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Foreword

This issue offers three main articles, two of which originated in public lectures recently presented at Conrad Grebel University College. “The Bottle, the Dagger, and the Ring: Church Discipline and Dutch Mennonite Identity in the Seventeenth Century” by Troy Osborne was the 2016 Benjamin Eby Lecture. The Eby lecture series offers Grebel faculty members an opportunity to share their research and reflections with the broader community. The Eby Lectures began in 1991 with Walter Klaassen’s presentation, “University: The Temple of Intellect, Past and Present.” “Unexpected Intersections: Amish and Hmong Textiles and the Question of Authenticity” by Janneken Smucker was the 2016 Bechtel Lecture. The Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, established in 2000 through the generosity of Lester Bechtel, give representatives of various disciplines and professions a unique forum for exploring the breadth and depth of Mennonite history, identity, faith, and culture.

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Jeremy M. Bergen
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The Bottle, the Dagger, and the Ring: Church Discipline and Dutch Mennonite Identity in the Seventeenth Century

Troy Osborne

On August 1, 1680, Mary Jans van de Heule and Pieter Melisz appeared before the elders of the Amsterdam Lamist Mennonite¹ congregation to address reports about their discordant and bad domestic life [*oneenig en slecht huishouden*], especially the rumors that the husband stayed out late on several nights. The couple did not deny the rumors, but promised that they would improve after the elders threatened to tell the rest of the brethren of their actions.² Less than two months later, Melisz appeared again and was earnestly admonished about his drunkenness and conflict with his wife, whom he had threatened with a knife and chased out of the house. The elders decided to cut off his charitable support and kicked him out of his church housing. Despite warnings they would oust him from the congregation, his behavior continued to deteriorate.³ In 1684, the board summoned him for smashing Michel Symons's head with a mug.⁴ In 1687, the elders informed the congregation that, despite previous warnings and promises of improvement, Melisz continued frequenting taverns and wasting his time.⁵ The next year,

¹ In this article, 'Mennonite' translates the Dutch word *Doopsgezind*. Following the Waterlander division of 1557, more moderate Dutch Anabaptist groups called themselves Doopsgezinden. In the 17th century, the stricter confessional groups who sought to remain true to the teachings of Menno Simons, like the Hard Frisians, referred to themselves as Mennonites. For more on the distinction, see Piet Visser, "Mennonites and Doopsgezinden in the Netherlands, 1535-1700," in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 313-14. When corresponding with outsiders, even Doopsgezinden often referred to themselves as Mennonites. See Troy Osborne, "The Development of a Transnational 'Mennonite' Identity Among Swiss Brethren and Dutch Doopsgezinden in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 88, no. 2 (2014): 195-218.

² Stadsarchief Amsterdam (Amsterdam City Archives, hereafter SAA) inventory 1120, item number (nr.) 174, page 193 [August 1, 1680].

³ SAA 1120 nr. 174, 231 [October 2, 1681].

⁴ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 18 [September 14, 1684]. His case went in front of the brothers, and he was cleared because of his admission of guilt.

⁵ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 51 [December 14, 1687]. Melisz denied everything.

The Conrad Grebel Review 35, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 114-150.

the board learned that he had threatened to cut his wife's throat.⁶ So, when he petitioned to rejoin the congregation in 1695, a skeptical board of elders decided that the testimonies of his improved behavior were not strong enough to re-admit him.⁷

Church Discipline and Confessional Identity

Cases like those of Pieter and Mary Jans are invaluable windows into the study of social discipline and confessionalization in the 16th and 17th centuries. During Europe's confessional age (1550-1700), Catholic and Protestant churches created institutions and programs to clarify the external boundaries between groups and to strengthen internally the Christian formation of their members. Some scholars have labeled Anabaptists as fundamentally "non-confessional,"⁸ but as they grew more enmeshed into the surrounding society, Mennonites in the Dutch Republic and northern Germany, like their Protestant and Catholic neighbors, used tools such as confessions, martyrologies, hymns, catechisms, and church discipline to instill greater devotion in members and to differentiate themselves from other denominations and other groups of Mennonites.⁹

Historians are attracted to the sources of church discipline for the access they provide into the lives of ordinary men and women. Those who were disciplined did not leave diaries or many letters, but their cases, which often include their own defenses, open a window on the majority who were the "copper coins of the Golden Age."¹⁰ In particular, disciplinary sources reveal how people lived out their reformation ideals in their daily lives. By looking at long-term patterns, historians can trace the successes and failures of reformers, Protestant, Anabaptist, and Catholic, in imposing Christian

⁶ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 53 [February 19, 1688].

⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 118 [December 15, 1695].

⁸ Heinz Schilling, "Confessional Europe," in *Handbook of European History: 1400-1600*, ed. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 2: 641.

⁹ For the confessional process among Hamburg's Mennonites, see Michael D. Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

¹⁰ A. Th. van Deursen, *Het kopergeld van de Gouden Eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978).

values on their members and the wider world.¹¹

Although it is never a straightforward route between official mandates and changes in identity and behavior, church discipline lay at the heart of religious reform in the 16th and 17th centuries. Changing practices in discipline inform us about changes in Mennonite identity and grant a sense of what it meant to be a Mennonite in Amsterdam.¹² By outlining how, when, and why congregations disciplined their members for drinking, sex, and violence, I will track in this essay the quantitative and qualitative changes to Mennonite discipline as their members grew more enmeshed into the surrounding culture. Comparisons with other churches' discipline will illustrate the ways that Mennonite efforts to eradicate sin in their congregations mirrored those of other Amsterdam faiths, and highlight the areas where they differed. I will also offer some initial explanations for the decline in discipline.

Amsterdam's Anabaptists

Anabaptists had gathered in Amsterdam since the 1530s. By the 17th century, there was a range of Mennonite and Anabaptist groups. The conservative Old Flemish met at the Nieuwe Zijl Achterburgwal in a building known as the "*6 Kruijkes*" (6 Jars). There were also two branches of Frisians: The conservative Jan Jacobsz group met on the Bloemstraat, and the Young Frisians met at "Noah's Ark" on the Heerengracht, one of the city's principal canals. The High German congregation also met in Amsterdam, but the location is still unknown.

¹¹ Two earlier studies of church discipline among Dutch Mennonites are A.M.L. Hajenius, "Quaet Comportement". De Tucht in de Doopsgezinde Gemeente Utrecht in de Zeventiende Eeuw," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen Nieuwe Reeks* 23 (1997): 72-73; S. Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden: Geschiedenis van de Dopersen in de Nederlanden 1531-1675* (Hilversum and Leeuwarden: Uitgeverij Verloren and Fryske Akademy, 2000), 448-54; For Mennonite discipline in German lands, see Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Kleruskritik, Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung in den Täuferischen Bewegungen der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung im Frühen Neuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. Heinz Schilling, vol. 16 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1994), 183-98; Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, 75-82.

¹² For discipline among Amsterdam's Reformed congregations, see Herman Roodenburg, *Onder censuur: de kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1990).

This present study draws from 150 years of records from the three largest Amsterdam congregations. The oldest and most moderate congregation were the Waterlanders (known as the *Toren*, or tower) of around 1,000 members, the first to record their congregational discipline in 1615.¹³ In 1668, the Waterlanders merged with the Flemish congregation (known as the church “bij ‘t Lam” (*by the lamb*) but continued to meet in separate buildings. In 1678, the two *Lamist* congregations totaled 2,639 members.¹⁴ In 1664, a dispute about the role of written confessions split the Flemish congregation, with 500 members leaving to worship at the warehouse called “The Sun” (*Zon*).¹⁵ Together, the Waterlander, Lamist, and Zonist archives contain the fullest (and essentially only) records of church life in 17th- and 18th-century Amsterdam.¹⁶

Amsterdam had a variety of Mennonite-related groups because of splits around the practice of discipline that had divided the Anabaptist movement at the end of the 16th century. It is perhaps ironic that, at the same time that Mennonites grew more intolerant of each other, they gained a degree of religious freedom and toleration in the Dutch Republic. The founding document of the Republic, the Union of Utrecht (1579), guaranteed all subjects freedom of conscience, stating that “nobody shall

¹³ W. J. (Wilhelmus Johannes) Kühler, *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden in Nederland: tweede deel, 1600-1735, eerste helft* (Haarlem, 1940), 66. The Waterlander records are in two ‘Memorial’ books started by Reynier Wybrants, found in Mennonite archives at the Stadsarchief Amsterdam: SAA 1120 nr. 116, ‘Memoriael B’ and SAA 1120, nr. 117, ‘Memoriael B.’ The Waterlander records continue in SAA 1120 nr. 125, ‘Notitie van gebrekelijke litmaeten der gemeente’ and SAA 1120 nr. 123, ‘Register met verzoeken om de doop, tevens attestatieregister.’ The Lamist records are in the church board’s notes SAA 1120 nr. 173-176.

¹⁴ J. ten Doornkaat Koolman and Frits Kuiper, “Amsterdam,” Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Amsterdam_\(Noord-Holland,_Netherlands\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Amsterdam_(Noord-Holland,_Netherlands)), accessed April 15, 2015. The Lamist discipline records are found in SAA 1120 nr. 174 and 1120 nr. 175, “Notulen.”

¹⁵ Nanne van der Zijpp, “Lamists,” GAMEO <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=LAMISTS>, accessed April 15, 2015. The Zonist discipline records are housed in SAA 877 nr. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, “Notulen.”

¹⁶ Although discipline records give us a glimpse into discipline practices, scholars use them cautiously. Record keepers may not have registered all offences, and informal discipline may have occurred without being brought to the full board of elders. Judith Pollmann, “Off the Record: Problems in the Quantification of Calvinist Church Discipline,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 2 (2002): 423-26, 438.

be persecuted or examined for religious reasons.”¹⁷ The Reformed Church became the publicly recognized church (*publieke kerk*) of the young nation, but the authorities would tolerate the existence of other confessions for the sake of public concord.¹⁸

After suffering decades of persecution, Mennonites willingly accepted their secondary status in the Republic and the accommodations they received. The authorities did not force them to marry in Reformed churches but allowed them to marry in front of magistrates. Instead of serving in the military, Mennonites could perform watch duty or help build city defenses. Rather than swearing oaths, they could make a simple affirmation that sufficed as a legally acceptable alternative. While forbidden from erecting churches that might tempt the curiosity of passers-by, they could build their concealed churches (*schuilkerken*) behind the facades of warehouses or homes.¹⁹

Mennonite Identity

In her study of the socio-economic background of the Waterlander congregation, Mary Sprunger concluded that ten percent (fifty households) of the congregation would have been considered wealthy by contemporary

¹⁷ M.E.H.N. Mout, “A Comparative View of Dutch Toleration in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel, and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden, New York; Köln: Brill, 1997), 41; Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, 1650: *Bevochten eendracht* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999), 181.

¹⁸ Willem Frijhoff, “Religious toleration in the United Provinces: from ‘case’ to ‘model,’” in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 31-37; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 361-67.

¹⁹ Samme Zijlstra, “Anabaptism and Tolerance: Possibilities and Limitations,” in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 113-114. On the cultural and social functions of concealed churches, see Benjamin J. Kaplan, “Fictions of Privacy: House Chapels and the Spatial Accommodation of Religious Dissent in Early Modern Europe,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 4 (2002): 1031-64. For the oath, see H. W. Meihuizen, “De oude dopersen en de eed,” in *Vooruitzien en terugzien. Feestbundel ter gelegenheid van de zeventigste verjaardag van H. W. Meihuizen*, ed. S. L. Verheus, D. Visser, and R. de Zeeuw (Amsterdam: Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit, 1976), 54-59, and Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, 145-47.

standards. At the other end of the scale, fifteen to eighteen percent of the members (365 men, women, and children), the majority of whom lived in the Jordaan and Haarlemmerdijk sections of the city, partook of the church's poor relief in 1658.²⁰

At the other end of the economic spectrum, elites within the congregation actively participated in the commerce and trade of the Republic. The Waterlanders active in foreign trade focused their investment in the nation's "mother trade" (*moeder handel*) in Baltic grain, as well as in fishing, shipping, and industry. In addition to commercial enterprises, Mennonites were also active in the cultural world of the Republic's Golden Age. For example, Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679), the greatest poet of the period, began his literary career while a member and deacon of the Waterlander congregation. Other Mennonites became doctors, professors, artists, and patrons.²¹ It was the staggering wealth that the richest families had concentrated among themselves through inter-marriage that supplied funds for the church's active poor relief, which fed, housed, and clothed

²⁰ Mary Sprunger, "Rich Mennonites, Poor Mennonites: Economics and Theology in the Amsterdam Waterlander Congregation During the Golden Age" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1993), 36-42, 133; Mary Sprunger, "Waterlanders and the Dutch Golden Age: A case study on Mennonite involvement in seventeenth-century Dutch trade and industry as one of the earliest examples of socio-economic assimilation," in *From Martyr to Muppy [Mennonite Urban Professional]: A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: the Mennonites*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Sjouke Voolstra, and Piet Visser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1994), 135-37.

²¹ S. Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden*, 484-89; Piet Visser, "Aspects of Social Criticism and Cultural Assimilation: The Mennonite Image in Literature and Self-Criticism of Literary Mennonites," in *From Martyr to Muppy*, 10-12. For biographies of several Mennonite painters, writers, and poets, see Piet Visser and Mary S. Sprunger, *Menno Simons: Places, Portraits and Progeny* (Altona, MB: Friesens, 1996); Marijke Spies, "Mennonites and literature in the seventeenth century," in *From Martyr to Muppy*, 83-98; S.B.J. Zilverberg, "Met pen, passer en penseel: Doopsgezinde en cultuur," in *Wederdopers, Menisten, Doopsgezinden: in Nederland 1530-1980*, ed. S. Groenveld, J.P. Jacobszoon, and S.L. Verheus (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1981), 180-94; A.L. Broer, "Doopsgezinde schilders van vroeger en nu," *Doopsgezinde Jaarboekje* 74 (1980): 70-80; S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, "Doopsgezinden en schilderkunst in de 17e eeuw—Leerlingen, opdrachtgevers en verzamelaars van Rembrandt," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen, Nieuwe Reeks* 6 (1980): 105-23, and Piet Visser, *Broeders in de Geest: de doopsgezinde bijdragen van Dierick en Jan Philipsz* (Deventer: Uitgeverij Sub Rosa, 1988): 22-81.

the congregation's neediest members.²² However, despite members with remarkable wealth, Sprunger's careful work is a reminder that "a large majority of Amsterdam Waterlander Doopsgezinden were from the bottom half of occupational levels."²³

Mennonite Discipline

In the multi-confessional Dutch Republic, individuals could choose which confession to join and even whether to join any congregation at all. Like Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed groups, Mennonites used sermons, printed confessions, songs, and martyrologies to shape and maintain their denominational identity and loyalty. At the end of the 16th century, most Mennonite congregations held that they had to be cleansed from any "spot or wrinkle" by disciplining offending members. The early Anabaptist desire for a visible, pure church of regenerated believers led to an emphasis on discipline as the primary mechanism of maintaining the integrity of the congregation. For Menno Simons's followers, the question was not whether to discipline members, but who should do the disciplining and how strict it should be.²⁴ Even the Waterlanders, who consistently called for a milder position on disciplinary issues than their co-religionists, disciplined their members.

In an undated and unpublished treatise on church discipline, Reynier Wybrandtz (1573-1645), an elder in the Amsterdam Waterlander congregation, composed a practice so that the "congregation would remain at peace and everyone's conscience could remain free and unconstrained."²⁵

²² Sprunger, "Waterlanders and the Dutch Golden Age," 138-40; Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden*, 465-74. For the 'mother trade,' see Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 366-76.

²³ Mary S. Sprunger, "Being Mennonite: Neighborhood, Family, and Confessional Choice in Golden Age Amsterdam," in *Religious Minorities and Cultural Diversity in the Dutch Republic*, ed. August den Hollander et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 154-55.

²⁴ Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden*, 448.

²⁵ "... op dat de Gemeinte in rust, ende ijdere gemoet vrij en[de] ongeperst mocht blijven." Amsterdam, (n.d.), SAA 1120 nr. 131, 1, "Reynier Wybrantsz, "Wat reden datmen can by brengen, daer van datmen yemandt, die beispelyck is, vermaent dat hy vande tafel des heren voor een tyt sal blijven." For a brief biography of Wybrantsz, see N. van der Zijpp, "Wybma, Reynier Wybrands," in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* 4: 998.

At the heart of discipline, Wybrantdtz understood there to be two types of ban, the greater and lesser ban.²⁶ With the greater ban, or excommunication, members “were not so much pronouncing their judgment, but God’s”²⁷ on offenders, whose actions had already separated them from God and the congregation. Excommunications occurred only for serious offenses. Among conservative Old Flemish or Hard Frisian congregations, shunning (*mijding*) was the social avoidance of excommunicated members. Other than greetings required by common courtesy, all social interaction with offenders was forbidden.²⁸ Shunning does not seem to have been practiced by any of the three large Amsterdam congregations. The social pressures of shunning would have worked more easily in the close relations of smaller villages than in the anonymity provided by the city.

Instead of shunning, Amsterdam congregations pronounced the lesser ban, which temporarily denied a person access to the communion table while maintaining membership in the congregation. The ban’s primary goal, Wybrantsz wrote, was to bring forth the shame and repentance of the offender, although the punishment might also serve as an example to warn others against sinning. Discipline, he concluded, should be administered with care in order that the sinner might repent and reconcile with the congregation.

Before communion, the ministers visited with members in their homes and the congregation heard a special preparation sermon (*proefpredicatie*). If a member’s offense was not publicly known, the elders would admonish the person privately about the need for improvement during the visitation. If the sin was publicly known, the offender had to appear in front of the church board (*collegie* or *kerkeraad*). A recalcitrant member who continued in a sinful walk would be admonished by the council to abstain from taking

²⁶ The idea of the greater and lesser ban has a longer tradition in Christian discipline. Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran doctrines defined two different categories of major or minor excommunications or greater or lesser bans. For a brief discussion of the tradition of discipline with a focus on the Reformation debates, see Amy Nelson Burnett, *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 9-25.

²⁷ “Wij niet so seer onse, als wel Godts oordeel wtspraecken”: Wybrantsz, 1.

²⁸ Karl Koop, *Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The Development of a Tradition* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004), 127.

communion; if he or she continued leading a wayward life regardless of continued admonition, the church council would require an appearance before the congregation (*broederschap*). At that point the offending member would be cut off completely from the congregation if the entire membership agreed.²⁹

As a correction to earlier historians of social control who emphasized a top-down structure of church discipline, historians now stress the importance of the horizontal forces of honor and shame in the discipline of the public church. In addition to the state, there were other forces for conformity, such as family, neighbors, and communion participants.³⁰ One could even go to a small claims court to defend one's honor. Dutch men protected their honor regarding financial affairs, while women guarded their sexual reputation. Lysbet Scheltes defended her honor from gossip floating about the city's crowded alleyways and chided the board of elders for believing every rumor they heard.³¹ Others risked aggravating their offense and refused to appear before the congregation because the public shame was too overwhelming.³² In a pluralistic context, honor and shame were critical to the functioning of

²⁹ SAA 565 nr. 779. This 1666 document of the Waterlander congregation *bij den Toren* records their church order as practiced from 1568 to 1651. The practice at the Flemish congregation *bij't Lam* was to proceed straight to the congregation with the announcement of censure.

³⁰ Lotte C. van de Pol, "Prostitutie en de Amsterdamse Burgerij: Eerbegrippen in een vroegmoderne stedelijke samenleving," in *Cultuur en maatschappij in Nederland 1500-1850: Een historische-antropologisch perspectief*, ed. Peter te Boekhorst, Peter Burke, and Willem Frijhoff (Meppel and Amsterdam; Heerlen: Boom; Open Universiteit, 1992), 180-81; Herman Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur: De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 244-54, and "Reformierte Kirchenzucht und Ehrenhandel: Das Amsterdamer Nachbarschaftsleben in 17. Jahrhundert," in *Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa (mit einer Auswahlbibliographie)*, ed. Heinz Schilling (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1994), 134-37. In addition to church discipline, Amsterdam residents wishing to defend their honor or to settle disagreements with neighbors could appeal to the *Banken van kleine zaken* (Small Claims Court), which worked to settle disputes between parties, the *buurtmeesters*, who supervised streets or neighborhoods, and the notaries, who also worked as middlemen in settling disputes. For a summary of the functioning of honor in the cities of the Republic, see Frijhoff and Spies, *1650: Bevochten eendracht*, 185-88.

³¹ SAA 1120 nr. 116, 46^R and nr. 125, 12^R [October 17, 1658].

³² Hans Houdtwercker, for example, claimed he was unable to face the board because of the great shame of his offense: SAA 1120 nr. 117, 47^R [August 27, 1623].

discipline. Without them, the spiritual care of the church would have had no teeth.

The church board believed it was especially important to reprimand dishonorable behavior done in public, lest it tarnish the reputation and honor of the entire congregation. Just as individuals could lose their honor in the eyes of their neighbors, ministers and elders were convinced they had to monitor the behavior of their members, lest notorious sins ruin the honor of the congregation in the eyes of the city. For example, the church had to step in when Gerret Fuikes and his wife Lysbet Scheltes grew so scandalously unpeaceful that the neighbors complained. Lysbet's struggle to control her temper threatened the congregation's collective honor, and she was commanded to refrain from communion because of the public shame.³³ In the Dutch Golden Age, one's moral reputation was valued almost the same as one's financial credit. The board maintained the solvency of the Waterlander congregation's honor by disciplining its members.

The wording of discipline records reinforces the importance of the concept of honor. In addition to transgressing against Christian notions of sin, many of the spots and blemishes for which the board disciplined members would have been offensive to nearly all upright Amsterdammers concerned with protecting their honor. Because the board was charged with overseeing the body of Christ on earth, it is not surprising that it objected to members behaving in a manner that was unchristian (*onchristelyck*). In addition, the board accused members of behavior that was improper (*onbetamelyk*) or unedifying (*onstichtelyck*). Ministers and elders chastised Isaak Vlaming, an elderly man who had dishonored a widow, for behavior that fell into all three categories.³⁴ Members were also commonly brought before the church for dishonorable (*oneerlyk*) behavior, like that of Annetie, who had an affair with another woman's husband;³⁵ using dishonorable words, such as those Arien Keescoper spoke to a deaconess who found him vomiting drunkenly on a Sunday;³⁶ or, like Jan Jacobsen Metselaer, for visiting dishonorable

³³ SAA 1120 nr. 116, 46^R and nr. 125: 122 [October 17, 1658].

³⁴ SAA 1120 nr. 125, 14^V [August 8, 1661].

³⁵ SAA 1120 nr. 117, 21^{R-V} [July 31, 1616].

³⁶ SAA 1120 nr. 117, 47^V and 50^R [August 27, 1623 and September 8, 1624].

places (i.e., taverns or brothels).³⁷ Overall, ministers disciplined members for offenses that combined notions of sin with societal norms of honor and shame.

Whether the sinners appeared before the ministers or were admonished in private, they were confronted with their reported transgression and given an opportunity to respond to the admonition. They often attempted to clear themselves of the charge by denying it outright, or by offering explanations to mitigate the offense.³⁸ If the accused showed great remorse, usually accompanied by tears and great sorrow, the church dealt more gently with them. For example, when the ministers admonished Jacob Jansen Modderman for an extramarital affair leading to a pregnancy, “The sorrow and grief that he showed there on his knees and with tears was great. He humbly begged God and the brethren for forgiveness and promised wholehearted improvement.”³⁹ His penitence convinced the elders that God had already received him into his mercy. They pronounced the lesser ban, barring him from communion and reducing his financial support. In many other instances, the board apparently decided that the admonition and repentance sufficed. They allowed the individual to proceed without either the greater or lesser ban, but warned that they would closely watch the course of that person’s life in future.

After a sufficient length of time, separated members could appeal to the board (ideally with tears as a sign of truly repentant heart) to rejoin the congregation, and if their remorse appeared genuine, they could once again approach the communion table. Four years after her exclusion from the table for her extra-marital pregnancy, Anneke Wouters was admitted to the table, since nothing negative regarding her life had arisen during that period and she had demonstrated her repentance with many tears. Like all censured members, the final step to her admittance was her own self-examination (*eigen proeve*); if her conscience was clear, she could rejoin the congregation.⁴⁰

³⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 117, 16^V [August 30, 1615].

³⁸ See the case of Jan de Jager and his wife at SAA 1120 nr. 116, 42^R [December 9, 1654].

³⁹ SAA 1120 nr. 117, 36^R [November 17, 1619].

⁴⁰ SAA 1120 nr. 123, 15^R [1644]; nr. 116, 32^V; nr. 125, 3^V [November 19, 1648]. For signs of repentance in Reformed discipline, see Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 126-28. While tears and heartfelt repentance were originally the necessary signs of a converted heart, by the 1650s and

Given the multi-confessional nature of the Dutch Republic, one might ask whether the threat of discipline would have had any teeth, given that an exiled member could simply have joined another church.⁴¹ However, members usually wanted to have access to communion, both for its importance as a religious symbol and to have their honor reinstated. As Charles Parker describes it, a person's "right to take communion established their innocence, and hence their moral honor."⁴² Since so much business in Amsterdam happened on a personal, face-to-face basis, public loss of honor had drastic economic consequences. One's honor was his or her credit, and Amsterdammers needed credit to survive.⁴³

For the poor of the congregation, it was particularly important to be in good favor with the church; falling under censure could result in the loss of alms or a room in one of the *hofjes* (small residential courtyards) run by the church.⁴⁴ In Amsterdam, care of the poor was divided along confessional lines, with each community caring for their own.⁴⁵ In addition to suffering the shame of censure, poor members had to find a new source of financial support or residence.⁴⁶ For example, when Hendrick Burgers and Maritge Speldesteeckster committed adultery, they had to leave the church housing

1660s, the records mention less frequently whether admittance was accompanied by these outward indications. This change suggests either a different recording secretary or a more pragmatic approach to disciplining, one that was less interested in the inner transformation of the heart than in eliciting new outward patterns of behavior.

⁴¹ Benjamin J. Kaplan, "Confessionalism and Its Limits: Religion in Utrecht, 1600-1650," in *Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age*, ed. Joaneath A. Spicer and Lynn Federle Orr (New Haven; London: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 60-71.

⁴² Charles H. Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 132.

⁴³ Roodenburg, "Reformierte Kirchenzucht und Ehrenhandel," 144-46; Frijhoff and Spies, *1650: Bevochten eendracht*, 178.

⁴⁴ Martin Dinges, "Frühneuzeitliche Armenfürsorge als Sozialdisziplinierung? Probleme mit einem Konzept," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 17, vol. 1 (1991): 5-29. Dinges argues against poor relief as social discipline since authorities were never able to implement the policy and Early Modern Europe was a self-help society. But since his conclusions are based upon his study of one city, Bordeaux, they are likely too broad. For one critique of Dinges's conclusions, see Robert Jütte, "Prolegomen zu einer Sozialgeschichte der Armenfürsorge," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 17, vol.1 (1991): 94-95.

⁴⁵ Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, 156-57, 174-75.

⁴⁶ Sprunger, "Rich Mennonites, Poor Mennonites," 230-31.

and lost their congregational charity until their deeds matched their promises of repentance.⁴⁷ While discipline was an especially high stakes matter for the poor, the church disciplined members from all social strata.

MENNONITES AND THE BOTTLE

For many Dutch moralists, drinking was the “mother sin” (*moedersonde*), because alcohol abuse led to many more grievous sins, such as violence, stealing, or bankruptcy. At the same time, alcohol was an essential element of Dutch culture. Drinking was a sign of friendship—a toast celebrated the birth of a child, and merchants often sealed a deal with a drink.⁴⁸ To demonstrate their masculinity, men were expected to consume large amounts of alcohol without overindulging and losing control. Although men had a duty to drink, women protected their honor by maintaining their sobriety.⁴⁹ Despite constant moralizing against the danger of immoderate drinking, the 17th-century cliché of the drunken Dutchman likely contained more than a drop of truth.⁵⁰

In a city known for the stench of its canals, people drank water only when beer and wine ran out. By 1613, a thirsty Amsterdammer could choose to slake his thirst in 513 tap-rooms (1 for every 200 residents) ranging from inns and taverns to side rooms in cellars and apothecaries.⁵¹ Beer, the

⁴⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 117, 53^v [February 8, 1626]. Deacons were not heartless in the removal of charity from censured members. They often made sure that the children of offenders did not suffer because of parental misdeeds. For example, deacons continued to support the children of Rebecca Nitters, daughter of Waterlander elder Nittert Obbes, even though her husband had died after sailing to the East Indies, and she had repeatedly appeared before the *collegie* for drunkenness. SAA 1120 nr. 123, 17^r [December 17, 1645]; nr. 116, 31^v and nr. 125, 3 [December 12, 1647 and December 3, 1648].

⁴⁸ B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville, VA: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2001), 103-14; Benjamin B. Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll: Youth Culture and Masculinity during Holland's Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 2012), 93.2001

⁴⁹ Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll*, 76; Benjamin Roberts, “Drinking Like a Man: The Paradox of Excessive Drinking for Seventeenth-Century Dutch Youths,” *Journal of Family History* 29, no. 3 (2004): 237-52; A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Violence, and Disorder in Traditional Europe* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State Univ. Press, 2009), 134.

⁵⁰ Roberts, “Drinking Like a Man,” 238.

⁵¹ A. Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in*

standard drink of the lower classes, ranged in quality from watered-down (low alcohol content) to thick, high-quality brews. Statistics suggest that the average person drank between 300 and 670 liters of beer in 1625. Although there were no vineyards in the Republic, Dutch merchants imported large amounts of wine, the preferred drink of the upper classes. The lower classes preferred beer, but as brandy, wine, and gin grew more affordable over the course of the century, the more potent drinks became more popular; the average drinker of hard liquor consumed 17 to 23 liters of brandy or gin per year.⁵²

To avoid excessive drinking and the sin of gluttony, an axiom advised drinking three glasses a day: the first for health, the second for taste, and the third for a good night's rest.⁵³ In a society in which everyone drank, Reformed and Mennonite discipline records made a distinction between private drinking and public and continual drunkenness.⁵⁴ Mennonites who engaged in obnoxious drunken behavior such as vomiting, breaking glasses, or urinating in beer mugs landed clearly outside broad social norms.⁵⁵ Drunkenness resulting from stronger alcohol, such as brandy or "anise-water," resulted in the elders banning Hartmen Jansen's wife in 1618, in 1619, and again in 1620.⁵⁶ The board disciplined other members for frequenting inns, even though one prominent Waterlander owned an inn that was an Amsterdam tourist attraction famous for its entertaining waterworks.⁵⁷ Most of the members, however, were confronted simply for rumors that they drank to the point of drunkenness (*dronken drinken*).

Seventeenth-Century Holland, trans. Maarten Ultee (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 101-102.

⁵² Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll*, 79-81.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵⁴ Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 340.

⁵⁵ Arien Keescoper, SAA 1120, nr. 117, 47^v [August 27, 1623]; Aggtes Sjouwer a.k.a. Agge Eelkes, nr. 116, 41^r and nr. 125, 9^r [December 12, 1652], and Hans Houdtwercker, nr. 117, 47^r [August 27, 1623].

⁵⁶ Hartmen Jansen and his wife Ottie, SAA 1120 nr. 116, 21^v; 23^r; 25^v [September 13 and 20, 1618; December 12, 1619] nr. 117, 37^v-38^r [March 1, 1620].

⁵⁷ H.F. Wijnman, *Jan Theunisz alias Joannes Antonides (1569-1637) Boekverkooper en waard in het muziekhuis "D'O's in de Bruyloft" te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: J.H. de Bussy, 1928), 30-31, and K.L. Sprunger, "Jan Theunisz of Amsterdam (1569-1638): Mennonite Printer, Pamphleteer, Renaissance Man," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 68 (1994): 439-40 and 443-44.

In addition to fulfilling social roles and quenching thirst, there were socially unacceptable ways to drink. The largest number of cases coming before the elders dealt with drunkenness, and alcohol played a contributing role in many other cases. Normally, the ministers passed the lesser ban only on members who occasionally became drunk. However, if members were repeatedly found inebriated, especially to the point they became violent or could no longer keep an orderly house, the board excommunicated them because of the New Testament's warning that a drunkard could not inherit the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁸ More than a third of all excommunications were for continual drunkenness, making it the most common offense to merit the Greater Ban. The Waterlander congregation intensified its struggle against drunk drinking in the 1640s and 1650s, but does not seem to have been winning the war by the time it merged with the Flemish congregation.⁵⁹

In the records of congregations from the second half of the 17th century, the most common offenses dealt with by the Lamist and Zonnist boards continued to involve alcohol, similar to the Waterlanders' pattern from before. Of a total of 793 cases, 182 (around one-quarter) described in the combined Waterlander and Lamist records mentioned abusive drinking. Nineteen of the 117 Zonist cases involved drinking as well.⁶⁰ In the worst incidents, the drinking was so severe that one member had sold the feathers for their bed and the clothing for their children to pay for her alcohol,⁶¹

⁵⁸ Joost Sijbrantsen, SAA 1120 nr. 117, 24^v [March 19, 1617]. The entry cites 1 Corinthians 6:10: "thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God," and Galatians 5:21: "envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." to support his excommunication.

⁵⁹ Emden's Reformed consistory also failed to curb drunkenness. Schilling attributes this to the city's economic decline following the return of the Dutch refugees to the Republic. Heinz Schilling, *Civic Calvinism in Northwestern Germany and the Netherlands: Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 55-58.

⁶⁰ The offense is usually called "*verloopen in dronkenschap*" or "*dronken drinken*." See, for example, the cases of Tonis Albertsz: SAA 1120, nr. 175, 8 [14 October 1683] and Gerrit Meijnderts the shoemaker, SAA 1120, nr. 174, 123 [August 18, 1678]. There are many more cases where alcohol abuse was linked to another offense, such as violent beatings, but I have classified those under the more serious offense. See, for example, the many appearances of Pieter Melisz, SAA 1120 nr. 174, 193 [August 1, 1680], 231 [October 2, 1681]; nr. 175, 18 [September 14, 1684], 51 [December 14, 1687], 53 [February 19, 1688].

⁶¹ See the case of Marritie Slicher, SAA 1120, nr. 175, 129 [February 21, 1697].

while another was so inebriated that they had to be carried home by someone else.⁶² As was the case for all Dutchmen, the problem with excessive drinking was that it was continual, public, and usually led to other types of offenses.⁶³

Perhaps because drinking was an everyday occurrence, it is understandable that church members called before the board defended their drinking—the line between acceptable and excessive drinking was unclear. Little Hansie, for example, argued that he could not have been drunk because he always drank on a full stomach.⁶⁴ Similarly, the types of drink permitted also changed during the 17th century. Anthony Proot protested that drinking brandy was no longer uncommon or offensive, since many Waterlanders and Flemish Mennonites did so.⁶⁵ The records also contain more accounts and more detailed records of women being drunk. This is similar to what Herman Roodenburg found in the records of the Reformed churches. It may be that drinking was less of a masculine domain by that time. However, Roodenburg suggests that the records simply did not bother to record all the accounts of drunken men and focused instead on the details of drunken women, which would have been more scandalous.⁶⁶

After 1730, the Lamist and Zonist records grow silent about alcohol. Roodenburg found the same pattern in Reformed consistory records. Perhaps church moralizing and discipline succeeded in shaping a sober congregation. Alternatively, members whose drinking endangered their church charity may have just stopped seeking assistance from a congregation that had become a gathering of middle-class, respectable Amsterdammers. Perhaps, in light of shrinking membership, elders did not bother disciplining or recording drunkenness any more, lest they offend remaining members. Nonetheless, when comparing Waterlander records from the early 1600s, one might tentatively conclude that drinking patterns among Mennonites had become more respectable.

⁶² See the case of Trijntie, the wife of Roelof Soeton, SAA 1120, nr. 175, 188 [February 10, 1701].

⁶³ The offense of drunkenness had the largest number of excommunications (22 out of 72). Of the 89 cases of drunkenness, the majority (53) were men.

⁶⁴ SAA 1120 nr. 116, 25^v [December 5, 1619].

⁶⁵ SAA 1120 nr. 116, 31^r [December 6, 1647].

⁶⁶ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 342-43.

MENNONITES AND THE DAGGER

On September 13, 1618, the Waterlander board summoned Reyer Jansen and his wife Annetie on account of their recent fight with Marten Joost and his wife. According to the elders' records, a quarrel between the two women escalated to the point that they pulled each other's caps off and hit one another. As the fight continued, Joost tried to pull the women apart, but Jansen encouraged his wife, yelling, "Hit, Annetie, Hit." When questioned by the elders, Jansen admitted that he had once struck a baker with tongs until he bled, and that he and his brother hit each other. He also confessed that he and his wife fought as well; he once bruised her arms so badly that she became bedridden. The elders' examination and admonition appear not to have succeeded on him. Later, he and his brother armed themselves with a hammer and went to Joost's house, where they pounded on the window and doors, trying to break in. When the brothers came upon Joost's servant, they sliced his jerkin and trousers.⁶⁷ Subsequently, the congregation found Reyer's and Annetie's misdeeds considerable and their contrition unsatisfactory, so they excommunicated the couple and encouraged them to repent.

Clearly, Jansen's violent, disruptive lifestyle shocked and offended his fellow Mennonites. Despite a general acceptance of low-level interpersonal violence in early modern Amsterdam, both Reformed and Mennonite churches would have condemned his actions as unchristian. Mennonites shared a cross-confessional consensus that condemned private violence while simultaneously respecting, and even endorsing, the state's monopoly of violence.⁶⁸ Mennonite attitudes towards interpersonal violence did not differ from those of other Dutch Christians, even though defenselessness was a key emphasis of Anabaptist identity.

Collective Violence—Disciplining a Core Conviction

Mennonites most clearly differentiated themselves from their Reformed neighbors in how they handled members who joined the military or militia, and members who sailed on armed ships. Dutch authorities had granted

⁶⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 116 [September 13, 1618]; SAA 1120 nr. 117 [September 23, 1618]: "Slae Annetie, Slae."

⁶⁸ Pieter Spierenburg, "Protestant Attitudes to Violence: The Early Dutch Republic," *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 10 (January 2007), 15-16.

Mennonites exemptions from serving in the city guard or military, so there was no legal requirement for them to seek those roles. It was usually poorer Mennonite men, desperate for any type of work, who joined the army or signed up to serve on armed ships, either with the navy, privateers, or the East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie, or VOC).⁶⁹ The elders understood that economic need compelled desperate young men to take any available job.⁷⁰ For example, Ide Klaes and Gilles Cornelesz admitted to sailing to war against the English in 1665, but explained that they only did so because of their great poverty. The Waterlander ministers informed Klaes that, if this was actually the case, he could acquire a secret loan rather than sail to war.⁷¹ However, it was more than just poverty that drove the men to enlist; they were also at the fringes of congregational life in other areas. Many who were disciplined for sailing to war were also often admonished for their drinking and for abandoning their families while they were away, not simply for going to war.⁷²

Men who returned from war usually received only the lesser ban.⁷³ Although the rejection of the Sword was a core Mennonite tenet, elders usually preferred to keep members from the fellowship of the communion table instead of cutting them off entirely from the congregation. Of the 39

⁶⁹ Mary S. Sprunger, "The Limits of Faith in a Maritime Empire: Mennonites, Trade and Politics in the Dutch Golden Age," in *The Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History*, ed. Tonio Andrade and William Reger (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 59-77.

⁷⁰ Not everyone who joined forsook his Mennonite convictions. In 1612, one governor general of the East Indies complained that the Mennonites did not fight against the Spanish and Portuguese. A. Th. van Deursen, *Honni soit qui mal y pense? De Republiek Tussen de Mogendheden (1610-1612)*, Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen 28:1 (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1965), 29.

⁷¹ SAA 1120 nr. 125, Ide Klaes [December 19, 1665] and Gilles Cornelesz [December 21, 1665]. Klaes sailed on a warship again in 1667.

⁷² Adriaan Joosten Isol, SAA 1120 nr. 125 [May 6, 1672]; Theunes Floresz Turfdrager [December 4, 1670, May 1673, August 8, 1675]; Ousger Evertsz [June 9, 1675]; and Jan Sjouckes SAA 1120 nr. 174 [April 27, 1679]. This is also true for the case of Gerrit Keijser, who had been behaving badly even before sailing to war in 1692: SAA 1120 nr. 175 [March 20, 1692].

⁷³ The greater ban cut the offender entirely out of the congregation. For a Waterlander treatise about the lesser ban, see SAA 1120 nr.131 by Reynier Wybrantsz, "Wat reden dat men ymandt vermaent van de tafel des Heeren te blyven."

men who sailed on armed ships, there were only six cases when the offender was excommunicated specifically for that offense, as Pieter de Jager was in 1615, when he refused to repent. While in a Turkish prison, he fought and killed three other prisoners in self-defence. Either before or after his time in prison, he had sailed on a ship that had thrown 88 Turkish prisoners overboard. He explained that he was at the rudder at the time and could have done nothing to stop the slaughter. Nonetheless, the scale of the killings and his refusal to repent had moved him beyond Waterlander principles.⁷⁴ Apart from clear cases like de Jager's, where military participation was the primary offense, the elders banned deviant offenders from the communion table. Violating a core Mennonite tenet did not completely sever the men's relationship with the community.

Whereas ministers showed some forbearance with poorer men who joined the military, they were less sympathetic with respectable members who armed their ships. The relatively short entries for sailors in the records contrast noticeably with entries for ship-owners and captains, which are much more expansive about the violation and the efforts to dissuade the men from arming their ships. When Anske Fockes was pressed into service as a captain on an armed ship in 1665, the preacher and elder Denijs van der Schuere⁷⁵ recorded his attempts to convince Fockes that sailing to war was against their religion. Van der Schuere wrote that, because Mennonites considered themselves defenseless Christians who took the gospel to say that only God could seek revenge, they were to turn the other cheek to their enemies. If Fockes understood the faith, the preacher continued, he should have understood that he could not become a man of war, much less a captain on a warship. Doing so engendered scandalous talk about the congregation and disturbed the simpler members. When Fockes, who seemed surprised

⁷⁴ SAA 1120 nr. 117 [August 30, 1615]; SAA 1120 nr. 116 [June 4, 1615]. The latter states that de Jager's shipmate threw only 85 prisoners overboard. De Jager may have been imprisoned by North African corsairs, who had released Dutch captives following the capitulation of 1612. Alexander H. de Groot, "Ottoman North Africa and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de La Méditerranée* 39, no. 1 (1985): 131-47.

⁷⁵ N. van der Zijpp, "Schuere, Denys van der (d. 1673)," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1959, [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Schuere, Denys_van_der_\(d. 1673\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Schuere,_Denys_van_der_(d._1673)), accessed April 21, 2015.

to learn of the Waterlander position, asked how he could hold his head up before other people (outside the Waterlander church), Van der Schuere retorted that he should be more concerned with how he could hold his head up before God. Because Fockes planned to continue with his voyage into war, the ministers banned him from the Lord's Table until he returned and the congregation could observe his life much more closely.⁷⁶

By the end of the century, elders no longer banned or publicly admonished members who joined the military or navy. In early 1696, the Lamist church asked Haye Heemstra to refrain from the Lord's Table because he had not only armed his ships, he was sailing under commission from the navy, which, they said, was sure to cause great offense in the congregation. When Heemstra asked permission to take communion, the board said it could not tolerate his behavior, especially sailing under commission. They did say, however, that it was only a "provisional" separation and that they would not notify the rest of the brothers, unless he continued.⁷⁷ The board appears to have had granted some leniency to members who sailed on armed ships, if they did not sail under commission. The decision to refrain from publicly censuring Heemstra also suggests a shift in the congregation's attitude.⁷⁸

Although the ministers took a relatively firm line with Heemstra, they began to leave decisions about military participation up to the conscience of individual members. In 1699, when Fredrik Jacobs, a sailor (*matroos*) on an admiralty ship (*jagt*), asked to take communion with the congregation,

⁷⁶ SAA 1120 nr. 25 [August 7, 1665].

⁷⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 175 [January 26, 1696, February 2, 1696, February 6, 1698]. In 1698, Heemstra asked the board for a letter of attestation so that he could take communion with the Remonstrants. The board said they could not provide such a witness for him. However, if the Remonstrants asked for a reference, they would say they had nothing negative to offer against him other than he disagreed with them about defenselessness.

⁷⁸ Mary Sprunger's work suggests that the attitude towards arming ships was complicated. Some Mennonites withdrew from the VOC, but others continued to invest in the company. She concludes that discipline against sailing armed ships was successful, since Mennonites avoided trade in regions where one had to arm ships to do business. Although Mennonites could not own armed ships, it is not clear whether they could charter ships to sail for them. Others criticized the Mennonite position on arming ships; although Mennonites may not have had guns on their decks, they stored plenty below. See Mary S. Sprunger, "Waterlanders and the Dutch Golden Age," in *From Martyr to Muppy*, 138-40.

the board informed him that he could do so upon his self-examination—in other words, if his conscience allowed him to do so.⁷⁹ After 1695, the records of all three congregations contain no further accounts of discipline for joining the military, and the last discipline of a member for sailing with the VOC occurred in 1712. While the church may have stopped treating armed service as a sin, it is more likely that the wealthy congregation no longer had members who were so poor that they joined the military out of economic necessity.

Interpersonal Violence: The Violence of Daily Life

In addition to enforcing the prohibition on armed service, the church boards worked to reduce interpersonal violence among members. Between 1612 and 1741, there were 39 cases of interpersonal violence, ranging from street fights to domestic violence. Most of these cases involved members living in church housing or from the lowest classes. The congregations had more success in disciplining members who relied on the church charity for their homes and food and, at the other end of the social scale, those whose honor and standing were important enough that they worked to reconcile with each other and the community. It was more difficult appealing to members who were marginal at best. Pieter Evertsz Schrote's case in 1678 serves as a typical example: When the board tried to summon him for assaulting another church member in the street, he refused to appear and indicated that he was planning to leave the congregation anyway.⁸⁰

Many of the violent acts occurred between two spouses. Usually, but not always, men assaulted their wives. While attitudes to war and the military were gendered exclusively to men, domestic violence or neighbor-to-neighbor violence involved nearly as many women as men. Like authorities in the Reformed church, Mennonites generally concentrated on reconciling quarreling married couples.⁸¹ Because one had to be reconciled

⁷⁹ SA 1120, nr.175 [July 23, 1699]. Perhaps he was not a member of the congregation, and thus did not need to adhere so strictly to its practices.

⁸⁰ SAA 1120 nr. 174 [August 18, 1678, September 5, 1678].

⁸¹ Manon van der Heijden, "Punishment versus Reconciliation: Marriage Control in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Holland," in *Social Control in Europe, Volume 1, 1500–1800*, ed. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2004), 69–71.

with fellow members in order to take part in the Lord's Table, elders banned the quarreling couple or just the offending spouse from communion until they learned the couple's domestic life had improved.

Many marital quarrels often involved heavy drinking by one or both partners. Records describe numerous cases of individuals summoned before the board because they were drunk or were rumored to "keep bad house" (*slecht huishouden*).⁸² Most of the cases concerned members living in church housing for the poor, where the deacons could keep a close eye on residents' behavior. The close quarters of these houses (*hofjes*) made it hard to keep marital fighting quiet from neighbors' alert ears.⁸³ In the narrow, bustling alleys and homes of Dutch cities, a violation of marital tranquility brought shame on the entire neighborhood, which might have compelled the Mennonite neighbors to bring the case to the congregation's attention.⁸⁴ Typically, ministers tried to reconcile sparring spouses; they never advised quarreling couples to divorce or temporarily separate in order to diminish the violence between them. In the Reformed congregation, the only acceptable reasons for divorce were adultery and malicious abandonment. However, the Reformed did grant irreconcilable couples an informal separation from "bed and board."⁸⁵ Mennonites, by contrast, always banned couples who would not reconcile and never suggested separation.

There was apparently no fixed policy in dealing with men who beat

⁸² For one interpretation of the importance of an orderly domestic life in the Dutch Republic, see Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Vintage, 1987), 375-480, especially 388-400. For the discipline of 'poor housekeeping' (*Übelhausen*) in Augsburg neighborhoods, see Carl A. Hoffmann, "Social Control and the Neighborhood in European Cities," in *Social Control in Europe: 1500-1800*, 317.

⁸³ For an example, see the case of Jan de Jager and his wife, SAA 1120 nr. 117 [December 9, 1654].

⁸⁴ Manon van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland: stedelijke rechtspraak en kerkelijke tucht, 1550-1700* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1998), 259-60.

⁸⁵ See Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw: Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Utrecht: Hes uitgevers, 1985), 196-214. In Rotterdam and Delft, the Reformed consistory also preferred to reconcile the couple rather than punish the offender. See Heijden, "Punishment versus Reconciliation," 71-72. For a Waterlander example of a couple separating, see the case of Abraham Gerritsz and his wife Hillette, SAA 1120 nr. 117 [February 6, 1633].

their wives. Elders assessed each case independently. Whenever rumors of married couples arguing came to the board's attention, they counseled the couples to strive to live peacefully with one another. Some offenders repented and received only the lesser ban for their violence. Lourens Pietersz Keescoper, on the contrary, was told he could not be considered a brother of the congregation as long as he hit and shoved his wife so hard that he bruised her.⁸⁶ Thus, the board does seem to have assessed the degree of violence and public knowledge, and visible bruising crossed a tolerable line. It is unclear whether the board condemned Pietersz because he violated the specific Mennonite prohibition against revenge and violence, or violated broader social disapproval of tyrannical behavior by husbands.

In some cases, the lack of domestic tranquility and push for reconciliation seems to have been more important than the fact that the husband hit his wife, or that the wife hit her husband. In 1646, Lubbert Pieters's wife left him because they could not live peacefully together, and he hit her 'black and blue.' Because Pieters was repentant and asked for forgiveness, the elders decided simply to watch his life a bit more closely. After his wife left him again five years later and refused to reconcile with him, the elders asked both of them to refrain from the communion table. The problem was that they were unreconciled, not that Pieters beat her.⁸⁷

If domestic discord became notoriously violent, it was publically known, and therefore a scandal and sin that had to be publicly addressed and publicly punished. Mennonite records reveal no cases in which husbands justified their violence as part of their duty to discipline their wife, children, or servants, examples of which Roodenburg found in Reformed records.⁸⁸ The few attempts at justification were similar to Adam Janssen Verver's unconvincing defense on October 31, 1675. When admonished for beating his wife with a stick, he admitted it, but said he was compelled to do so because she had hit him seven or eight times first. The elders were

⁸⁶ SAA 1120 nr. 117 [February 18, 1636]. Other members who did not appear when summoned were also excommunicated, but it is unclear whether the excommunication resulted from the abuse or for not heeding the summons.

⁸⁷ SAA 1120 nr. 123 [September 2, 1646]; SAA 1120 nr. 116 [August 27, 1646, August 23, 1648, April 15, 1651].

⁸⁸ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 366.

not moved.⁸⁹ When Mennonite churches disciplined domestic violence, the men (and women) who hit their spouses were usually also known for being notorious drunks, bankrupt, or lazy. This can obscure whether elders were more concerned about the violence or the other offenses.⁹⁰

Mennonite and Reformed leaders dealt with violent husbands in similar ways. Both boards admonished couples to reconcile and live peacefully together. However, when appearing in front of the board, Mennonite men never defended their violence with appeals to their patriarchal duty. Also, Mennonite boards never turned to the secular authorities for help when the woman feared for her life. But Roodenburg's study of Reformed discipline describes several occasions when the consistory advised a family to lock up a notorious abuser in the public rasp or spinning house because "we live under a Christian government, who is ordained to bring such people to reason and order."⁹¹ Mennonite elders, by contrast, preferred to take care of their own offenders rather than turn them over to secular authorities. The most severe threat they leveled was to withhold someone's charity or to evict them from church housing.

Outside the domestic sphere, episodes of Mennonites physically assaulting someone reflect the same types of incidents as found in Reformed records. Twenty-three cases concerned men in public places like taverns and streets, or in workplaces. There were also twelve reports of Mennonite women living in church housing who were violent towards neighbors or co-workers. In at least five incidents of assault, the members (all men) threatened someone with a knife, considered a much more serious offense than simple fisticuffs and punishable in secular courts. At the time, knife fighting or carrying a dagger for protection was usually associated with the semi-respectable lower classes, since the respectable lower-middle classes fought with staffs or fists.⁹² This class division is reinforced by the fact that Mennonite knife fighters came before the board for multiple offenses, such

⁸⁹ SAA 1120 nr. 125 [October 31, 1675]

⁹⁰ For one example, see the case of Leendert Cornelisss and Mettie Jans, SAA 1120 nr. 175 [July 10, 1687, June 15, 1690, March 1, 1691, June 23, 1695, September 1, 1695].

⁹¹ Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 367.

⁹² Pieter Spierenburg, "Knife Fighting and Popular Codes of Honor in Early Modern Amsterdam," in *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*, ed. Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1998), 103-27.

as fraud, bankruptcy, frequenting dishonorable houses, or drunkenness.

When members fought with each other or with someone outside the congregation, they had to refrain from the communion table until they resolved their differences. In most of these cases, the board's aim in enforcing the lesser ban was not to punish the parties for physical violence, but to enforce the unity of the table and to encourage members to reconcile with each other. In 1660, Agge Aelkes pulled his knife on someone and was wounded along with his opponent. The Waterlander board informed him that he must refrain from the unity of the table, which he agreed to do. Two years later, after Aelkes was reconciled with his opponent and people heard that he behaved himself, he repented of his sins and promised an improvement in his life. The elders readmitted him to the communion table, if his conscience allowed it.⁹³ Arming one's ship was grounds for excommunication; however, a repeatedly violent personal life did not automatically end one's membership in the church.

On August 1, 1680, Mary Jans van de Heule and Pieter Melisz, whom we have met before, appeared before the Lamist board, which admonished them for their domestic discord [*slechte huishouden*], especially Pieter, who stayed out late at night. A year later, the elders summoned him again about his drunkenness and domestic disturbances with his wife, whom he had threatened with a knife and then chased out of the house. He offered very little in his defense, and the elders asked him to stay away from the communion table, warning him that his financial support might stop. If he did not improve, they threatened to tell the entire congregation about his behavior and to treat him as unworthy of membership. In 17th-century Amsterdam, the public shame could have been worse than the removal of charity.⁹⁴ Three years later, the board summoned Melisz for smashing Michel Symons's head with a mug, an action that he admitted. Because he already had a bad record, his case went before the brethren. However, following his confession, he was once again forgiven. In 1687, the elders informed the

⁹³ SAA 1120 nr. 125 [December 14, 1660; May 19, 1662]. In 1652, the board had summoned Aelkes for smashing glasses in an inn. At that time, they resolved to keep a closer watch on his behavior. SAA 1120 nr. 116 [December 12, 1652].

⁹⁴ Herman Roodenburg, "Reformierte Kirchenzucht und Ehrenhandel," 130-31; Pollmann, "Off the Record," 432.

congregation that Pieter had continued to misbehave, and was repeatedly warned and punished. The elders had learned that he still frequented taverns and wasted his time. They tried to summon him to appear. This time he denied everything, so they resolved to gather evidence and show it to him and the congregation. In 1688, records report that he threatened to cut his wife's throat. It is likely at this point that the church excommunicated him, although it is not recorded. Seven years later, he tried joining again, but the reports of his behavior were still not good enough. So, although the board eventually excommunicated him, it took him many years and multiple infractions to use up his second chances.⁹⁵

The Decline of Violence and End of Church Discipline

Although the elders attempted to adhere to the tradition of Mennonite defenselessness, it is unclear what Mennonite identity meant for their violent, marginal members, many of whom lived in church housing. If Mennonites believed the congregation should be a community of believers who voluntarily committed themselves to a life of discipleship, what did that commitment mean to this underclass? Perhaps they were simply legacy members whose parents had once been devout Mennonites and chose to remain and identify as Mennonite, even though they could have left the church. Was the financial support from the congregation so important that they were glad to assent to a minimal understanding of Mennonite identity? By the 18th century, this minimal understanding seems to have taken hold, because the amount of disciplining declined more significantly than the simultaneous decline in church membership.⁹⁶ This reflects Roodenburg's findings, and also confirms Norbert Elias's and Pieter Spierenburg's description of a "civilizing process" to the internalization of restraint and social control among in the elites, which then trickled down through the manners and morals of lower social divisions.

⁹⁵ SAA 1120 nr. 174 [August 1, 1680, October 2, 1681]. SAA 1120 nr. 175 [September 14, 1684, December 14, 1687, February 19, 1688, December 15, 1695].

⁹⁶ From 1700, there were 117 discipline cases recorded in the *Lam* and *Toren* congregation and 70 cases in the *Zon*, mostly for drunkenness and bankruptcy. From 1742 until 1800, there were only a handful of cases recorded in both churches.

MENNONITES AND THE RING

The discipline of sexuality and marriage likewise reflects Mennonites' integration into broader Dutch society. Secular and religious authorities were united in restricting sexual activity to marriage. Despite Reformed leaders' efforts to weed out traditional sexual practices allowing some sexual contact between betrothal and marriage, there was some confusion among their members about the relation between engagement, betrothal, consummation, and marriage. Mennonite discipline cases attempted to control when and whom members could marry.

While the earlier Waterlander congregation disciplined roughly the same number of women as men, from 1650 on they handled 24 cases of women and only four cases of men for pre-marital sex. The disproportionate number of cases involving women is likely because it was difficult for women to hide their pregnancies. As was the case in the Reformed consistory, Mennonite elders dealt with more cases of pre-marital sexual activity during economic downturns, when there was a surplus of women. Roodenburg has suggested possible reasons for the rise in cases between 1660 and 1670: betrothed couples had to put off marriage until they could afford to establish a home, and women might have been more willing to risk binding themselves to a husband.⁹⁷

While there was some leniency in the discipline of pre-marital sex, the act of adultery was strongly condemned by all Dutch moralists. In addition to censure and loss of honor, adulterers faced prosecution in either the civil or the criminal courts, where they could theoretically receive fines or even a death sentence.⁹⁸ Given the serious nature of the sin, it is striking that, of the

⁹⁷ Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 257-58. In 1683, Amsterdam's Reformed consistory remarked that the absence of so many warships resulted in larger numbers of poor, women, and orphans.

⁹⁸ Veronique Verhaar and Frits van den Brink, "De bemoeienissen van stad en kerk met overspel in het achttiende-eeuwse Amsterdam," in *Nieuwe Licht op oude justitie: misdaad en straf ten tijde van de republiek*, ed. Harold Faber (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1989), 65; Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 286. For the connection between female honor and adultery as described by Dutch moralists, see Maria-Theresia Leuker and Herman Roodenburg, "'Die dan hare wyven laten afweyen': Overspel, eer en schande in de zeventiende eeuw," in *Soete minne en helsche boosheit. Seksuele voorstellingen in Nederland, 1300-1850*, ed. Gert Hekma and Herman Roodenburg (Nijmegen: SUN, 1988), 61-84.

11 cases of adultery, the board excommunicated only five of the offenders.⁹⁹ A woman named Annetie had refused to appear when summoned; Jonas Gysbertsz had earlier repented in front of the congregation for sailing to war, thereby already placing him on the margins of the membership, and Aeltge Scheltes was punished because her adultery had become publicly known.¹⁰⁰ The congregations punished the other six cases, but less harshly: one couple lost their church housing and food allowance, an elderly man was banned from the communion table and admonished for not knowing better, and a woman was banned for being seen out late with a man other than her husband.¹⁰¹ While the percentage of excommunications is relatively high compared to those for pre-marital sex, the boards still preferred to preserve excommunication for individuals who repeatedly sinned or refused to cooperate with the disciplining process.

Offenses of marital discord and extramarital sexual activity would have been frowned upon by moralists from all confessions. In fact, Mennonite attempts to discipline these offenses illustrate how similar their ideas of sin were to those of their fellow citizens. The discipline of mixed marriages shines a light on Mennonite efforts to mark their boundaries off from other confessions and to preserve a distinct identity. Marriage provided an easier, subtler route for sin to corrupt the church “without spot or wrinkle” by conjugally joining the fleshly world with the spiritual world.¹⁰² Records show that the even the moderate Waterlanders considered *buitentrouw* (marriage to someone from outside the congregation) a serious offence. With 64 occurrences, it was second only to drunkenness in the total number of cases handled by the board. Mennonites had condemned mixed marriages since at least since the 1550s and had reaffirmed this view in several confessions

⁹⁹ Roodenburg found a similarly low number of excommunications in the Reformed records. Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur*, 284.

¹⁰⁰ Annetie, SAA 1120, nr. 117, 21^{R-V} [July 31, 1616 and August 14, 1616]; Jonas Gysbertsz, SAA 1120, nr. 116, 40^V-41^R; 42^{R-V} and nr. 125, 5^V [October 24, 1652; May 14, 1653; December 12, 1654]; Aeltge Scheltes, SAA 1120, nr. 116, 38^V and nr. 125, 6^V [January 23, 1652 and May 12, 1652].

¹⁰¹ Hendrick Burgers and Maritge Speldesteckster, SAA 1120, nr. 117, 53^V [February 8, 1626]; Isaak Vlaming, nr. 125, 14^V [August 8, 1661]; Abigaël Ariaens, nr. 125, 17^R [March 20, 1662 and April 16, 1662].

¹⁰² This image is from Visser, *Broeders in de Geest*, 1: 94-96.

through the 17th century, including the Dordrecht Confession of 1632. Although the most conservative groups disciplined every case and even banned members who married Mennonites outside their particular branch, the more moderate Amsterdam congregations punished only members who married non-Mennonites, and reserved the right to judge each case on its own merits.¹⁰³

Most of the Mennonite discipline controlled members' behavior, but the struggle against *buitentrouw* focused on maintaining the integrity of the community's beliefs.¹⁰⁴ In the earliest period, the bans lasted for up to three years, but over time the discipline seems to have developed into a formality, especially in cases where a member promised to remain in the church and "be a good light and example" for their spouse.¹⁰⁵ Waterlander Hendrick Vasters even took it upon himself to refrain from communion; although he married an honorable woman who did not attend any church, he hoped eventually to win her over.¹⁰⁶

The more difficult cases of mixed marriage occurred when a member married a partner with a poor public reputation, or when someone married against the will of their parents or the ministers. Ijbeltien married a scoundrel against the advice of her mother, and then left the man after he came after the mother with a knife. (The Waterlanders kicked Ijbeltien out, but she had clearly moved herself outside the boundaries of the congregation. She had not attended a service for several years and refused to appear when summoned.)¹⁰⁷

Over the course of the century, a growing sense arose among those who married non-Mennonites that they would have to answer to the church board for their choice of spouse. But as long as they continued to attend the congregation, the punishment was temporary and not a significant loss of honor. Mary Sprunger has suggested that the church was more willing to

¹⁰³ Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden*, 182, 277, 391.

¹⁰⁴ Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, 161. In a chapter on *buitentrouw* among Hamburg Mennonites, Driedger traces the process by which ordinary men and women forced the church board to moderate its position forbidding marriage outside the community, thus weakening its ability to enforce its will on the congregation's identity.

¹⁰⁵ Immetie Lamberts, SAA 1120, nr. 116, 21^R [October 5, 1617].

¹⁰⁶ SAA 1120, nr. 116, 33^R [December 3, 1647].

¹⁰⁷ See the case of Ijbeltien, SAA 1120, nr. 116, 7^V [July 7, 1613].

tolerate the mixed marriages of wealthier members. She looked at the example of Aeltie Pieters Buys, who married merchant Symon Willemsz Nooms. In addition to serving in the city militia, he was involved in the Atlantic trade, even arming his ships for defensive purposes. Pieters continued to be well respected among the Waterlanders, donating 50 guilders a year to the poor chest.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps the fear was justified that marriage to a non-Mennonite spouse might make it easier for Waterlanders to move away from the beliefs and practices that distinguished them from their neighbors. When, in 1657, delegates from the church board confronted Jacob Venkel about his clothing, he blamed the finery of his dress on his marriage to a Reformed woman.¹⁰⁹ He argued that his wife had forced him to conform to a dress code with less restrictive norms than those of the Waterlanders, thereby likely reaffirming the ministers' misgivings about *buitentrouw*.¹¹⁰

The question of marriage outside the congregation had fractured Mennonite unity in the previous century, but congregations punished it less strictly by the middle of the 17th century. Although the Lamists no longer viewed mixed marriage as a threat to the purity and unity of the congregation, they continued to discourage the practice, albeit for different reasons. After the city magistrates officially required churches to support their needy members, the board worried that marriage was a channel for outsiders to gain access to the poor chest of the wealthy congregation.

In 1690, after much "heartfelt sorrow," the board presented a new regulation regarding *buitentrouw* to the congregation. They created the policy to deal with members whose troublesome spouses were not members of any Mennonite congregation, drank, did not work or attend church, and yet lived off the congregation's charitable gifts. From that point on, all members married to someone whose behavior was a dangerous model for

¹⁰⁸ Mary S. Sprunger, "Deaconesses, Fishwives, Crooks and Prophetesses: Mennonite Image and Reality in Golden Age Amsterdam," in *Sisters: Myth and Reality of Anabaptist, Mennonite, and Doopsgezind Women Ca. 1525-1900*, ed. Mirjam G.K. van Veen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 175-76.

¹⁰⁹ SAA 1120 nr. 125, 32^r [December 13, 1657].

¹¹⁰ Benjamin J. Kaplan, "For They Will Turn Away Thy Sons': the Practice and Perils of Mixed Marriage in the Dutch Golden Age," in *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marc R. Forster and Benjamin J. Kaplan (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 115-33, especially 119-20.

the children would receive only one-half their support. Any future marriages in which members were “shackled to such inappropriate and unchristian” people would receive no food, money, or shelter.¹¹¹ By discouraging members from marrying undisciplined and unchurched outsiders, ministers found an additional way to make sure only upright Christians joined their congregation.

When Grietje Bouwer was to marry a Papist (*paapsman*) with five children in 1697, the ministers warned that doing so endangered both her soul and her body, since her husband was unable to support her. Since the Lamists could no longer assist her, they asked her to leave the church’s housing (*hoffs*).¹¹² In the proposal of 1690, ministers added the provision that, if the *buitentrouw* was between virtuous people who became unable to support themselves, a three-quarters vote by the entire board would allow the member to receive congregational charity.

Records of mixed marriages essentially stop after 1700. Perhaps, in order to protect the congregation’s considerable financial resources and its respectability, the board made it too financially risky for members to take up with marginal members of other congregations. However, historian Benjamin Kaplan has found that one-third of Mennonite marriages in 1760 were to a spouse of another faith.¹¹³ By that time, confessional differences were no longer significant barriers to mixed marriages, a trend that Simon Rues, a German traveller to Amsterdam, had already noted in 1743.¹¹⁴ In the mid-19th century, Steven Blaupot ten Cate suggested that mixed marriages

¹¹¹ The congregation had already expressed concerns about mixed marriages to disruptive spouses in 1687: SAA 1120 nr. 175, 41, 74-75 [March 13, 1687, January 3, 1690]. The board resolved to read the resolution to the congregation again in 1710, nr. 175, 284 [February 27, 1710]. In 1720, they also resolved to read the resolution to baptismal candidates along with a warning that, if members left without an attestation for longer than two years, they would never receive one from the board, nr. 175, 462 [March 7, 1720].

¹¹² SAA 1120 nr. 175, 131 [August 8, 1697].

¹¹³ Benjamin Kaplan, “Integration vs. Segregation: Religiously Mixed Marriage and the ‘verzuiling’ Model of Dutch Society,” in *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c. 1570-1720*, ed. Benjamin Kaplan et al. (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2009), 60–61.

¹¹⁴ Simeon Friedrich Rues, *Aufrichtige Nachrichten von dem gegenwärtigen Zustande der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten, wie auch der Collegianten oder Reinsburger* (Jena: Joh. Rud. Crökers Wittwe, 1743), 107.

were to blame for the steep drop in Mennonite numbers in the previous century.¹¹⁵ Perhaps in an effort to climb socially, Mennonites who married Reformed spouses affiliated with their spouse's churches.¹¹⁶

Protecting the Bottom Line: Charity and Changes in Discipline

For the Lamists, membership in the congregation was based upon adherence to three core points of the identity of the church: defenselessness, adult baptism, and avoidance of the oath. Virtuous behavior and affirmation of these basic markers of Mennonite identity grew more important to the Lamists than earlier claims to be the exclusive body of Christ or agreement with a printed confession of faith. That they could take communion with those who agreed to the three principles and lived upright lives demonstrates a greater openness to the surrounding culture and a lack of interest in closely policing identity markers.¹¹⁷

If they were much more welcoming around the communion table, the Lamists were at the same time growing more careful about whom they allowed to become a member. In the second half of the 17th century, city magistrates reorganized poor relief by requiring each confession to care for their own needy members. During periods of economic downturn, the wealth of Amsterdam's shipyards, warehouses, and markets attracted men and women from poorer parts of the Republic. Therefore, the Lamists scrutinized potential members more carefully, making it more difficult for poor or ill-behaved individuals to join—and to burden the congregation with the responsibility of disciplining and supporting them. In addition to fulfilling a Christian and required civic duty, the Lamists' charity also functioned to shape the social make-up of the membership. In the process,

¹¹⁵ Steven Blaupot ten Cate, *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Friesland: Van Derzelver Ontstaan tot dezen Tijd, Uit Oorspronkelijke Stukken en Echte Berigten Opgemaakt* (Leeuwarden: Eekhoff, 1839), 248-49; Kaplan, "Integration vs. Segregation," 60.

¹¹⁶ For more on marriages between the elites and the regent class, see Mary Sprunger, "Iemand Burgemeester Maken. Doopsgezinden en Regenten Geslachten in de Gouden Eeuw Te Amsterdam," *Doopsgezind Bijdragen* 32 (2006): 75-121; Mary Sprunger, "Why the Rich Got Mennonite: Church Membership, Status and Wealth in Golden Age Amsterdam," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 27 (2009): 41-59.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Isaak Arondeaux, who came from Rotterdam with proof of his adult baptism and upright life: SAA 1120, nr. 175, 23 [August 16, 1685].

however, discipline focused even more on the powerless members while granting the “better sort” more leeway.¹¹⁸

Prospective members had to present an attestation of good standing with their previous congregation in order to prevent potentially disreputable or censured individuals from fleeing a shamefully tarnished past for the anonymity and poor boxes of Amsterdam. As the Republic’s economy weakened and Mennonites from around the country sought their fortune in Amsterdam, the congregation added a requirement that residents had to live in the city for at least a year before they could join. This allowed current members to observe the behavior of the new residents. They could thereby establish whether they were committed to Mennonite principles and were financially sound.¹¹⁹ The board also hoped that it would discourage members from congregations elsewhere who were poor or on the edge of poverty from “overflowing” the wealthy Amsterdam congregation and becoming a burden.¹²⁰ In 1709, the board increased the waiting period to three years, further discouraging marginal Mennonites from coming to the city.¹²¹

From 1678 until 1731, the Lamist church board rejected the attestations of at least 66 individuals requesting membership. In several cases, the board was convinced that the inquirers were interested only in the deacons’ poor relief.¹²² Some of the seekers, like Jan Raets and Wilhelm Vos, did not know enough about church doctrine to justify their inclusion.¹²³ In a dramatic switch from Mennonite tradition, the board allowed Lijsbets Bongerts to take communion in 1703 but did not grant her membership, since it was

¹¹⁸ This pattern is a change from that of the Waterlanders in the first half of the century.

¹¹⁹ The task of observing potential members’ behavior was made easier when they lived in neighborhoods where many other Mennonites were living. When Dieuwertie Jans asked to be baptized into the congregation, she had trouble finding two witnesses to vouch for her. There had been rumors about bad behavior, but the ministers had difficulty locating anyone who could do so. The collegie told her she had to move to a part of the city where members of the congregation could have clear proof (*klare prevuen*) of her betterment. SAA 1120, nr. 174, 239, 247 [January 29, 1682 and August 20, 1682].

¹²⁰ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 204 [January 3, 1704].

¹²¹ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 280-81 [September 23, 1709].

¹²² See, for example, Jan Jans Roos, SAA 1120, nr. 175, 32 [August 1, 1686] or Aaltie Jacobs, SAA 1120, nr. 175, 188 [February 17, 1701].

¹²³ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 98, 131 [May 5, 1678, December 1, 1678].

not apparent that she had ever been a sister in a Mennonite congregation.¹²⁴ Gerrit Smit, a member of the Zonist congregation for many years, asked to add his name to the Lamist membership rolls in 1717. Because he was known to have been a troublesome member for the Zon, the board told him that they would not take him on as a member. They would keep his case in mind, and in the meantime he could enjoy the freedom to take part in communion.¹²⁵ By the 1710s, individuals whose pasts had “spots” and “wrinkles” could take communion more easily than they could be added to the membership rolls and receive charity.

Lamist leaders grew frustrated when needy members took the money, food, shelter, or turf of the congregation while remaining on the margins of congregational life. On March 3, 1687, the ministers admonished the entire congregation to attend the Sunday services and charged the deacons of the poor to make sure that needy members also attended. During one of the services, deacons went the poor neighborhoods (*wijks*) to see who was going to church or not. When deacons Arend Bosch and Pieter van Beek reported that very few of the poor members attended services, either with their children or alone, the board decided to renew efforts to monitor attendance.¹²⁶ On January 22, 1688, they summoned most of the needy members and their children over eight years old to the church, where they chastised them for their absences from the sermons. They admonished them to make a greater effort to attend the services and sermons.¹²⁷ If the board was going to support needy members, they expected them to attend services and receive the edification of sermons, not just the nourishment of charity.

As the Golden Age lost its luster, marginal men and women may have needed help more than ever, yet it grew increasingly difficult for Amsterdam's down-and-outs to gain access to charity.¹²⁸ By linking charity with church

¹²⁴ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 204 [April 5, 1703].

¹²⁵ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 412 [August 26, 1717]. It is unclear what Gerrit Smit had done in the Zon congregation, but he had been admonished by their board during a visitation in 1710. See SAA 877, nr. 3 [September 3, 1710].

¹²⁶ SAA 1120, nr. 17, 40 [March 6, 1687].

¹²⁷ SAA 1120, nr. 175, 50 [January 22, 1688].

¹²⁸ Maarten Prak and Lidewij Hesselink, “Stad van gevestigden 1650-1730,” in *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam: Zelfbewuste Stadstaat 1650-1813*, ed. Willem Frijhoff, Maarten Prak, and Marijke Carasso-Kok (Amsterdam: SUN, 2005), II 2: 141.

membership, discipline, and participation, the Lamists thereby protected their collective reputation, helped the city nourish its weakest members (or cut them loose), and contributed to social discipline. Magistrates recognized the importance of all the city's churches and their responsibility to care for their needy, passing a law in 1719 that granted all the Protestant churches exemptions from new taxes, a privilege that previously only the Reformed had enjoyed.¹²⁹ When Dutch Mennonites appealed to authorities on behalf of Swiss or South German Mennonites, they always drew on their own reputation as upright, well-behaved subjects.¹³⁰

The discipline of violence shows how the boards adapted to the changing nature of their members. From the second half of the 17th century, there were two tiers of Mennonite members: Mennonites from the middling and elite classes, who were expected to behave and believe in a certain way; and members from the very lowest classes or those living in church housing, who were not held to the same expectations.¹³¹ The sources do not allow us to discern the faith commitments of the violent members, but there are a few hints. In the cases of the *Zon*, where 18th-century records list both date of birth and date of baptism, many marginal members had been baptized at around 14 years old and committed their infraction only a few years later. Many of the offenders would have been relatively immature in age and in their faith.

CONCLUSION

In the first decades of the 18th century, the number of discipline cases

¹²⁹ Ibid., 144. The Lamists had enjoyed some tax freedoms since 1676. They petitioned both Amsterdam and the States of Holland for the continuation of their freedom from the 100 and 200 penny taxes in the early 18th century. See, for example, SAA 1120 nr. 175, 204 [March 3 and 15, 1703]; 214 [September 20, 1704]; 214-16 [November 20, 1704 and January 1, 15, 22, 1705], 243 [November 18, 1706, June 21, 1714].

¹³⁰ Troy David Osborne, "Worthy of the Tolerance They'd Been Given: Dutch Mennonites, Reputation, and Political Persuasion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 99 (2008): 256-79.

¹³¹ The nature of the sources makes prosopographical work (studies that identify and relate a group of people within a historical context) in the Amsterdam Mennonites difficult. Mary Sprunger has found that two-thirds of the Waterlander congregation came from middling and poorer classes. Sprunger, "Being Mennonite," 167-68.

dropped sharply in all Mennonite congregations. Why did a group for whom discipline and purity of the gathered congregation had been a mark of the true church gradually stop disciplining members? The changing discipline of alcohol, violence, and marriage shows the degree to which Amsterdam Mennonites were already integrated into Dutch society at the start of the previous century and how the remaining vestiges of a separate identity disappeared in the new century. From the perspective of the 21st century, we think of discipline as a way to mark borders with the outside world. We instantly think of bishops banning women for wearing jewelry, as was the case with my Amish grandmother's sisters. However, with the exception of sailing in war, Mennonites were concerned about exactly the same things as the other faiths in Amsterdam. They disciplined, not because they were separate from the world but because they were fully part of it.

Although the data shows a clear change in discipline (or at least in the recording of discipline), we are left with some difficult questions about what those changes mean. Were the Mennonites assimilated to such a degree that it had become impossible to enforce an effective discipline? Or, had the congregation's discipline actually succeeded in shaping members into upright Christians, thereby making banning and shunning superfluous? Were Mennonites less willing to discipline or be disciplined?

Records indicate that members grew more willing to challenge the authority of the ministers to pass judgment over their lives. Jan Pieter Swaert, in 1677, wrote a letter to the board reminding them that everyone was a sinner and that only those without sin could cast the first stone.¹³² In 1708, Johannes Blauw, a long-term alcoholic, refused to appear in the chambers unless he learned the names of his accusers.¹³³ Walraven Slicher appeared in 1699 with two witnesses to make his case for reacceptance into the congregation after his excommunication 14 years earlier. The board decided that his witnesses could only testify to his general behavior, and that he needed more evidence of true repentance, since his sin had been so severe. Outraged, Slicher threatened to reveal the name of a minister

¹³² SAA 1120 nr. 374: Letter dated July 22, 1677.

¹³³ SAA 1120 nr. 374: Letter dated October 28, 1708. Based on the letter and his repeated drunkenness, Blauw was cut off from the congregation. SAA 1120 nr. 175, 231 [March 18, 1706], 270 [November 29, 1708].

or deacon present in the room who should also refrain from communion. When pressed to elaborate, he refused to identify who it was.¹³⁴ In 1710, still excommunicated, he threatened to take communion with or without the ministers' permission. He was warned that the deacons would pass him by,¹³⁵ thereby publicly reinforcing his exclusion.

Successful social discipline required vertical as well as horizontal pressure. Therefore, the congregations increasingly resisted their leaders' exposure of their moral failings, and the elders no longer preserved the purity of the congregation and communion table, which undercut the effectiveness of discipline. Congregations no longer added marginal individuals to their membership lists, shaping themselves into respectable gatherings of solid burghers with a few peculiar beliefs regarding the oath and the sword. As they gained in wealth and respectability, the Lamists shifted the emphasis of discipline from safeguarding their purity to defending their propriety. Mennonites raised the bar for admission into their congregations, founded orphanages, and punished indolence, thereby raising their collective reputation. The sectarian and ascetic practices of a church discipline intended to separate believers from the fallen world were no longer necessary to govern upright burghers used to rubbing shoulders with the economic and political elites of the Republic.¹³⁶

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¹³⁴ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 25 [November 8, 1685], 174 [August 20, 1699].

¹³⁵ SAA 1120 nr. 175, 309 [November 19, 1710].

¹³⁶ This article builds upon material used in Troy Osborne, "Mennonites and Violence in Early Modern Amsterdam," *Church History and Religious Culture* 95, no. 4 (2015): 477-94. The author delivered a version of this material as the 2016 Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College.

Unexpected Intersections: Amish and Hmong Textiles and the Question of Authenticity

Janneken Smucker

I

Before 1971 no one bothered pairing the adjective “Amish” with the noun “quilt.” Few people outside Amish settlements knew there was anything distinct about the types of patchwork bedcovers Amish families kept folded in their cedar chests or displayed on guest beds. The Amish themselves just called them “quilts” or used the Pennsylvania German word *Debbich*. But in 1997, when noted art critic Robert Hughes wrote his sweeping survey of American art history, he called Amish quilts “America’s first major abstract art,” and pictured an early 20th-century quilt attributed to Rebecca Fisher Stoltzfus from Groffdale in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.¹ (Figure 1) In a mere quarter-century, these objects had shifted in status from obscurity within a relatively closed religious community to artworks considered by a prestigious critic as precursors to great modern American abstract paintings.

Today, Amish quilts regularly appear in arenas quite distinct from one another. They hang on the walls of art museums, where curators and viewers alike treat them as works of art of the highest caliber. (Figure 2) By contrast, they also regularly appear in small country stores located in Amish settlements. Here one can find quilts stacked horizontally on beds, hanging vertically over bars like newspapers at a public library, and hung on walls like paintings. One can sift through piles of pillows, quillows (a combination of quilt and pillow), potholders, placemats, tote bags, and wall hangings, purported to be pieced and quilted by Amish women. (Figure 3) Few of these objects, also collectively called “Amish quilts,” bear much resemblance to those that hang in museums. Yet these quilts and quilted objects—marketed to tourists visiting Amish country—are also typically made by unnamed

¹ Robert Hughes, *American Visions: The Epic History of Art in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 43-44.

Amish makers (as well as by unnamed women of other religious and ethnic backgrounds). Does a contemporary quilt sold at Country Lane Quilts have anything in common with the work of art hanging at a museum, other than an attribution to makers of the same Anabaptist faith?

As I explored this question and many others, my research stretched from the period during which Amish women first began making quilts in the late 19th century, when they adapted commercially available patterns and innovated their own quilting styles to fit individual community standards. I placed the Amish and their quilts within a context of consumer culture, a context in which they are no strangers today, thanks to forces including tourism and reality television. However, the quilts were also products of consumer culture, made from factory-produced cloth often from commercially published patterns.

In the late 1960s, artists and art enthusiasts living in urban areas including New York City and San Francisco “discovered” Amish quilts. Before long, the Amish began catering to outsiders, making quilts in home-based cottage industries to sell to tourists visiting Amish country. The term “Amish” functioned like a brand name, adding value to quilts by signifying quality and authenticity, but unlike a trademark, whose owner can legally prevent unauthorized use of the name, “Amish” was free for anyone to use, no matter what product they sold. When it came to selling quilts, “Amish” turned into an adjective that at times had nothing to do with who made the product. As I discuss in the second half of this article, with immigrant needleworkers from the minority Hmong community of southeast Asia eventually finding work in the Amish quilt industry, Amish quilts became part of a cross-cultural transnational process that flooded the market, and resulted in consumer mistrust of the “Amish brand” and lack of recognition for the extraordinary needlework traditions of Hmong women.

If you ask an Amish woman when the Amish began quilting, she likely will tell you that they have always quilted. Today, quilts are among the objects most specifically associated with the Old Order Amish, but Amish quilting is actually a relatively recent phenomenon. For decades after many of their neighbors began making quilts, the Amish continued instead to use bedding common to their Germanic heritage—chaff bag (a homespun linen bag filled with straw chaff or cornhusks), featherbed, and

a woven coverlet.² However, by some point in the mid- to late 19th century, Amish women in settlements in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois had begun to make quilts.

Why did the Amish begin making quilts? We just don't know. Ever since Amish quilts became widely known outside of their communities of origin, people have been speculating about what may have inspired these quilts. Unfortunately, many of the details are probably lost to history. Since outsiders began paying attention to Amish quilts in the late 1960s, authors have written at length about Amish women borrowing the quilting practices of "English" neighbors, about the design sources for patterns, and about the linear evolution of Amish quilts from simple to complex.³ Regardless of from whom Amish women learned the craft, it likely was an innovator within the community who first adopted the practice.

Quilting probably started in earnest after Amish settlers founded new communities in western outposts, rather than originating in eastern Pennsylvania and transplanting with quiltmakers to new communities. The craft requires an excess of fabric as well as time to laboriously piece and quilt, resources abundant only after settlements on the frontier were firmly established. Amish had already founded settlements in central and western Pennsylvania by the last quarter of the 18th century. Some Amish from these newer settlements moved further west to Ohio in 1808; others came to Indiana in 1841, with additional settlements soon to follow.⁴ Many of these Amish pioneers settled in close proximity to other Germanic groups, especially Mennonites. Intermingling occurred at church, at school, and in commerce. Perhaps quilting spread through a social network of German-speaking friends and relatives, or, as some scholars have theorized,

² Alan G. Keyser, "Beds, Bedding, Bedsteads and Sleep," *Der Reggebooge* 12, no. 4 (October 1978): 12-18.

³ Robert Bishop and Elizabeth Safanda, *A Gallery of Amish Quilts: Design Diversity from a Plain People* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 22; Rachel Pellman and Kenneth Pellman, *The World of Amish Quilts* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1984), 10, 26; Patricia T. Herr, "Quilts within the Amish Culture," in *A Quiet Spirit: Amish Quilts from the Collection of Cindy Tietze & Stuart Hodosh* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1996), 48.

⁴ David Luthy, *Amish Settlements Across America* (Aylmer, ON; LaGrange, IN: Pathway Publishers, 2009), 9-10, 16-18.

from Welsh, Quaker, or other “English” neighbors.⁵

By exploring how Amish communities have experienced gradual change and adaptation in other daily life practices, we can hypothesize how women adopted a new cultural practice of making quilts. Typically, individuals have been the instigators of change, pushing the community from its edges to adopt objects and practices outside its range of conformity: for example, decorative molding in a bedroom, snaps rather than hooks and eyes to fasten clothing, electric lights on horse-drawn buggies, or quilts instead of woven coverlets. These new “fashions,” however, have typically already been out of date or irrelevant to mainstream society, so they have not affected the cultural fences separating the Amish from the world. Thus, they posed no direct threat to the stability of the community.⁶ As one Amish bishop has explained, “Well, change just kind of happens.”⁷ It happens when someone on the periphery of Amish culture adopts a new practice and the practice meets little complaint; if others also adopt it, it soon becomes acceptable, perhaps even the default. Likely, an innovator within the community learned to quilt in the mid- to late 19th century, borrowing patterns and techniques either from friends or neighbors of non-Amish sectarian groups such as Mennonites or Church of the Brethren, or perhaps, as already noted, from Quakers or from the Scots, Irish, or Welsh. As other friends and relatives adopted the practice, quilting soon became common.

Yet, no one outside the Amish community really paid attention to

⁵ Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 39-40; Paton Yoder, *Tradition and Transition: Amish Mennonites and Old Order Amish, 1800-1900* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991), 264. Ricky Clark discusses the similarities among quilts made by various Germanic groups in Ohio, suggesting a related Germanic aesthetic among Amish, Zoarites, Moravians, Brethren, and Swiss Mennonites. See Ricky Clark, “Germanic Aesthetics, Germanic Communities,” in *Quilts in Community: Ohio’s Traditions* (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1991), 33.

⁶ For more on how change and fashion function within Amish culture, see Abbie Gertrude Enders Huntington, “Dove at the Window: A Study of an Old Order Amish Community in Ohio” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1956), 218; and Donald B. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2001), 69-70, 293-318. On quilting as an expression of “nonconformity to the world and its fashions,” see Patricia J. Keller, “The Quilts of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: Production, Context, and Meaning, 1750-1884” (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 2007).

⁷ Amish bishop quoted in Kraybill, *Riddle of Amish Culture*, 297.

these quilts until the late 1960s. At that time, to young art enthusiasts Amish quilts were a “discovery”—a new, authentic art form that fit into the visual culture of modern art in which they were already well versed. The quilts’ resemblance to paintings by artists like Mark Rothko and Josef Albers, along with their convenient apartment-wall size and relatively low price, made them appealing to urbanites eager to hang a work of abstract art on the wall. When Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof, a couple who assembled one of the foremost collections of Amish quilts during the 1970s, bought their first example in 1968, they were not alone in appreciating the aesthetic merits of old bedcovers. Beginning in the 1960s and increasingly in the ’70s, artists, art critics, antiques dealers, exhibition curators, feminists, and other cultural entrepreneurs reinterpreted quilts as art objects. This new perception was part of a larger cultural conversation about tradition, craft making, and aesthetics occurring among urban and rural people both inside and outside academic and art world circles.

Part of the attraction to quilts in general during the 1970s was purely an aesthetic coincidence. In the lively patchwork of a Tumbling Blocks quilt, people saw “op art” as the sixty-degree diamonds played with their eyes in a dizzying way. Repeated baskets formed from bits of red fabric running across the surface of a quilt top reminded them of Andy Warhol’s penchant for sequence and repetition. They compared Kenneth Noland’s manipulation of color—his late ’60s work often featured parallel stripes running horizontally along the width of a landscape-shaped canvas—to the visual effects achieved by repeated stripes on a Pennsylvania Rainbow quilt.⁸ These quilts—created in two dimensions on a similar scale to the large works generated by New York’s abstract artists—were typically crafted fifty to one hundred years earlier than their painted counterparts.

⁸ Susan Colgan, “Collecting Quilts: Where It All Began,” *Art and Antiques*, October 1983, 51; Jonathan Holstein, *Abstract Design in American Quilts: A Biography of an Exhibition*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Kentucky Quilt Project, 1991), 15, 17-18, 20; Jonathan Holstein, *The Pieced Quilt: An American Design Tradition* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 113; Jonathan Holstein, interview by Janneken Smucker, Cazenovia, NY, November 9, 2007, Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7d513tx808>.

In 1968, during a trip through Pennsylvania's Lancaster County on Route 30, when Holstein and van der Hoof escaped from New York to the countryside, they stopped at a small antiques shop. They had begun buying old quilts because they loved their strong graphics, and the quilts looked great hanging on the walls of their New York apartment. In this shop, they spotted what they considered an unusual quilt covering the springs of a brass bed. The proprietor wanted to sell the quilt and bed as a lot, asking \$11 for the two pieces. "I said to the guy, 'You know, I really just want to buy the quilt,'" recounted Holstein. After considering for a moment, the proprietor agreed, charging the couple \$5.75 for the quilt (Figure 4). They brought it home to their apartment, and, as Holstein remembers:

We looked at the quilt in New York, at first thinking it was some extraordinary work of genius. And then, after looking at it for a week realizing that it was too precise, the materials were too consistent, the quilting was too consistent for it to be a singular example from any culture we knew anything about. . . . We carried around [the quilt] or pictures of it for a long time until someone finally said, "That's an Amish quilt." So then we thought, "How are we going to get more of these?" . . . We asked them, "Are they all like this?" "Yeah, they're like this." So I thought, "Oh my god, how are we going to find more?" So we began looking around for Amish quilts. Slowly we began to find them.⁹

Among the many quilts stitched from abundantly available printed cotton fabrics in repeated geometric block patterns that Holstein and van der Hoof would have seen, this one would certainly have stood out. Its wide borders were a lush rust-orange wool suiting fabric framing a field of alternating green and orange strips of wool fabric—which Holstein dubbed "bars" and the Amish called *Strema*, the Pennsylvania German term for "strips." Framing these strips was a narrow violet border that separated the design field from the outer border with an electric vibrancy. The binding holding the three layers of the quilt together echoed the green from the design field, sealing in what Holstein considered the quilt's perfect

⁹ Holstein, interview.

proportions: the balance between the outer border and the inner field. In the wide rust outer border, intricate stitches formed swirling feathers. This curving ornament contrasted with both the rigid geometry of the strips and the fine cross-hatched quilting stitches that covered the alternating green and orange wools. These colors, combined with the simple lines of the quilt's design, would indeed have seemed extraordinarily out of place compared to the busy prints found on most non-Amish quilts the couple encountered on their collecting jaunts. To them, this quilt was a "first clue" that led them to pursue these bed covers as art objects.¹⁰

Holstein and van der Hoof began to talk about quilts to anyone who would listen, including their artist friends in New York City, proselytizing about the aesthetic merits of old bedcoverings in an effort to convince the art world that the quilts' resemblance to paintings was not just an interesting coincidence, and that quilts were worth exploring as visual objects in their own right. In 1971, the duo used their art world connections to convince the Whitney Museum of American Art to host *Abstract Design in American Quilts*, an exhibit featuring sixty of their quilts displayed on the large white walls of the newly opened Marcel Breuer-designed space. Hanging on the Whitney's walls was that same bars quilt they bought for under \$6 in Lancaster County. The exhibit was hugely popular, praised by prominent art critics, and attended by thousands, with the museum selling out its catalog and extending the exhibit's run.¹¹

Soon, Amish quilts became highly-sought-out "cult objects" enamored equally by stylish urbanites and rural collectors. Why were outsiders so enchanted? In some ways, the quilts with their strong graphics and bold colors simply substituted for other works of abstract art. One Philadelphia dealer specializing in Amish quilts recalled that everyone upon seeing these objects "would think they'd discovered [them]: 'Oh my god, look at these! They look just like modern art!'"¹² But beyond the visual qualities, the quilts

¹⁰ Ibid. See International Quilt Study Center & Museum [University of Nebraska-Lincoln], Jonathan Holstein Collection, 2004.003.0013: www.quiltstudy.org/collections.

¹¹ Holstein, *Pieced Quilt*, 27-31; Jonathan Holstein, "The Whitney and After...What's Happened to Quilts," *The Clarion* 11 (Spring/Summer 1986): 82.

¹² Amy Finkel, interview by Janneken Smucker, Philadelphia, PA, May 15, 2008: Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt71zc7rqw4b>;

embodied a paradox of looking very modern while symbolically serving as a tangible reminder of tradition, authenticity, and rural values. Only within the context of self-conscious modernism could collectors and curators celebrate this paradox.

In addition to collectors and museums, interior design magazines promoted how to use Amish quilts to capitalize on the paradox combining modernism and tradition. *House & Garden* featured dealer Phyllis Haders's white-walled, upscale New York City apartment covered in Amish quilts (Figure 5). The magazine copy stated that "The vivid colors of Amish quilts—often the only decorating to be found in Amish homes—are all the color this modern, light-filled room needs. Hung like contemporary paintings in Mr. and Mrs. Richard Haders's city apartment, they enliven a setting designed by Melvin Dwork to show off their dazzling geometrics."¹³

Why were Amish individuals willing to sell their old quilts? Part of it was a cultural clash in values, and part of it was a change in taste and preference. First, the clash in values: Because the Amish have strived to maintain a separation from "the world," their values have often been at odds with those of mainstream society. Throughout the history of the Old Order Amish church, these conflicting values have been materially manifested through Amish choices in appropriate dress and limited use of technology. In the case of quilts, when outsiders to the community brought their values to the objects, knocking on Amish doors and offering significant sums of money for old quilts in the 1970s and early '80s, the Amish had to learn to adapt their own ideals to the situation. The Amish belief system frowns upon materialism, pride, and "worldliness" understood as the seeking of comforts and conveniences, the love of material things, and participation in self-enhancing activities. Once the values of the outside world determined that their old quilts—with high monetary and aesthetic worth—conveyed ideals that ran against the grain of these beliefs, this appraisal overshadowed the quilts' sentimental meanings derived from familial ties. As one Amish man observed of the decision to sell old quilts: "The practical function of [a quilt] was really gone. [The owners] were attached to them too much sentimentally to wear them out, because they were heirlooms, and yet they

Warren Rohrer, *Pennsylvania Quilts: One Hundred Years, 1830-1930, November 17-December 15, 1978*, Moore College of Art (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art, 1978).

¹³ "Living With Art," *House & Garden*, October 1978, 142-43.

were uncomfortable having a \$10,000 heirloom in their house. . . . You don't keep art objects like that in your house; you get rid of them and turn them into cash and pay your debts."¹⁴

Second, Amish fashion had changed. By the 1970s when outsiders became interested in their quilts, many Amish were less enamored with the aesthetic qualities of so-called "old dark quilts" featuring solid colored fabrics in geometric patterns. An Amish man commented in the mid-'80s that people in his community "wouldn't be seen with the old quilts. They think they're ugly."¹⁵ An Amish woman said that "we just didn't like the old style."¹⁶ In addition, Amish families considered them too small for their contemporary beds and too difficult to launder. Many had moved on to synthetic blend fabrics in cheery country patterns and lighter colors, or preferred store-bought bedspreads. Yet they still had a sentimental attachment to the old quilts, which were passed on as gifts between generations and displayed on beds on Sundays when they hosted church in their homes.

Instead of holding tight to family quilts for sentimental reasons, Amish families transformed the quilts' meaning within their culture by turning the craft into a new sort of cash crop. Economic, demographic, and geographic changes within numerous Amish settlements ushered in a new spirit of entrepreneurialism in the 1970s and '80s, as many Amish families could no longer afford to farm. Rather than migrate away from established settlements in search of affordable farmland, many started small businesses.¹⁷ In the Lancaster County Amish settlement, this shift toward entrepreneurship coincided with a growing interest among outsiders in the old dark quilts. Not surprisingly, the Amish established home-based quilt businesses as a new form of livelihood, catering to outsiders' demand. As in other facets of Amish culture, changes were slow, with risk takers within the community leading the way. Eventually, making quilts to sell to outsiders

¹⁴ Benuel Riehl, interview by Janneken Smucker, Narvon, PA, May 13, 2008: Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7c599z332v>.

¹⁵ Quoted in Karen Heller, "The Fancy Quilts of the Plain People," *Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, January 25, 1987, 22.

¹⁶ Barbara Beiler, interview by Rachel Pellman, February 4, 2004, Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum Collection, Lancaster Historical Society.

¹⁷ Donald Kraybill and Steven M. Nolt, *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004), 26-29.

became an acceptable practice, spreading to other settlements, with quilt shops becoming a typical site in communities large and small.

Amish businesswomen organized complex putting-out systems, employing hundreds of additional Amish women during the peak years of the quilt market in the 1980s.¹⁸ In this typical business model, the entrepreneur tasked her employees with the various steps of the process—design, cutting, piecing, marking, quilting, and binding—with individuals specializing in the distinct steps.¹⁹ Other businesses used a consignment model, with quiltmakers offering finished quilts as inventory. And non-Amish entrepreneurs also participated, operating businesses that coordinated the design and production process while hiring Amish quiltmakers, typically producing quilts intended to look like the antique ones made early in the 20th century with solid-colored fabrics and simple geometric designs.²⁰

The resulting products from the Amish-run shops were much more diverse—made with new patterns, new materials, and new techniques. Most quilts made for the consumer market looked significantly different from those that Amish women had crafted for their families earlier in the century. When produced for retail shops, most Amish-made quilts featured contemporary designs that changed with interior decorating fashions. Amish quilt designers learned how to stay on top of these trends by reading new “how-to” books, following industry publications, and attending trade shows.²¹ One Amish businesswoman reported, “We have to keep up with what colors are fashionable so we can make the changes from one year to the next.” Retailers also needed to maintain a diverse inventory to satisfy the varying tastes of consumers. “You get all kinds of people. So we try to do all kinds of quilts. Hopefully we do a quilt for everybody,” said another

¹⁸ Ed Klimuska, “New Quilts: They Sell by Thousands, Make Work for Hundreds,” in *Lancaster County: Quilt Capital U.S.A.* (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster New Era, 1987), 27-31.

¹⁹ Sandra Gottlieb, “Mrs. Beiler’s Modern Management Turns Out Quaint Amish Quilts,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 22, 1985; Klimuska, “New Quilts,” 28; Beth E. Graybill, “Amish Women, Business Sense: Old Order Women Entrepreneurs in the Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Tourist Marketplace” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2009), 61, 130-32.

²⁰ Businesses run by non-Amish entrepreneurs during the 1980s included Amish Design from central Ohio, Mercer & Bratt Quilts from Belleville, Pennsylvania, and First Edition Quilts out of New York City.

²¹ Rachel Pellman, interview by author, April 4, 2008, Quilt Alliance, Quilters S.O.S.—Save Our Stories, <http://quiltalliance.org/projects/qsos>; Graybill, “Amish Women, Business Sense,” 181; Hannah Stoltzfoos, conversation with author.

businesswoman. Many tourists visiting Amish settlements wanted a quilt that was Amish made, but preferred other styles than the old dark quilts. To these consumers, a quilt's Amish origins signified quality, regardless of its aesthetics, and Amish businesswomen were happy to "give them whatever they want."²²

One new pattern that excited consumers had its origins in Lancaster County. In 1983 *Brides* magazine came to Lancaster to profile an old home renovation for a newly married couple. The editors decided the profile needed a custom-made quilt to take center stage in the bedroom and sought out the assistance of the Old Country Store, one of the largest fabric and quilt retail shops in the county. The manager, Rachel Pellman, and her colleague, Craig Heisey, created the pattern, featuring love birds (based on the *Distelfink*, a common Pennsylvania German symbol), overlapping hearts, and undulating vines of tulips, drawing inspiration from the iconography frequently found on Pennsylvania German decorative arts of the 18th and 19th centuries.²³

After the quilt appeared in *Brides* magazine, the Old Country Store began receiving frequent requests from quiltmakers for its pattern. Initially, Pellman's staff sold photocopies of the pattern for a few dollars before realizing that consumer demand warranted publishing the pattern and an accompanying how-to book. The staff followed up with a whole series of Country Bride patterns, including Country Lily, Country Love, and Country Songbird. (Figure 6) The design fit perfectly with the American Country aesthetic popular throughout the 1980s. And when the dominant interior design colors switched from blue and rose to salmon and green in the '90s, quilters easily could adapt the Country Bride series of patterns to follow. The success of the Country Bride quilt and its related spin-offs ushered in many romantic appliqué patterns that have remained popular among consumers coming to buy quilts in Lancaster County.²⁴

²² Unnamed Amish quiltmaker quoted in Ed Klimuska, "Tourist Business Changed the Way the Amish Make Money and Quilts," in *Lancaster County: Quilt Capital U.S.A.*, 35, 37; Amish informant quoted in Graybill, "Amish Women, Business Sense," 150.

²³ Pellman, interview; "Do-It-Yourself: Renovating a Home of Your Own," *Brides*, July 1983.

²⁴ Cheryl Benner and Rachel T. Pellman, *Country Bride Quilt Collection* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1991); idem, *The Country Love Quilt* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1989); idem, *The Country Paradise Quilt* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1991); idem, *Country Lily Quilt* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1990); Craig N. Heisey and Rachel T. Pellman, *The Country Bride Quilt* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1988); Pellman, interview. On the "American Country" aesthetic see Mary Ellisor Emmerling, *American Country: A Style and Source Book* (New York: C.N. Potter, 1980).



Figure 1. Center Diamond. Rebecca Fisher Stoltzfus, dated 1903. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Collection of the American Folk Art Museum. Photo credit: American Folk Art Museum/Art Resource, New York.

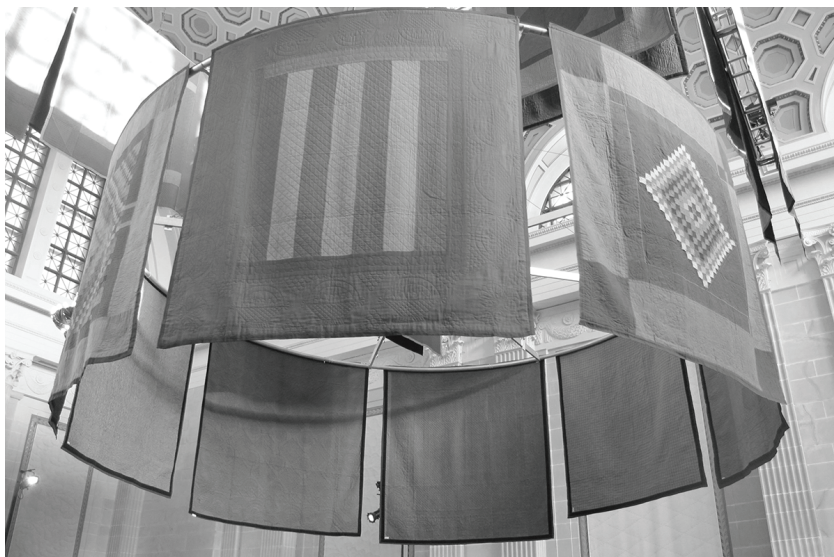


Figure 2. Installation at Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum, 2012. Photograph by author



Figure 3. Amish Quilt shop, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 2010. Photograph by author

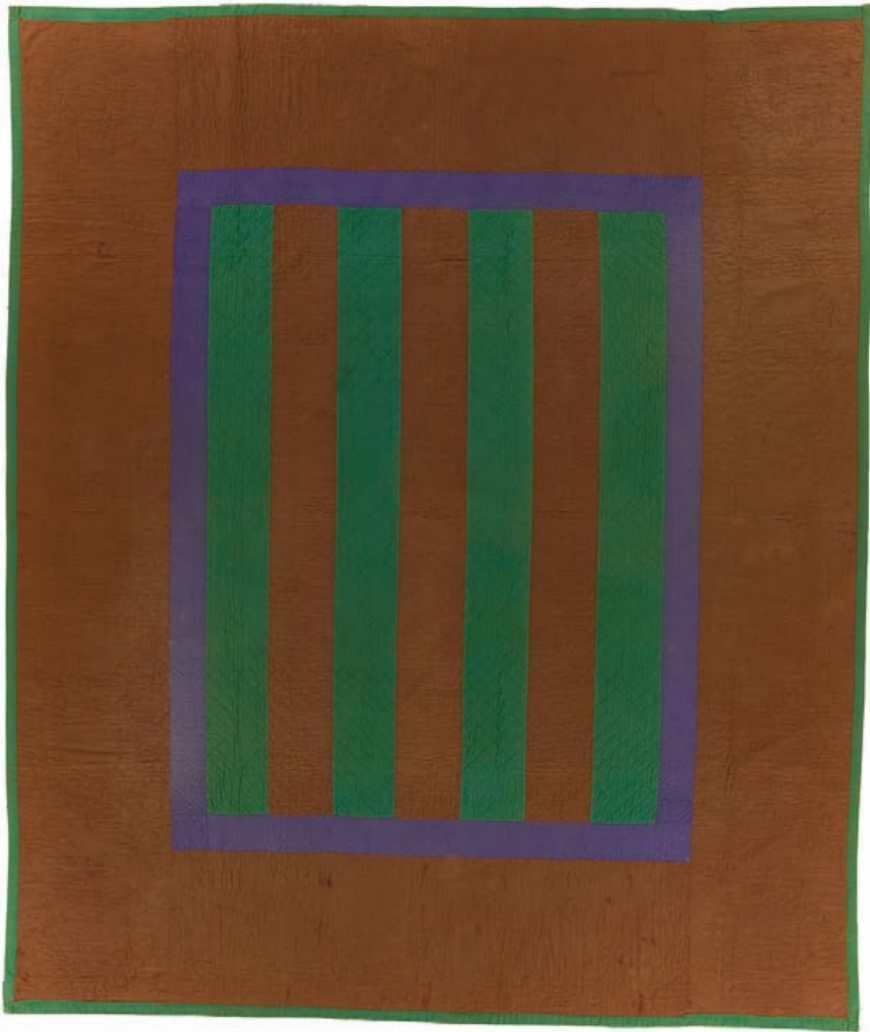
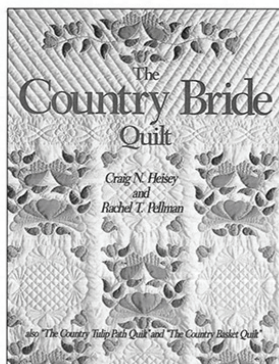


Figure 4. Johnathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof's first Amish quilt. Bars, unknown Amish maker, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, c. 1880-1910. International Quilt Study Center & Museum (IQSCM), University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2003.003.0013. Image reprinted with permission of IQSCM, fee generously waived.



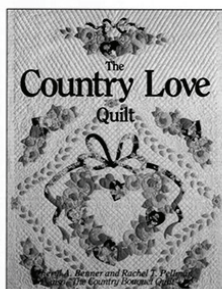
Figure 5. Richard and Phyllis Haders's New York City apartment. Photograph by Ernst Beadle. Originally published in House and Garden magazine, October 1978. Current rights holder information unavailable.



Other Books in the Best-Selling Series

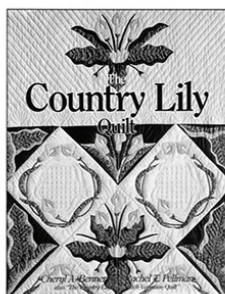
Exquisite in its simplicity, The Country Bride Quilt will become one of the heirlooms every woman of the 21st century will wish had been passed down to her!

—*Quilting Today*



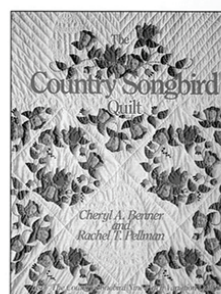
If traditional applique is what you have in mind and you're looking for a lavish pattern to inspire you, have a look at The Country Love Quilt!

—*Book Page*



Once more Good Books has scored with a how-to book for lovers of applique quilts—a lovely new design which follows the graceful lines of the Calla Lily.

—*Bookends*



The fourth graceful design in this series, The Country Songbird Quilt features birds among wreaths of tulips, berries and clovers, topped off with a quilted bird cage.

Figure 6. The Country Bride Quilt series [back cover of publication] (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, ca. 1988-94), out of print. Image reprinted with permission.



Figure 7. *Hmong in traditional dress, Bac Ha Market, Vietnam, 2010. Image licensed by Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic Creative Commons license.*

Photograph by flickr.com user avlxyz.



Figure 8. "Harmony A-Hmong the Cultures" quilt integrating Hmong paj ntaub into a traditional quilt setting called "Garden Maze." Photograph by author.

II

Demand for country style appliqué quilts was high among consumers, but not enough Amish seamstresses were skilled at the intricate hand stitching required. Luckily for Amish quilt businesses, the Hmong, new residents in the Lancaster County area originally from Southeast Asia, had the necessary sewing skills, experience selling their own textile arts, and a knack for learning and adapting others' cultural practices. The Hmong are a minority ethnic group, historically based in present-day China, Vietnam, and Laos, with a tradition of fine needlework skills. Hmong women had long decorated ceremonial clothing, baby carriers, and funeral accouterments with embroidery, appliqué, and batik, three textile practices collectively known as *paj ntaub* (pronounced "pa ndau" and translated as "flower cloth"). (Figure 7) While practices differed among the clans, they shared precise geometric forms, fine detailed stitching, and bold coloring. Traditionally, young girls learned *paj ntaub* techniques from watching their mothers, developing appliqué and embroidery skills along with abilities in manipulating symmetry, proportion, and color.²⁵

Hmong refugees began immigrating to the United States in 1975 following the end of the Vietnam War. As part of its involvement in Southeast Asia in the years leading up to and during that war, the US had provided financial and logistical support to what became known as a "CIA Secret Army" consisting of Hmong and other minority groups from the highlands of Laos who fought against the region's communist armies, including the North Vietnamese. When the communist government declared victory in Laos in 1975, just as the US military left the region, the Lao People's Democratic Republic began to target Hmong people, rounding them up into concentration camps because they had fought on the side of the Americans. Many Hmong attempted to escape Laos by crossing the Mekong River into refugee camps in Thailand. Many died trying. From these camps, the

²⁵ Lauri Linch and Alice Schmude, "Hmong Needle Treasures," *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine*, October 1984, 18-19; Marsha MacDowell, "Old Techniques of Paj Ntaub, New Patterns of Expression," *Folk Life*, 1993, 26-27; Sally Peterson, "A Cool Heart and a Watchful Mind: Creating Hmong Paj Ntaub in the Context of Community," in *Pieced By Mother: Symposium Papers*, ed. Jeannette Lasansky (Lewisburg, PA: Oral Traditions Project of the Union County Historical Society, 1988), 35-38.

refugees awaited asylum, with tens of thousands resettling in the US during the late 1970s and the '80s. Others found asylum in Canada and Western Europe, although many have continued to live in Thai camps.²⁶

In the refugee camps the Hmong came to rely on their traditional textile art as a primary source of income. They were accustomed to outsider interest in *paj ntaub*, having sold it to French colonials in the 1940s and to American governmental advisors and missionaries working in Laos in the '50s and '60s. During the '60s, prior to the mass exodus of Hmong refugees from Laos into Thailand following the war, a few nonprofit and Thai government-sponsored agencies began marketing art made by hill tribes, including the Hmong. With the establishment of refugee camps in the '70s, aid agencies and missionary groups cultivated craft production among refugees in hopes that outsider interest in *paj ntaub* might provide families with a modest supplemental income. Aid groups then brought *paj ntaub* to urban markets in Thailand and exported pieces across the globe.²⁷

The Christian and Missionary Alliance established Camacraft in 1976 as part of its relief and development arm, Compassion and Mercy Associates (CAMA). Camacraft developed self-help projects enabling refugees to earn income while living in Thai camps.²⁸ A few entrepreneurial Hmong had made their own efforts at selling textile pieces to camp workers and the occasional Thai tourist. The American founders of Camacraft believed that Hmong

²⁶ Eric Crystal, "Hmong Traditions in the Crucible of Social Change," in *Michigan Hmong Arts: Textiles in Transition*, ed. C. Kurt Dewhurst and Marsha MacDowell (East Lansing, MI: Folk Arts Division, Michigan State University, 1984), 74; Nancy D. Donnelly, *Changing Lives of Refugee Hmong Women* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1994); Peterson, "Cool Heart," 39; Keith Quincy, *Hmong, History of a People* (Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington Univ. Press, 1995), 213-24; Jane Hamilton-Merritt, *Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, the Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993).

²⁷ Sally Peterson, "From the Heart and the Mind: Creating Paj Ntaub in the Context of Community" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 331-37.

²⁸ Christian and Missionary Alliance, founded in 1887, established Compassion and Mercy Associates (CAMA) as its relief and development wing in 1972. Originally working with displaced persons during the final years of the Vietnam War, CAMA now works with refugees worldwide. See "About," *Compassion and Mercy Associates*, December 18, 2013, <http://camaservices.org/about/>; "The History of The Christian and Missionary Alliance," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/history/>; "About CAMACRAFTS," *CAMACRAFTS - Handicrafts from the Lao P.D.R.*, accessed April 3, 2017, www.camacrafts.org/about_cc.htm; Peterson, "From the Heart," 334-37.

seamstresses needed assistance with product development and advised them to make objects familiar to Westerners, such as aprons, potholders, coasters, and Christmas ornaments. Some Hmong women had already begun making bedcovers by stitching together squares of *paj ntaub*, separated by strips of cloth much like an American-style quilt. Camacraft encouraged production of this form, instituting standardized sizes that could appeal to Western consumers. Marketers also dictated what colors and fabrics the women should use, suggesting color palettes that would be pleasing. Hmong women of different clans living in the camps learned from one another and integrated new techniques and designs, priding themselves on being able to quickly adopt techniques and styles. In a practice that paralleled the way Amish women chose which quilt patterns to make for the consumer market, designs that sold well soon spread among the Hmong seamstresses working in refugee camps.²⁹

Church organizations sponsored many of the first Hmong refugees to the US. In 1978 the Mennonite Central Committee began resettling refugees in the US and Canada, with thirty families finding new homes in and near Lancaster County. Other Hmong families resettled in nearby Philadelphia. As these immigrant communities grew, with individuals becoming naturalized US citizens, kin remaining in refugee camps were also able to emigrate.³⁰

With poor English language skills and little transferable work experience or education, Hmong immigrants faced a difficult adjustment. Making *paj ntaub* to sell naturally emerged as a viable means for the women to contribute to their families' meager incomes, a practice they could fit in around other domestic responsibilities. Hmong immigrant communities across North America organized cooperatives and associations, often with the guidance of women volunteers from sponsoring church or aid agencies, that helped build consumer markets for *paj ntaub*. Those living in southeastern Pennsylvania soon realized that a thriving market for handcrafted textiles already existed. Rather than shoehorn their tradition

²⁹ MacDowell, "Old Techniques," 27; Peterson, "From the Heart," 335-39.

³⁰ Elmer Neufeld, "Mennonite Central Committee United States," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1987: www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/M4659.html/?searchterm=mcc; Kathleen Parrish, "A Way of Life Woven from Misery for Hmong Quilters," *The Morning Call* (Allentown), April 24, 2006; Quincy, *Hmong, History of a People*, 219.

into the established marketplace, some seamstresses decided to adapt their skills to fit the booming quilt market.³¹

As Hmong women in the Lancaster area recount, in the early 1980s one seamstress learned—perhaps from an Amish or Mennonite friend met through a local church sponsorship—how to construct the types of quilts local shops sold. When she started earning money for her fine appliqué skills, friends and relatives wanted to learn the practice too.³² Amish quilt businesses had no qualms about hiring these newcomers. As one businesswoman said, “We’re all God’s creatures. I’ll take a chance with anyone.”³³ The reverse appliqué technique used to make *paj ntaub* was easily adaptable to the new sorts of appliqué quilts sold in Lancaster County’s many quilt shops. In fact, Hmong women found making quilts easier than *paj ntaub*, as the technique was less intricate.³⁴

As the Hmong women’s reputation for fine appliqué work spread among Lancaster County shops, these seamstresses found more employment available as part of the complex putting-out system of crafting thousands of quilts for the consumer market. By one estimate, Hmong women in southeastern Pennsylvania and their relatives in Asia did 99 percent of the appliqué work sold in county shops by 1987. When asked about the difference between the work of Amish and Hmong seamstresses, an Amish quilt entrepreneur said the Hmong product was much better. They were also faster stitchers than their Amish and Mennonite counterparts. Some particularly skilled Hmong women strove to make quilts from start to finish—including cutting, piecing, appliquéing, and quilting—within a week, a pace most Amish women did not attempt. Like their Amish counterparts, most Hmong

³¹ Donnelly, *Changing Lives of Refugee Hmong Women*, 88-112; Jean Henry, “Hmong and Pennsylvania German Textiles: Needlework Traditions in Transition in Lancaster County,” *Folk Art*, Summer 1995, 43; Linch and Schmude, “Hmong Needle Treasures,” 19; MacDowell, “Old Techniques,” 28; Elaine Markoutas, “A Proud People Carry on Folk Art of the Life That Was,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 12, 1982; Parrish, “Way of Life”; Peterson, “From the Heart,” 392-400, 411-12, 417; Peterson, “Cool Heart,” 42-43.

³² Parrish, “Way of Life”; Peterson, “From the Heart,” 412.

³³ Quoted in Peterson, “From the Heart,” 414-15.

³⁴ Carol Morello, “Hmong Are at Home with Country Quilts,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 5, 1989; Peterson, “From the Heart,” 412, 414; Houa Yang, interview by Heather Gibson, August 22, 2003, Quilt Alliance, Quilters’ S.O.S.—Save Our Stories, Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, <http://quiltalliance.org/portfolio/qsos-interview-with-houa-yang/>.

quiltmakers earned far below the minimum wage, but they preferred sewing to factory work, the alternative employment for many. They liked working at home, the flexibility of fitting quilting around other activities, and involving children and grandparents in the activity. According to some estimates, by the late '80s nearly all Hmong women in the Lancaster County area worked on quilts for the market.³⁵

Making quilts paid better than making *paj ntaub*, and was less laborious than doing traditional needlework. Furthermore, with the thriving market for Amish quilts, Hmong seamstresses had little economic incentive to establish a local market for *paj ntaub*. In 1989 a journalist reported that one Hmong woman earned \$250 a day marking quilting designs on appliquéd quilts at \$25 apiece, while another woman stitched *paj ntaub*, rather than quilts, spending a week on an intricate wall hanging she hoped to sell for \$25. For this sort of reason, many southeastern Pennsylvania Hmong seamstresses had all but abandoned working on *paj ntaub* in favor of more lucrative quilting, even teaching their daughters to make Country Bride and Double Wedding Ring quilts instead of creating elaborately decorated ceremonial clothing.³⁶

On the surface, Hmong quilting practices appear to be a heartwarming example of adapting one's skills to new surroundings and creating culturally hybrid quilts. Yet there was an ongoing tension. While Amish and Mennonite businesses were eager to employ Hmong seamstresses to do skilled appliquéd work, often they were not so quick to acknowledge Hmong contributions to their customers. Businesses in Lancaster County recognized that the Amish identity of the quiltmakers was a huge part of the appeal to consumers. Amish origins signified "authenticity"—even if it was only an imagined idea. Defining authenticity in any genre is challenging, and in quilting even more so. While many North Americans regard quilting as a traditional, old-fashioned craft—the sort of "primitivism" various modernists have celebrated as authentic—in reality it has long been

³⁵ Peterson, "From the Heart," 414; Morello, "Country Quilts"; Patricia Dane Rogers, "New Twist to Amish Quilts," *The Washington Post*, Washington Home section, March 19, 1992.

³⁶ Heather Gibson, "Embroidered History and Familiar Patterns Textiles as Expressions of Hmong and Mennonite Lives" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 2006), 46; Henry, "Needlework Traditions," 46; Morello, "Country Quilts"; Peterson, "From the Heart," 416, 418; Peterson, "Cool Heart," 43.

dependent on consumer culture and industrialization, requiring an excess of factory-produced cloth and relying on commercially published patterns.³⁷ Although many quilts are derivative, drawn from such patterns, consumers sought them out in a modernist quest for authenticity.³⁸ The Amish, and likewise their quilts—widely perceived as a pre-industrial enigma preserved intact in the late 20th century—seemed to represent perfectly the imagined authenticity consumers sought. Authenticity became a selling point, even if most quilts sold in Amish shops were based on commercially published patterns following interior decorating trends. Authenticity directly correlated with the identity of a quilt's maker.

Most stores labeled the Hmong-appliquéd quilts as “Amish Made,” even if Amish women contributed only the quilting. Other labels read “Made Locally,” a true statement yet still a means of disguising Hmong contributions.³⁹ Although journalists and scholars had written about the relationship between Hmong and Amish quiltmakers, most tourists visiting the Amish no doubt had trouble imagining that quilts could be made by anyone other than the Amish. Authentic quilts in Lancaster County were Amish quilts, no questions asked.

In the late 1980s, Hmong quiltmakers were caught between wanting credit for their contributions to the popular appliqué quilts sold in shops and fearing public acknowledgement could jeopardize their relationship with local businesses. In addition to seeking acknowledgment as a matter of ethnic pride, some women wanted to be free agents able to negotiate pay rates on their own terms, and to sell directly to customers rather than through Amish or Mennonite businesses profiting from their skills. These

³⁷ On the relationship of modernism, primitivism, and authenticity, see James Clifford, “Histories of the Tribal and the Modern,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), 89-214. As early as the 1840s, urbanites regarded quilting as old-fashioned. T.S. Arthur bemoaned the loss of the old-fashioned quilting bee in “The Quilting Party,” *Godey's Lady's Book* [Philadelphia], September 1849. For more on quilts as old-fashioned, see Barbara Brackman et al., “Quilting Myths and Nostalgia,” in *“Workt by Hand”: Hidden Labor and Historical Quilts*, ed. Catherine Morris (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum, 2012), 26-30.

³⁸ For more on late 20th-century modernism and the quest for authenticity, see Daniel Joseph Singal, “Towards a Definition of American Modernism,” *American Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 21.

³⁹ Peterson, “From the Heart,” 417.

women wanted to band together to strategize on how they could be treated better within Lancaster's quilt industry. But many other seamstresses did not want to risk losing their important source of income. According to some Hmong quiltmakers, Amish and Mennonite businesses warned them against starting their own businesses selling quilts, implying that it would somehow be illegal.⁴⁰

Frustrated with this situation, one entrepreneurial Hmong quiltmaker decided to disregard these warnings and opened her own retail outlet to sell both quilts and *paj ntaub*. In 1990 Lo Mao Moua established Pennsylvania Hmong Crafts in Intercourse, Pennsylvania, the center of Amish-focused tourism in Lancaster County. Moua and her sister in Wisconsin appliquéd many of the quilt tops and then contracted with Amish and Mennonite women for the quilting. Now the tables were turned: a Hmong entrepreneur hired Amish women. "I tell my customers the truth," Moua told a journalist. "The quilt top is done by me; the quilting is done by Amish. Sometimes they already know. Sometimes they don't care."⁴¹ In addition to quilts and small quilted objects, she also stocked *paj ntaub* made either by elderly Hmong women in Pennsylvania and other communities or by Hmong in Thailand. Sometimes she integrated *paj ntaub* blocks into quilts. However, Moua discovered that running a retail outlet had its challenges, including overhead costs. Paying rent in Intercourse dictated that she charge more for her quilts while making less profit. In 1997 she closed her shop, deciding to run the business from her home as many Amish seamstresses did, and continuing to sell quilts at craft shows on the East Coast.⁴²

Other women, including Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk, similarly stopped working directly for Amish quilt businesses in favor of selling or consigning completed quilts to retailers or at craft shows where they could keep all the profit.⁴³ She also wanted to publicize Hmong contributions to the popular

⁴⁰ Ibid., 415.

⁴¹ Quoted in Kathleen Parrish, "Prosperity Amid New Set of Troubles," *Morning Call* (Allentown), April 25, 2006.

⁴² Lo Mao Moua, interview by Heather Gibson, July 23, 2007, Quilt Alliance, Quilters' S.O.S.—Save Our Stories, Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, <http://quiltalliance.org/portfolio/qsos-interview-with-lo-mao-moua/>; Parrish, "Prosperity."

⁴³ Trish Faubion, "The Amish and the Hmong: Two Cultures and One Quilt," *Piecework* 1 (1993): 34.

quilts sold in Lancaster County, and she even exhibited an Amish-style Rose of Sharon wall hanging in a Philadelphia gallery. The exhibit label read, “Many times we made things and Amish people never said so. I just want people to know that I made this.”⁴⁴

Even more than Amish women, Hmong women were accustomed to adapting traditions. Many Hmong quiltmakers became adept not only at using fine stitches to appliqué the motifs of Country Bride quilts but at creatively modifying popular patterns with individual touches or inventing their own patterns. Lo Mao Moua added pieced corner elements to the Country Bride pattern to create what she called the “Country Bride Combination.” Houa Yang copyrighted her Grape Galore pattern, a stylized wreath of grapes.⁴⁵ Some quiltmakers even combined aspects of *paj ntaub* with patterns that the Amish had employed for their “old dark quilts”; Tong Lor used purple squares of intricate *paj ntaub* reverse appliqué to form the central motif of her Center Diamond quilt, flanking it with rich red and blue fabrics in this favorite Amish design of the early 20th century.

Quiltmaking may not have been Hmong women’s traditional textile art, but neither was it a tradition among the Amish before they adopted it in the 19th century. Quiltmakers from both cultures found ways to adapt the practice of making quilts into both a personal expression and a saleable commodity. Unfortunately, many consumers visiting Amish country perceived a hierarchy of authenticity: Amish made authentic quilts, they thought, while Hmong made inexpensive knock-offs. As Lo Mao Moua later told a journalist, “Because I am Asian, they think I sell cheap imports.”⁴⁶

During the 1990s and 2000s, inexpensive factory-made quilts—true cheap imports—and an apparent decline in consumer demand brought down the prices of quilts sold in Lancaster County shops.⁴⁷ By the early 2000s some Hmong working in the county’s quilt industry had become disappointed with the decreasing profits. If consumers no longer sought out Amish quilts

⁴⁴ Philadelphia Folklore Project, “We Try To Be Strong: 28 Years of Hmong Textiles in Philadelphia,” *Philadelphia Folklore Project*, www.folkloreproject.org/programs/exhibits/hmong/index.php; accessed March 1, 2010.

⁴⁵ Yang, interview; Moua, interview.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Parrish, “Prosperity.”

⁴⁷ For more on factory outsourcing, see Chapter 12 in Janneken Smucker, *Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2013).

in great numbers, seamstresses could no longer consider stitching away on “Amish quilts” as a viable source of income. Some Hmong women began to outsource quilts themselves in hopes of earning more profit. Quiltmakers in Pennsylvania now sent patterns and fabric to relatives and friends still living in Asia, then resold the finished products to wholesalers and auction houses in Lancaster County. In contrast to quilts made in the county by either Hmong or Amish women, which cost around \$400 to make, in Thailand quilts could be made for as little as \$65 to \$80.

The practice of American Hmong outsourcing needlework to Hmong in Thailand was not novel. Entrepreneurial quiltmakers like the aforementioned Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk from Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, had since the 1980s made buying trips to Thai refugee camps, where they bought *paj ntaub* to sell to American consumers. Sirirathasuk had tutored Hmong seamstresses on how best to make products to appeal to Americans and earn the most profit, and also taught them to assemble *paj ntaub* into American-style quilts.⁴⁸

However, outsourced Hmong needlework sold not as *paj ntaub* but as locally made Amish quilts was a different matter. As the Allentown, Pennsylvania, *Morning Call* reported in 2006, no one knew for sure how many foreign-made quilts had been sold in Amish country. Rather than end up in one of the popular Amish-run quilt shops, many were sold at the New Holland Quilt and Craft Auction, held every two months in Lancaster County. There quilts were sold on consignment, and buyers—mostly shop owners seeking an inexpensive means to supplement their inventories—had no way of knowing if quilts were made locally or overseas. The auction manager told a journalist that the flooded auction and the resulting prices—as low as \$60 for an intricately appliquéd quilt top—were causing tensions between Hmong and Amish trying to survive in the industry. Amish entrepreneurs blamed local Hmong quiltmakers for inundating the market, not necessarily aware that many of these items were actually made overseas.⁴⁹ Other auctions, like

⁴⁸ Kathleen Parrish, “Imports Buoy Thai Villages, Hurt Lancaster County Sales,” *Morning Call* (Allentown), April 26, 2006; Parrish, “Prosperity”; Philadelphia Folklore Project, “We Try To Be Strong: 28 Years of Hmong Textiles in Philadelphia.”

⁴⁹ Parrish, “Imports”; Hometowne Auction LLC, “Hometowne Quilt Auction,” www.hometownequiltauction.com/index.php, accessed October 23, 2009.

the annual Gordonville Fire Company sale in support of the community's volunteer fire company, began limiting the number of quilts individuals could submit to seventeen, because some Hmong women were consigning what the auction deemed excessive numbers. Some entrepreneurs felt that Hmong were "trying to take over a historical thing that's associated with Amish and Mennonites," despite the reality that most Amish and Mennonite quilt businesses had begun only twenty to thirty years earlier.⁵⁰

A backlash occurred at some shops that in the past had accepted quilts on consignment. With knowledge of the influx of foreign-made quilts growing among entrepreneurs, businesses wanted greater control over their product and began to commission more quilts on contract rather than accept undocumented consignments or wholesaled quilts. While this meant more work for the shop proprietors, it was a means of guaranteeing that quilts were indeed locally made.⁵¹

When the Allentown *Morning Call* published a series of articles investigating outsourced quilts flooding the market, many readers responded with outrage. One reader called these quilts "counterfeit"; another proposed an "industry standardized label to identify the real German-Amish-Mennonite quilt," because he did not want his "quilt money subsidizing slave like labor kapos overseas." Ironically, he did not identify quilts as American but as German, an attribution that overlooked the American origins of Amish and Mennonite quilting traditions.⁵²

Once again, the imagined ideal of authenticity seemed to be at the forefront of how to value quilts. Wrote one *Morning Call* reader in a letter to the editor, "I'm shocked! My vision of sweet Amish women sitting in a quaint living room having a quilting bee has been destroyed." The reader considered Amish quilts authentic only if they conformed to her imagined ideal of how they were made.⁵³ Peter Seibert, director of the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum, which collected old dark Amish quilts in simple graphic patterns,

⁵⁰ Parrish, "Imports". Todd Reinhart quoted in same.

⁵¹ Ibid.; Barbara Garrett, conversation with author, November 12, 2009.

⁵² "Transcript of Chat with Peter Seibert," *themorningcall.com*, April 26, 2009, www.mcall.com/news/local/all-quilt=seibert-transcript,0,4037315.story, accessed May 8, 2009. These comments were posted by readers Joan Gullett and Roland Nachtigall Jr.

⁵³ Jacqueline Leonardi Alburtis, "Shocked to Learn Quilts Aren't Made By Amish," *Morning Call* (Allentown), April 25, 2006, A8.

complicated the issue in the newspaper's online forum, questioning what exactly made an "authentic" Amish quilt. He pointed out that Amish living in mid-western settlements produced some of the quilts sold in Lancaster County. He asked, "Is that an authentic Lancaster quilt?" He also described quilts Amish made for their own use as undesirable to consumers: "Most people would never own them. They incorporate fabric markers, crocheting, quilting, shiny modern fabrics, etc. This is not the country aesthetic that we associate with their quilts."⁵⁴ As Seibert implied, perhaps these quilts—undesirable to consumers yet made entirely by Amish according to Amish taste for use in Amish homes—were in fact the most authentic Amish quilts. If so, it seemed consumers would rather own ones made in Thailand, or purchased from a mail order catalog, that at least conformed to their imagined ideals.

Out of the conflict and controversy over Hmong contributions to quiltmaking in Lancaster County, one entrepreneur attempted to find harmony. Old Order Mennonite quilt proprietor Emma Witmer began to sell what she called "Harmony A-Hmong the Cultures" quilts in the 1990s. (Figure 8) These quilts celebrated Hmong needlework, acknowledging both the seamstresses' skills and the beauty of traditional Hmong designs. These quilts were sold in the oldest quilt shop in the county. The bed-sized quilts, which Witmer describes as a combination of Amish and Hmong styles, featured squares of *paj ntaub* stitched by Hmong women in Thai refugee camps and sent to stateside relatives, or sometimes by Hmong women in the US. She began acquiring these embroidered and reverse appliquéd squares from some of her local Hmong seamstresses in 1995. They convinced her that by purchasing these squares, which took refugee women six to eight weeks to make, she would be helping Hmong living in the camps, a prospect that suited her religiously-driven ethic of service. Witmer designed the quilts in a commonly used setting for a repeated block quilt, with neutral-colored sashing separating the *paj ntaub* blocks.

Unlike many Lancaster quilt entrepreneurs, Witmer never hesitated to acknowledge the Hmong women's contributions to the quilts she sold, saying that they did all of the appliqué work. She valued her "Harmony" quilts not only for their fine needlework and great composition but also

⁵⁴ "Transcript of Chat with Peter Seibert."

for representing the union of two cultural practices in a constant state of adaptation rather than of unchanging tradition. Customers who have bought these quilts were not art collectors who loved old dark quilts or casual tourists who were looking for souvenirs; they were consumers who valued quality needlework, no matter the ethnicity of the maker.⁵⁵ While these quilts make up only a fraction of what Witmer sells in her shop, she has trouble keeping them in stock, reflecting their persisting appeal to consumers.⁵⁶

In March 2016, I attended the annual Gap Fire Company Sale, an auction benefitting the local volunteer fire department in a small community on the edge of Lancaster County. The quilt hall was filled with spectators sitting in folding chairs and standing along the aisles. Racks displaying quilts carefully folded with their item numbers were equally full. There was no shortage of quilts for sale. Yet only a few of the auction goers were actually bidding. Many plain-dressed Amish and Mennonite women watched intently, noting the sale price of each quilt, like meticulous baseball fans keeping track of strikes and balls, inning by inning. But these women did not bid. The out-of-town collectors who would have swarmed similar sales during the peak-market days of the 1980s were notably absent. In those days, buyers came from out of state, purchasing quilts and marking them up as much as three times their sale price when they returned to their urban shops, reflecting the cachet of the Amish brand.⁵⁷ But in Gap on that chilly Saturday, all the prices were deflated, and hundreds of quilts—many within a same small subset of patterns and styles—were auctioned off in a day, ensuring a flooded market. The same is true in many small quilt shops dotting the landscape in settlements including Lancaster County. Quilts, made by Amish and Hmong alike, are commodities subject to the whims and rules of the marketplace, including supply and demand, changing fashions, and labor costs.

We do not like to think of quilts in such terms, because we want them to reflect the values with which we imbue them—tradition, craftsmanship, simplicity, authenticity. We want them to be made with love. As quilts sold by Amish businesses have dropped in price and sometimes in quality, consumers

⁵⁵ Emma Witmer, interview by Heather Gibson, October 20, 2003, Quilt Alliance, Quilters' S.O.S.—Save Our Stories, Library of Congress, American Folklife Center; Emma Witmer, conversation with author, June 30, 2008, New Holland, PA.

⁵⁶ Emma Witmer, conversation with author, June 2016.

⁵⁷ Klimuska, "New Quilts," 30; Mrs. W. Troyer, "Clymer, NY," *The Budget*, November 13, 1985.

increasingly have found it hard to distinguish them from factory-made quilts abundantly available from department stores, mail order catalogs, and e-commerce sites. To the sophisticated enthusiasts who loved the old dark quilts, both varieties have seemed more like kitsch than authentic pieces of design and craftsmanship.⁵⁸ To them, quilts have become something cheap, both in price and quality. Today's quilt entrepreneurs have to fight against those perceptions while struggling against deflated prices, flooded markets, and a globalized labor market. Amish quilts—once a coveted art object and later a sort of newfangled cash crop—now are neither.⁵⁹

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⁵⁸ Susan Delagrange and George Delagrange, interview by Janneken Smucker, Jeromesville, OH, October 3, 2008: Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt79cn6z0589>; David Wheatcroft and Eve Granick, interview by Janneken Smucker, Westborough, MA, September 19, 2008: Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt73r20rtt00>.

⁵⁹ This article draws on material from Janneken Smucker, *Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2013). Reprinted with permission of Johns Hopkins University Press. The author delivered a version of this article as part of the Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College on February 5, 2016.

The Risky Adventure of *Homo Caritas*: The Evolutionary Story of Adaptive Cooperation and Love

Christian Early

Introduction

This paper addresses an issue that eventually faces any ethic. Given its emphasis on enemy love, this is particularly an issue that an Anabaptist ethics faces in the current academic and cultural discourse: namely, the relationship of the ethic to available conceptions of what it means *biologically* to be human. Alasdair MacIntyre, in his *Dependent Rational Animals*, argues that no ethic is adequate if it does not at some point also make contact with philosophical anthropology and biology.¹ A lack of contact between ethics and anthropology constitutes an inadequacy, because the ethic will not be able to explain how humans, embodied as we are, can become the kind of persons envisaged by the ethic. It will consequently lack an intelligible developmental account of the transition between who-we-are and who-we-ought-to-become. The ethic proposed may simply be an idealistic fantasy, perhaps relatively harmless on its own, but it will always be vulnerable to being manipulated politically and used as a form of social control or sedation.² Much is at stake for those committed to the claim that the Kingdom of God is a this-world human reality—that the real overcoming of divisions of enmity which happens *now* in gathered Jesus-following community is a sign of what the whole world will be *then*.

Many current images of what it means to be human are problematic from this ethical position, but one popular scientific image is especially so: it proposes that the story of biological life as such is governed by a competitive logic—a self-centered, rational (cost/benefit) calculation—with

¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1999). We should add psychology here.

² This is stated in the extreme. There is an argument for the inherent value of projecting ideals such as love or peace, even if unattainable, in that ideals function to make the world less cruel. As good as this sounds, the ideal would still be vulnerable to manipulation.

the aim of reproductive success, or survival.³ This particular philosophical biology/anthropology creates a problem for an ethic of love, because love does not follow the rules of a self-centered calculation. Love is dyadic. Love is not motivated by calculation; it is motivated by connection. Love is a relational dynamic, in which the other is seen and valued, from which behavior flows. It de-centers the subject as a standpoint from which to perform ethical reasoning. It is often embodied in action that is sacrificial. From the perspective of the competitive story of biological life, however, love is irrational unless it can be made indirectly to conform to a selfish logic. Contesting this conclusion, I wish to explore a conception of love as part of the adaptive and cooperative logic of life and thereby reclaim for it evolutionary intelligibility.⁴

It is possible to meet the claims of the competitive philosophical biology/anthropology philosophically and theologically,⁵ but in this paper I want to meet the claims on their own turf by interrogating two doctrines that most often support it: the reductionist metaphysics of gene-centrism, and the behavioral logic of competition. In the case of gene-centrism, I will provide reasons to conclude that organisms play a far more active role in evolution than previously imagined, and that it is the organisms and their phenotypically enabled way of life—preserved and passed on through capacities encoded in their genetic makeup—which ultimately face the pressures of natural selection. As the metaphors of the gene and organism relationship become less reductionist and more causally bi-directional and behaviorally improvisational, so also the underlying theme of the story of evolution becomes less dominated by a deterministic drive to reproduction on the part of genes, and more characterized by adaptive adventure on the part of organisms and their struggle to continue their way of life in creative,

³ Most scientists recognize a complex co-existence of competitive and cooperative strategies running throughout life. It may therefore be objected that I am engaging a straw man. I disagree. First, not long ago (forty years or so), cooperation was thought to be of limited importance (social insects, birds, primates, and humans) and not general to life itself. This assumption has only very recently been recognized. Second, significant intellectual work continues to attempt to explain cooperative behavior in terms of competition.

⁴ I am not saying love always makes sense; I am saying it makes evolutionary sense.

⁵ See Mary Midgley, *The Solitary Self: Darwin and the Selfish Gene* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

co-evolutionary conversation with their niche.

In the case of competition, I look at what has been called “the problem of altruism.” I will suggest that we have been in the grips of a figure-ground perceptual grouping that has misled us in our “just so” account of the story of life. From the competitive point of view, altruism is irrational because it is associated behaviorally with all costs and no benefits. Intense intellectual effort has been devoted to folding altruism into a logic conforming to the sociobiological story of life—thus “kin,” “reciprocal,” and “competitive” altruism, and so on—since Edward O. Wilson defined altruism as the core problem for sociobiology forty years ago.⁶

Acknowledging that there is both competition and cooperation at the behavioral level, what if we do not fold cooperation into a competitive framework? What if, instead, we understand life as adaptively cooperative? Exact phrasing is difficult here, but what if we say that life “instinctively” risks reaching out to explore and to connect in order to stay alive? Would it not make more sense of what we actually see—male frogs carrying tadpoles on their backs, birds building nests together, chimpanzees reconciling after a fight, and humans helping strangers?

Such a philosophical biology would allow us to construct an account of human bodied existence that can, without too much stretching, make contact with a Jesus-oriented ethics of enemy love while retaining a prophetic edge against the equally human tendency to project and enforce in-group/out-group distinctions (an ethics of the tribe). It would allow us to talk about human beings as “finite, erotic creatures,”⁷ or as I suggest, *Homo caritas*. It would help us to see that being human together does not necessarily entail a quest for reproductive, territorial expansion, but rather—truer to being bodied human—involves setting out on a risky adventure together, crossing the walls that divide us (rich/poor, male/female, Jew/Greek) and taking up love as a way of life: that is, following in the way of Jesus and inviting the kingdom of God to come on earth as it is in heaven.

What is at stake here are two alternative ethics, each with its own philosophical biology/anthropology: an ethics of the (genetic) tribe, with its

⁶ See E.O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1975).

⁷ Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), 119.

reproductive protection and expansion, and an ethics of love, with its risky, boundary-crossing adventure. One claims to be natural, forcing the other to claim to be “spiritual.” But once we notice that risky, boundary-crossing love is natural too, and that the human being is best understood as *Homo caritas*, we can reject that unhelpful dualism as well as the incoherence that results from affirming both. Love is a risky adventure, and to unhook it from the logic of reproduction is to open up a space for ethical thinking outside the confines of the tribe from which we can acknowledge, for example, gay and lesbian love *as* love (and not as a reproductive strategy mistake or a direct violation of divine ordinance). This seems especially important, given the current conversation concerning sexuality in our churches.

Getting Clear About Cooperation

I take adaptive cooperation to be the central behavioral strategy of life. Without adaptive cooperation, molecules would not “team up” together, and consequently there could not be complex molecular strands, cells, multicellularity, and complex organisms with nervous systems and brains—the “evolutionary transitions in individuality.”⁸ Because I am challenging deeply held fundamental assumptions in philosophical biology, I must clarify what I am arguing.

First, I am not questioning natural selection, which is a reality of life on earth. While the earth supports an amazingly diversity of life, to be alive *is* a struggle, resources *are* limited, and living things *do* die—sometimes whole populations with their ways of life go extinct. Natural selection does *not* require competition; however, it requires variation and elimination.

Second, I wish to attend to the subtle sleight-of-hand way in which a competitive survival story moves from “is” to “ought.” We start by calling the fact that some organisms relative to other organisms survive a condition of (indirect) competition. From there, it is a short step to say that the organisms survive *because* of their (direct) competitive behavior.

⁸ See Richard Michod and Matthew Herron, “Cooperation and Conflict During Evolutionary Transitions in Individuality,” *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* 19 (2006): 1406-09. Competitivists have a problem explaining evolutionary transition from individual parts to a greater organic whole. It requires a suspension of each individual competitive logic long enough to create a new, larger individual which then can sustain a new competitive logic on the part of the greater whole.

Completing the transition, we then say that the best chance any organism has of survival is (normatively) to *be* competitive. The relatively low-to-the-ground description of a situational setting has become an imperative for action (compete or go extinct!)—an ethical Athena springing fully armored and ready for battle from Zeus’s head.

If we go back to the original description, however, it is just as accurate to say that some organisms make it whereas others do not because they are better able to adapt to their environmental conditions. These assertions are not equivalent. In the second telling of the story, adaptation, not competition, is the focus of attention. The facts are the same—not all organisms make it (and there can be many reasons for that)—but the plot-driver is different and, most important, the two tellings imply a different imperative: “adapt or die,” and “compete or die.”⁹

I will further clarify my position by mentioning two possible counterexamples to my broad claim for adaptation and cooperation: predation and parasitism. Two populations are said to be competing when they both rely on the same limited resources (food, water, and territory) for survival. Given this definition, predation is *not* an example of competition since, for example, cheetahs and gazelles do not compete for the same limited resources (one is the food source of the other) except perhaps that they drink from the same water source. There is even a sense in which the predator-prey relationship is “cooperative” as a result of their co-evolution. Similarly, parasites do not compete with their host, even if they are life-threatening to it. Moreover, some parasites have developed a symbiotic relationship with their host—engaging the host in an adaptive cooperative conversation. But even parasites that do not develop cooperative traits are not in competition with the host.¹⁰

⁹ Some call this difference “aesthetic.” I prefer the language of “story” because it involves an implied ethic. See Scott Gilbert and David Epel, *Ecological Developmental Biology: The Environmental Regulation of Development, Health, and Evolution*, 2nd ed. (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 2015). I thank an anonymous reviewer for this reference.

¹⁰ See Andrew Weeks et al., “From Parasite to Mutualist: Rapid Evolution of *Wolbachia* in natural populations of *Drosophila*,” *PLoS Biol* 5:5 e114 (2007), accessed May 3, 2017. When two populations find themselves in direct competition, often an adaptation will make room for both populations (niche displacement). If a population cannot adapt, it will very likely die out eventually.

Organisms as Actively Adaptive Agents

Several lines of evidence suggest that the relationships connecting genes, the organism, and its habitat are characterized by bi-directional feedback loops that disturb the causal bottom-up reduction to the gene. One recent line of evidence explores phenotypic plasticity. Briefly put, *same* organisms that develop *different* morphologies and behaviors in response to differing environment are “phenotypically plastic.” Phenotypic plasticity provides for greater adaptiveness in changing environments. It is heritable, which is why it is suggested as a potentially important mechanism facilitating macro-evolution.¹¹

Mary Jane West-Eberhard, who studies developmental plasticity and evolution, recommends that we recognize the role of organisms in evolution—specifically, that we see evolution as an instance of adaptation in which organisms take the active lead.¹² Instead of thinking of genes using organisms, she suggests thinking of organisms using their genes to preserve core capacities—what an organism is and what it can do in the world—for perpetuation of their way of life in a particular environment. Organisms, all the way down to gene expression, adapt to environmental changes (“genetic accommodation”) and in turn learn how to shape their environment in ways that favor habitation. In short, they work *with* their environment, adapting to it and shaping it to make it more habitable. Organisms construct a way of life in a niche, and over time a dynamic, extended two-way conversation emerges between organisms and their niche about the conditions of life.

Evolution scientist John Odling-Smee calls this shaping of the environment “niche-construction.” Niche-construction directly impacts the chances of survival for an organism’s offspring (the better an organism is at niche-construction, the better its offspring’s chances).¹³ If niche-construction is performed by organisms, not their genes, and the capacity to construct a niche is directly related to survival, then it seems more accurate to say it is

¹¹ See Carl D. Schlichting and Matthew A. Wund, “Phenotypic Plasticity and Epigenetic Marking: An Assessment of Evidence for Genetic Accommodation,” *Evolution* 68, no. 3 (2014): 656-72.

¹² See Mary Jane West-Eberhard, *Developmental Plasticity and Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

¹³ See John Odling-Smee, *Niche Construction: The Neglected Process in Evolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003).

the *organism* and its *way of life* that survives through its offspring, not the gene. Ultimately, that is what faces selective pressure.¹⁴

Biologists Marc Kirschner and John Gerhart point out that if we follow the evolutionary path from the bacterium-like common ancestor to the present display of living biodiversity, we find curiously repeated episodes of great biological innovation.¹⁵ New genes and proteins arise during these brief periods of innovation, and afterwards the components and processes seem to settle into a prolonged period of conservation. This narrative pattern of brief innovation and prolonged conservation is surprising, because it suggests that genetic mutation, which is supposedly constant and random, may not be the sole driver of variation. If it were, there would be a more gradual and consistent production of diversity. It is curious that genetic mutation producing viable biological innovation seems to happen only in brief periods. It would make sense to see the organism as somehow participating actively in the evolutionary process of biological innovation. Kirschner and Gerhart call this “facilitated variation.”¹⁶

Even if we do not yet know the precise mechanisms of facilitated variation, once we acknowledge that organisms are active in their own biological innovation, then the history of evolution conjures up different metaphors than selection determined by competition for resources. The history of evolution in effect becomes a creative story of the ability of

¹⁴ Niche construction has generated an active conversation with some push-back. See, for example, the dialogue between Kevin Laland et al. and Gregory Wray et al. in “Does evolutionary theory need a rethink?” *Nature* 514 (2014): 161-64; T.C. Scott-Phillips et al., “The niche-construction perspective – a critical appraisal,” *Evolution* 68 (2014): 1231-43; E.D. Brodie III, “Caution: niche construction ahead,” *Evolution* 59 (2005): 249-51; Richard Dawkins, “Extended Phenotype – But Not Too Extended. A Reply to Laland, Turner and Jablonka,” *Biology and Philosophy* 19 (2004): 377-96.

¹⁵ Marc Kirschner and John Gerhart, *The Plausibility of Life: Resolving Darwin's Dilemma* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2005). The theory of evolution includes variation and selection. Darwin could explain selection, but his dilemma, as Kirschner and Gerhart understand it, was explaining innovation and variation. Although genetics provides important clues about inheritance, the question remains: “how can small, random genetic changes be converted into complex useful innovations?” (ix). Solving the problem of innovation then becomes very important for evolutionary theory.

¹⁶ “Facilitated variation” is strikingly similar to theoretical biologist Mary Jane West-Eberhard’s “adaptive evolution,” but Kirschner and Gerhart arrive at their notion by addressing the problem of biological innovation and variation, which they call “Darwin’s dilemma.”

living things to converse with, adapt to, and shape their world, given the constraints of finite resources and changing environments. This story sees organisms as active agents in their world and in their own evolution, not as passive instruments of genes. This goes a long way to explain the rich diverse variation we see.¹⁷

Philosopher Massimo Pigliucci and biologist Gerd Müller incorporate this story as a central element of what they call the “extended synthesis” of evolutionary theory.¹⁸ In their view, the extended synthesis overcomes three significant restrictions of the “modern synthesis” (an established concept in contemporary biology): *gradualism* (focusing on gradual changes because of the way the population-dynamic formalism was understood and the inability to account for non-gradual change); *externalism* (focusing entirely on natural selection to realize adaptation through differential reproduction, and thus not seeing the role of the organism); and *gene-centrism* (focusing on genes as the sole agent of variation and unit of inheritance, and thus not recognizing *multi-causal* evolutionary factors acting on the properties of organismal systems such as development and environment).

Of all these, overcoming gene-centrism may be the most significant. Pigliucci and Müller summarize the extended synthesis as

[T]he view of “genes as followers” in the evolutionary process, ensuring the routinization of developmental interactions, the faithfulness of their inheritance, and the progressive fixation of phenotypic traits that were initially mobilized through plastic responses of adaptive developmental systems to changing

¹⁷ I do not mean to suggest that organisms are conscious agents, but merely that they can solve problems raised in the course of living intelligently. There is a lot of ground in between mechanical stimulus-response and conscious agency.

¹⁸ Massimo Pigliucci and Gerd B. Müller, *Evolution—The Extended Synthesis* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010). The term ‘extended synthesis’ is meant to distinguish it from the ‘modern synthesis,’ which brings together ideas from several biological fields and provides an account of evolution widely accepted as the current paradigm, and to signal that concepts such as evolvability or new fields of research such as EvoDevo are not already understood as part of the ‘modern’ synthesis. For corroborating views, see James Shapiro, *Evolution: A View from the 21st Century* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Science Press, 2011), and Sheldon Krimsky and Jeremy Gruber, eds., *Genetic Explanations: Sense and Nonsense* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2013).

environmental conditions. In this way, evolution progresses through the capture of emergent interactions into genetic-epigenetic circuits, which are passed to and elaborated on in subsequent generations.¹⁹

According to currently available evidence, genes play a supporting role to the organism by accommodating, capturing, and passing on capacities for interactions with the environment to the next generation, thus perpetuating an organism's way of life.

Cooperation and Evolution: The Risk of Life

Gene-centrism is one of two doctrines that most often support the usual story of life. The other doctrine states that life is self-interestedly competitive. There seem to be several reasons for this latter doctrine. One is the theological doctrine of fallen human nature: human beings are selfish from birth, and when resources are sparse they will turn against each other. The idea finds expression in Thomas Robert Malthus, who concludes that population increases geometrically while subsistence increases only arithmetically, thus leading to increased scarcity and competition in the struggle for survival.²⁰ Adding to this analysis Darwin's understanding of natural selection, the blind process by which species go extinct, Herbert Spencer sloganized Malthus's idea as "the survival of the fittest."²¹

More recently, mathematics has played an important role in understanding evolution and the conditions of life, and is indeed central to the modern synthesis of evolution.²² In the early 20th century, Godfrey H. Hardy devised a simple equation showing the effect of passing genes down

¹⁹ Pigliucci and Müller, *Evolution—The Extended Synthesis*, 14.

²⁰ Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

²¹ Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864). In the conclusion to *Origin of Species* Darwin called it a "war of nature" (305-306), but he was much more nuanced than Spencer in his understanding of life and human beings. For example, in his *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871) Darwin suggested that human conscience was a natural extension of social instincts and affections.

²² I rely here on Martin Nowak's retelling. See Martin Nowak and Roger Highfield, *SuperCooperators: Altruism, Evolution, and Why We Need Each Other to Succeed* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 15-16.

the generations in his celebrated *A Mathematician's Apology*.²³ His work was generalized by Wilhelm Weinberg to show the incidence of genes in a population. Biology now had a mathematical law of its own comparable to what Newton had provided for physics: the Hardy-Weinberg law. Later Ronald Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane, and Sewal Wright “put the fundamental concepts of evolution, selection, and mutation in a mathematical framework for the first time: they blended Darwin’s emphasis on individual animals competing to sire the next generation with Mendel’s studies of how distinct genetic traits are passed down from parents to offspring.”²⁴

However, there was a problem with the laws of biology: human beings do not behave quite as the laws predict they genetically should. The link between genetic traits and behavior is not as tight as previously believed. Specifically, human generosity, cooperation, and self-sacrifice defy the core principles of competition theory. Social psychologist Donald T. Campbell and biologists Richard Alexander and Edward O. Wilson named this puzzle “the problem of altruism.”²⁵ After almost forty years of intense scrutiny, the problem has not gone away and has only become more acute. As Christopher Boehm says, “a major and growing interdisciplinary academic industry has devoted its efforts to resolving the ‘altruism paradox’—with only partial success.”²⁶

The problem with altruism is that there is too much of it, so it seems, especially between human strangers. We may be tempted to think that altruism is a result of cultural norms learned and acquired as humans mature, but this turns out not to be the case. If altruism is a virtue acquired through internalizing social norms or through rewarding desired behavior, then young children should be selfish. However, through a series of studies

²³ Godfrey H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1940).

²⁴ Nowak and Highfield, *SuperCooperators*, 16.

²⁵ See Donald T. Campbell, “On the genetics of altruism and the counter-hedonic component of human culture,” *Journal of Social Issues* 28 (1972): 21-37; Donald T. Campbell, “On the conflicts between biological and social evolution and between psychology and moral tradition,” *American Psychologist* 30 (1975):1103-26; Richard D. Alexander, *Darwinism and Human Affairs* (Seattle, WA: Univ. of Washington Press, 1979); Richard D. Alexander, *The Biology of Moral Systems* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1987); E.O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*.

²⁶ Christopher Boehm, *Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

in which young children and chimpanzees demonstrate spontaneous and unrewarded helpfulness, social scientist Felix Warneken demonstrates that the roots of cooperation, helpfulness, and altruism go deep into our biological heritage (ontogeny and phylogeny) and cannot be accounted for solely with reference to cultural practices.²⁷

How far back into our evolutionary heritage does cooperation go? Martin Nowak, director of an evolutionary dynamics research program at Harvard, and Roger Highfield, a chemist and science journalist, argue that it goes all the way back to “pre-life.”²⁸ Seeing this requires turning the evolutionary selection story on its head. Conventional thinking says that reproduction comes first and selection comes second, but Nowak and Highfield have shown that before life emerged, Earth generated a “complex ecosystem of cooperating molecules” and that natural selection “predates the emergence of reproduction itself.”²⁹ Within the rich chemistry of “pre-life” there would have been opportunities for cooperation and catalytic activities that would have increased rates of certain reactions. Pairs of cooperating molecules—each increasing the rate at which the other is formed—is a very plausible notion in such an ecosystem. Replication, or life, can even be thought of as pairs of cooperating molecular strands: “One strand of RNA builds a complimentary strand, and so on.”³⁰

If this picture of pre-life is granted, then selection and cooperation predate replication. This places cooperation at the center of transition from non-life to life, and this central place continues throughout evolution. On this view, life is an achievement of adaptive cooperation through natural selection. It generates diversity by creating new specializations, niches, and divisions of labor along with multiple lines of connection and causation—in short, complexity. Adaptive cooperation makes evolution creative, open-ended, and risky. In sum, it is the story of life.

This conclusion can be supported by mathematics in game-of-life simulations such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma. Two players decide either to

²⁷ Felix Warneken, “The Development of Altruistic Behavior: Helping in Children and Chimpanzees,” *Social Research* 80, no. 2 (2013): 431-42.

²⁸ Nowak and Highfield, *SuperCooperators*, 117.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 122-23.

cooperate or defect. The game has a payoff matrix such that if both players cooperate, there is a higher payoff than if both defect, and yet there is an incentive to defect. For a little while “always defect” is a successful strategy. Soon “tit-for-tat,” in which a player first cooperates but then mirrors the actions of the other player, is highly successful. Finally, “generous tit-for-tat,” in which a player forgives a defection on the part of the other player, is the most successful strategy of all, even though populations of “always defect” and “tit-for-tat” remain.³¹ Even if the initial strategy is selfishly competitive, eventually the search for the best strategy finds its way to cooperation—and even generous cooperation.

Given these considerations, I suggest that the “problem” of altruism is purely theoretical. We have constructed it by the way we have conceptualized the story of life in our philosophical (and theological) biology. Instead of trying to solve the problem of altruism, perhaps a more promising approach would be to *dis*-solve it. We may discover that we have been in the grip of a figure-ground model. If so, then we need a new story of life—perhaps along the lines of what Nowak and Highfield have suggested—that will explain very simply and elegantly why there is so much cooperation and altruism, as well as so much hostility and evil (the latter should be troubling us, not the former).³²

Natural Connection: Birds, Chimpanzees, and Early Humans

There are signs that a new theory is already emerging. Evolutionary biologist Joan Roughgarden argues for a theory of *social selection* emphasizing relational cooperativeness instead of a theory of *sexual selection* emphasizing competitive self-interestedness.³³ Social selection recognizes that the success of two birds building a nest together is the success of a *relationship* established between both birds: the survival of the offspring depends on the success or

³¹ See Benjamin M. Zagorsky, Johannes G. Reiter, Krishnendu Chatterjee, and Martin A. Nowak, “Forgiver Triumphs in Alternating Prisoner’s Dilemma,” PLoS ONE 8(12): e80814, accessed May 3, 2017.

³² See, for example, Simon Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). Baron-Cohen argues that evil can be explained, though not excused, as committed by persons having a lack of empathy.

³³ Joan Roughgarden, *The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 2010).

failure of the relationship. If the two birds cannot find a way to work together to build a good nest, it directly impacts the survivability of their eggs and young.

Roughgarden suggests that two birds building a nest together is a kind of household in which both birds have a shared interest, and the household is sustained by relational cooperativeness between them. Nest-building can then be seen as the achievement of the household, and this achievement resists being decomposed analytically into individual contributions since the household succeeds or fails as a whole—it is a non-zero sum game. Nest-building is the achievement of the relationship's emergent level of agency. The old framework of sexual selection struggles to incorporate this insight, because its methodological reductionism gives it no theoretical way to recognize cooperative connections and bonds as having agency. Sexual selection theory has no way to recognize relational bonds and “friendship” between organisms; it recognizes only genetic familiarity, which is the only thing it tracks. The limits of this explanatory framework become especially apparent when it attempts to account for the remarkable phenomenon of homosexual co-parenting and adoption among birds and mammals.³⁴

Social selection and its evolutionary story of relational connection also help to explain the otherwise very expensive development of the mammalian and human brain, which is wired to recognize, form, and maintain relational bonds. Primatologist Frans de Waal has undergone a significant shift of perspective while studying the behavior of chimpanzees. Early in his career, he wrote about competition and power politics among chimpanzees at the Arnhem Zoo in the Netherlands.³⁵ He had set out to tell an essentially Machiavellian story focusing on power and aggression, but in the midst of the unfolding political drama he kept noticing “a great need in the apes to maintain social relationships, make up after fights, and reassure

³⁴ See Bruce Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). I could have said ‘revelatory’ here. I don't think Anabaptists have understood the biological, ethical, and theological significance of homosexuality with respect to love. It is a sign that love (especially the life of love embodied by Jesus) cannot be enclosed within the logic of reproduction and perpetuation of the tribe. Note that it is a ‘sign,’ not a ‘proof.’

³⁵ Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex among Apes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982).

distressed parties.”³⁶ Apes go to surprising lengths to connect socially and to repair connections.

This behavior did not fit a strictly competitive framework that allows the winner of a struggle no motivation to reconcile with the loser. It struck de Waal that perhaps a different motivational framework was needed to account for the whole political drama, and he started thinking about the role of cooperation and empathy in chimpanzee life. He began painstakingly documenting the remarkable habits of caretaking, reconciliation, and peacemaking in their communities.³⁷ Finally, he left the competitive framework behind entirely, and argued that primates are wired for social connection and for peacemaking—we are “good natured.”³⁸

In a recent volume, de Waal and Pier Francisco Ferrari make this point regarding motivation of behavior:

Approaches to altruism are often presented as a quest for the “true” altruism, that is altruism without any obvious benefits for the actor. From this perspective parental care or aid to kin hardly counts as altruistic, and any chance at reciprocation by the beneficiary also disqualifies altruism as genuine. This is a curious approach, however, because motivationally speaking these distinctions are irrelevant unless we assume that actors know about inclusive fitness or are capable of anticipating future return benefits and perform their behavior with these benefits in mind. The evidence that they do so is non-existent.³⁹

De Waal and Ferrari apply a simple rule to the explanation for primate behavior: what motivates behavior is entailed in the situation. When a mother cares for her young or when a friend cares for another friend, the action cannot properly speaking be motivated by altruism, since a fitness

³⁶ Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009).

³⁷ Frans de Waal, *Peacemaking among Primates* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989).

³⁸ Frans de Waal, *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996).

³⁹ Frans de Waal and Pier Francesco Ferrari, “A Bottom-Up Approach to the Primate Mind,” in *The Primate Mind: Built to Connect with Other Minds*, ed. Frans de Waal and Pier Francesco Ferrari (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2012), 7.

calculation is not what motivates it. Rather, empathy motivates it. While care is adaptive and has tremendous survival benefits, this is not why a mother or a friend cares in the moment of the behavior. Survival is a result of caring; caring is not a result of a survival calculation.

In her book *Mothers and Others*, anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy recognizes that the leading problem of sociobiology is to explain “prosocial” emotions. How is it possible that empathic and generous hunter-gatherers developed and flourished in ancient African landscapes occupied by highly self-centered apes? What was the impetus for the emergence of intersubjectivity, “the capacity to put ourselves cognitively and emotionally in someone else’s shoes, to feel what they feel, to be interested in their fears and motives . . . [which] adds up to a mutual understanding and sometimes even compassion”?⁴⁰ Does it make sense, she wonders, to rely on out-group hostility as the best explanation for the emergence of peculiarly prosocial natures? How is it possible for Mother Nature to concoct such a hypersocial ape starting with such an impulsively selfish one? The only conclusion is that Mother Nature did not start from there. Hrdy proposes that, as a result of cooperative breeding where others assist in the care and provisioning of young (“alloparenting”), there emerged a line of apes that began to understand the subjective lives, the inner thoughts and feelings, of others. These intersubjective apes were emotionally modern humans.

Using evidence from comparative primatology, ethnographic studies of childhood in foraging societies, comparative infant development, and behavioral ecology, Hrdy argues that humans survived in the Pleistocene era through cooperation with each other and kindness to strangers, in particular sharing resources and specifically food. Caring and sharing extended towards strangers, or “as-if kin,” was a practical matter of survival. The consistent caring and sharing behavior can be accounted for only by the ability to monitor the mental states and feelings of others, and those mental states and feelings matter to us.

Recent research into mirror neurons further explores this intersubjective capacity in humans.⁴¹ Mirror neurons allow us to track what

⁴⁰ Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 28.

⁴¹ See Marco Iacoboni, *Mirroring People: The New Science of How We Connect with Others*

others are doing by activating the same states in our own bodies. We imitate each other, and we intuit others' intentions and emotions. We can make sense of behavior using very fine distinctions with respect to intention, such as in "I don't think she meant to hurt you." It allows us to predict behavior, something that is very valuable in social settings, and to connect with others in a deep, meaningful way. We can de-center ourselves and modify our behavior; we can navigate social space with an awareness of how we impact each other. Making contact between people's inner worlds is what it means to be an emotionally modern human, and it made early humans *human*.

The Risky Adventure of *Homo caritas*

It may be possible to go one step farther in our philosophical anthropology by asking about the upshot of intersubjectivity for the emotionally modern human: What does it say about who we are that the intersubjective story is so significant for our being and thriving? In his *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study*, psychoanalyst and research psychiatrist George Vaillant tells the story of a longitudinal study following 268 men and how they fared with respect to flourishing and thriving.⁴² He sums up what he learned:

Over those years I've developed convictions, and (I pride myself on this, too) exposed them to empirical scrutiny. Three big ones have stood the test of time, if not perfectly. One was that a warm childhood was a most important predictive factor and that a bad childhood was not. Another was . . . that the most important contributor to joy and success in adult life is love (or, in theoretical terms, *attachment*). My third great conviction was the identification of the involuntary adaptive "mechanisms of defense" as the second greatest contributor.⁴³

Love, according to Vaillant, is the most important contributor to human being and thriving. This conclusion represents a dramatic shift of vision for him because, when the study began, love was not studied scientifically—it

(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

⁴² George E. Vaillant, *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 370.

belonged in romantic literature, not in the laboratory, in the clinic, or in a research article. Though coming from very different perspectives, scientists of the day—i.e., behaviorists (Skinner et al.) and psychoanalysts (Freud et al.)—agreed that the interplay between biology and emotion was fully captured by lust, hunger, and power. Love was a hedonistic, self-centered instinct rather than a risky, relational process of reciprocal pair-bonding. The theoretical term “attachment” comes from psychologist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby, who argued that babies “imprint” on their mothers “not because their mothers fill their bellies but because they cuddle them, sing to them, and gaze into their eyes.”⁴⁴

Over the last two decades, Bowlby’s insights have been confirmed by the discovery of the mammalian attachment system and the human empathy circuit, and the consequences if they are damaged.⁴⁵ This confirmation has reverberated in disciplines as far away from mother-infant bonding as restorative justice and conflict transformation studies.⁴⁶

What these findings invite us to see is that we are *Homo caritas*—or, in Jonathan Lear’s phrase, “finite erotic creatures.”⁴⁷ To say we are finite is to say we are vulnerable in our engagement with others and with the world. To say we are erotic is to say we reach out longingly to others and the world for contact and connection. For Lear, it means that human life is marked by risk: “we may suffer physical and emotional injury, we may make significant mistakes, even the concepts with which we understand ourselves and the world may collapse—and yet as erotic creatures we reach out to the world and try to embrace it . . . we aspire to intimacy . . . we aim toward living (what we take to be) a happy life.”⁴⁸ To live a happy life, we need our reaching out to be met by someone reaching back to us—to experience ourselves as not being alone. More than anything else, human beings need love.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 64. See also John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁴⁵ See Iacoboni, *Mirroring People*, and Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil*.

⁴⁶ See Christian Early and Annmarie Early, ed., *Integrating the New Science of Love and a Spirituality of Peace: Becoming Human Again* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013).

⁴⁷ Lear, *Radical Hope*, 119.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 120.

Conclusion

It is well-documented that humans—and other animals—behave in ways that are kind and others-centered. We develop bonds of loyalty with friends and loved ones that motivate us to self-sacrificial behavior. More remarkably, we often (often enough, at any rate) treat strangers with kindness and generosity without any expectation of return, as if they too were kin or potential friends. The intriguing questions are how to account for this behavior and how to make evolutionary storied sense of it. Despite intense efforts, it seems that if we start with a self-centered competition theory of life, we cannot arrive at a place from which this kindness can be seen as anything more than a mistake. Theoretically, we should not behave this way—or at least not as often.

I have argued that a currently popular biological story of life and human behavior—that explanations of behavior can be reduced to the individual genetic level, and that the calculation characterizing behavior is a self-centered, competitive cost/benefit analysis with respect to reproductive capacity—can be questioned at several key points. Recent research is uncovering a dynamic two-way conversation among genes, organisms, and habitat in which creative adaptation (or responsiveness) and cooperation are central characteristics of thriving populations. Importantly, organisms themselves are agents in this conversation and participate in their own evolution. Moreover, as creative adaptation and cooperation are the source of newness and complexity, they are drivers of diversity from the very beginning of life, subject of course to the pressures of natural selection. Mother Nature is an experimental pragmatist, and what actually works in the real world, what got life going and keeps it going, is the creativity of adaptive cooperation.⁴⁹

It also turns out that selfish competition is most effective in an environment of cooperators, whereas the reverse is not true: cooperation in an environment of competitors is a short-lived strategy. It is difficult to see, then, how cooperation could ever get going in a competitive world. It is much easier to explain both cooperation and competition in a cooperative world. Moreover, the most successful strategy discovered in mathematical biology so far is “generous tit-for-tat”: meeting the world with cooperation, forgiving instances of defection and competition, but protecting against being taken

⁴⁹ This should not be surprising, as it is also characteristic of Abba Father, the Creator.

advantage of and becoming a sucker. Given this central behavioral logic, it is not too far a stretch to make sense of kindness towards strangers. Instead of this behavior being an anomaly, it is entirely predictable.

From an adaptively cooperative biology, it is possible to support an anthropology of *Homo caritas*: a conception of the human being that recognizes our felt need to connect intersubjectively, and that acknowledges our desire for intimacy and our longing to experience life with a sense of being-together rather than being-alone. Love, as George Vaillant discovered, is the single most important contributor to human thriving. Finally, it is possible to connect this anthropology to a Jesus-oriented ethic of enemy-love. Love of course is risky, and many things can and do go wrong along the way. Thus a tension remains between who we actually are and who we are called to be. That makes following Jesus of Nazareth an adventure of love—and the cost of this adventure can be high, as it was for Jesus.

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V. George Shillington. *James and Paul. The Politics of Identity at the Turn of the Ages*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

This book centers on the tension between Paul and James, the brother of Jesus. Paul dominates the imaginations of many people when they reflect upon Christian origins, because some of his letters were included in the canon, and a good deal of the Acts of the Apostles focuses upon his activities. James, however, has no extant writings and is only indirectly accessible through some references in Acts and mentions in Paul's letters, as well as the possibility that the pseudonymous Letter of James reflects aspects of his message. Building upon prior studies of the historical figure of James, V. George Shillington stresses the significance of James to the Jesus movement and seeks to understand the conflict between James and Paul as evident in Paul's description of his confrontation with Peter in Antioch. The author argues that the clash between James and Paul was the result of a differing politics of identity, despite the two men sharing many things in common.

The first part of the book explores sources of information about the historical James. Shillington begins by gleaning what he can from the undisputed letters of Paul, concluding that James was the biological brother of Jesus, likely married, and had such significant authority over the Jewish believers in Jerusalem that he could commission representatives from their community to visit Antioch "to assess the identity of the non-Jewish converts to Jesus Messiah" (31). The author thinks that the writer of Acts, although aware of James' import, says little about him in order to highlight the hero of the story, namely Paul.

In the next chapter, Shillington deems the Letter of James to be pseudonymous and written to honor James. Produced significantly later than the time of James and Paul, it provides glimpses of James's teachings, especially his emphasis on wisdom as a gift from God, the importance of the law, and caring for the poor. Shillington dismisses attempts to find parallels between the letter and sayings of Jesus—a surprising move, given all the careful source critical and rhetorical work done on this topic. Next, he suggests that the "beloved disciple" of the Gospel of John could possibly be James, while in a subsequent chapter he examines a range of other sources, including Eusebius, Hegesippus, Josephus, and a variety of

Christian apocryphal literature. Together, these traditions are clear evidence of the ongoing influence of the historical James despite the relative paucity of information about him in the New Testament.

The second part of the volume turns to a comparison of James and Paul, reminding the reader that James knew Jesus personally while Paul did not. Both, however, had received a revelation of the risen Jesus, and Shillington thinks that they shared many of the same theological commitments. James and Paul were not forming two different Christianities, and they remained committed to their Jewish identities, but in different ways. While Paul envisioned a community that included Jewish and uncircumcised Gentile believers (Paul's collection represents this coming together of different ethnocultural groups) and in which Jews had priority but not superiority, James remained within "the best tradition of Second Temple Judaism, and called the new Jesus-community in Jerusalem to follow the same path" (324). James did welcome Gentiles, but he likely expected the uncircumcised to be circumcised. Paul failed to fully appreciate James's position when he received the "right hand of fellowship" from James, Cephas, and John.

These different understandings led to a conflict which, in turn, contributed to a political battle over the full inclusion of the Gentiles, a battle that Paul lost. Later on, Jewish Christianity disappeared, the church became primarily Gentile and "regrettably anti-Jewish" (328).

This book is clear and accessible to a relatively broad audience (scholars, clergy, graduate students, and interested lay people). Given the centrality of identity and politics to the argument, I was disappointed to see little discussion of the meaning of social identity and how it functions with regard to "Jewish Christianity" in light of the larger political context of the Roman Empire. However, the study further contributes to the knowledge that James was a central and not peripheral leader in the first decades after the crucifixion. There is an important reminder, as well, that politics was as significant to nascent Christianity as it is to religious groups today.

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Hans Boersma. *Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa: An Anagogical Approach*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Hans Boersma, the J.I. Packer Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, has published works spanning various theological topics, including projects on violence and hospitality, the *Nouvelle Théologie* school of Catholic theology, and a recent book of sermons. In the book under review, Boersma approaches the Cappadocian through the lens of embodiment and virtue. This volume provides a robust overview of the numerous ways the human body is portrayed in Gregory's theology, while offering a new methodological lens by which to view that theology.

Essential to the methodology is Boersma's deployment of "anagogy," a method of interpretation of spiritual accounts, particularly popular among medieval theologians. However, as the author argues, the term is "much broader than its use later in the Medieval ages" (2). Gregory uses anagogy broadly, employing it to show how Scripture can give insights into broader spiritual realities, not merely realities in the future. Boersma argues that Gregory's entire theology can be classified as anagogical, going so far as to say that for Gregory, the purpose of life itself is anagogical in character (3): anagogy is then not just a hermeneutical strategy or a means of doing exegesis. It is instead a process of participation within divine virtue, and thus the human being's attempt to ascend to the life of God.

Embodiment and Virtue is divided into nine chapters, each of which attempts to show the importance of anagogy for Gregory's thought. Boersma attempts to establish this theme early on in his description of Gregory's notion of *diastema*, a theory of extension that relates to all of created order, including time and space. Gregory's emphasis on the *diastemic*, measurable character of created existence suggests that God created the world distinct from Godself (12). To say that the created order is *diastemic* is to argue its impermanence. Boersma generally employs *diastema* to explain the depth of space between human bodies and God, using the term to explain capacity as opposed to a mere spatial gap. He also argues that temporality is ultimately to be overcome by human beings (31). *Diastema* thus acts as the force which both limits human bodies in their temporality and provides access for

potential ascension to the Divine.

The temporality of human experience, and the need to ascend to the life of God, is where virtue becomes important. Following a similar trajectory of thought as *diastema*, virtue is the means by which human beings surpass their limitations and temporal distance. Human interaction with divine virtue happens through various means. It can occur through interaction with scripture, by employing an anagogical approach that moves beyond limitations bound by historicity and allows scripture to be experienced as divine revelation (53). Boersma reminds readers that Gregory had a high regard for Scripture as divine revelation, even if he lacked confidence in the ability of human reason to comprehend essential meaning. Yet it is ultimately faith, not reason, through which anagogy takes place.

Virtue can also be acquired through observation of the bodily senses, allowing the human being to participate through imitation (99). Virtues are embodied in, and in turn are perceived and expressed through, the senses during human interaction. Pervading the core tenets of Gregory's theology is a voice calling for embodied virtue as participation in the life of God (215).

Although the author's writing is incisive, readers would undoubtedly benefit from previous experience with patristic thought and methods. Boersma's project provides a useful overview of Gregory's understanding of embodiment and human placement within creation. The author nicely covers secondary subjects under Gregory's study of the body, such as scripture, gender, death, and slavery, while expressing concern over recent attempts to consider the depiction of the body in the Cappadocian's theology as only rhetorical. Gregory has re-emerged in recent years because of his vibrant theology, particularly as it relates to theological anthropology and the body's role in relation to the infinitude of God.

While providing a useful overview, Boersma underplays the stimulating aspects of Gregory's thought by being too concerned with placing the Cappadocian within the standard categories of Platonism. While those categories are natural aspects of any discourse on Gregory, Boersma leaves little room for discussion of other potential philosophical influences, or of occasions when Gregory's thought opposed the Neoplatonism of his day.

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Adam Kotsko. *The Prince of this World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017.

In *The Prince of this World*, Adam Kotsko traces the forces that shaped the devil. The author outlines the devil's origin, accounts for the devil's radical conversion, and concludes with the devil's provocative legacy. He begins the genealogy with Pharaoh, the first unjust rival and enemy of God's rule. Through the Bible this genealogy tracks the experience of suffering inflicted by evil (ones) alongside belief in a just God. The author describes three paradigms: the Deuteronomistic paradigm (evil ones deliver punishment for the wrongdoing of the faithful); the Prophetic paradigm (evil ones remain God's servants in world history); and the Apocalyptic paradigm, which emerges when the people cannot reconcile the experience of suffering in the midst of faithfulness and must reconcile matters in a cosmic realm.

The Apocalyptic paradigm ultimately births a recognizable devil when God battles rivals in both the earthly and cosmic realms. This paradigm continues in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation, where God's glory will be revealed only in the apocalyptic overthrow of the Beast, and the suffering of the faithful will be no more (though the suffering of the wicked will be increased and extended in order to render justice).

Whereas the previous biblically-based paradigms dealt with the faith in a just God and the question of suffering (and those who inflicted it), the Patristic paradigm emerged as Christianity made peace with Rome. The evil ones were no longer those who inflicted suffering, but primarily Jews and heretics who did not adhere to the solidifying orthodoxy. Rome's conversion was viewed as God's vengeance on them. This quite unexpected event "was tantamount to the devil's conversion to Christianity. . . , [w]hereby the devil becomes the tool of the oppressor rather than the oppressed" (75).

In monastic and medieval Christianity, the devil is almost completely divorced from political associations, and the focus shifts to battles over true belief and bodily temptations. This culminated in another reversal. Previous paradigms attempted to explain suffering, but orthodox theologies now began to *demand* it as a good in and of itself. "The God of medieval Christianity is a God who delights in suffering, a God who has become demonic" (103).

These changes left theologians grappling with God's goodness and the origin of evil, a problem in which "it can seem as though God is setting the devil up to fall. . . . [With free will emerging as] an apparatus for producing blameworthiness" (131). The devil was 'free' to choose otherwise, a conception that the author connects with modern individualism.

Kotsko spends the second half of the book 'in hell,' reviewing images of punishment from Dante to Foucault. There is no redemption for the damned, and punishment serves as a spectacle and distraction from present realities. Indeed, hell and prison *create* evildoers as much as they punish them. The God who was formerly called upon to overthrow those inflicting suffering has moved through the medieval paradigm of suffering for the sake of redemption to inflicting suffering on those disobeying his rule and order. "Hell is finally the location of all that God *cannot* control" (193).

The author locates the devil's legacy in the realm of choice and freedom. Freedom, necessary to maintain the concepts of God and evil, quickly became the mechanism for producing blameworthiness and preserving God's purity. Though Western culture has discarded most theological language, Kotsko maintains that modernity remains Christian when individuals are blamed for the world's suffering because of their poor consumer and political choices. While we cannot escape this element of the Christian inheritance, we can trace untaken paths from the positive resources that are equally part of it. Foremost here is the idea that the devil can perhaps be saved—not by applying liberal moral relativism, but by undermining the illusion of individual choice that justifies the production of Hell and punishment. Then we could take aim at the powers that profit from, and inflict suffering from, that production.

Kotsko has provided a tremendous resource for understanding the shifts within biblical and Christian theological traditions of evil, the devil, and hell. As well, he has offered insights into the forces forming the modern subject, the notion of freedom, and the reasons we blame and demonize. This is a well-crafted account, one in which even skeptics will find the devil in the details.

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Richard McCutcheon, Jarem Sawatsky, and Valerie Smith, eds. *Voices of Harmony and Dissent: How Peacebuilders Are Transforming Their Worlds*. Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2015.

“Imagine inviting wise elders of peace from different traditions around the world to a sharing circle focused on inspiring and sustaining peacebuilders. What if these elders were asked to share first-hand stories about their experience of working for peace over a life-time?” (19). This question, appearing on page 19 of *Voices of Harmony and Dissent: How Peacebuilders Are Transforming Their Worlds*, led to the consolidation of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP), held annually by Canadian Mennonite University. The intensive five-day course invites peacebuilders from different contexts and faith traditions to share from their life as peacemakers, both in theoretical and experiential terms.

This collection of essays by some of the invited peacemakers includes “men and women, Mennonite, Quaker, Indigenous, Catholic, and Buddhist. They are Thai, Canadian, Bosnian, and South African” (20). The authors’ diversity is reflected in their various approaches and writing styles.

Two of the essays especially caught my interest. In a contribution on Peace Theology, Harry Huebner develops a historical and theological revision of how Anabaptists have addressed the question of social engagement, focusing on 16th-century Anabaptists and developments in the latter 20th century. From the earlier century, Huebner stresses the Anabaptists’ separatist ecclesiology and an eschatology “rooted in their reading of what Jesus required of his followers in bringing about the new Kingdom” (132). More recently, the Anabaptist movement seems to have taken a less separatist interpretation of the role of the church, identifying it as witnessing peace and embracing nonviolent direct action as “a sign that although we are not in charge, the One who is in charge calls us to undermine the powers of evil by refusing allegiance to them. This is the alternative to violence—a way to say that peace is the desire of God from the very beginning of creation” (144).

What I found particularly interesting in this essay is the persistent issue of *participation*: how our actions—especially nonviolent actions—are connected with God’s actions and plans, either in the form of “the last things” or by “restoring” the *shalom* order of creation. Nonviolent actions can be

measured, not in terms of effectiveness when compared with violent actions, but in terms of how they reflect God's desired shalom and promised full restoration. This positive tension prevents nonviolence from becoming an ideology: acting nonviolently as a form of witnessing God's plan embodied in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection frames our hopes, expectations, and actions as part of a larger plan, not just our own personal ideology.

The other contribution that captured my attention was Ivo Markovic's account of the Pontanima Choir in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The author describes the religious component of the tensions, conflicts, and violence between people there, and presents the Pontanima (Latin *pons*, bridge, and *anima*, soul) choir as a nonviolent expression of art connecting to spiritual growth that has the potential to bring about reconciliation. The choir was founded in 1996 within a Franciscan monastery to bring people "from all the religions and beliefs in Sarajevo, people who, together, would sing a symphony of religions as a way of realizing the vision for positive relationships among religions" (206). The initial repertoire included Catholic and Jewish songs, but now includes Orthodox and Islamic songs as well. Pontanima performs in front of a wounded, polarized, and religiously diverse audience. Markovic describes how one woman expressed her dislike of the initiative at the beginning of a performance but ended singing along with the choir towards the end.

I can only imagine what it would be like for the singers to meet and create the potential for new possibilities and relations. Reconciliation is then not just a goal for the audience, but also the way that people from different, historically opposing, backgrounds can come together.

This book presents an amazing mosaic of peacebuilding experiences from personal stories to community and national/international settings, offering a vast set of examples of how-to work in peacebuilding, and of where one may stand, or take off from, on the journey. It will be a must-read for scholars dealing with mediation, advocacy, food wars, and peace theology; for practitioners and peacemakers, to motivate their imagination and creativity; and for all readers, to inspire them and identify embodied experiences of peacemaking even in the hardest times and contexts.

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Robert J. Dean. *For the Life of the World: Jesus Christ and the Church in the Theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Stanley Hauerwas*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016.

As the western world rapidly moves into a post-Christendom context, what is the role of the church? Theologian Robert J. Dean attempts to answer this question in this new volume. With Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas as his guides, the author argues that proper ecclesiology begins with Christology. By focusing on the ecclesiologies of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, Dean offers accounts of two theologians who strove to understand what it means to be the church guided by the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Dean's study comprises three main parts: "This Man is God!": The Person of Jesus Christ, A Peculiar People: The Church of Jesus Christ, and For the Life of the World: Church and World. Each part is devoted first to the work of Bonhoeffer, then Hauerwas, and concludes by drawing parallels and dissimilarities between the two theologians. Each section is mutually descriptive and critical of the pair's respective views, attempting to be honest to the message and content of each while recognizing potential failings.

In a way, what Dean is doing is as much providing a method to do Christological ecclesiology as it is examining the content of the work of both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas. The author correctly situates the two in the tradition of Karl Barth, in that their theologies are directed towards "the God who has acted for us and revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ" (6). Thus, Dean argues that the work of both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas operates with a Christological impulse that informs the rest of their respective theologies. By beginning *For the Life of the World* with a foray into the Christologies of both men, he contends that the proper starting place of ecclesiology is not with the worshipping body but with the person of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians today, fuelled by a concern for mission, try to create worshipping institutions that focus primarily on the church as it should be for the world. However, as Dean shows in light of the arguments of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, the proper way for the church to be for the world is for it to be properly for Jesus Christ. Both theologians argue that only once an understanding (albeit an incomplete one) of Jesus Christ is reached, can one begin to understand who the body of Christ—the church—actually is.

Thus, it is only when the church truly knows who it is in Christ that it can be for the world (225).

While the author's goal is to emphasize the similarities of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas rather than their differences, he recognizes that their differences "may offer a helpful correction" to each other (130). One "potential impasse" comes up regarding orthopraxis in the context of discipleship (136). Hauerwas, influenced by Alasdair MacIntyre, employs the language of virtue ethics as a way of speaking of the disciple's conformation to Christ. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, is concerned about virtue language, discussing the "masquerade of evil" which befell the Third Reich. What remains true for both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, however, is that conformation to the person of Jesus Christ is the essential task of the disciple.

For the Life of the World will benefit multiple readerships. For theologians, critical engagement with the work of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas will provide a greater understanding of both theologians' greater projects, with a reminder that theology should be rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ for the benefit of his body, the church. For pastors, Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas provide methods of being church that are rooted in the person of Christ, thus urging those in leadership positions to reflect on their own ecclesiological models in order to ascertain if they truly employ a Christological ecclesiology. Finally, lay readers will be reminded that everything they do in life should be guided by the person and work of Christ.

Dean contends that the works of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas will help the church to "faithfully bear witness to Christ in the midst of navigating its increasingly diasporic existence amidst the ruins of Christendom," for both men claim that "Jesus makes all the difference" (4, 5). It appears, perhaps, that post-Christendom cannot hear enough of this message of Jesus.

Daniel W. Rempel, M.A. student, Theology, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mark Jantzen, Mary S. Sprunger, and John D. Thiesen, eds. *European Mennonites and the Challenge of Modernity over Five Centuries: Contributors, Detractors, and Adapters*. North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2016.

This anthology, stemming from a 2010 conference at Bethel College, evaluates Mennonite contributions to European society, politics, and church structures in the centuries following the period of Anabaptist origins. As Thomas Brady indicates in his revised keynote, at the heart of this collective project rests a basic historiographical problem: Do scholars justify their study of Mennonites by stressing their marginality and opposition to modernity, or by integrating them into broader narratives that explicate modernity?

Contributors to this volume largely select the latter option. They find that Mennonite communities shaped political, social, and religious affairs in various European contexts. Tellingly, of the three sections into which the book's 19 chapters have been divided—Contributors, Detractors, and Adapters—the first is longest. Yet, despite this distribution, all the essays speak to common themes: Mennonite ambivalence about modernity and its truth claims, Mennonites' place in and relevance to society, and possibilities for the exercise of agency by those on society's edges.

The editors' decision to avoid defining modernity draws a wide variety of scholars into conversation but leaves the reader wondering what, exactly, Mennonites contributed to or what they detracted from. The most effective essays incorporate discussions of modernity's content while positioning Mennonites in relation to it. Michael Driedger, for instance, traces the "meme" of so-called irrational, fanatical Anabaptist violence in Münster from the 16th through the 21st century, illuminating the changing intellectual concerns of authors who invoked this event. He contends that uncritical adoption of this meme has served to legitimate state violence against misunderstood religious minorities.

In a different vein, Ernst Hamm explores shifting relationships between religious faith and natural knowledge in his study of scientific instruments and education at the Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam founded in 1735. Dutch Mennonites' innovative incorporation of "experimental philosophy" into pastoral training curricula makes him question assumptions of a Mennonite suspicion of science and technology. Frank Konersmann

investigates class differentiation in the southwestern German countryside by tracing developments within economic and social relations of six Mennonite families in the Rhenish Palatinate between 1740 and 1880. He finds that their agricultural and commercial innovations turned them into “peasant merchants” who increasingly associated with local nobility and the urban middle class and, as a result, generated new values, patterns of socialization, and forms of self-representation.

Each of these essays furthers efforts to move Mennonite historiography past the 16th century. The 18th century, often neglected by historians of both early modern and modern Europe, attracts the most attention. Many studies, including Hamm’s, explore Mennonite contributions or reactions to the Dutch Golden Age. Through the lens of Max Weber’s association of ascetic Protestantism with a capitalist ethos, Mary Sprunger examines Mennonites’ application of capitalist practices to problems within their communities, thereby challenging the simplistic equation that more wealth equals less faithfulness. Troy Osborne argues that Mennonites’ commitment to church discipline and charity coincided with the ordering objectives of the Dutch state, helping to create domestic conditions favorable to the creation of Europe’s first “capitalistic empire.” In his investigation of the involvement of Mennonite elites in the Frisian Patriot movement in the 1770s and 1780s, Yme Kuiper demonstrates that Mennonites on occasion shaped Dutch political culture more directly. Moving east into Prussia, Mark Jantzen reveals further political influence. Suggesting that the transition from enlightened absolutism to democracy impinged on Mennonites’ religious freedoms, he nonetheless identifies Hermann von Beckerath, a liberal Mennonite from Krefeld, as a chief opponent of military exemptions.

Other essays examine Mennonite theological discourse, pedagogy, and art history, and provide narrative histories of Mennonite settlements in Poland and southwestern and central Asian Russia.

This volume’s diversity in topic, scale, method, periodization, and contributors’ countries of origin is an achievement. The results of the project are significant, not least because the contributors’ demonstration that Mennonites were often implicated in long-term economic, political, and religious developments challenges a simple understanding of the marginality of Mennonites’ past. The fruitful interaction of historiographies here leads

one to wonder how else stories of Mennonite actions across time and place could be brought together. If present realities shape how we analyze the past, has Europe become an increasingly problematic framework for such conversations as the Mennonite demographic center moves to the global South?

David Y. Neufeld, Ph.D. student, Department of History, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

MENNONITES, SERVICE, AND THE HUMANITARIAN IMPULSE: MCC AT 100

**Winnipeg, Manitoba
October 23-24, 2020**

In 1920 Mennonites from different ethnic and church backgrounds formed Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to respond collaboratively to the famine ravaging Mennonite communities in the Soviet Union (Ukraine). Since then MCC has grown to embrace disaster relief, development, and peacebuilding in more than 60 countries. One of the most influential Mennonite organizations of the 20th and 21st centuries, MCC has facilitated cooperation among various Mennonite groups, constructing a broad inter-Mennonite, Anabaptist identity, and bringing Mennonites into global ecumenical and interfaith partnerships.

This centennial conference invites proposals for papers examining MCC's past, present, and future, and reflecting on Mennonite response to the biblical call to love one's neighbor through practical acts of service. Proposals are welcome from various academic perspectives, including but not limited to anthropology, conflict transformation and peacebuilding, cultural studies, development studies, economics, history, political science, sociology, and theology.

The conference will be hosted by the Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, in collaboration with Canadian Mennonite University.

Proposal submission deadline: December 1, 2019

Send proposals or questions to Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9, Canada. E-mail: r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

Limited research grants are available to help defray costs related to research in MCC's archives in Akron, Pennsylvania or at other MCC sites. Queries, with a brief two-paragraph description of the proposed research, should be sent to Alain Epp Weaver: aew@mcc.org. Requests for research grants will be assessed on an ongoing, rolling basis.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Conrad Grebel Review invites original article submissions from a variety of disciplinary perspectives on two specific themes:

(1) Sacramentality and (2) The Common Good.

SACRAMENTALITY

Possible topics include sacramentality, sacraments, ordinances, and pastoral practice in Anabaptist/Mennonite faith communities; sacramentality in ecumenical dialogues involving Mennonites; sacramentality in worship practices; sacramentality as a perspective on creation.

Length: 5000-7500 words / Deadline: October 1, 2017

THE COMMON GOOD

Possible topics include biblical, historical, theological, ethical, or practical perspectives on the common good; the function of the idea of the common good in Mennonite ethical discourse; the common good and economic inequality, war and peace, ecology and climate change, political institutions, race, and/or gender; the common good in ecumenical, interfaith, and/or public discourses; the common good as a relevant and rigorous concept.

Length: 5000-7500 words / Deadline: January 1, 2018

See grebel.ca/cgreview for style guide and general submission guidelines.

All manuscripts should relate to The Conrad Grebel Review's general mandate to publish on "theology, peace, society, and culture from broadly-based Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives." Submissions on themes other than those above, but related to the journal's mandate, are welcome at any time.

CALL FOR PAPERS

MENNONITES AND THE HOLOCAUST Conference

**Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas
March 16 - 17, 2018**

The history of Mennonites as victims of violence in the 1930s and 1940s, and as relief workers during and after World War II, has been studied by historians and preserved by many family histories. However, this commemorative and celebratory history hardly captures the full extent of Mennonite views and actions related to nationalism, race, war, and survival. It also ignores extensive Mennonite pockets of sympathy for Nazi ideals of racial purity and an exuberant identification with Germany. In the last decade an emerging body of research has documented Mennonite involvement as perpetrators in the Holocaust in ways not widely known or discussed. A wider view of Mennonite interactions with Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Roma, *Volksdeutsche*, and other groups as well as with state actors is now necessary. This conference aims to document, publicize, and analyze Mennonite attitudes, environments, and interactions with others in Europe that shaped their responses to, and engagement with, Nazi ideology and the events of the Holocaust.

Paper topics are welcomed from a variety of perspectives, such as social, economic, political, cultural, theological, religious, historical and gender analysis. Registration and lodging costs will be covered for all presenters. Some travel subsidies are available. Publication of selected conference papers is planned.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: SEPT. 1, 2017

Submit a one-page proposal that includes a title, a description of the proposed paper, and a short explanation of the stage of your research (work-in-progress, new paper, previously published), and a 1-2 page CV to John Thiesen at jthiesen@bethelks.edu.

For more information: mla.bethelks.edu/MennosandHolocaust

Conference Co-rganizers: John Sharp, Hesston College, Hesston, KS, Mark Jantzen, Bethel College, Bethel, KS; John Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, KS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

MENNONITE GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE VIII Texts, Experiences, Interpretations

June 14-16, 2018

Toronto, Ontario

Hosted by Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMMC)

TMMC Conference organizers invite proposals for scholarly papers exploring texts, experiences, and/or interpretations. The event will provide a forum for graduate students working on Anabaptist/Mennonite related topics and/or identifying with Anabaptist/Mennonite traditions to present their ongoing academic research in an interdisciplinary context, and to engage with colleagues and peers.

Paper topics may include:

- Interpretive and comparative work on scholarly texts, lived experiences, and established interpretations in disciplines including, but not limited to, theology, biblical studies, ethics, philosophy, religious studies, sociology, social development studies, globalization studies, diaspora studies, history, literature, musicology, international development studies, and peace and conflict transformation studies
- Discussions of texts by Anabaptist/Mennonite-related authors, both historical and contemporary, and in the context of the global Anabaptist perspective (e.g., the Global South)
- The unfolding of Anabaptist/Mennonite history and historiography
- Roles and interpretations of experiences and texts in theology, broadly construed
- Roles of lived experience in congregational life for ecclesiology, practical theology, and/or homiletics
- Biblical hermeneutics and interpretive method, and the constructive or critical interpretation of Biblical texts
- Conversations in feminist theology, including, but not limited to, the intersections of feminism and Mennonite theology

Travel bursaries may be available. Accommodation details will be released closer to the conference date. Send paper proposals, including a title, max. 300 words, to mennonite.centre@utoronto.ca by **January 15, 2018**. Include your name and affiliation only in your e-mail message, not in the proposal.

More information: <http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/tmtcgradconference>

The Conrad Grebel Review (CGR) is a multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed journal of Christian inquiry devoted to advancing thoughtful, sustained discussions of theology, peace, society, and culture from broadly-based Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives. It is published three times a year. We welcome submissions of articles, reflections, and responses. Accepted papers are subject to Chicago style and copy editing, and are submitted to authors for approval before publication.

Articles

Articles are original works of scholarship engaged with relevant disciplinary literature, written in a style appealing to the educated non-specialist, and properly referenced. Length limit: 7500 words, excluding notes. Manuscripts are typically sent in blind copy to two peer-reviewers for assessment.

Reflections

Reflections are thoughtful and/or provocative pieces drawing on personal expertise and experience, and may take the form of homilies, speeches, or essays. While held to the same critical standard as articles, they are generally free of scholarly apparatus. Length limit: 3000 words.

Responses

Responses are replies to articles either recently published in CGR or appearing in the same issue by arrangement. Length is negotiable.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Send your submission electronically as a WORD attachment to: **Stephen Jones, Managing Editor, cghedit@uwaterloo.ca**. Include your full name, brief biographical information, and institutional affiliation in the covering e-mail. CGR will acknowledge receipt immediately, and will keep you informed throughout the assessment process.

For CGR's Style Guide, Citation Format Guide, and other useful information, please consult the submissions page on our website.

Note: CGR also publishes Refractions, Book Reviews, and Book Review Essays. Refractions are solicited by the CGR Literary Editor (position currently vacant). Book Reviews and Book Review Essays are managed by CGR Book Review Editor Troy Osborne: troy.osborne@uwaterloo.ca.

CGR is indexed in Religious & Theological Abstracts, EBSCOhost databases, and in the ATLA (American Theological Library Association) Religion Database. It is also included in the full-text ATLASerials (ATLAS) collection.

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