Kent, "Agnostic Front interview," *No Answers*, 1988, 4.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Youth of Today, *Break Down the Walls* "Break Down the Walls," Revelation Records, 45 RPM, 1986.

simply expanded on hardcore, and many recognized that its tenets did not ban hardcore's rebellion.

Diverging from the problems within the City and in the scene itself, animal rights became a pressing issue for many straight edge members. This had some precedent in British anarchistic punk bands, most notably Conflict and Oi Polloi, both of which took the questions of animal liberation head-on by advocating direct action against the livestock farming industry. New York's own anarchist punks, Nausea, would follow suit in their 1990 song, "Butchers." However, Youth of Today first brought this issue to the attention of New York's hardcore scene. The lyrical content in punk that gave the issue precedent in hardcore was generally not recognized by hardcore members. Unlike the obscure relationship between punk and early hardcore as it diverged from the former, by the mid-1980s, hardcore was distinct with few members recognizing the parallels of the punk that coexisted with its hardcore counterpart of the mid and late 1980s. Though, not ignoring the problems they saw in front of them, animal welfare became an issue of new concern for many New York hardcore members, embracing external concerns the movement had failed to acknowledge at its outset.

Reaching beyond hardcore's scene into animal rights was a natural progression. By resisting alcohol and drugs, straight edge members had already felt a significant distinction between themselves and society as a whole. For them, vegetarianism did not constitute a major development. As Mackaye explained, "I think that vegetarianism was a logical step... The idea in my life, of the process that is, is re-examining things given to me and seeing if they work and constantly working to try and make myself better – do a better job in the world."¹⁸⁰ Members of straight edge had two primary reasons to combat animal cruelty; veganism and vegetarian dietary choices correlated easily to their existing convictions. The first was bodily intake. Undoubtedly, those involved in straight edge had a predisposition to question what they consumed; meat was no exception. For some straight edge members, this meant adopting a vegan or vegetarian diet for reasons relative to their health; however, this was not the case for most members. Most members concluded from their questioning of consumption that there were reasons beyond their own bodies to adopt a new diet.

¹⁸⁰ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 103.

Mackaye's reasoning dealt with more than consumption; he focused on ethics. More than extending straight edge ideals, embracing ethical dietary choices represented interests beyond that of the individual tenets of straight edge. The relationship between ethics and straight edge was often seen by its members in the significance in soberness as a form of clarity. Members felt that refraining from addictive behaviors allowed them to focus on matters of more significance, such as animal welfare. Youth of Today recorded their animal rights anthem, "No More," in 1988: "Meat eating, flesh eating, think about it / So callous to this crime we commit / Always Stuffing our face with no sympathy / What a selfish, hardened society so / No More / Just looking out for myself / When the price paid is the life of something else / No More / I won't participate." Though the band was unaware and concerned about the reaction they would get over song content foreign to hardcore, members of the scene quickly adopted Youth of Today's message. According to Porcelly, after the release of "No More," "practically the whole scene went vegetarian. When we wrote that song we weren't sure if kids would be into the idea or completely turned off by it. But we didn't care. It was such an urgent message."¹⁸¹ Soon after, vocalist Anthony Civarelli of New York's straight edge band Gorilla Biscuits followed suit in their song, "Cats and Dogs." He exclaimed, "My true compassion is for all living things and not just the ones who are cute so I do what I can / I want to save lives and I've got a plan."¹⁸²

The message of animal rights had a huge impact on hardcore and straight edge throughout the country. Bands such as Insted, emulated the youth crew sound and concern for animal rights in their songs "Maybe Tomorrow" and "Feel Their Pain." Insted asserted, "It's my philosophy / To take life is criminal / From the smiling clown / To the billions served / Represents to me bloodshed undeserved / Hear my words / Feel their pain / Eating their flesh / You have nothing to gain."¹⁸³ The message also influenced first wave hardcore bands in the late 1980s. Early New York band Cro-Mags advocated animal rights in their 1989 song, "Death Camps," asserting that meat eating is a product of being conditioned to eat meat since birth, but it is not ethically justifiable.¹⁸⁴ Karl

¹⁸¹ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 131.

¹⁸² Gorilla Biscuits, *Start Today* "Cats and Dogs," Revelation Records, 45 RPM, 1989.

¹⁸³ Insted, *We'll Make the Difference* "Feel Their Pain," Nemesis Record, 331/3 RPM, 1989.

¹⁸⁴ Cro-Mags, *Best Wishes* "Death Camps," Profile Records, 45 RPM, 1989.

Buechner formed his band, Earth Crisis, in 1989 with both straight edge and veganism as primary focuses for lyrical content, endorsing direct action from such groups as the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front. The ideas expressed by bands such as Earth Crisis would ultimately form a distinct social circle in hardcore known for militancy: hardline. Hardline and its strict vegan message developed a national following in the mid-1990s.

Though vegetarianism and veganism were not necessary tenets of straight edge, such dietary choices morphed into the straight edge identity. By the 1990s, vegetarianism and veganism were so closely identified with straight edge that many considered vegetarianism another tenet. A 1995 *New York Times* article stated “The Straight Edge rules: no liquor, drugs, or meat.”¹⁸⁵ However, straight edge members still recognized that the *fourth X* was not absolutely necessary. As the straight edge movement reached beyond the original tenets and beyond the immediate interests of the scene, members did some introspection. Many later bands would become adamant about including veganism’s in straight edge. While the ethic of animal welfare was not a necessary tenet, its popularity in the scene conveyed that the movement valued ethics and self-reflection.

While hardcore began taking on issues larger than those that were immediate to the scene, members seemingly overlooked one crucial element within. Hardcore generally idealized an egalitarian scene in which each member was as vital as the next whether they be a show promoter, band member, or just a fan. However, attitudes towards women reflected more of the mainstream culture than an environment of equality. Women in hardcore and straight edge faced the broader social difficulty of negotiating their identity in a scene that promoted acceptance while being male dominated. More males seemed to be drawn to the aggressive and angry nature of New York hardcore at its inception, particularly slam dancing. Early members often adopted a favorable view of masculinity as a seemingly natural reaction to their disenfranchisement, which supports the sociological theory that subcultures are generally male-dominate as a result of limited upward mobility.¹⁸⁶ Many New York bands, such as Rest in Pieces and Break Down, used imagery that idealized a masculine appearance and physical strength. As hardcore continued into the mid and late 1980s, reflection caused

¹⁸⁵ Jennifer Steinhauer “Clean Living’s New Look,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1995.

¹⁸⁶ Albert Cohen, *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1955), 55.

members to reevaluate the scene, resulting in a unique expansion toward issues like animal rights and ethical concerns. For women, however, their place in hardcore was often the back of CBGBs and other small venues where they could avoid the violence of “the pit.”

Nonetheless, women participated in the scene and took many unique, as well as shared, experiences from it. Many saw hardcore as at least a small improvement to society’s hegemonic masculinity. Attitudes towards women were almost never outwardly negative in the scene. In fact, men often welcomed women and encouraged them to take part in hardcore. Most members within hardcore embraced the punk ideal that women’s involvement should allow them to “move from backup singers to musicians and from groupies to participants with an accompanying fashion style that blew away traditional ideas about women’s appearance.”¹⁸⁷ Hurley, for one, writes about being welcomed into hardcore as an outsider who had first come to the scene as a photographer. Bands such as Reno’s 7 Seconds attempted to bring the issue to the attention of all those involved in hardcore. Their song, “Not Just Boys’ Fun,” acknowledged the disparity between men and women in hardcore and recognized the value and importance of participation by women: “There’s girls who put out fanzines, and others put on shows / Yet they’re not allowed to get out on the floor / Some make music, well that you can accept / Hell, maybe live you’ll get some tits and ass / You fucking moron, your brains have run amuck / A girl’s only lot in life is not to fuck!” Doubtless, hardcore during the 1980s was a clear medium for advocating gender equality. In many cases, women within the scene took advantage of this. However, in New York, while women actively participated in the scene, no notable effort was made within the scene to reestablish gender roles in the interest of equality. As New York hardcore member Susan Martinez recalls, “being a girl at shows was extremely alienating at times. Girl bands or even girls in bands were so rare, and even then, mocked by boys.”¹⁸⁸ Ultimately, whether or not people made an effort to subvert gender norms in hardcore and whether or not they welcomed women into the scene, women were severely under-represented.

¹⁸⁷ Jamie Mullaney, “‘Unity Admirable But Not Necessarily Headed’: Going Rates and Gender Boundaries in the Straight Edge Hardcore Music Scene,” *Gender & Society* 21 (2007): 385.

¹⁸⁸ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 112.

Straight edge both rejected hegemonic masculinity while also recreating it.¹⁸⁹ This replication of gender norms was not overt, but a subconscious byproduct of the masculine identity that hardcore valued. Thus, hardcore quickly adopted and perpetuated hegemonic masculinity. Coupled with the established interest in masculinity by hardcore participants, straight edge associated abstinence with a mental strength that transcended into physical strength, helping to perpetuate hegemonic masculinity. One New York straight edge band in particular, Project X, made the association between mental and physical strength clear through their lyrics: "I'm as straight as the line that you sniff up your nose / I'm as hard as the booze that you swill down your throat / I'm as bad as the shit you breath into your lungs / And I'll fuck you up as fast as the pill on your tongue." Project X frontman John Porcelly had originally written these lyrics with the intention of using them for Youth of Today, but Ray Cappo declared them too militant. Nonetheless, the very short lived Project X had a significant impact on New York hardcore and strengthened the relationship between masculinity and straight edge.

Beyond idealized virility, straight edge members' views on sex often encouraged involuntary rejection of women. Some men, rather than recognizing women's own interest in the scene for reasons as diverse as their own, associated female participation with common stereotypes of women in leisurely social settings; in a most simplistic suggestion, women were there to be approached by men. Though this was not a view delegated to all women by all male hardcore members, it very likely was present enough to have had the potential to encourage a female member's dissociation. This certainly had precedent in hardcore. Non-straight edge band, Adolescents, from Los Angeles, called attention to a certain *type* of hardcore girl in their song, "L.A. Girl:" "You'd fuck any guy in town / Your life's a total mess up / Why the hell do you hang around?"¹⁹⁰ Likewise, negative stereotypes could have been perpetuated by other women. Early New York City scene member Laura Albert contends about the first wave, "The role of women in the scene was as the sexual outlet or as something that hung on the arm and stood on the side. Women weren't welcome in the mosh

¹⁸⁹ Haenfler, *Straight Edge*, 95.

¹⁹⁰ Adolescence, *Adolescence* "LA Girl," Frontier Records, 45 RPM, 1981.

pit... [women] weren't welcome in the bands. Girls didn't welcome each other, either; there was no camaraderie. The only thing you could really offer was sex."¹⁹¹ While the second wave seemed significantly more open for women's participation beyond sex, a stigma remained. Though not exclusive to straight edge, it was this stigma and the tenets of straight edge that led to the questioning of the motives of female members. This again resulted in the replication and perpetuation of larger societies structures of gender.

Ultimately, women involved in hardcore and straight edge faced the issue of self-construction. Many women came to hardcore with the intention of escaping the passive, quiet, and ladylike ideal of them projected by larger society. However, it was not easy to adopt the aggressive manners associated with hardcore when the perception by many men in the scene was still more in line with the norms women hoped to avoid. According to Laura Albert, "I was always aware of this very male sexual energy going on, and since I wasn't a boy, I couldn't be part of it. I wanted something from these people but I knew I didn't want to actually have sex with them. I had this feeling that I would've gotten more if I was a boy."¹⁹² However, bands, such as the all-male 7 Seconds, attempted to defy social norms for women through their music. As sociologist Jamie Mullaney asserts, "Music subcultures that aim not only to embrace women as participants and musicians but also to consciously subvert dominant conceptualizations of femininity often end up reproducing the structures of inequality they purport to defy."¹⁹³ Hardcore during the latter half of the 1980s exemplified this. Perceptions of what it meant to be hardcore conflicted with societal norms of femininity. Thus, women within hardcore were restricted by new structures of gender within the scene. In a 1987 interview on New York University radio, all-male New York hardcore band WarZone discussed the importance of having the "WarZone women" behind the band. They commented that "there is a good woman behind every man," and thus, it was the case that there were *good women* behind their band.¹⁹⁴ This attitude perpetuated gender roles in the scene. If women were to take on roles generally associated with men, they could have very well faced being mocked, as Susan Martinez

¹⁹¹ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 34.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁹³ Mullaney, "Unity Admirable," 387.

¹⁹⁴ WarZone, interview by Spermicide, *Crucial Chaos Radio Show*, WNYU 89.1 New York, 1987.

recounts. Thus, women in hardcore were often left to find a balance between hardcore and ladylike characteristics to solidify their place in the scene.

While hardcore and straight edge would ultimately adhere to larger society's cultural perspectives of gender, most women within the scene still saw hardcore as a better alternative and may have never even recognized any problems. Dawn, a late 1980s New York City female member of the scene, suggests that women in the scene were little different than men and all played an important role. Speaking about the entire scene and individual ownership of it, Dawn asserted, "We're building something that's completely new and different and, you know, it's going to be a real alternative and a real way for people like us to exist in this world."¹⁹⁵ Another member of New York's scene recalls, "I never felt any different about being a girl at straight edge shows, and I think that point perfectly illustrates the beauty and personality, aside from the physical, between girls and guys in the hardcore scene."¹⁹⁶ These different attitudes reveal that all members likely had different perspectives. The complexity of the issue extends even further when considering the different settings of hardcore. Masculinity seemed an essential part of participating in slam dancing; however, men involved in hardcore often purported to promote equality between the sexes. This may have often been easier to recognize outside CBGB's before a show began, a much different setting than "the pit." Summing up the boundaries and structure of gender in hardcore, Ian Mackaye, acknowledging gender inequality in hardcore but suggesting it gradually diminished, proclaims, "You can say it was total misogyny, or that here were these boys who forced an issue and made it possible for an era where more women are in bands than ever before. If you walk into a show now and see a band with three women and a boy, do you even think twice about it? No! So shoot some props out to the hardcore kids."¹⁹⁷ Of course, Ian was a male member of the scene, perhaps rendering his opinion biased. Nonetheless, many women recognized the value of being members of hardcore regardless of gender.

Likewise, gay members of the scene faced many of the same obstacles that some female members faced, particularly in New York. During the first half of the decade while the popularity of skinhead culture reached an apex, gay

¹⁹⁵ Wood, *Straight Edge Youth*, 43.

¹⁹⁶ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 193.

¹⁹⁷ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 35.

members of the scene were not accepted. Representing a popular and contradictory view among skinheads in New York, Roger Miret of Agnostic Front declared in 1985, "I don't beat up gay guys, but let them stay on the West Side. If I see a guy rubbing his crotch and licking his lips, I'll put him out. I have friends who are, but I don't want to know what they do."¹⁹⁸ This statement expresses the idealized masculine social structure that characterized hardcore. As Steven Blush writes, "In NYC, starving young Skinheads would make 20 bucks blowing old men in the West Village – then, to 'right themselves,' would return to the East Village to fag-bash."¹⁹⁹ Blush reveals the complexity of masculinity as expressed in hardcore settings.

As hardcore merged into its second wave and straight edge took its place as a major force behind New York City hardcore, violent attitudes towards homosexuality dwindled. Straight edge did not have the same impact on homosexuality as it on women. Furthermore, many bands outside of New York embraced homosexuality, which set an example for New York bands. Hardcore bands such as the Dicks, Big Boys, and Meatmen all had at least one gay member and made their homosexuality a lyrical theme. Nonetheless, no gay New York bands emerged, though there were certainly gay members of the scene. Thus, just like women, gay members had to formulate an identity that fit both the structures of hardcore and homosexuality, a hard balance to find particularly in New York.

Hardcore in New York and around the country in the 1980s was a white male dominated scene. Escaping this dominance in exchange for an egalitarian community was clearly a challenge to a scene that hardly recognized its restrictions. However, hardcore proved itself capable of transforming again and again. Hardcore grew out of the complacent punk rock, and underwent another transformation with the birth of straight edge. However, New York hardcore never truly addressed the issues of gender and sexuality to improve the scene for all of its members. As the scene grew, it in large part lost sight of its inclusive nature by further embracing masculinity and militancy that many original straight edge members felt caused it to regress. As Lahickey writes, "Unfortunately as the straight edge scene progressed, it became hauntingly reminiscent of all the narrow-mindedness that hardcore had given me refuge

¹⁹⁸ Roger Miret, interview by *Flipside* #45, 1985.

¹⁹⁹ Blush, *American Hardcore*, 37.

from.... It all began to make me feel uncomfortable. I fell in love with hardcore for the freedom I felt from others' expectations. Straight edge became just a different set of rules."²⁰⁰

Straight Edge Militancy and Fragmentation

By the end of the decade, the dramatic explosion of straight edge had dwindled. In fact, there was growing criticism from new members to the scene, similar to the older members who had at first been apprehensive of straight edge's message. As fewer hardcore members began adopting the straight edge label, more straight edge members began "dropping the label" or "selling out," which meant denouncing any of the tenets of straight edge. As straight edge's popularity began to diminish, becoming more contentious than ever before, some members felt unsettled by the criticism of straight edge. Mike Judge, most notably of the band Judge, but playing briefly for Youth of Today recalls, "in New York I could see how the whole straight edge seemed to be taking a beating from all sides, especially Youth of Today. I don't know whether it was because Youth of Today was more outspoken than the rest of the straight edge bands were... I thought it was really weird because Youth of Today was always about trying to be good to yourself and good to other people around you."²⁰¹ Many critics of straight edge again began to assert that it was a supercilious identity. Mike Judge continues, "I was mad at these people who were saying we were these elitist, Nazi-type straight edge guys."²⁰²

For Mike Judge and John Porcelly, it seemed necessary to react to the critics of straight edge. While Mike Judge was in Youth of Today, he began writing lyrics for a new project that would become the band Judge. With Porcelly on guitar, the idea behind the band was to give critics of straight edge "a little bit of what they thought we were about."²⁰³ The opening song from their first release was an overt attack: "Smoking that butt / It makes you mature / A slave to sex / And you tell me you're pure / You slam that beer / It makes you a man / I'll try to keep my cool / But you better understand / UNDERSTAND!"²⁰⁴ The following song, "In My Way," pushed the point even further, declaring, "Those

²⁰⁰ Lahickey, *All Ages*, xviii.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁰³ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 79.

²⁰⁴ Judge, *New York Crew* "Fed Up," Schism Records, 33 1/3 RPM, 1988.

drugs are gonna kill you / If I don't get to you first."²⁰⁵ Far from a general condemnation of all drug users, Mike Judge would later claim these words were written about his cousin.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, critics did understand the story behind the song, and the attack seemed broad to any listener. Project X released their EP, *Straight Edge Revenge*, in the same militant vein.

The militant lyrical content did nothing to resolve criticism of straight edge. What's more, it was in many ways a contradiction to the ideals put forth by Mackaye in *Minor Threat* and Cappo in *Youth of Today*, along with a slew of other straight edge bands that identified with positivity. Mackaye became disillusioned with straight edge and in many ways tried to dissociate with it, particularly the more militant side. Mackaye declared "It was always, in my mind, a celebration of an individual's right to choose his or her way of living... people who pushed a movement, particularly a militant movement, really lost sight of human beings."²⁰⁷ Furthermore, he clarified what he had not intended when he had written the words that made straight edge its own movement within hardcore: "I don't want people to ever use my words ever to hurt anybody ever!"²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, militancy in straight edge seemed to become more and more prevalent, resulting in violence at shows between straight edge and non-straight edge hardcore members with straight edge members often being the antagonists.

For Mike Judge and John Porcelly, it did not take long for their words to catch up to them. They had at first written militant lyrics as a reaction to critics who they felt were ignorant of what straight edge truly was. They saw it as a positive, but as Judge suggested, he and Porcelly twisted the original theme of positivity to give critics what they wanted to hear. This was largely due to frustration and disillusion in a hardcore scene in which they felt straight edge had merit. To their dismay, the frustration resulted in lyrical content that would ultimately tear down straight edge as a symbol of positivity and growth. While Judge and Porcelly perhaps should have foreseen straight edge members reacting violently towards opposition, as their lyrics suggested, they did not. In fact, they recognized their lyrics as independent expression, not advocating violence amongst straight edge members. Porcelly recounts, "I can't even count how many

²⁰⁵ Judge, *New York Crew* "In my way," Schism Records, 33 1/3 RPM, 1988

²⁰⁶ Mike Judge, interview by Double Cross Zine, August 27, 2013.

²⁰⁷ Ian Mackaye, interview in *Edge The Movie* (Munster: Compassion Media, 2009), DVD.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

times these jerks would come up to us and brag about how they kicked some guy's teeth in and wait for a sign of approval from me or Mike Judge... Judge had this real violent image. It was weird. It wasn't a good feeling to know that indirectly we were responsible... if that was the result, it wasn't worth being in a band. So Judge broke up."²⁰⁹ Similarly, speaking about Project X, Porcelly asserts, "I've regretted it because of all the violence and intolerance caused by that one record. That's not what I was about at all, so it was a lesson learned. If I have some influence on someone, I sure want it to be a good influence."²¹⁰ Militancy welcomed hardcore into its third wave. Beyond just violence in the scene, hardcore in New York, as well as throughout much of the country, began to change. As the decade turned, hardcore's positive message seemingly began to be lost on new members coming into the scene. The sense of unity that was once strongly stressed had dwindled as the scene grew to a capacity in which factions formed. The rise in factionalism, along with the loss of unity as a central theme behind the music, resulted in bands and those involved in the scene losing sight of the importance of hardcore's locality. Hardcore had continued to grow nationally throughout the 1980s. Moreover, by the end of the decade, New York was recognized for its role in the development of hardcore and straight edge by scenes throughout the country. Thus, the music and scene dissociated from the City as its source livelihood and from an inclusive environment that encouraged social change. Likewise, the sound also began to change. New bands introduced a harder sound with a slowed down tempo and more aggressive, darker guitar riffs.

The changes represented by the introduction of the third wave of hardcore were one more schism in the long list that prevented hardcore's stagnancy. As hardcore had originally diverged from punk rock in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and as straight edge diverged from the complacency and drug-plagued New York scene of the mid-1980s, by the end of the decade new members felt less akin to predecessors who attempted to make straight edge synonymous with positivity. Of course, Judge and Project X had lashed out at criticism of the positive message, ironically only fueling the fire of militancy, causing new members who had been predisposed to militant opposition to drug and alcohol use to perpetuate hardcore straight edge's new form. As Wood, points out,

²⁰⁹ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 132.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

Upon initial contact with straightedge culture, the recruit already might be grappling with a fear or discontent about alcohol and drugs. In turn, the straightedge frame of reference articulates the potential recruit's discontent, delineating its source, construing it as a threat, and proscribing an appropriate set of norms, values, and beliefs for overcoming it. As long as the subcultural frame of reference properly articulates the individual's discontent, he or she will remain affiliated with the subculture.²¹¹

For straight edge members, the appropriate set of norms became less relevant as a personal choice because they began thinking of straight edge tenets as representing a worldview, making members feel as if their philosophy was a standard by which everybody should live. Straight edge militants expanded on the idea of ethical concerns such as animal rights to include straight edge itself. Whereas early straight members often associated their membership with individuality, later militant members often expressed the idea that straight edge was an objective moral issue. Fiercely articulated in Earth Crisis' "Firestorm:" "Street by street. Block by block. Taking it all back / The youth's immersed in poison--turn the tide counterattack / Violence against violence, let the roundups begin / A firestorm to purify the bane that society drowns in / No mercy, no exceptions, a declaration of total war."²¹² While this attracted new members, it did not properly articulate the discontent of early straight edge members to the scene.

This sense of militant morality led people to wonder how far straight edge militants would go in their pursuit of objective morality. Beyond merely straight edge, some militants strongly advocated extreme ecological ideologies, veganism, heterosexuality, and an anti-abortion philosophy. Hardline, as this became known, was its own sub-group within straight edge and hardcore. Moreover, straight edge militancy grew out of the selectivity of membership. Hardline and militant attitudes resulted in more inclusive membership and thus signified a greater resistance to social norms. Sociologically, this meant a greater benefit to members of this small, collective identity.²¹³ The seeming irony of exclusiveness

²¹¹ Wood, *Straight Edge Youth*, 132.

²¹² Earth Crisis, *Firestorm* "Firestorm," Victory Records, 33 1/3 RPM, 1993.

²¹³ Scott Hunt, Robert Benford, and David Snow, "Identity Fields: Framing Processes and the Social Construction of Movement Identities," in *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 173.

being more appealing to members of a subculture was overshadowed by its benefits. For members of straight edge this meant more defined identity in a hardcore scene that was expanding and forming factions. Of course not all militant members adhered to hardline principles, and many were even critical of them, such as Boston straight edge band Slapshot. Nonetheless, militant enforcement of the three basic tenets of straight edge still ensured exclusivity and a sense of moral objectivity and righteousness. As Ian Mackaye contends, "My concern with where straight edge started to go was that it appeared to become much more of a factioned thing. I started to perceive those factions as communities defined by exclusion – in other words carving out what they are by cutting other people off."²¹⁴

During the 1990s, it would be this militancy and selectivity that caught the attention of mainstream culture, particularly in Salt Lake City and Reno. In these cities, an attack on non-straight edge members by straight edge members made the national news; the local police then classified straight edge as a violent gang in both cities. Violence was particularly severe in Salt Lake City. On October 31, 1998, seventeen-year-old straight edge member Colin Reesor fatally stabbed fifteen-year-old Bernardo Repreza, who was not straight edge. Reesor was reportedly motivated by his involvement in straight edge. Though he affiliated with the straight edge movement, there is no way to ascertain if straight edge ideology motivated the attack. As he claimed, "I heard someone yell, 'Gun! Gun!' There was a car driving around hitting people. I had all these emotions running around in my head. I released it all at once and stabbed him."²¹⁵ This incident of course reinforced the media's negative perception of the subculture. After the attack, Karl Buechner of Earth Crisis declared, "The media only wants to report on these types of incidents that involve some straight edge people."²¹⁶ Buechner became frustrated that the media only reported on the negative aspects of the subculture. However, the scene had become more violent and the actions of Reesor demonstrated this simple fact, whether or not

²¹⁴ Brian Peterson, *Burning Fight: The Nineties Hardcore Revolution in Ethics, Politics, Spirit, and Sound* (Huntington Beach: Revelation Records Publishing, 2009), 58.

²¹⁵ Stephen Hunt, "Straight Edge Slayer Recounts Chaos of Fatal Halloween Night," *The Salt Lake Tribune* March 21, 2007.

²¹⁶ Karl Buechner, interview by Geraldo Rivera, *At Large with Geraldo Rivera*, Fox News, June 5, 2005.

straight edge motivated his actions. The violence in the movement ultimately attracted new members that were predisposed to ferocity. All these factors perpetuated violence among straight edge members.

Hardline, as distinct from just militant straight edge, with its inclusion of militant ecological views, was largely overlooked by the media but disrupted the scene as much as the straight edge militancy that Reesor was identified by. The lyrics of hardliners represented the severity of their convictions. Southern California's Vegan Reich addressed their contempt for abortion, meat eating, and the use of drugs in their song "I, The Jury." With a sense of moral superiority they declared, "I won't hesitate... To infringe on your rights, to take them away, to be judge and jury, and make you fucking pay, for the crimes you commit day after day, 'cause only with you stopped will our lives be truly free!"²¹⁷ This encouraged more factionalism and exclusivity. While hardline never formed any significant following in New York City, like it had in surrounding scenes and on the West Coast, it grew out of the reestablishment of straight edge and militancy in New York City's scene.

While many newer members of straight edge adopted the militant attitude, it faced severe criticism from not just older straight edge members but from the larger hardcore population. In 1989, Grudge, a band created with the sole purpose of mocking straight edge bands, released a 10 song album titled *Project-Ex*. They not only mocked Judge and Project X in their name and album title, they also facetiously recorded a WarZone and Youth of Today parody song while touting their love for alcohol.²¹⁸ While there was a certain light heartedness to Grudge, it also represented a popular perception of straight edge: a faction within hardcore that had become overly self-righteous and diverged from the inclusive nature of hardcore. New York's Uppercut expressed this feeling in their song "Am I Clear?" The song made the case that straight edge possessed no advantages; rather, it suggested that addiction to drugs and alcohol is of course detrimental, but that consumption with moderation is not problematic. The song also contended that with age straight edge became less meaningful. Uppercut claimed that the song was not an attack on straight edge, but a reflection on the hardcore scene at large.²¹⁹ Whatever the intent, Uppercut raised issues that straight edge members had to grapple with.

²¹⁷ Vegan Reich, *Vanguard* "I, The Jury," Uprising Records, CD, 1995.

²¹⁸ Grudge, *Project-Ex*, Jism Records, 33 1/3 RPM, 1989.

²¹⁹ Stephen Murphy, interview by *Mad World Zine*, January 30, 2008.

After recognizing militancy as a pitfall, many of the early New York straight edge band members became disillusioned with the hardcore scene and found avenues to exit. With a considerably softer and more commercial sound than that of their hardcore roots, Gorilla Biscuits would ultimately form into Civ. Likewise, Ray Cappel of Youth of Today formed Shelter, which featured songs that had a pop influence and centered on a Hare Krishna. Some straight edge members “sold out” while others, such as Cappel, began to simply distance themselves from straight edge. Similarly, Mike Judge recalls, “there was so much violence at all the shows... emotionally I couldn’t deal with it anymore... I came back to Jersey and I hid out for a couple years, didn’t talk to anybody, didn’t look anybody up, just tried to get my shit together.”²²⁰ While Judge disconnected with the hardcore scene in a particularly emotional form, most of those who identified with straight edge left the scene in a seemingly natural manner. As meaning and content began to change, they could no longer relate. As Ray Cappel proclaims,

I felt straight edge became very gang-ish in the nineties, and I lost the taste for that scene. I couldn’t relate to the music because it was all metal, and there was a lot of hate involved with it too. I always came from a more positive perspective. I never wanted to ‘exterminate’ those who were drinking... When movements get motivated by hate then it sort of defeats the purpose especially if they are in the name of enlightening other people.”²²¹

Regardless of why straight edge members left the scene, what had occurred during New York’s second wave of hardcore had a huge impact on its participants. For some it marked formative years of perceived and actual youth rebellion, laying a foundation for the rest of their lives. Cappel and JPorcelly saw it as such. Both became Hare Krishna devotees, drawing a direct correlation between Krishna Consciousness and straight edge. According to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Krishna devotees should abide by four principles: no eating of meat, fish, or eggs, no gambling, no sex other than for procreation within marriage, and no intoxication through recreational drugs, alcohol, tobacco, tea, or coffee.²²² As Porcelly asserts, “To me it

²²⁰ Lahickey, *All Ages*, 80.

²²¹ Peterson, *Burning Fight*, 71.

²²² A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *The Hare Kṛṣṇa Challenge* (Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1977).

was like a natural progression of straightedge... all the basic tenets of Krishna Consciousness I was already following... To me it's sort of like the culmination of what straightedge really should be."²²³ Porcelly contends that straight edge was never a moral end in itself but was always a means to it. It led him to vegetarianism, and ultimately the end became Krishna Consciousness. Thus, as Porcelly saw it, militant straight edge ideology was wrong for the mere fact that it assumed straight edge as an end result as a movement. Both Hare Krishna and youth crew shared core tenets of straight edge ideology, but these movements utilized alternative ways of advocating these tenants. Porcelly articulates the result of this schism and the impact Krishna had on straight edge members who belonged to the second wave: "it seems that the people from back in the whole youth-crew days who managed to stay straightedge, I'd say most of them are devotees."²²⁴ Cappa's band, Shelter, New York's Cro-Mags, and nationally acclaimed Strongarm and 108, also adopted Krishna in the mid-1990s. While earlier straight edge members identified with Hare Krishna and disassociated with hardcore, hardcore eventually adopted Krishna Consciousness.

Ultimately, whether the tenets persisted or not, the original members of New York City's straight edge scene have discarded their straight edge identity. The dissociation and different pursuits of members marked the end of hardcore's second wave and solidified classification of straight edge as a youth subculture. Moreover, the opposition to, and questioning of, larger cultural values in the movement ultimately opened the door to critical self-analysis that generally led to revelation of inconsistencies between ideals and action.²²⁵ For members of New York hardcore and straight edge, a highly idealist subculture, this often meant new pursuits beyond the realm of the scene.

What It Meant: Legacy and Impact of 1980s New York City Hardcore and Straight Edge

New York's hardcore in the 1980s impacted hardcore more broadly and left a lasting legacy. The early straight edge scene in New York revitalized and perpetuated the existence of straight edge. During the first half of the decade there were few straight edge bands and those that existed often came from the

²²³ Wood, *Straight Edge Youth*, 137.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

²²⁵ Haenfler, *Straight Edge*, 211.

hardcore scene with few straight edge members.²²⁶ If it had not been for the outburst of straight edge in New York during the second half of the decade, straight edge would have likely died out. New York hardcore had been at the forefront of the hardcore sound throughout the second half of the 1980s. This meant that as straight edge took off in the City, many other parts of the country followed not far behind in their own hardcore scenes. Straight edge bands from the West Coast such as Insted, No For An Answer, Chain of Strength, and Brotherhood received national attention, while on the East Coast, bands outside of New York such as Floorpunch and Mouthpiece did so as well. All of these bands emulated the appearance and musical style of their New York peers. Now, this movement is still a thriving youth subculture that has continued to evolve, with acknowledgment of a clear distinction from its earlier form. Most recently, many hardcore bands from around the country have tried to replicate the sounds of New York bands during the 1990s. Bands from New York take a particular pride in their city's legacy. It is common for bands to stamp their merchandise with "NY," "NYC," or "NYHC." This is something very rarely practiced by hardcore bands from other cities. However, there are currently no notable New York City straight edge bands, and there have not been for the past decade. Perhaps ironically, while many other hardcore scenes have developed largely around straight edge bands and membership, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, New York has seemingly dissociated with straight edge. Still, where straight edge has grown and continues to do so, the New York straight edge bands from the second wave remain the most valuable part of the subcultures history second only to its inception.

Thus, the end of the second wave of hardcore was by no means a step towards an end to hardcore, but it was an important leap in a new direction. The second wave solidified hardcore's existence while New York specifically solidified straight edge's growth. The new direction was represented in how hardcore and straight edge would be perpetuated. At its outset, hardcore was created by "kids" seeking to identify themselves as distinct from broader cultural norms by associating with the subculture as a source of individuality. By the 1990s, it was the norms hardcore had created for itself that members identified with.

²²⁶ Only a few straight edge bands existed out of the relatively large number of hardcore bands that toured nationally during the first half of the 1980s. Most notably, this includes Minor Threat, DYS, Society System Decontrol, and Uniform Choice.

Thus, in an ironic turn typified by subcultural patterns, in many ways hardcore began to *produce* its members, as opposed to its members producing it. These members stepped away from the value of community growth and self-reflection that characterized the first two waves as a necessity for the scenes existence. By the early 1990s, hardcore had begun to grow tremendously, thus causing some new members to lose sight of the original aims and intentions of hardcore. As suggested by Ian Mackaye, "I think what was going on in the eighties was a reaction to what [hardcore members] inherited; what was going on in the late eighties and into the nineties was a reaction to what those kids inherited."²²⁷ Still, not all was forgotten or ignored. Of course, as the scene grew, the message evolved and had the potential to influence more than ever before. However, by the start of the 1990s, the message was largely militaristic, as opposed to the positive themed scene of a few years prior. Hardcore in the 1980s was certainly distinct from that which followed in the 1990s. Identifying the value of hardcore for those already within the scene during the mid to late-1980s, and how this value transcended beyond hardcore is pivotal to any research done on the impact of this topic.

In 1978, writer Dave Laing wrote an article titled "Interpreting Punk Rock" acknowledging the association between punk and the "cultural revolt of proletariat youth." Laing considers political themes, style, and the shock effect that all characterize punk rock. However, a prerequisite to cultural revolt through punk is to remain un-integrated into the music industry; punk was integrated.²²⁸ Hardcore remained untouched by outside sources competing for the bands and record sales. Hardcore remained true to the 'do it yourself' principles on which punk had been founded. Furthermore, hardcore members did not want to be integrated; they sought to further themselves from the industry and its social norms. This made straight edge a logical development in hardcore, as it stood in opposition to sex, drugs, and an industry standard of rock & roll. New York City hardcore and straight edge in the 1980s were more than the perceptions of outsiders and even of their own members. These movements constituted youth subcultures that were unparalleled by any other, which made their classification subject to words that diminished their complexity. These movements endorsed a unique combination of ideals taken from right-wing

²²⁷ Peterson, *Burning Fight*, 58.

²²⁸ Dave Laing, "Interpreting Punk Rock," *Marxism Today* (April, 1978): 123-128.

philosophy touted by Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign and disgust for the status quo. While the issues that many of the bands wrote and sang about were political in an abstract sense, many members did not make the correlation between their association with hardcore and politics. In fact, they often asserted that hardcore was not political.²²⁹ As localized as the scene was, it may not have made sense to suggest it was beholden to a political ideology. Unity represented the ultimate goal. However, this in itself was political. Moreover, a DIY ethic and slam dancing constituted political activities. It was a political stance that stood in opposition to what members witnessed on the streets of New York: the status quo. Hardcore was both political and rebellious by nature. Members engaged in subconscious rebellion by attending shows or starting bands. This rebellion directed hardcore members even after they left the scene, making it an anomaly in youth subculture.

New York hardcore always had a purpose beyond the music. The bands believed that they had something meaningful to say that might be of some influence to those listening and attending their shows. Perhaps most straight edge members believed that their decision in choosing to become straight edge was personal, but by doing so, they stepped into a socially concerned scene that promoted ideas beyond CBGB and New York's deteriorating inner-city. Now we have to ask, what was the result? Hardcore in New York could never have influenced people not predisposed to its sound and ideals. It lacked an ad campaign to sell its often-unwelcoming image. Messages of positivity, animal rights, and the threats of consumerism espoused by bands during New York's second wave were simply not intended for anybody outside the scene. Plus the music was too loud, too fast and too aggressive. This generally meant that only people who already embraced hardcore's music heard this music. Hardcore's preached to the choir due to the idealized pride in unity and locality of the early scene. It was not exclusive, but it was tight-knit.

Conclusively, hardcore is fluid, always evolving, and New York in the 1980s was no exception to the rule. Punk and hardcore from their inception have maintained a societal stigma due to their defiant nature. However, defiance is subjective. Members of the straight edge and hardcore scene during the 1980s were consistently defiant but not in opposition to objective moral good established in American cultural norms. Instead, these movements embraced defiance

²²⁹ WarZone, interview by WNYU.

against the norms that they felt were objectively moral wrongs. The movements had purpose; it did not engender aimless youth rebellion. They began as a reaction to the realities of hardship in the Lower East Side and resulted in an attack on many American cultural values. Thus, along with positive, ethically and socially concerned lyrical content, hardcore, in its complex and contradictory nature, formed a growing militant faction. Nonetheless, what New York proved is that hardcore punk is an anomaly of youth subculture that is often regarded as nonsensical and violent. An essence of progressive ideals cultivated New York's straight edge scene and remained with members as they fell out of the changing scene. While New York's cultural landscape explains why hardcore developed out of a deteriorating inner-city, the lasting impact on its members, and the way in which its legacy continues to impact hardcore, reveal hardcore's true value.

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ECHOES OF A DYING STATE: PERESTROIKA PROPAGANDA IN THE SOVIET FOREIGN PRESS

By Matthew Brown

“Perestroika means mass initiative. It is the comprehensive development of democracy, socialist self-government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavor, improved order and discipline, more glasnost, criticism and self-criticism in all spheres of our society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity.”²³⁰

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of one of the most tumultuous and volatile periods in modern history. The Soviet Union was not destroyed by a foreign military invasion, nor was it torn apart by civil war. The events that resulted in one of the most powerful countries the world has ever seen literally signing itself out of existence were official government policy, heavily promoted by the Communist Party as the pinnacle of Soviet ideology, and praised by the Soviet intelligentsia as a clear path to a prosperous society. The perestroika and glasnost reforms, instituted under Mikhail Gorbachev, represent the final

²³⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 34.

chapter of the Soviet Union's history before its collapse in 1991 and the splitting of the Union into 15 post-Soviet republics. How did such promising and widely acclaimed plans destroy the very society on which they were built? The answer to this question lies in how the Soviet Union mobilized its citizens to action; in propaganda.

The reforms began with Gorbachev's assumption to the position of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March of 1985. Gorbachev's vision for the future of the Soviet Union involved a public examination of the social, economic, and political issues that plagued the country at the time, while simultaneously developing programs to prepare the Soviet Union for future development in all spheres of life.²³¹ The term *perestroika* was adopted to define the task at hand. Perestroika translates to English as "restructuring", underlining that a massive change was needed within the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, and not simply a handful of minor adjustments. This proposed restructuring of the entire Soviet system and society was to be driven by two concepts: *glasnost* (openness) and *demokratizatsia* (democratization), ultimately resulting in the revitalization of the communist party and the Soviet Union.²³² The "openness" of glasnost meant that issues such as the shortcomings of the Soviet planned economy, corruption within the Communist Party and state bureaucracies, ideological disputes, and foreign policy would no longer be covered up, but openly discussed and solutions sought. Moving hand-in-hand with the dialogue and self-criticism inspired by glasnost, democratization worked to alleviate totalitarian elements in Soviet society and politics by replacing the appointment system with elections for state leadership positions and factory management.

Scholarly writing about the 1980s reforms in the Soviet Union tends to fall into two distinct camps. The type of writing that emerged first is largely focused on the role of Mikhail Gorbachev as the chief orchestrator of reform. Titles including *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, *Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union?*, and *Gorbachev's Revolution* illustrate the academic fascination with the man, and hold him as a figure to guide their discourse and analysis of perestroika

²³¹ Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), ix.

²³² John F.N. Bradley, *Soviet Perestroika, 1985-1993: Russia's Road to Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 15.

and glasnost.²³³ They view Gorbachev's efforts as in earnest, though perhaps too ambitious or with little chance of success.²³⁴ Though this style persisted beyond the collapse of the Soviet Union, it first emerged out of a necessity to discuss the reforms, despite the absence of quantifiable results while the reforms were underway. Following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, more complex arguments emerged. With knowledge of how Gorbachev's programs played out, it became possible to widen one's perspective on the reforms with information about how different factions of the Soviet government and public responded to the changes and how these reactions ultimately led to the end of the Soviet state. These pieces take the internal politics of the Soviet Union into account, along with public opinion and international relations. While presenting the multifaceted nature of perestroika and glasnost and the wide effect of the reforms, these later works hold a general consensus that the rise of nationalism in the Soviet Republics (in the wake of perestroika's restructuring initiatives) is the major reason for collapse.²³⁵

A theme that features heavily within both major types of literature is the legacy of Joseph Stalin. Be it a focus on Gorbachev's final undoing of Stalin, or the role that Stalinism played in holding the Soviet Union together, the argument remains the same: the perestroika reforms represented a move away from Stalin's authoritarian command structure that persisted since his death in 1953, and thus, shook Soviet society to its very core. Susanne Sternthal, in her book *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization through Demilitarization*, argues that Josef Stalin is responsible for the various problems that Mikhail Gorbachev

²³³ Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*; Zdenek Mlynar, *Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union?* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); Susanne Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms, De-Stalinization through Demilitarization* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997); Anthony D'Agostino, *Gorbachev's Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

²³⁴ Marc Zlotnik, "Rethinking Soviet Socialism: The Politics of Ideological Change," in *Restructuring Soviet Ideology: Gorbachev's New Thinking*, ed. Sylvia Woodby and Alfred B. Evans, Jr. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 13-37.

²³⁵ George J. Neimanis, *The Collapse of the Soviet Empire: A View from Riga* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997); Elie Kedourie, "Nationalism and the Balance of Power," in *End of Empire: The Demise of the Soviet Union*, ed. G.R. Urban (Washington, D.C.: The American University Press, 1993); Edward W. Walker, *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Berkeley: Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2003); Wisła Suraska, *How the Soviet Union Disappeared* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). Suraska analyzes several contributing factors to the Soviet Union's dissolution, though I am citing it here in the capacity that it details the rise of nationalism like the majority of other works.

outlined upon his ascent to power.²³⁶ In this same vein, Elie Kedourie argues that Stalinism is what held the Soviet Republics together, and that with Gorbachev's de-Stalinization, the Republics turned to nationalism and the Union dissolved.²³⁷

The claim that Stalin is responsible for the state of the Soviet Union that Gorbachev inherited is a valid one. A brief survey of Soviet history supports this argument. Stalin's legacy includes the bureaucratization of the Soviet Union, and the militarization of Soviet society and foreign policy under a totalitarian state. While centralization of state controls may have been justified in his own time by the need to industrialize and the inevitability of preparing for and fighting the Second World War, Stalin established precedents that persisted in Soviet leadership well beyond his death.²³⁸ Perhaps one of the most damaging legacies of Stalin is the defense-first mindset he initiated. Due to what he saw as capitalist (and during the Second World War, fascist) encirclement, Stalin devoted the majority of the country's resources and capabilities to preparing for what he saw as an inevitable war. This resulted in a centralized system of state command that permeated not only economics, but also political and social life with the Communist Party (and all too often, Stalin himself) as the sole source of authority.²³⁹ Having the country on a perpetual war-path against ideological "enemies," internal and external, meant the justification of suppressing political opponents, the direct control of the Soviet Union's still budding industrial system, and an openly hostile foreign policy. All aspects of life, social, economic, and intellectual, were politicized and directed by the state and its narrow interpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Following the death of Stalin, attempts were made by Nikita Khrushchev to reduce spending on the military, increase the quality and quantity of consumer products, and adapt Soviet policy to the new social and economic realities of the post-war world.²⁴⁰ While the Khrushchev era did indeed see a thaw in international relations and some internal social and economic reforms, Communist Party conservatives led by Leonid Brezhnev ultimately ousted him from power, returning to heavy-handed Stalinist style governance. As

²³⁶ Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms*, 3.

²³⁷ Kedourie, "Nationalism and the Balance of Power," 104.

²³⁸ Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms*, 6.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

historian Yuri Afanasyev states, regarding the period between Khrushchev and Gorbachev, “The intellectual and ideological stagnation of those years was worse than the economic stagnation.”²⁴¹ Stalin’s heavily centralized and bureaucratic party and government had effectively transcended his own death, reforms of his successor, and remained the status quo of the Soviet system for another 20 years until Mikhail Gorbachev introduced plans for far-reaching and radical changes.

Outside of the Gorbachev-focused writing and the writing dealing more directly with the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are authors that make arguments that are undoubtedly in the minority. A particularly interesting, though highly dubious claim is that the reforms themselves were nothing but propaganda, designed to gain Western financial aid for an already collapsing system.²⁴² While propaganda did feature heavily in the portrayals of perestroika and glasnost, the idea that the reforms themselves were part of some ploy to trick the West out of a full victory in the Cold War is laughable. It ignores the complex nature of both propaganda and the reforms.

The vast majority of propaganda studies revolve around the analysis of psychological techniques and rhetorical devices propagandists utilize in their craft, and suffer from a definition of propaganda that lends little to more sophisticated scholarship. These types of writing typically result in lists of notable tactics, case studies detailing multiple historical examples, and methods readers can employ to challenge propaganda when they encounter it. Scholars who have published works to this effect include D. Lincoln Harter, Edward L. Bernays, and Karen Dovring.²⁴³ Studies of this type exist for the explicit purpose of exploring propaganda for its own sake, as a standalone phenomenon. They

²⁴¹ Yuri Afanasyev, “The Agony of the Stalinist System,” in *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev’s Reformers*, ed. Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 97.

²⁴² Marian Leighton, *Soviet Propaganda as a Foreign Policy Tool* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), 99-127.

²⁴³ Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1928); Karin Dovring, *Road of Propaganda: The Semantics of Biased Communication* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1959); D. Lincoln Harter, *Propaganda Handbook* (Philadelphia: Twentieth Century Publishing Company, 1953). Harter even begins his work with a list of “77 techniques” that are common, and refers to the psychological basis of each and how they have been used in the past. This is rather typical of books of this type, exploring little beyond the techniques a propagandist utilizes.

view propaganda as a tool for those in power who wish to deliberately and maliciously alter the beliefs of others through deception and hidden agendas.²⁴⁴ This oversimplification is incredibly problematic when studying propaganda for application in the field of history. It ignores the society from which the propaganda emerges, and pigeonholes those who use propaganda as evil, creating moral judgments that are generally to be avoided in the writing of good history.

One scholar that takes a more sophisticated approach in his work with propaganda is Jacques Ellul. Ellul was a French academic, writing in fields that spanned psychology, sociology, political science, and theology. A common theme featured throughout his varied writings is society's relationship with technology and the social power that comes along with technological power. His focus on social phenomena in relation to cultural and political power structures features heavily in his work *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*.²⁴⁵ Ellul's *Propaganda* represents a distinct break from previous studies of the field, viewing propaganda as a symptom of mass societies, rather than an intentional creation. He states that to "delineate the real dimensions of propaganda we must always consider it within the context of civilization."²⁴⁶ Previous analyses did little of this, relegating propaganda to a role in which it acts only as the tool of advertisers and despots. He goes on to write, "Propaganda is a good deal less the political weapon of regimes (it is that also) than the effect of a technological society that embraces the entire man and tends to be a completely integrated society."²⁴⁷ Here, Ellul makes clear that his take on propaganda is far more nuanced than that of his predecessors. He views propaganda more as an unintentional result of modern society, rather than something it deliberately creates. In this way, propaganda can be seen as an indicator of a society in which the state permeates multiple facets of life; in Ellul's own words, a "completely integrated society." "Propaganda must be seen as situated at the center of the growing powers of the

²⁴⁴ Eugen Hadamovsky, *Propaganda and National Power*, trans. Alice Mavrogordato and Ilse De Witt (1933; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1972); William Hummel, *The Analysis of Propaganda* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949).

²⁴⁵ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

State and governmental and administrative techniques.”²⁴⁸ Further reiterating and expanding on his argument, Ellul holds that as a state develops power and expands its role in society, propaganda is a natural byproduct.

Ellul’s assertion that one must examine the social landscape to better understand propaganda is echoed in the discipline of history. One historian whose ideas fit well with this idea of understanding the society producing the propaganda is Moshe Lewin. Lewin, a noted scholar of Russian and Soviet history, holds that to properly understand the Soviet Union, one must examine the social forces at work within it.²⁴⁹ It is not sufficient to simply view the Soviet system as a government in control of its citizens. Lewin states that “one needs to work from a conceptualization of the state that allows one to grasp the connections between the political and other areas of social life.”²⁵⁰ This type of view is especially important when examining the media produced by the Soviet Union for the Western capitalist world. It is of limited use to label propaganda of any type, Soviet included, as a mere tool of the state. As with any aspect of government or political systems, the social forces behind propaganda and state-produced media must be thoroughly examined and analyzed to truly arrive at an understanding of how it functions.

The ways in which the Soviet Union depicted its own national project of restructuring, when viewed in conjunction with Ellul’s theories, give valuable insight to Soviet society. As the media in the Soviet Union was state owned and directed, newspapers and periodicals coming out of the USSR reflect the official program of the Soviet government and the Communist Party—supreme forces in nearly every aspect of Soviet life at the time. While a study of material published for Soviet audiences is ideal, the author encounters a significant language barrier preventing work with original Russian language sources. However, it is possible to operate around this problem by examining Soviet publications printed in English. This naturally leads to the questioning of just how similar the content of Russian language publications is to those written in English. By looking at material that has been translated from the domestic Soviet press of the reform period and comparing it with English language pieces of the same

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, xviii.

²⁴⁹ Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, 7.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

time, it can be determined that the views expressed are indeed consistent with each other.²⁵¹ In fact, pieces printed in English language Soviet publications were often listed as coming from newspapers and magazines circulating in the Soviet Union, though obviously in translation. These realities firmly establish the validity of examining English language publications as a means to explore Soviet print media regarding the reforms. For the sake of this paper, the monthly magazines *Soviet Life* and *Sputnik* will be used because of their close correlation to works translated directly from Russian sources, as well as their inclusion of pieces also read by Soviet audiences, allowing them to function to a certain degree as substitutes for domestic, Russian language sources. Evaluating the content of the pieces found within these magazines using Ellul's propaganda theories will shed light upon the society that produced them, expanding our understanding of the perestroika and glasnost reforms and how they affected the Soviet Union.

Representations of the perestroika and glasnost reforms in the Soviet English language media fit the criteria for propaganda as established by Jacques Ellul on multiple levels, thus revealing the centralized nature of the Soviet State and its supreme power in society. The specific categories these works of propaganda can be classified into and the psychological methods they utilize further illustrate the character and intent of the reforms beyond their face values and reflect the foundations that Soviet society was built on. As the reforms progressed, pieces found in Soviet media began to drift farther from the characteristics of propaganda, increasingly resembling more independent journalism and works of opinion until the ultimate dissolution of the Soviet state. This shift represents the successful implementation of certain aspects of the perestroika and glasnost reforms, while simultaneously signifying their ultimate failure in revitalizing the Soviet Union at all levels. The failure of the Soviet government to create the society that it promised to its citizens resulted in the abandonment

²⁵¹ Isaac J. Tarasulo, *Gorbachev and Glasnost: Viewpoints from the Soviet Press* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1989). This volume provides a great number of Soviet news articles published in translation. They are taken from various Soviet domestic newspapers and magazines and organized by subject matter. The pieces regarding perestroika are incredibly consistent with the types of statements made in *Soviet Life* and *Sputnik*, justifying my use of those magazines as representative of the Soviet press of the time. Perhaps the largest difference in content is found in the treatment of Soviet pop culture, detailed much more in the domestic articles than those destined for foreign readers, which tend to focus on fine arts and traditional culture.

of the social foundations that were used to advance the reform programs in propaganda, resulting in the collapse of Soviet state power.

A Social Approach

When working within Ellul's framework and a basic knowledge of Soviet history, one can easily understand why propaganda existed at the time Gorbachev took power and why it continued to exist at the inception of the perestroika and glasnost reforms. Gorbachev inherited a political system and society still operating under the Stalinist structure of state controls. As Ellul stated, propaganda is a natural phenomenon that results from such completely integrated and centralized societies. Though Gorbachev's reforms aimed to restructure the state completely and reduce the authoritarian influence it exerted over citizens' lives, the fact remains that he and his reformers were emerging from and working within a society already shaped by 50 years of supreme state power. It may seem counter-intuitive that a state would develop propaganda to initiate a process of decreasing state controls, however, the reforms were themselves state-organized programs. As acts of policy, they would be powerless and ineffective without the support of the public and a drive towards the active participation of the masses. This returns us to what Ellul holds as the one shared characteristic of all forms of propaganda: a will to action.²⁵² The social circumstances necessary for propaganda to exist already long in place, Gorbachev and his fellow reformers utilized the existing state media infrastructure to promote and advance their agenda of restructuring and openness with the public.

It is important to pause at this juncture and establish the nature of propaganda. The term, through decades of simplistic interpretations, has achieved an extremely negative connotation. Propaganda is often seen by the general public as an inherently malicious effort to distort the truth (or lie outright) and bring about the propagandist's ulterior or dubious motives by altering what individuals believe. However, this view is flawed on several levels. First, propaganda need not be malicious, nor need it contain lies. As stated above, the one primary piece of criteria that determines whether or not something is propaganda is the will to action. The ethical value of the action itself is not relevant to the label of propaganda. This connects to the second issue with the common misinterpretation of propaganda: it does not need to alter what an

²⁵² Ellul, *Propaganda*, x.

individual believes, but only move them towards action. Ellul calls this seeking *orthopraxy* rather than *orthodoxy*.²⁵³

Having established the validity of this particular theoretical framework of propaganda in relation to the state of society in the 1980s Soviet Union and the basic implications it has on the definition of propaganda, we can begin to look at more specific applications of the theory within Soviet publications produced for the West. While Ellul largely attempts to avoid outlining specific techniques of propaganda, he does outline different types of propaganda and the characteristics they demonstrate.²⁵⁴ Exploring which characteristics are present within the pieces of propaganda produced to advance reform not only further validate their labeling as propaganda, but in turn add the understanding of the reforms themselves and what their intended goals were.

Overt vs. Covert Propaganda: The Novosti Story

One distinction that Ellul draws is between covert and overt propaganda.²⁵⁵ The names themselves leave little to the imagination. Covert propaganda actively hides its aims and that it is intended to influence or push its audience towards a given action.²⁵⁶ The other side of the situation is overt propaganda. Overt propaganda does little or nothing to hide its source, and the actions it hopes to elicit are made clear. Official propaganda ministries are a key identifying factor for overt propaganda.

Soviet Life and *Sputnik*, the periodicals that this study is focused on, certainly fit within the definition of overt propaganda. Though intended to be magazines that showcase Soviet current events and culture, there was never any doubt that they were works of propaganda. Part of this classification stems from the fact that both of these journals (as well as many others) were published by Novosti. *Agentstvo Pechanti Novosti* (Novosti Press Agency, or simply Novosti for short) was created in 1961 with the stated goal of publishing “magazines, newspapers, and brochures designed to acquaint foreign readers with the Soviet Union,” amongst other similar domestic duties.²⁵⁷ While this may sound innocent enough, the reality of Novosti’s formation and activities

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-84.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Baruch A. Hazan, *Soviet Propaganda: A Case Study of the Middle East Conflict* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1976), 49.

are quite revealing of its true function. The founders of Novosti came from several other Soviet organizations, public in name, but working within state sanctions. Members of the Union of Journalists, the Union of Writers, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Contacts with Foreign Countries, the National Union for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, and other similar groups had a hand in the foundation and management of the agency, which was in turn staffed with intelligence officers and graduates of KGB courses.²⁵⁸ While these groups had no official government connection, the state of society did not allow for independent bodies to exist without governmental approval. All publications were property of the people (the Communist Party), and journalists were hand-picked and expected to conform with and adhere to the party line. It is for this reason, although not directly state sponsored, that Novosti can be considered as an organ of the Soviet government with propaganda production as its chief goal. The manner in which these facts differ from the stated purpose may lead observers to classify Novosti as a producer of covert propaganda, however the state of the Soviet press was no secret, and publications coming directly from Novosti carried with them the stigma of state and party sponsorship.

An example of the close ties between Novosti and the Soviet state in the Gorbachev era can be found in one of its board chairmen, Valentin Falin. Elected to his position by the Council of Sponsors (leading members of the aforementioned groups and unions) in March of 1986, Falin's biography is very telling of the types of individuals that controlled Novosti. Graduating from the Moscow Institute of International Relations in 1950, Falin held various executive posts within the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁵⁹ From 1971-1979 he served as Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, as first deputy head of a department in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee from 1978-1983, and was awarded the Order of the October Revolution, three Orders of the Red Banner of Labor, and other medals for his service to the state and Communist Party.²⁶⁰ This lifetime of government work and intimate connection with the Communist Party, publicly stated, only furthers the charge that Novosti was overtly producing propaganda, though without explicitly labeling itself as such.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ "Valentin Falin Elected Chairman of APN Board," *Soviet Life*, May 1986, 29.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Soviet Life in particular leaves no doubt as to the overt nature of its propaganda. Published from 1956-1991, *Soviet Life* was part of an agreement between the Soviet and American governments to allow for the limited distribution of specific periodicals in each other's countries (the American equivalent being *Amerika* magazine).²⁶¹ *Soviet Life*'s successor journal, *Russian Life* claims that while the magazines were intended to contain general interest pieces from the country of production, there was never a doubt that both functioned as mediums for the distribution of propaganda.²⁶² The presence of such an agreement between the two governments is itself an indicator that each party recognized the reality of the situation.

The propaganda coming out of Novosti was not limited to English language materials. Novosti was truly a massive agency. Publications were produced for more than 110 countries, with official representatives present in 82 of them maintaining connections with 140 major international news agencies.²⁶³ Some of their materials were published in multiple languages, while others were specifically targeting particular languages and nationalities. For instance, the newspaper *New Times* was printed in Russian, English, Spanish, German, French, and Arabic, containing broad-based stories and news coverage.²⁶⁴ Other publications including *Far Eastern Affairs* (printed in Russian, English and Japanese), *The Land of the Soviets* (Syria), *Al-Magallya* (Egypt), and *Fakel* (Hungary) were comprised of material specific to the region or culture in question.²⁶⁵ Novosti's gargantuan international scope, combined with its state-approved structure is further testament to the fact that it was indeed a propaganda house and not a simple news agency.

Vertical vs. Horizontal Propaganda: A Call to Action from Above

The voice developed in works of propaganda produces the next key distinction that Ellul makes: vertical vs. horizontal propaganda. Vertical propaganda is, as its name implies, top-down in orientation. The speaker is usually an authority figure or someone "in the know" acting from a superior position of power.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ "About Russian Life: Our History," *Russian Life Magazine*, accessed March 6, 2013, <http://www.russianlife.com/about/>.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ Hazan, *Soviet Propaganda*, 49.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 80.

This is the standard form of propaganda that comes to mind in most discussions of the subject, representative of Nazi German, Stalinist, or American propaganda. The other, more uncommon type of propaganda in regards to voice is horizontal propaganda. Horizontal propaganda comes from sources within a given group and is directed towards a society where all members are (in theory at least) equal in standing and knowledge.²⁶⁷ A propagandist in horizontal systems acts more as a facilitator for discussion rather than from a position of power, guiding his targets towards the intended action. According to Ellul, this type of propaganda was found within Maoist China, where members of the Communist Party were planted in various social groups, slowly influencing said groups from inside.²⁶⁸

The propaganda of the perestroika and glasnost reforms is markedly vertical in its orientation. Speeches from leading government officials, often Gorbachev himself, and pieces written by various academics in high posts calling for reform, qualifying the necessity for change, or projecting the expected benefits of the new course are very common. This coincides with the top-down nature of the reforms themselves, as well as the media used to transmit information about them. Had the movement been from the masses or a faction within the government not backed by Gorbachev, it is highly unlikely that positive information regarding them would be found in party-backed sources like *Soviet Life* or *Sputnik*. As perestroika and glasnost were created and directed by the government, it only makes sense that the most enthusiastic advocates of the programs would be found within the government and associated bodies.

Soviet Life often published excerpts and summaries of various official speeches given by Gorbachev regarding his proposed courses of action and the benefits he claimed they would hold. These are clear examples of vertical propaganda, coming from the head of the Soviet state directed towards not only his own citizens but the world as a whole. The May 1986 issue of *Soviet Life* published a summary of General Secretary Gorbachev's political report speech given on February 25, 1986 to the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, titling it "We Look to the Future Confidently"; itself a quote from the speech.²⁶⁹ "Accelerating the country's socioeconomic development is

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁶⁹ "Mikhail Gorbachev, 'We Look to the Future Confidently...,'" *Soviet Life*, May 1986, 3.

the key to solving all our problems—immediate and long-term, economic and social, political and ideological, internal and external. It is the only way our society can and must achieve a qualitatively new stage.”²⁷⁰ Gorbachev acknowledges wide-spread problems within his country, and proposes his newly-revealed plans for reform as the sole path to correcting them and moving into the future. As leader of the USSR, he urges the population towards participating in the process, and for foreign listeners/readers to accept his reforms as positive for all mankind. At the conclusion of the piece, Gorbachev is paraphrased as assuring his audience that “The Communists and the entire Soviet people support the party’s policy of accelerating the country’s socioeconomic development and its Program’s clear orientation toward communist construction and world peace.”²⁷¹ Here Gorbachev has qualified his reforms by using his authority as head of the Communist Party to his advantage, giving them the blessing of the party and by proxy, the public as a whole. Though the reforms aimed to reduce this type of authoritarian directive, the fact remains that the Communist Party was, at this early stage of reform, still accepted as the representative of all citizens; a piece of the Stalinist legacy.

Outside of Gorbachev’s own speeches, other high-ranking individuals were commonly featured in *Soviet Life* writing about the necessity for restructuring and outlining how their fields would be affected. Many of these individuals are academics and professors, primarily from the fields of economics and sociology. As leading scholars in their fields, they are utilizing their titles and positions to add weight and authority to their interpretations. Doctor of Economics from the Central Economic and Mathematical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences Natalya Rimashevskaya is featured as writing, “the program provides for improving working conditions and remuneration, increasing the consumption fund, giving more assistance to large families, reviewing pension arrangements and retail prices, improving housing conditions and health services, and further developing education, culture, art and the mass media.”²⁷² Sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya, also a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, is featured several times in *Soviet Life* throughout the Gorbachev period. Her assessments concern the development of society as a whole, rather than specific economic

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷² Natalya Rimashevskaya, “Social Aims of Society,” *Soviet Life*, November 1986, 53.

goals. In a March 1988 interview with *Soviet Life*, Zaslavskaya is asked if she as a sociologist can guarantee that perestroika will be successful in bringing about positive changes for the Soviet Union. She answers, "The result will depend on the choice of virtually every member of society...a consistent democratization of all spheres of public life is under way—a process that could become the main factor of success."²⁷³ The open support of academics like Rimashevskaya and Zaslavskaya is crucial to the public mobilization behind perestroika. As experts in their respective fields, their statements are received with more credibility by the public.

More meaningful for foreign audiences who may not necessarily be influenced by Soviet politicians and academics are the experiences of people who are on the ground experiencing the changes themselves. Well aware of the distrust many Westerners felt towards anyone directly associated with the Soviet government, *Soviet Life* printed articles by friendly, relatable individuals lending indirect support to the government programs through the reporting of their everyday observations. While they may not hold official titles or positions of importance, accounts from these individuals, especially when published in a magazine like *Soviet Life* can be considered vertical propaganda. They are directed from someone who can be considered "in the know" in relation to foreign readers that have no tangible connection to the reforms taking place. An example of this type of vertical propaganda can be found in the October 1987 piece "Moscow—Center of Change".²⁷⁴ Mike Davidow, an individual given no formal introduction and taking a familiar tone, relays his observations of perestroika Moscow. Davidow lauds the vibrancy of the local bazaars, noting how full of life everyone is and the festive atmosphere surrounding the community. He writes that this jubilant affair is the direct result of the fact that collective farms and co-ops are now allowed to sell their surplus products independently (a piece of the perestroika reforms) and are thus alleviating the food shortages that once plagued the city.²⁷⁵ Davidow's claims are substantiated by the fact that he is on the scene, bearing witness to the changes in progress. Works such as Davidow's act as support for the politicians, policy makers, and academics that promised such improvements would occur.

²⁷³ "Perestroika: For the People or of the People?," *Soviet Life*, March 1988, 9.

²⁷⁴ Mike Davidow, "Moscow—Center of Change," *Soviet Life*, October 1987, 53.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Irrational vs. Rational Propaganda: Ideals Put into Action

Ellul differentiates pieces propaganda into two more classes based the type of appeals they use to encourage action: irrational and rational. Irrational propaganda is made to excite the audience, speaking with great passion and emotion often about lofty ideals or principles with no statistical grounding.²⁷⁶ Rational propaganda on the other hand, makes heavy use of facts, figures and statistics to appeal to the man's favorable view of verifiable information and illustrate the successes or failures of a course of action.²⁷⁷ Here, it is important to again emphasize that propaganda need not be lies. A piece of propaganda may be 100% factual information, but conveyed in a manner that demands support and action.

The propaganda of perestroika and glasnost contains both rational and irrational elements, revealing the comprehensive nature of their goals. Irrational pieces make use of concepts like democracy, social justice, and promises of a new age in the Soviet Union. The rational pieces use statistics and reports to underscore where the past system has fallen short, and illuminate where the new course has been successful. Utilized together, these two types of appeals paint a picture of a society undergoing a complete transformation of ideology and infrastructure. The irrational and the rational support each other—one laying out the ideological basis of the reforms, the other providing tangible and calculable evidence of their necessity and successes.

Given the ideological shifts that perestroika and glasnost were working towards, irrational propaganda served to excite the public with ideals of the inherent "goodness" of the new system. One theme that is featured quite often is that of social justice. The idea of a just and moral society in which social conditions do not limit opportunity or the ability to achieve one's goals is upheld as a proud Soviet tradition, albeit one that is still being perfected and brought to a reality.²⁷⁸ The attainment of social justice and equality is lifted up as the supreme goal of reform. Readers are assured that the actions taking place before them have this in mind, and that the Communist Party will do everything it can to advance the principle.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Ellul *Propaganda*, 85.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁷⁸ Vsevolod Davidovich, "Promoting the Cause of Social Justice," *Soviet Life*, March 1986, 50.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Perestroika was made to look appealing in that it was to usher in a new age of prosperity and socialist enlightenment. It was throwing off the shackles of previous ideological stagnation, and proceeding with the development of new ideas in light of modern realities. One individual who made this claim very clear was Boris Krotkov, editor-in-chief of *Sputnik*. At the beginning of each issue, Krotkov writes a letter to his readers giving his (and consequently, the Party's) take on the current state of affairs in the Soviet Union. His style is a perfect example of irrational propaganda, promising a brighter future in the wake of reform. "We want more socialism. But we need socialism constantly renovating, capable of being in the vanguard of human civilization...and not for some abstract prestige, but for the sake of each and every one [sic.] of us. For the sake of me, my children and grandchildren, their bright future, the road to which was opened by the October Revolution."²⁸⁰ Krotkov offers no specifics, rather relying on the broad appeal of a promising tomorrow shaped by ideological developments.

Though emotional appeals such as Krotkov's are quite common in material emerging from this period, there are an even greater number of pieces with a focus on justifying perestroika with hard facts and statistics. Wage levels, industrial production statistics, and efficiency reports are among the vast number of figures thrown at readers in these types of articles. These reflect the fact that a major portion of perestroika's reforms were economic, and as such, changes could be quantified and judged accordingly. Problems with past economic planning were accompanied with the statistic that the industrial output growth rate in 1982 was 50% below the average of the growth rate for the previous five-year planning period.²⁸¹ The economics of the Uzbek Republic were cast in a dismal light by listing that industrial capacity had been underused for the preceding 20 years, leaving goals for growth rates and economic targets unmet.²⁸² A 60% decline in the growth of the national income of the USSR from 1971-1986 was noted, naturally alongside calls for change.²⁸³ These numerical revelations direct readers to one conclusion: the old system has failed. When the ideology

²⁸⁰ Boris Krotkov, "Along the Trail Blazed by the October Revolution," *Sputnik*, July 1987, 13.

²⁸¹ "Nikolai Ryzhkov: Accelerated Economic Growth, A Better Life for the People," *Soviet Life*, May 1986, 20.

²⁸² Vladimir Mizhiritsky, "Big Economic Changes in the Offing," *Soviet Life*, September 1987, 8.

²⁸³ Abel Aganbegian, "Three Waves of Restructuring," *Sputnik*, October 1987, 44.

and policy no longer produce quantifiable success, people are bound to seek an alternative—namely, perestroika.

The economic effects of perestroika, or rather the state of the economy during the perestroika reforms, were also made public via statistics. Surely, readers are to believe, any improvements in production or efficiency could be attributed to the numerous changes brought about in economic policy. Industrial production is listed as having increased by 4.4% and agricultural production by 3% between 1985 and 1986.²⁸⁴ Use of “progressive” technologies was to be expanded by 50-100%.²⁸⁵ These statistics are not published to be remembered by readers. What is important is the overall impression they create. With growth numbers positive and goals set high for the future, readers gather that things must be looking up, paying no mind to what “progressive” technologies may be or just how closely the recorded growth rates correspond with previous plans. What is remembered is that they were shown numbers, and that the numbers looked promising.

The scope of the perestroika and glasnost reforms is much better understood when utilizing the framework of rational vs. irrational propaganda. Both types were featured heavily, representing the multi-faceted nature of the reforms themselves. On one hand, there was to be a massive shift in ideology, bringing about a new era of justice and prosperity. On the other, these ideas were to be concrete, manifesting themselves in improved production that could be seen on paper or in the factories.

Lenin and Stalin as Symbols

While Ellul is careful to establish that propaganda is not solely the manipulation of symbols for a psychological effect, he stipulates that symbols can be manipulated within a propaganda system to provoke action.²⁸⁶ In order for a symbol to be manipulated effectively, it must first be ingrained within a society. Once the symbol has been properly established and elevated through the pre-education of a society, it can be called upon to serve the purposes of the propagandist.²⁸⁷ The manipulation of revered or hated concepts or individuals

²⁸⁴ “On the Party’s Tasks in Fundamentally Restructuring the Management of the Economy,” in *Soviet Life*, September 1987: 51.

²⁸⁵ Ryzhkov, “Nikolai Ryzhkov,” 21.

²⁸⁶ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 20-23.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

provokes reflexive actions in those who have been taught to feel a certain way about them.

Within the Soviet Union, there was no symbol more respected than that of Vladimir Lenin. The architect of the October Revolution, Lenin's status was elevated to that of an immortal sage, accessible through his writings and his embalmed body that rests in its Red Square mausoleum.²⁸⁸ The cult of Lenin is something unmatched in Western society. During the October Revolution and following his death, Lenin grew from being a political theorist into an abstraction of all that was possible for the people of the Soviet Union.²⁸⁹ The veneration of Lenin was by no means consistent in its intensity. However, it endured usurpation and corruption by the personality cult of Josef Stalin, was revitalized to an extent by Nikita Khrushchev, only to again be relegated to half-heartedly celebrated state holidays in the following decades.²⁹⁰ Though the Soviet concept of Lenin was not always at the forefront of political life, it managed to maintain its character relative to the revolution and the benevolent and all-wise status Lenin was elevated to. The enduring power of Lenin as a symbol of the purity of his ideology and goodwill in the Soviet Union made his identity and the myths surrounding him a natural target for manipulation.

The possibility of using Lenin as a symbol was by no means ignored by proponents of the perestroika and glasnost reforms. Once again, Lenin was used to justify the new course of action proposed for the Soviet Union; his writings being cited as a source of inspiration for reform and new policies labeled as a continuation of his work. All Soviet citizens were imbued with a deep appreciation and respect for Lenin's accomplishments and theories, and aligning one's platform with that of Lenin was a sure method to achieve a reflexive action from the public.

A piece of Leninist theory that proved vital to the promoters of perestroika was the view that society must adapt to practical realities, updating its approaches to face issues that previous theorists, Lenin included, could not possibly foresee. Gorbachev's use of a Lenin quote is explained in a *Soviet Life* piece when he repeated, "When the situation has changed and different problems have to be

²⁸⁸ Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), xi.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 252-263.

solved, we cannot look back and attempt to solve them by yesterday's methods. Don't try—you won't succeed.'"²⁹¹ With this general notion justifying the drive toward reform, other more specific elements of Lenin's writing and life were used to direct the changes. The openness and critical nature of glasnost could be aligned with Lenin's claim that "our strength lies in stating the truth," and the war against bureaucracy justified by the importance Lenin placed on reducing bureaucracy in times that were to see great changes.²⁹² These congruencies were not held to be coincidences, nor should they be. They represent an attempt to return to classical Leninist theories uncorrupted by the Stalinist system, and updating them as per Lenin's own advice. Using Lenin as a symbol was not simply an attempt to gain public support for a new course, but the result of a society that had been conditioned to look to him for answers. In Gorbachev's own words, "It is precisely...in Lenin's spirit that we acted at our congress. It is precisely in this way that we are going to act in the future as well."²⁹³

While Lenin was used as a symbol of pursuing a progressive socialist society through reinterpretation and creative thinking, the image of Stalin was utilized to personify the ills that faced the Soviet Union at the time of reform. We have already established the general character of Stalin's additions to the Soviet system, and this history was not lost on Gorbachev and the other reformers. There were few in the Soviet Union whose families were not harmed by Stalinism.²⁹⁴ In the propaganda of the late 1980s, Stalin's influence was typically portrayed as repressive, centralizing, and instrumental in bringing about the authoritarian management system that was to be reformed (a valid representation, as established in earlier sections).²⁹⁵ "The vast majority of deviations from socialism, many of which have not yet been overcome, emerged in Stalin's time...Stalinism implies mass terror, contempt for human life, the massacre of millions of innocent people on political grounds."²⁹⁶ While it is historical fact that Stalin did shape the Soviet Union in this way, the real interest lies in how Stalin was directly associated with the problems reformers were facing. By directly linking the pre-perestroika system to Stalin and his legacy of terror, these pieces create the reflexive desire to distance oneself from the old ways. In the West,

²⁹¹ Pyotr Mikhailov, "Leninist Rethinking," *Soviet Life*, May 1986, 7.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ "Closing Speech By Mikhail Gorbachev," *Soviet Life*, May 1986, 5.

²⁹⁴ Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms*, 1.

²⁹⁵ "Party Conferences: Pages of History," *Soviet Life*, July 1988, 9.

²⁹⁶ "Stalin is my Idol!," *Soviet Life*, January 1989, 29.

where Stalin is usually depicted as the ultimate evil of the Soviet Union, this correlation had potential to be very successful in winning the support of many Americans.

The combination of Lenin (an already revered figure) as a symbol of correct socialist ideology and Stalin (feared and hated by many in the Soviet Union and abroad) as the source of socioeconomic ills reveals an interesting side of the perestroika and glasnost reforms. The reforms seized upon the collective senses of success and failure. Reformers recognized where they believed their country had deviated from its founding principles, and turned their focus to the success of Lenin's October Revolution as a way of mitigating the damage and continuing on what they believed to be the correct path. The propaganda reflecting this duality of Soviet leadership was not a planned out tactic as more rudimentary studies may conclude, but an organic result of the social fabric and history of the Soviet Union at the time.

Changing Coverage: No Direction but Down

As the Soviet Union continued down the labored and uncertain path towards democratization, there are certain shifts visible within the content of *Soviet Life* and *Sputnik*. The materials presented in the publications drifted farther from the criteria used to define propaganda. Beginning in 1989 and lasting through the official dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, articles being to appear that do not contain the same drive towards action found in earlier pieces. Rather than suggesting a correct path or reassuring the population that the present hardships are in the service of future benefits, questions about the future of the Soviet Union are brought up and left open-ended. The questioning of reforms begins somewhat modestly, but as time goes on the dissatisfaction intensifies. By early 1991, certain articles openly express distaste with all things coming from the government with great exasperation.

In December of 1989, *Soviet Life* printed an article titled "Unemployment: Avoiding the Pitfalls".²⁹⁷ The piece almost acts as an introduction to the word "unemployment" and its implications, as until the perestroika reforms, there had been full employment in the USSR. The root of the massive levels of unemployment (primarily in Central Asia and the Caucasus region) is held to be the self-financing of all factories and plants. The article states that because these production facilities are no longer state supported, they have reduced

²⁹⁷ Victor Shirokov, "Unemployment: Avoiding the Pitfalls," *Soviet Life*, December 1989, 23.

costs by eliminating superfluous workers. The article goes on to say that if the Soviet Union desires economic recovery, the “myth” of full employment needs to be done away with. A question is asked of readers in the final lines: “What should be done to ease the situation, to avoid pitfalls, and to guarantee and safeguard our citizens’ right to work?”²⁹⁸

Interestingly, the piece gives no hypothetical solutions. In earlier issues, this type of question would warrant a lengthy reply, thick with hopes of a better future at the expense of today. However, progress is no longer the task at hand. The question asks what can be done to ease the situation and safeguard citizens, not advance their causes. This piece cannot be considered propaganda, as it does not suggest or lead towards any specific action, but rather asks readers “what can be done?” It openly labels full employment, previously a key feature of the Soviet economy and a point of pride, as a “myth.”

Two months later in February 1990, a piece entitled “Socialism: Where is it headed?” was published in *Soviet Life*.²⁹⁹ The article begins by praising the enthusiasm with which Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe have embraced perestroika and the spirit of change that comes with it. After this optimistic introduction, the tone of the writing becomes more questioning of the Soviet Union’s allies. The author, Nikolai Shishlin questions the direction the countries will go in with their reforms. He lists three possible views on the further development of “socialist community” within these states. The first is that socialism is dead and that the only future is in a return to a “bourgeois-democratic” system. The second is that socialist democracy will take hold and that Stalinist interpretations will be defeated. The third possible outcome is that “revolutionary” changes will take place and “cleanse” the socialist ideal. Shishlin concludes that all three opinions have the right to exist, that no single course can be suggested, and that everyone should be prepared for more unpleasant surprises. Finally, he ends by making an appeal to the right of free choice of government and encourages cooperation.

This type of writing would be completely alien in *Soviet Life* were it published a year earlier. Even entertaining the fact that socialism may be dead without responding with a voracious attack on all possible angles would be next to sacrilege. Like the article before it, this one makes no suggestion as to the course the states it discusses should take. Granted, it does call for cooperation and

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁹⁹ Nikolai Shishlin, “Socialism: Where is it Headed?,” *Soviet Life*, February 1990, 12.

freedom to choose one's own government, but these goals presented without the ideological components of previous pieces are nothing more than a hope for any form of stability.

Representing the most extreme move away from the classification of propaganda is an article written by Yuri Gafsky titled "In Search of an Economic Strategy."³⁰⁰ Printed in the February 1991 edition of *Soviet Life* (1991 was the final year *Soviet Life* would be published), the article takes a scathing tone, renouncing all government efforts to improve the economic situation. Gafsky compares the promises of Gorbachev to the failed promises made by Josef Stalin, stating "in recent years ordinary Soviet citizens have been showered with promises of social boons."³⁰¹ He ties any increase in wages or pension amounts to the government's willingness to print huge amounts of currency to satisfy promised increases, which are rendered moot by the inflation this behavior inevitably leads to. He discusses with tangible levels of disgust the waffling of various government bodies as they struggle to come up with a working plan of any type to save the economy, revealing the contradictory nature of the policies adopted at that time. He closes by saying, "The Soviet economy moves according to the principle, 'One step forward, two steps back.'"³⁰²

Clearly, the transformation is complete. Socialist ideology is never even mentioned in this article. No course is proposed, and there is little to no hope for the future of the economy, and almost no faith left in the government to solve the problems Gafsky argues it is only making worse with its own ineptitude and indecision. There is no way this government-bashing rant, completely devoid of hope or any direction for the future, can be considered propaganda; at least not within the criteria established by Ellul. This absence of propaganda indicates the absence of the state power Ellul held as necessary for propaganda to exist. The Soviet Union was effectively done, officially ceasing to exist 10 months following the publication of this article.

What happened?

How could reforms that started out so promising end in the dissolution of one of the world's greatest superpowers? At the beginning of the march towards greater openness and a more fair society, the Soviet Union represented a highly

³⁰⁰ Yuri Gafsky, "In Search of an Economic Strategy," *Soviet Life*, February 1991, 50.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 62.

centralized, bureaucratic, top-down oriented civilization. In 6 short years, it would sign itself out of existence. Surely, there must be a way to explain such a dramatic fall.

We can arrive at one of many possible understandings by utilizing the theories of Jacques Ellul, as has been done throughout this study. Ellul writes that propaganda must be rooted in action, and that a failure to take action is in itself counter-propaganda.³⁰³ The failure of the Soviet state to reach the goals it established for itself was its ultimate downfall. The Communist Party promoted a new course of action, deeply rooted in Leninist theory and the idea that the Party is an effective representative of the people. While democratization was indeed achieved, the rest of the package was conspicuously absent. The economy was in a state of complete ruin, far from the promised consumer prosperity. The legitimacy of the Party as a guiding force and the traditions it rested on were called into question and ultimately thrown out by voting citizens. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, its leaders and experts, and ideological foundations were rendered impotent and ineffectual in light of their public failings. The social backbone that the propaganda and reforms were based on caved in. Elections favored new political parties, and the Soviet Republics decided, one by one, to pursue their own separate courses of development apart from the Soviet Union, consistent with the nationalist claims made by post-collapse historians.

The close study of propaganda from this period demonstrates in stark terms the decline of Soviet state power. From the initial speeches and statistics to mobilize the masses, to the open rejection of government policy, the collapse of the state is clear. Ellul's claim that propaganda represents a powerful state rings true in this case. As Communist Party supremacy faded, the Soviet print media's publications drifted farther and farther away from the characteristics of propaganda. In a sense, this marks a sort of success the Communist Party and Gorbachev never intended for. Perestroika and glasnost did indeed finally de-Stalinize the Soviet Union, but at the cost of the Union itself. Soviet state power fell victim not only to the general failure of perestroika, but also to its limited successes.

³⁰³ Ellul, *Propaganda*, 21.

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