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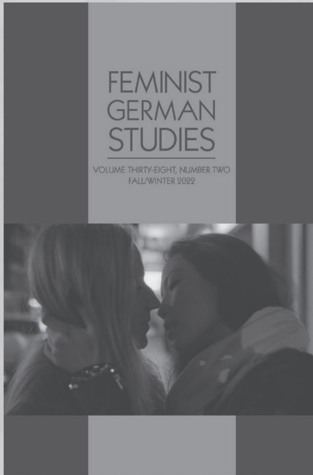
FEMINIST GERMAN STUDIES



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Introduction

Cultures of Conservatism in Western Europe since the 1960s

MARTINA STEBER, TOBIAS BECKER, AND ANNA VON DER GOLTZ

The hair trends for men presented by the Central Association of the German Hairdressing Trade in spring 1983 were strikingly reminiscent of men's hairstyles from a bygone era.[1] "With their pompadours, the young men on view resembled none other than the seventy-year-old man who had become president of the United States of America in 1981: [they sported] an oiled, tightly combed structure that no gust of wind could knock out of shape," remarked Michael Rutschky. The sociologist and journalist saw the Reaganesque hairstyle, by then to be spotted on a stroll through any "mid-sized city," as indicative of a return to the styles of the 1950s. This was significant, he argued, because hair and fashion were more than fads; they communicated attitudes and group identities to the outside world:

> When, dressed in a suit and vest, I enter one of the establishments frequented by our teacher and his ilk, people who live by the code "emancipation" (positive) and "repression" (negative), people gape at me with amazement, if not hostility. It is as if a Seminole has entered Iroquois territory without following the rituals prescribed for such a border crossing. And our teacher encounters no less hostility when he enters one of those elegantly stylized cafés where these kids with Ronald Reagan haircuts hang out.

The young men's attire and the "code" associated with it was "extremely conservative, immunized against the passage of time in many respects," and, most importantly, a rebellion against the 1968 generation, Rutschky was convinced.[2]

It was not only 1980s fashion that led observers to note that the German zeitgeist had taken a conservative turn. Depending on their political position, this diagnosis—which was almost always framed in political terms—was tinged with either regret or satisfaction. Conservative affinities in culture,

many argued, testified to the success of the so-called "reversal of tendencies" and the reality of "spiritual-moral change" since the Christian Democrats' return to power with Helmut Kohl's election as German chancellor in 1982.[3] Commentators were quick to point out the international dimension of this putative conservative turn, whereby the changes of government in the UK and the US in 1979 and 1981, respectively, were seen as pivotal moments, and Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan as harbingers of a new conservative hegemony. Jürgen Habermas brought this reading into philosophical discourse when, in his 1980 Adorno Prize acceptance speech in Frankfurt, he described the "conservative" inclinations of the day—including postmodernism—as enemies of the Enlightenment project of modernity.[4] Culture had become a key concept again, a "major principle for social cohesion," and therefore the subject of political debate.[5]

This edition of the German Yearbook of Contemporary History focuses on cultures of conservatism in Western Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, and is especially interested in the transnational and transatlantic traffic in ideas, culture, and lifestyles between Europe and the United States in the final decades of the twentieth century. All the articles in the yearbook and parts of this introduction were first published in German in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* in 2022/23.[6] In adopting this focus, the yearbook interrogates the relationship between political and cultural change in this period. It asks how we should, in fact, interpret the sudden penchant for Reagan haircuts and the revival of suits and vests. Were these mere cultural manifestations of political ideology—aesthetic reflections of political beliefs, in other words? Or did they signify a more subtle shift that was not necessarily in sync with people's political preferences—or that perhaps actually shaped such preferences? How should we interpret the connections between cultures of conservatism and organized politics in an era of conservative political dominance? In addressing these questions, the volume seeks to move beyond the sphere of organized politics to excavate deeper layers of conservatism's appeal and to offer a more nuanced understanding of the major political and cultural transformations of the final decades of the twentieth century.

Contemporary observers have often noted that this was not just an era of seemingly conservative tastes but also one defined by a "new complexity"—whose hallmarks were diversity, contradiction, and ambiguity.[7] "The 1980s," according to the self-proclaimed "zeitgeist journalist" Matthias Horx, "were the decade of confusion, of a productive muddle, of mixed-up heads, bellies, and souls."[8] The 1980s can indeed be described as a decade in which long-term trends toward increasingly pluralistic environments and individualized biogra-

phies continued to unfold and exert a broader cultural impact; the 1980s were characterized by a "culture of contradictions."[9] The considerable confusion that arose about how to interpret the manifold cultural shifts of the time illustrates how long-established criteria for understanding the world were slipping. "Nothing and no one can be relied on anymore," noted an exasperated Horx. "When we cannot be sure that the left is not in fact arch-conservative and the yuppies emancipatory, that alienation has not become concrete reality, while reality has long since become an abstraction—who is to set standards?"[10] Categories had begun to slip. This was true not least of the terms "progressive" and "conservative."

These cultural upheavals reflected the dynamics of change in political conservatism between the 1970s and the turn of the millennium, a period when key concepts and convictions were recast, new players appeared on the scene, and new groups, organizations, and networks were established.[11] Similar developments took place in the cultural sphere, from high culture through popular and media cultures to the cultures of everyday life and lifestyles. General skepticism about the future and a "wave of nostalgia" that was said to accompany it; a rediscovery of history and a renewed emphasis on morality and family values and on regionality and origin; the importance attached to individualism and subjectivity; the distancing of postmodernism from modern functionalities—the decades between 1970 and 2000 were characterized in both high and popular culture by a multitude of new trends that contemporaries often perceived as conservative.[12] Doubts about the inevitability of progress, which had originated in the alternative and environmental movements of the 1970s and had been spreading ever since, led to Western temporalities being called into question. Ideas about how to win the future had to be renegotiated, and this would involve addressing the past.[13]

In an influential study the historian Daniel T. Rodgers aptly described the last third of the twentieth century as "an era of disaggregation, a great age of fracture." He argued that this period was defined by the shattering of central organizing principles relating to the economy, identity, the nation, and time, as well as a questioning of the theories and ways of thinking about modern society that had dominated the Western world since the end of World War II. Political conservatism was both a symptom and a cause of these developments, according to Rodgers. On the one hand, the new individualistic free-market conservatism, which had received its impetus from Britain and the US since the 1970s but had since become a political force throughout the Western world, helped pave the way for the disintegration of traditional certainties. On the other hand, the new conservatism was itself a phenomenon of the "age of

fracture."[14] Fluidity and hybridity, which Rodgers identifies as characteristic of the era, also marked the conceptual and cultural spaces of conservatism.

The five articles in this yearbook build on these insights. They are attentive to ambiguities and surprising mixtures and, most importantly, to the remarkable plurality of what was deemed conservative in the period under examination. All the authors understand conservatism from the 1970s onward as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon and therefore not exclusively as a political project. Cultures of conservatism were sometimes openly and sometimes more indirectly politicized, and sometimes they were seen as apolitical.[15]

Cultures of conservatism emerged in at least three distinct dimensions. The first of these was political, i.e., the cultures of both party and political milieus and of countercultural subcultures. The second was in the nonpoliticized cultures of everyday life, some of which were transient and some of which became firmly established. And third, they emerged in the artistic artifacts of high and popular culture and in the broad interpretative space that surrounded these. Conservative meaning could be ascribed to the latter in various ways: through artists' self-positioning in their works, through the interpretations of outside observers, and through political appropriation.

The concept of conservatism defies easy categorization, especially in the years that are the focus of this volume. The term "conservative" referred first to a general view regarding change over time, as manifested in lifestyles and attitudes to life. In this sense, being "conservative" meant living in the present while valuing the tried-and-true and traditional, and being skeptical about too much progress. The British political theorist Michael Oakeshott described this concept of conservatism as a "disposition" on which everyday thought and action drew:

> To be conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to Utopian bliss. Familiar relationships and loyalties will be preferred to the allure of more profitable attachments; to acquire and to enlarge will be less important than to keep, to cultivate and to enjoy; the grief of loss will be more acute than the excitement of novelty or promise.[16]

A second use of the term "conservative" referred to the political ideology of conservatism as a theory within political thought, one of the major political ideologies of modernity since its origins in late eighteenth-century Europe and the US. This second sense also referred to the political practice of conserva-

tive politics in parliaments, parties, and governments. This is the definition adopted by most historians of conservatism.[17] According to a third definition, "conservative" has always been a tendentious linguistic weapon used in political debate by followers and opponents alike.[18] When we study the history of cultures of conservatism, we encounter all of these definitions competing and overlapping in manifold ways. They therefore require systematic historicization.

In examining cultures of conservatism since the 1970s, this yearbook focuses on the period that international scholarship sees as marked first and foremost by economic rupture, with the political conservatism of the Anglo-American transatlantic alliance setting the pace of historical change. Comparative and transnational research to date has mainly concentrated on the social and economic policy agenda, whose aims included liberalizing (financial) markets, dismantling the welfare state, and individualizing risk management.[19] The Anglo-American conservative project had a global influence, boosting conservative forces in Western Europe and forming the political center of "post-boom" economic, political, and social processes of transformation.[20] Many studies have therefore treated conservatism since the 1970s implicitly or explicitly as neoliberalism in conservative garb, though this garb has often been viewed more as a disguise than as an expression of genuine conviction.[21]

However, recent research on conservatism in Britain and the New Right in the US has moved beyond the realm of ideas and economic policy, and it indicates that conservatism was far more complex than such readings suggest.[22] While economic thought, political strategies, and neoliberal transatlantic networks certainly played an important role in the reinvigoration of conservatism in Western industrialized countries, this conservatism also manifested itself as a multilayered cultural phenomenon—and it is to this sphere we must turn to chart its endurance and appeal beyond a narrow economic and political elite.[23]

A vast body of work on the US, in particular, has shown that conservative movements drew much of their strength from the postwar cultures of everyday life. Since the late 1940s, such conservative cultures had been developing in the suburbs and business districts of large American cities, in social clubs and religious movements, in companies and think tanks, and in universities, the military, and the media. In the 1970s this trend broke through to the mainstream. There were multiple reasons and driving forces behind conservatism's new cultural prominence, ranging from anticommunism and the challenge posed by civil rights and student movements, through the promotion of liberal visions of society and their representation in the media, to new social movements and the new visibility of minority populations in cities and communities after a

major overhaul of immigration legislation in 1965.[24] Most importantly, for our purposes at least, US historians of conservatism have long since demonstrated that those who identified with the right did not have to be hopelessly old-fashioned or out of step with the changing times. On the contrary, they could be emphatically modern and showed considerable initiative and imagination in mobilizing working-class, female, and non-white subjects.[25] This scholarship has painted an image of conservative movements and subjects that is more hybrid than the idea of a "backlash" against modernity and the cultural and social changes of the 1960s would suggest—although the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016 undoubtedly threw into sharper relief the reactionary qualities of US conservatism that have continued to exist alongside its more modern variants. In the past few years, US historians have therefore begun to pay more attention to conservatism's long history of white nativism, opposition to racial progress, penchant for conspiratorial thinking and hyper-partisanship, and the frequently blurred boundaries between mainstream conservatism and the far right.[26] In spite of the recent rise of right-wing populist movements and parties and the challenge they pose to traditional conservatives, this is a story that does not have a straightforward equivalent on the other side of the Atlantic because mainstream conservative parties and movements in Western Europe have, for the most part, demarcated themselves more firmly from the right-wing radical fringe than US Republicans have done.[27]

While numerous US historians have shed light on the complex and sometimes contradictory histories of conservatism and conservative cultures of everyday life, we are still largely in the dark on most aspects of the cultural history of Western European conservatism—something the contributions to this yearbook begin to address.[28] In introducing an Anglophone readership to cultures of conservatism in Britain and (West) Germany and their links to the US, the yearbook hopes to contribute to freeing the study of conservatism from the straitjacket of the nation-state to which it has traditionally been confined, and to stimulate future research on transatlantic comparisons and linkages.[29] This seems to be especially appropriate when examining cultures of conservatism that have always been fluid, transnational, and malleable.

For all their topical breadth, the articles in this yearbook all conceptualize "culture" in similar ways that include both high and popular culture, as well as "systems of meaning and categorization" that pervade everyday life, serving as "specific forms of interpreting the world" that are contested, ambiguous, and in a constant state of change.[30] The articles gathered here offer a cultural history of political conservatism in the decades since the 1960s.[31] At the same time, they broaden our understanding of what writing a cultural history of politics

entails. Such histories have all too often adopted a traditional, narrow concept of culture. By contrast, several of the essays focus on the conservative potential of popular cultures, thereby opening up a neglected field of research that links political and cultural history in novel and fruitful ways.[32] Histories of European conservatism, with some notable exceptions, still overwhelmingly concentrate on organized politics and on the history of ideas. The same is not true of US historiography, and approaches from the history of American conservatism were an inspiration for the articles in this volume.[33]

Histories of pop culture, on the other hand, have overwhelmingly portrayed conservatives as critics—if not enemies—of pop culture, ignoring the fact that pop culture has met with equal, if not more sustained, opposition from the left, most notably in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's influential critique of the "culture industry."[34] Although Horkheimer and Adorno understood pop culture as inherently conservative (in the double sense of not being avant-garde and of being politically conservative) and as rendering its consumers conservative (in the sense of acquiescing to the status quo instead of rebelling against it), few of the many critics inspired by their book have explored the connections between pop culture and conservatism in more thorough ways.

What is more, histories of European pop culture, in particular, have largely focused on leftist, alternative, progressive, subversive cultural genres, styles, artifacts, and artists—or, rather, on genres, styles, artifacts, and artists read as such—and have ignored cultural expressions traditionally considered conservative, thereby underestimating their reach, impact, and importance. For the countless books on counterculture and punk in Western Europe, to name just two favorites, there are comparatively few studies on genres such as country music, Christian rock, musicals, family board-games, soap operas, police dramas, or lifestyle manuals, and even fewer that explore their connections to cultures of conservatism and conservative politics.[35]

In this yearbook we operate with the broadest possible definition of pop culture, understanding it not merely as the opposite of high or elite culture, nor as the twentieth-century equivalent of traditional folk culture, but as mainstream culture as it developed in the United States and Western Europe after World War II. We understand pop culture as the sum of different commercially produced cultural genres intended for the biggest possible audience, and widely distributed and widely consumed by large parts of the population. In this sense, pop culture encompasses not only popular films or musical genres but also the spaces (particular districts and venues), dances, fashions, magazines, lifestyles, advertisements, and so on that accompany them, as well

as the interconnections, cross-pollinations, and exchanges between them.[36] This understanding reflects the political contingency and versatility of pop culture, which, just like mainstream culture, includes conservative varieties as a matter of course. This makes it all the more important to interrogate the complex relationship between pop culture and politics—not least between pop culture and conservatism, which has often been ignored. Just as cultural historical perspectives can inform the study of conservatism, this yearbook argues, so perspectives from the history of conservatism can enrich the study of cultural history.

The articles in this yearbook are thus all interested in the interrelationship of culture and political conservatism: in the influences and effects of conservative policies, ideas, and institutions on the field of culture and conversely of those cultural actors, artifacts, and genres that saw themselves as conservative or were viewed by others as conservative. The authors showcase the potential hidden in this approach, which also brings siloed fields of historical study into dialog with each other and connects historiography with its neighboring disciplines. Several of the articles focus on Britain, a country that has played a pivotal role both in the reshaping of conservatism and as a cultural contact zone between Europe and the United States. The distinction between high and popular culture is not as sharp in Britain and the US as it is in continental Europe, and the commercialization of culture has been more pronounced for far longer, a trend that only intensified when Thatcher slashed subsidies in the 1980s;[37] to survive, culture had to perform on the market, and this increasingly meant the international market.[38] Thus, trends from Europe, the US, and other parts of the world reached Britain and were culturally absorbed, transformed in a variety of ways, and fed back into the increasingly transnational space of pop culture.[39]

This is particularly true for music, the subject of three of the articles in this yearbook. Revolving less around words and hence less in need of translation, music crosses borders with particular ease. Whereas the period up to World War I was characterized by European imports to the US, subsequently such flows were reversed, with initially jazz and rock and roll and subsequently other genres becoming popular abroad. In both periods, the United Kingdom—and London specifically—acted as a gateway between Europe and the US. Yet at no time was this relationship unidirectional, as the articles in this volume show. Music also makes for a particularly suitable case study as it is arguably the cultural sphere least likely to be equated with politics: are musical tastes not by definition personal and individual? As all three articles show, however,

music is just as prone to being judged as "conservative" or "progressive" as other cultural preferences and attitudes.

The yearbook begins with an article by Nikolai Wehrs showing how a popular British television satire was profoundly shaped by Thatcherism—and why it is no surprise that the prime minister herself was its biggest fan. While Thatcher is often portrayed as a philistine with little interest in culture and with petit bourgeois (i.e., bad) taste, and as a politician the cultural establishment loved to hate, this ignores those cultural figures who supported her or her politics or both. The most influential of these was the British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, who was to British culture in the 1980s what Thatcher was to British politics, a presence that was loathed by many but impossible to ignore. Yet while Lloyd Webber was a self-confessed Tory—going so far as to compose music for a Conservative Party political broadcast in 1987—how far can his music be said to be conservative? What was the relationship between his music and his politics and that of his audiences? These are the questions Amanda Eubanks Winkler explores in her contribution, arguing that his musicals were an influential cultural corollary of Thatcherism. Martina Steber's article examines similar questions for the field of popular classical music, a genre that has gone practically unexamined to date. The international career of the British composer, conductor, and record-label owner John Rutter illustrates how popular music cultures emerged around sacred music, becoming a paradoxical expression of the historically Christianized, secularized cultures of the British Anglosphere. Yet what do terms such as "progressive" and "conservative" actually mean when it comes to music and particularly to a genre such as rock? This is what Tobias Becker's piece examines, exploring increasingly fluid boundaries of genres and terminology in the "age of fracture." Finally, Craig Griffiths illustrates how the historiography of transatlantic social movements is enriched—and indeed transformed—by widening our field of vision to include cultures of conservatism. His piece reexamines the familiar history of gay liberation in the United States and West Germany by giving a voice to some of the more conservative figures in male homosexual politics whose sexual identity was not inextricably connected with hopes of political transformation, and who prioritized caution and responsibility over more exuberant presentations of queer subjectivity.

Depending on the contours of their subject, the five authors adopt a different periodization: while Wehrs and Eubanks Winkler focus on the 1980s, Steber, Becker, and Griffiths tackle the broader period from the late 1960s on-

ward. Nevertheless, all the articles emphasize the 1970s as a time of major upheaval when conservatism underwent a political and cultural reconfiguration.

Taken together, the articles in this yearbook demonstrate that cultures of conservatism mattered profoundly. They were not found solely in popular music, television series, and musicals; they were present in most areas of social life. They shaped subcultures and everyday life, and they connected political parties and movements with their social surroundings. They therefore offer a fertile field for future research—research that the articles in this yearbook hope to foster. All the articles focus on cultural realms that European scholarship has rarely linked to conservative movements. In particular, our authors demonstrate that we need to rethink the binary opposition between "progressive and avant-garde," on the one hand, and "conservative and conventional," on the other. Undoubtedly, combining terms as ambiguous as "conservative" and "culture" runs the risk of blurring both. Yet it also offers an opportunity to define them more precisely and to do so in relation to one another. The political, including the history of conservatism, was deeply embedded in the cultures of everyday life; the breadth and endurance of conservatism's political appeal cannot be adequately understood without taking stock of this presence. In addition, our authors reveal the limitations of a cultural history that has focused overwhelmingly on progressivist ways of thinking that emphasize innovation and novelty, but has systematically ignored the putatively retrograde and conventional that was often equally popular and influential.

By shining a light on the manifold ways in which conservatism and culture were enmeshed in the final decades of the twentieth century, the articles gathered in this volume enrich our understanding of one of the major political ideologies of our time and lend more nuance to interpretations of the social, cultural, and political transformations of the recent past. In doing so, they also help chart the paths that lead to our present.

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worked seamlessly at University of Nebraska Press. We are extremely grateful for all their hard work and support.

Notes

Translations by Sinéad Crowe

1. This introduction is a revised and slightly extended version of Martina Steber and Tobias Becker, "Editorial: Kulturen des Konservativen in der jüngsten Zeitgeschichte—das Beispiel Großbritannien," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 1 (January 2022): 149–58.

2. Michael Rutschky, " 'Das ist doch bloß Mode!' Über den untauglichen Versuch, Zeiterscheinungen abzuwehren," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, June 11-12, 1983. On long hair in the alternative scene, see Bodo Mrozek, "Walle, walle, nimm die schlechten Lumpenhüllen: Body politics der Langhaarigkeit in Lebensreform um 1900 und alternativem Milieu um 1980," in *Lebensreform um 1900 und Alternativmilieu um 1980: Kontinuitäten und Brüche in Milieus der gesellschaftlichen Selbstreflexion im frühen und späten 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Detlef Siegfried and David Templin (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2019), 271–91.

3. See Peter Hoeres, "Von der 'Tendenzwende' zur 'geistig-moralischen Wende': Konstruktion und Kritik konservativer Signaturen in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 61, no. 1 (January 2013): 93–119; Nikolai Wehrs, *Protest der Professoren: Der 'Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft' in den 1970er Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 430–52.

4. See Jürgen Habermas, "Die Moderne—ein unvollendetes Projekt," in *Zeitdiagnosen: Zwölf Essays* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2003), 7–26.

5. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte: Die Bundesrepublik—1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2009), 404.

6. Steber and Becker, "Editorial"; Martina Steber, " 'A very English superstar': John Rutter, die populäre Klassik und der transnationale Konservatismus seit den 1970er Jahren," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 1 (January 2022): 159–88; Nikolai Wehrs, " 'Abolish Economists!' Die Britcom 'Yes Minister' und der Wandel des britischen Konservatismus in der Ära Thatcher," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 2 (April 2022): 391–420; Tobias Becker, "Only Rock'n'Roll? Rock-Musik und die Kulturen des Konservativen," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 3 (July 2022): 609–34; Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "Der Thatcherismus und Andrew Lloyd Webbers Musicals," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 4 (October 2022): 817–41; Craig Griffiths, " 'Schwul gleich links?' Konservative Strömungen in der Schwulenbewegung in Westdeutschland und den USA in den 1970er Jahren," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 71, no. 3 (July 2023): 557–97. All articles are based on papers that were first presented at a conference in London in 2017: see Tobias Becker, Anna von der Goltz, and Martina Steber, "Cultures of Conservatism in the United States and Western Europe between the 1970s and 1990s," *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 40, no. 1 (May 2018): 175–81.

7. See Jürgen Habermas, *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985).

8. Matthias Horx, *Aufstand im Schlaraffenland: Selbsterkenntnisse einer rebellischen Generation* (Munich: Hanser, 1989), 211.

9. See Andreas Wirsching, *Abschied vom Provisorium: 1982–1990* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2006), 308–33, 421–66.

10. Horx, *Aufstand im Schlaraffenland*, 211.

11. From the wealth of literature, most of which focuses on the US, see Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009); Julian E. Zelizer and Bruce J. Schulman, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974–2008* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008); Anna von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, eds., *Inventing the Silent Majority in Western Europe and the United States: Conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Johannes Großmann, *Die Internationale der Konservativen: Transnationale Elitenzirkel und private Außenpolitik in Westeuropa seit 1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2014).

12. See Wirsching, *Abschied*, 421–91; Hermann Glaser, *Deutsche Kultur: Ein historischer Überblick von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, 2nd expanded ed. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2000), 368–420; Werner Faulstich, ed., *Die Kultur der achtziger Jahre* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2005); Schildt and Siegfried, *Kulturgeschichte*, 403–69; Tobias Becker, "The Meanings of Nostalgia: Genealogy and Critique," *History and Theory* 57, no. 2 (2018): 234–50.

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16. Michael Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative," in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1962), 168–196, here 169.

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24. See, for example, Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Sean P. Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism: Texas and the Rise of the Modern Right* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2009); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton,

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“Abolish Economists!”

The Britcom *Yes Minister* and the Transformation of British Conservatism in the Thatcher Era

NIKOLAI WEHRS

What role did formats of popular culture play in the renaissance of political conservatism after 1968? The Britcom *Yes Minister* (1980–88) is generally viewed as a left-wing satire of the elitism of the British civil service. Nikolai Wehrs, however, shows how the authors of the TV series purposely merged the left-wing antiestablishment narrative with a new middle class populism, and thereby created a political-cultural space of possibility for the conservative ideology of Thatcherism. He argues that *Yes Minister* allows for the investigation of the central transformation processes of British conservatism under the aegis of Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s.

Popular Culture as a Receptive Space for Political Conservatism

One of the first difficulties faced by almost any study of cultures of conservatism is that in common parlance the attribute “conservative” is used as a synonym for “old-fashioned and elitist.” In the cultural sphere these adjectives inevitably have unpopular connotations, while the attribute “popular” implies anti-elitism and is generally associated with modernity. The tendency to link high culture with conservatism, and popular culture with rupture, change, and progress, is ultimately based on such entrenched chains of association.[1] By the same token, in contemporary historical narratives a “leftist” political impact is often attributed to the phenomena of popular culture. In Britain, for example, the flourishing of pop culture during the Swinging Sixties is frequently associated with the liberalization of that decade and the return of the Labour Party to government in 1964 under the premiership of Harold Wilson. A photograph of Wilson with the Beatles at the Variety Club Showbusiness Awards in March 1964 is often used to illustrate this point.[2]

Meanwhile, most scholarship on the subject sees the avowed enemies of pop culture at the conservative end of the spectrum. Dozens of pages have been devoted to eccentric figures such as the evangelical activist Mary Whitehouse and her National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (NVALA), who, in their crusade against the sexualization of television, denounced even playful fantasy series like *Doctor Who* as moral hazards. These "right-wing" opponents of popular culture are often said to have paved the way for the conservative backlash that ultimately resulted in the political-ideological counterrevolution of Thatcherism in the 1980s. A silent majority of *Doctor Who* critics as the trailblazers for the triumph of the "New Right"? It is difficult to imagine this in concrete terms.[3] This essay seeks to depart from the usual chain of associations. Instead, it interrogates the positive contribution of popular culture to the growing social receptiveness to political conservatism in Britain between the pop culture revolution of the 1960s and the Thatcher era of the 1980s, focusing on an example from a specifically British genre of popular culture: the Britcom.

"Britcom" is a portmanteau word combining "British" and "sitcom." As is well known, the sitcom (itself a portmanteau word comprising "situation" and "comedy") is a television series format whose entertainment value relies on a rapid succession of gags and punchlines based on the comedy of everyday situations. Unlike sketch shows, the sitcom has a dramatic plot and a fixed cast of recurring characters. In contrast to the light comedy typical of the US sitcom, Britcoms are characterized by a distinctive black humor and a certain anarchic-subversive tendency; famous examples from the period under investigation here include *Fawlty Towers* (1975–79) and *Blackadder* (1983–89).[4] Given these characteristics, it might once again be tempting to assume that the genre is associated with left-wing social criticism. But this is not automatically the case. The following analysis of the television series *Yes Minister* will demonstrate that the subversive trait of Britcom can also have a conservative political impact, and that in the series, viewers could observe key processes of change in British conservatism as they unfolded during the Thatcher era.

Yes Minister as a Satire of the Politics-Administration Dichotomy

Yes Minister[5] revolves around the daily work of the fictitious British cabinet minister James "Jim" Hacker, who heads the British government's equally fictitious Department of Administrative Affairs. However, it is not the minister but a civil servant, Permanent Secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby, who really calls the shots within the department. In practically every episode, Sir

Humphrey blocks his minister's plans and instead pushes through his own schemes. Week after week, therefore, the basic satirical idea underpinning this Britcom is that the bureaucratic will of the civil service triumphs over the political will of democratically elected politicians.[6]

Produced by the public television British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and broadcast on BBC2, the series in its original format ran for three seasons between February 1980 and December 1982, with each season comprising seven half-hour episodes. In 1984 a one-hour Christmas special followed in which Sir Humphrey is promoted to cabinet secretary and cleverly maneuvers Hacker into the office of prime minister. This plot twist paved the way for a sequel, *Yes, Prime Minister*, which ran in two seasons of eight half-hour episodes each from January 1986 to January 1988. The series, comprising thirty-eight episodes in total,[7] was a massive success with the public and critics alike from the outset. In the Audience Appreciation Index, which measures viewer satisfaction with television shows in the UK on a scale of 1 to 100, *Yes Minister* scored 90+. Furthermore, the series won the British Academy Television Award for Best Comedy Series three times in the 1980s.[8] Notably, the show seems to have lost little of its popularity over the years: In a 2004 BBC poll of television viewers to find "Britain's Best Sitcom," *Yes Minister* came in sixth out of one hundred, just one place behind *Fawlty Towers*.[9] This was a remarkably good placing for a sitcom that, when compared with today's viewing habits, was rather slow-paced and almost entirely devoid of physical comedy. What TV station today would air a comedy show in which three middle-aged white men engage in smart, witty dialog about politics in scenes lasting up to eight minutes?

Importantly, it appears that the show owes its enduring popularity to the fact that it is seen not only as entertaining but also as politically relevant. The director Armando Iannucci, who would return to the themes of *Yes Minister* a few years later in *The Thick of It*, remarked in the context of the 2004 poll: "*Yes Minister* was more than a sitcom, it was a crash course in Contemporary Political Studies—it opened the lid on the way the Government really operated."[10] Numerous comments on the poll website make similar points. For example, a user named Liam wrote: "There are many reasons why this is simply the best sitcom of all time, but one of them is that with each new era, *Yes Minister/Prime Minister* seems more relevant than it ever was." Wim H. from the Netherlands shared this view: "*Yes Minister* is as funny as the rest, but it stands out because it teaches you a lot about an actual situation rather than one that springs from the mind of a writer." Similarly, Michael from Hong Kong commented: "The element of reality gives it an edge that the other series simply cannot deliver." And finally, Steve K. from the UK expressed this strong opin-

ion: "It tells the truth about the fundamental dishonesty of politicians and the 'Establishment.' And it is very funny!" According to its fans, at least, *Yes Minister* contributed to viewers' political education, giving them a look behind the scenes of the theater of politics and an insight into the real machinations within the government apparatus.

This raises questions about the political impact of *Yes Minister*. Fans may have enjoyed it as a political education show, yet presumably its audience of millions far exceeded the average success achieved by exponents of this genre. Seldom have so many British people been able to learn the same things at the same time about how their political system works. It can therefore be assumed that *Yes Minister* influenced the political consciousness of many British citizens and even played a profound role in shaping it, particularly with regard to its understanding of the relationship between politicians and the ministerial bureaucracy.[11] Iannucci's assessment that the series opened the audience's eyes to how their system of government actually worked is therefore a little troubling, given that viewers could only have learned that their system of government did not work at all, or at least did not work in the intended democratic manner.

In the field of political science, the problem from which *Yes Minister* drew its combined entertainment and educational value is known as the "politics-administration dichotomy."[12] Arguably, this dichotomy alludes to one of the central topics of historical research, namely the exercise of power as authority. As Max Weber already knew, in the sphere of everyday affairs "the exercise of authority consists precisely in administration."[13] In the modern state the composition of administrative staff and their influence on political decisions are power issues of the utmost importance. This is especially true in democratic states, where the principle of state administration is in particular tension with the normative demands of democracy. Where all state power is supposed to emanate from the people, executive organs should ideally act without their own agenda. However, the banal reality is that certain social classes, cultural milieus, and professions (such as jurisprudence) are overrepresented within the staff of these executive organs. As a result, these organs may have special interests which they can at least potentially allow to influence political decision-making processes. Many democracies have specifically developed precautionary measures to ensure the primacy of the democratically legitimized will of government over the potential special interests of administrative elites. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, the ministerial bureaucracy is headed by politically appointed civil servants (*politische Beamte*) who can be replaced by the elected government at any time. This principle is taken to

extremes in the US, where every new government appoints up to 3,000 new executive officials.[14]

But in the UK, where the political system famously relies on unwritten traditions, there are no such precautions. Civil servants are traditionally employed on a permanent basis right up into the highest echelons of power. This means that newly formed governments must continue to work with the same ministerial civil servants who worked for the previous government; not even the permanent secretaries who head up each ministry change. Because of this continuity, ministerial civil servants inevitably have a virtually unassailable advantage in terms of experience over their frequently changing ministers. The only safeguard against abuse of power by unelected officials is the traditional ethos of the British civil service, according to which civil servants may provide only impartial, fact-based advice to the government in office at any given time.[15] The question of how reliable this ethos is in practice has been the subject of much debate in British political discourse, with critics warning about the undermining of the democratic separation of powers by a too powerful state bureaucracy since the 1920s.[16] However, this debate did not gather real momentum until the last third of the twentieth century, and it was only in the 1980s that, thanks to *Yes Minister*, the idea that the civil service secretly ruled the country became received opinion among the British public.[17]

Fictionalized representations of politics almost always center on power struggles between politicians, and their narrative forms tend to echo classic tragedies. For example, *House of Cards*, a 1990 BBC political thriller adapted by Andrew Davies from a novel by former Margaret Thatcher adviser Michael Dobbs, in which a fictional Conservative Party chief whip uses intrigue and murder to become prime minister, was modeled on Shakespearean tragedies such as Richard III and Macbeth (as was the 2013 Netflix adaptation of the same name).[18] The creators of *Yes Minister* turned tragedy into comedy by shifting the setting from the Palace of Westminster to the offices of Whitehall, thereby taking viewers from a "House of Cards" to the "Corridors of Power," as Charles Percy Snow called the civil service's sphere of influence in London's government district.[19] The *Yes Minister* scriptwriters made a conscious decision not to set a single scene in the thirty-eight episodes of their political satire in Parliament: "We never wrote a scene in the chamber of the House of Commons because Government does not take place there. The House of Commons is theatre. That's where the performance takes place. Decisions are taken elsewhere."[20] In focusing on the disempowerment of politicians by the civil service instead of power struggles between politicians, the creators of *Yes Minister* devised a genuinely new satirical format.[21]

Of course, mockery and satire of bureaucrats have a long tradition in Britain, as they do in many countries. Indeed, the “Circumlocution Office” invented by Charles Dickens in *Little Dorrit* (1855) can be seen as a kind of precursor of *Yes Minister's* Department of Administrative Affairs, which, as the name intimates, is an unwieldy bureaucratic nightmare.[22] The popular BBC radio show *The Men from the Ministry* (1962–77) followed in this tradition of satirizing government bureaucracy, as did the ITV sitcom pilot *If It Moves, File It* (1970), which was not made into a series.[23] But in all these examples, civil servants were portrayed either as pedantic misfits or as lazy incompetents, as “boring people who wore bowler hats and drank a lot of tea.”[24] *Yes Minister* was the first satire to depict Whitehall mandarins as shrewd manipulators of the political system, and the civil service's public image has yet to recover from this unflattering portrait. While political science scholarship on the civil service tends to bemoan this image and emphasize how distorted it is, few have asked where the creators of *Yes Minister* got it from.[25] In the following section, I locate *Yes Minister* in Britain's political culture by discussing first the relatively general cultural-historical context and then the more specific political-historical context in which the series originated.

Yes Minister as a Product of the Satire Boom of the 1960s

The central cultural-historical context of *Yes Minister* is the British satire boom of the 1960s, of which the series was a late product. This boom began with formats such as the West End show *Beyond the Fringe* (1960–66), the Soho cabaret *The Establishment* (1961–64), the satirical magazine *Private Eye* (founded in 1961), and, most importantly, David Frost's BBC television satires *That Was the Week That Was* (1962–63) and *The Frost Report* (1966–67). Virtually every British satire and comedy format of the following decades was indebted to these “classic” formats, which had created the distinctive combination of black humor and anarchic nonsense that would have a defining effect on Britcom style and which has been regarded as a British trademark since the worldwide success of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969–74). The satire boom also served as an incubator for a whole cohort of writers whose scripts would leave their mark on British comedy for at least three decades, most famously Peter Cook, Marty Feldman, John Cleese, and Michael Palin.[26]

This incubator recruited new talent mostly from the Oxford Revue and Cambridge Footlights student theater groups. In terms of social history, then, the satire boom once again emphasized the dominance in British cultural institutions of the educated upper-middle class and the traditional English

elite universities. Nevertheless, the texts produced by this cohort of writers regularly contained self-ironizing commentaries on the classism of private boarding schools and Oxbridge, and, in the debates on the Establishment that were emerging in Britain at the time, these children of the Establishment were clearly on the antiestablishment side. With unusual trenchancy their shows took aim at the complacent conservatism of the elites in politics, the military, and the financial world. In 1961 Peter Cook's parody in *Beyond the Fringe* of the Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan's late-Victorian posturing was considered taboo-busting. In retrospect Cook's show could be seen as a harbinger of the electoral victory of the down-to-earth Yorkshireman Harold Wilson over Macmillan's aristocratic successor Alec Douglas-Home in October 1964. Thus, the overall picture that emerged of this era—not least in the later autobiographical reflections of those involved—directly linked the satire boom with the social liberalization of the 1960s.[27]

Although they were not at the forefront at the time, the creators of *Yes Minister*, Antony Jay (1930–2016) and Jonathan Lynn (b. 1943), were also satire boom writers. They came from the same sociocultural background as the figures mentioned above and benefited from the same professional networks. Jay had attended St Paul's School in London, one of the most exclusive private boys' schools in England. He went on to study literae humaniores (known as "Greats"), a degree rich in tradition among the English elite, at Magdalen College, Oxford, and graduated with a double first. Lynn had attended the not much less prestigious Kingswood School in Bath and then studied law at Pembroke College, Cambridge. Jay, who was somewhat older, began his career in the 1950s as a journalist at the BBC. As an editor there he was responsible, among other things, for the *Tonight* program (1957–65), the first news show to combine current affairs with light entertainment. In the 1960s Jay helped to bring the satire boom to the BBC, working on shows such as *That Was the Week That Was* and *The Frost Report*. One of his close colleagues on those shows was John Cleese, with whom in 1972 he founded the Video Arts Company, which specialized in the rather niche genre of professional training films incorporating comedy elements. Jay's relationship with Cleese brought him into closer contact with Lynn, who as a student had performed with Cleese in the Cambridge Footlights. Lynn had earned his spurs in television entertainment as a performer in BBC comedy shows such as *Twice a Fortnight* (1967). He later worked as an actor and writer on the ITV sitcoms *Doctor in the House* (1968–70) and *Doctor at Large* (1971) before joining the writing team of the rather bawdier ITV sitcom *On the Buses* (1969–73).[28]

With their close biographical links to the satire boom, Jay and Lynn also

espoused the boom's antiestablishment attitude and the liberal zeitgeist of the 1960s in general. But while Lynn is to this day referred to as a "left-leaning actor" in newspaper reports, Jay later publicly distanced himself from this phase of his political biography.[29] In a lecture delivered to the neoconservative Centre for Policy Studies in 2007, Jay presented a typical conversion narrative in which he ridiculed his period as "part of the media liberal consensus": "We were not just anti-Macmillan; we were anti-industry, anti-capitalism, anti-advertising, anti-selling, anti-profit, anti-patriotism, anti-monarchy, anti-Empire, anti-police, anti-armed forces, anti-bomb, anti-authority. Almost anything that made the world a freer, safer and more prosperous place, you name it, we were anti it."[30]

But in his role as convert, Jay may have overstated his earlier bond with the "media liberal consensus." From the mid-1960s he had been writing books on business management skills with titles such as *Management and Machiavelli* (1967) and *Corporation Man* (1972), in which there was little trace of a leftist political zeitgeist. Instead, he was already engaging with public choice theory in these books. In the late 1970s, around the same time as the first season of *Yes Minister*, Jay and Video Arts produced the TV documentary *Free to Choose* (1980), which aimed to popularize Milton Friedman's neoliberal economic theory, for the American TV network PBS.[31]

On closer examination, therefore, the profiles of the two writers of *Yes Minister* are clearly distinguishable from each other, and although Jay and Lynn co-wrote all the scripts for the series, the distinctive influence of each man is apparent in the final product. The sitcom veteran Lynn unquestionably contributed most to the farcical elements, while Jay poured the lessons of public choice theory into the satirical dialogs: all characters in *Yes Minister* promote only the special interests of the group they represent, but in doing so they always invoke the common good. According to Lynn, the writers' different personalities also informed the way they divided up the work, with each writer attending to certain main characters. Jay wrote most of Permanent Secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby's lines (in fact, in an echo of his own academic achievements, Jay gave the character a double first from Oxford), while Lynn focused more on Minister Jim Hacker. Lynn saw Jay himself as "something of an Establishment figure": "He would probably have become a Permanent Secretary had he joined the civil service instead of the BBC." Lynn joked that he himself felt a closer affinity with Hacker: "a frustrated and disappointed idealist who regularly fails to practise what he preaches."[32]

Yes Minister, Labour, and the Narrative of British Decline in the 1970s

Jay and Lynn began working on *Yes Minister* in 1977. However, as Lynn later wrote, Jay had approached him with the idea several years earlier, but at that time Lynn had thought a series about the civil service sounded boring.[33] Most likely Lynn changed his mind a few years later because of an event that took place in 1975: the publication of the first volume of the diaries of the late Labour minister Richard Crossman, who had died in 1974.[34] This publication provided the specific political-historical context to which *Yes Minister* owed its emergence, for it first put into the public domain the idea on which the series' plot hinged.

The Crossman Diaries offered the British public a completely new insight into the internal workings of government. Previously, the diaries and memoirs of leading British politicians had generally been published only in versions that had been carefully redacted by government officials. Churchill's multi-volume war memoirs, for example, had effectively been ghostwritten by entire teams in the Cabinet Office.[35] The 1975 publication of *The Crossman Diaries* without official authorization was therefore a minor sensation. Unsurprisingly, the government's futile attempts to stop the publication by invoking the Official Secrets Act only increased public attention.[36] Thanks to the diaries, a broader public learned for the first time about the complicated relationship between government politicians and the civil service. The British special case of the "politics-administration dichotomy" was transformed from a topic interesting only to experts in public administration theory into the subject of political debate. And because this subject was bound up with questions about the democratic balance of power, it was practically crying out for satirical treatment.

Between 1964 and 1970 Crossman had served as a cabinet minister in various departments in Harold Wilson's Labour government. Like Jim Hacker, who was modeled on him, Crossman had originally trained as a journalist. Because the Labour Party had spent the previous thirteen years in opposition, Crossman (again, like Hacker) had no administrative experience when he took up his first government post as minister for housing and local government in October 1964. He was therefore extremely dependent on his civil servants at first. According to his diaries, he felt like an inmate in a psychiatric hospital during this period. On October 22, just a week after he had been appointed, he noted:

> Already I realize the tremendous effort it requires not to be taken over by the Civil Service. My Minister's room is like a padded cell, and in cer-

> tain ways I am like a person who is suddenly certified a lunatic and put safely into this great, vast room, cut off from real life and surrounded by male and female trained nurses and attendants. When I am in a good mood they occasionally allow an ordinary human being to come and visit me; but they make sure that I behave right [. . .]. Of course, they don't behave quite like nurses because the Civil Service is profoundly deferential—"Yes, Minister! If you wish it, Minister!"[37]

The inspiration for *Yes Minister* is obvious: the series' title appears word for word on the first pages of *The Crossman Diaries*. The irony of the phrase is already apparent in the diaries too, with Crossman emphasizing that the civil servants' servile affirmations of the minister's wishes did not necessarily mean that they would do what the minister wanted. In fact, what Crossman so candidly exposed in his diaries was an inexperienced minister's sense of being controlled by the bureaucratic apparatus: "If ever I write a note in my own handwriting [. . .] suggesting somebody should come and see me, I find a note at the bottom of my red box that night saying, 'Of course, it's perfectly all right for you to do this. But we would like you to do it like this, rather than like that.' "

The scripts of the early episodes, in particular, of *Yes Minister* contain a number of almost verbatim transcriptions of diary entries in which Crossman recorded his sense of powerlessness. Take, for example, the following key moment, which made it clear to Crossman that his department functioned autonomously and that he was in fact superfluous. In his diary Crossman described how his principal private secretary explained how to work through the piles of correspondence on Crossman's desk in a time-efficient manner:

> And he sat opposite me with his owlish eyes and said to me, "Well. Minister, you see there are three ways of handling it. A letter can either be answered by you personally, in your own handwriting; or we can draft a personal reply for you to sign; or, if the letter is not worth your answering personally, we can draft an official answer." [. . .] "How do I do that?" I asked. "Well, you put all your in-tray into your out-tray," he said, "and if you put it in without a mark on it then we deal with it and you need never see it again."

This incident is reenacted almost word for word in the "The Official Visit," the second episode of *Yes Minister*. Here it is Bernard Woolley, Hacker's principal private secretary, who provides the valuable advice.[38] At multiple points in his diary, Crossman described his staff shielding him from running into

subordinate civil servants in the department.[39] Similarly, in the episode "The Skeleton in the Cupboard" (YM, S3, E3), Woolley alerts Sir Humphrey: "The Minister is just gone walkabout." Sir Humphrey is aghast. "You mean, he is loose in the building?" he responds and then runs off to retrieve the minister. Even the set of the minister's office in *Yes Minister* seems to have been inspired by Crossman's gloomy description: "On the mantelpiece there is a clock and over it a copy of a Holbein. In the other extreme corner is a dim little print. Nothing else on these ugly, modern, panelled walls, in this vast, dreary room with the roar of Whitehall outside if I open the window."[40] In *Yes Minister*, a nondescript landscape painting, rather than a Holbein, hangs above the mantelpiece, but otherwise the resemblance is striking. Jay and Lynn openly acknowledged on numerous occasions that they had taken inspiration from *The Crossman Diaries*. "Our best source," Lynn wrote; "Crossman had made *Yes Minister* possible."[41]

The diaries were not the only source of inspiration for the two scriptwriters, however. Indeed, they were not even the only source from within the Labour Party. Some years earlier, in 1973, Barbara Castle, a long-serving Labour minister, delivered a lecture in which her descriptions of her experiences with the civil service would not be out of place in an episode of *Yes Minister*. For example, Castle recounted her tragicomic and ultimately futile fight for an "integrated transport policy," an experience that *Yes Minister* drew on in the episode "The Bed of Nails" (YM, S3, E5). Like Crossman, Castle described a sense of powerlessness and isolation: "The Minister is alone: the loneliness of the short-distance runner. We will not be there very long and heaven knows what new Minister will very shortly be greeted in the same charming, efficient, and no doubt very genuine way."[42]

In addition, it emerged decades later that Jay and Lynn were personally acquainted with two government insiders who had for years worked closely with Prime Minister Harold Wilson. One of these insiders was Marcia Williams (officially Baroness Falkender after she was given a peerage in 1974), Wilson's political adviser since 1956, while the other was the political scientist Bernard Donoughue, senior policy adviser for prime ministers Wilson and James Callaghan from 1974 to 1979. At the time, the writers kept their dealings with these contacts so secret that even the two informants knew nothing about each other, though this may also have had something to do with the personal animosity between Donoughue and Williams. According to Lynn, the writers would meet their two whistleblowers separately for several business lunches before work on each season began in order to discuss ideas for possible stories and pick up inside information. Williams even provided feedback on

the scripts and advised the writers on how to make the officialese of Whitehall more authentic.[43]

In Williams and Donoughue, the *Yes Minister* writers had found two very special key witnesses from within the government apparatus. Both were early pioneers of the special adviser position, a role that would later become extremely influential. The Wilson government had created this role to tackle the very problem that Crossman and Castle complained about so bitterly, namely, the danger of the bureaucratic apparatus controlling the government. Recruited mostly from the party apparatuses and seconded to ministries on a temporary basis, special advisers were supposed to make the ministers more independent of the influence of unelected officials. Freed from the civil service's obligation to maintain impartiality, they were also supposed to help implement the ruling party's political line.[44] Wilson was the first prime minister to appoint a special adviser, installing his close confidant Williams in the role in 1964. Then, when Wilson returned to office in 1974, Donoughue, who had been poached from the London School of Economics, built a large policy unit for the prime minister. The appointment of party-political advisers at the highest levels of government was initially met with considerable resistance within the civil service. In particular Williams (who, as a woman, had a difficult enough time in Whitehall, given that it was entirely dominated by men at the time) had to fight hard to gain access to files and adequate office space in 10 Downing Street.[45]

Naturally, the conflict between the civil service and special advisers was immediately exploited by Jay and Lynn in *Yes Minister*. As early as the first season, they introduced the character of Frank Weisel, a special adviser with an activist streak who tries to circumvent the civil service in his attempts to keep Hacker in line with the party manifesto. Played by Neil Fitzwilliam, Frank Weisel looked remarkably similar to Bernard Donoughue. In "Jobs for the Boys" (YM, S1, E7), the final episode of the first season, the character was written out of the series, however. According to Lynn, this was in order to ensure that Hacker did not resemble a Labour minister too closely, for although the Thatcher government retained special advisers after 1979, in the early 1980s the position was still associated in the public mind primarily with the Labour Party.[46]

Yet in *Yes, Prime Minister* a special adviser returned in the character of Dorothy Wainwright, the prime minister's senior political adviser, whom the screenwriters clearly modeled on Marcia Williams. The visual resemblance between the character, played by Deborah Norton, and the real-life inspiration was again striking. Like Williams in the 1960s, Dorothy Wainwright has to

contend with the sexism of male civil servants and must fight hard for her office. In the episode "The Key" (YPM, S1, E4), she takes an office next to the men's toilet at 10 Downing Street so that she can eavesdrop through the thin wall on Hacker's male rivals as they plot against him. Lynn later claimed to have been told this anecdote by Williams herself, but there is no indication that it is true. In fact, Williams had prudently secured an office with access to the Cabinet Room.[47]

To assess the political impact of *Yes Minister*, it is important to be aware of the scriptwriters' indebtedness to this special interpretation of the politics-administration dichotomy. The narrative about the civil service that *Yes Minister* popularized in the 1980s was largely influenced by former government officials and political advisers to the Labour governments of the 1960s and 1970s. Deeply inscribed in this narrative, therefore, were specific experiences that these people had had during their time in government. The relationship between the Labour Party and the civil service underwent a dramatic transformation between 1964 and 1979. Prior to this, the Labour Party had had a generally positive attitude toward the role of the civil service. Though socialists had already in the interwar period criticized the elitist social structure of the service's higher echelons, in principle they had always regarded a strong state apparatus as precisely the right instrument for their interventionist social policies. The civil service's quiet cooperation in implementing the reforms of Clement Attlee's 1945–51 Labour government seemed to vindicate this attitude.[48]

Things took a turn for the worse only when Labour governments after 1964 failed, amid economic instability, to build on the reform successes of the Attlee government. Starting with Richard Crossman, it was now primarily politicians from the left wing of the party who blamed Whitehall's mandarins and their structurally conservative upholding of the status quo for blocking progressive reform policies. Alongside Crossman and Castle—both veterans of the traditionalist left wing of the Labour Party—Tony Benn, who in the 1970s increasingly emerged as leader of the party's "New Left," was a particularly prominent critic of the civil service.[49] As minister he clashed fiercely with his civil servants between 1974 and 1979. Benn's speeches and essays from his time in opposition from 1979 onward paint a picture of a manipulative, powerful elite seeking to control the political agenda without democratic legitimacy.[50] In a 1982 BBC radio feature, Benn claimed: "The deal that the Civil Service offers a Minister is this: if you do what we want you to do, we will help you publicly to pretend that you're implementing the manifesto on which you were elected. [. . .] They are always trying to steer incoming governments back

to the policy of the outgoing government, minus the mistakes the Civil Service thought the outgoing government made."[51]

Like so many key quotes from *The Crossman Diaries*, Benn's statement appears almost verbatim in *Yes Minister*. In the episode "The Quality of Life" (YM, S2, E6), Sir Humphrey tells a lobbyist: "You see, there is an implicit pact offered to every minister by his senior officials: if the minister will help us to implement the opposite policy to the one that he has pledged to, which once he is in office he will see is obviously incorrect, we will help him to pretend he is in fact doing what he said he was going to do in his manifesto." Since this episode of *Yes Minister* was first broadcast in March 1981 (before the aforementioned BBC radio feature), it is conceivable that here it was not the scriptwriters quoting Benn, but in fact the Labour politician quoting the fictional Sir Humphrey.

In a sense, then, *Yes Minister* was a satirical document of the crisis of confidence that developed between the Labour Party and the civil service in the 1970s. But in addressing Labour's scapegoating of the civil service, the series also indirectly documented the party's political failure in those years. When the series began in 1980, former Labour ministers such as Gerald Kaufman and Roy Hattersley immediately recognized the strong similarities between the government featured in *Yes Minister* and the Labour government of 1974 to 1979. Indeed, Kaufman described the series as "chillingly accurate."[52] This means, in fact, that the fictitious government on television resembled one of the indisputably weakest real-life governments in modern British history. Having come to power as a minority government in February 1974, it only managed to muddle through for five years by striking deals with smaller parties. In terms of policy, Labour was deeply divided. In the run-up to the 1975 European Economic Community (EEC) referendum, cabinet members attacked each other on television. Economically the UK was seen as the sick man of Europe in the 1970s, and in 1975 inflation climbed to a historic high of 26.9 percent. Strike threats from increasingly militant unions put even more pressure on the government. A public-sector strike lasting several weeks in the winter of 1978/79 produced images of complete collapse, with refuse piling up on the streets of London and hospitals having to cut back emergency services. This "winter of discontent" sealed the government's fate, and in the general election of May 1979 the Conservatives, led by Margaret Thatcher, won a landslide victory.[53]

The pilot episode of *Yes Minister* was recorded at BBC Television Centre in January 1979, right in the middle of the winter of discontent. Not much

was missing and the series would have been first broadcast amid the political conditions it depicted, but with a general election looming, BBC bosses opted to postpone the start of the politically sensitive satire.[54] Thus when the series finally aired in February 1980, the subject of its satire was already somewhat outdated. From a historical perspective, though, it is fascinating to observe how compellingly *Yes Minister* captured the sense of crisis in 1970s Britain. This is particularly striking in the scathing depiction of the British trade unions, which in *Yes Minister* are dominated by corrupt cliques and militant Trotskyists. For example, the episode "The Compassionate Society" (YM, S2, E1), in which Hacker struggles with the absurd consequences of mismanagement in the National Health Service, could have been taken directly from the winter of discontent. In the episode a newly built hospital cannot accept any patients because the hiring of 500 administrative employees has left no money in the budget for medical staff. But when Hacker threatens to close the dysfunctional hospital, a militant union official calls all the hospitals in London out on strike. When the episode was first broadcast in February 1981, viewers likely had little difficulty recognizing that this union official was based on Jamie Morris, a shop steward of the National Union of Public Employees, who organized the London hospital strike in January 1979.[55] What may have been more surprising to the audience was that in *Yes Minister* the strike is secretly supported by the civil service.

The series thus paints a vivid picture of a stymied state in which the cliques of the fossilized Establishment defend each other's privileges while the political class bumbles along hopelessly. Whenever Sir Humphrey wants to talk his minister out of an idea, he just needs to remark that it is "courageous."[56] The writers of *Yes Minister* thereby contributed to a narrative about the winter of discontent that was used by the Conservatives not only to discredit the Labour Party, but also to delegitimize the corporatist postwar consensus in British politics more generally.[57] While the satire boom was associated with the atmosphere of rupture and new beginnings that pervaded 1960s British society and found its political equivalent in Labour's election victory in 1964, *Yes Minister* subsumed the demise of this atmosphere in the 1970s and Labour's election defeat in 1979 into the narrative of British decline. This narrative created a political-cultural space that could be filled by the ideology of Thatcherism in the 1980s.[58] As the following section will demonstrate, *Yes Minister* had a hand in the latter too.

Yes Minister and the Policies of the Thatcher Government in the 1980s

Yes Minister may have been a document of the 1970s, but it was not broadcast until the 1980s, and so it was in this latter decade that its value as a political education tool took effect. In order to properly assess the series' impact, therefore, one must appreciate how profoundly the Thatcher government changed the political culture of the UK in the 1980s.[59] Drawing on the experience of weak and discouraged governments in the 1970s, *Yes Minister* poured scorn on the political class. One might expect this to have damaged the government's reputation, but the effect appears to have been just the opposite. As commentators at the time noted, the government depicted in *Yes Minister* was so inept that the real-life government automatically looked good by comparison.[60] And because viewers recognized that the government in the satire was a caricature of the Labour government of the 1970s, the series effectively served as a weekly reminder of how poorly politics had been conducted in Britain before the Thatcher government took the helm. As divisive as Thatcher was, even her fiercest opponents could not accuse her of lacking courage or shying away from unpopular decisions.

As far as the civil service was concerned, probably no prime minister had taken office with a stronger distrust of the ministerial bureaucracy than Thatcher in 1979. During her time as a minister in the Heath government from 1970 to 1974, Thatcher had been at constant loggerheads with her civil servants. Subsequently, as leader of the opposition, she had attentively read Leslie Chapman's 1978 tell-all book *Your Disobedient Servant* and even briefly hired the author as an adviser. Chapman had worked as a regional director at the Property Services Agency but had left on bad terms, and his book was a blistering account of the mismanagement he claimed to have witnessed in the civil service.[61] Embedding entrepreneurial thinking in state administration was a central component of the Thatcher government's free-market agenda of reversing the postwar consensus. In 1979 Thatcher's team of advisers came up with the explicit slogan "De-Privilege the Civil Service."[62] John Hoskyns, who as Thatcher's senior special adviser took charge of the policy unit first established by Donoughue, had beforehand enjoyed a successful career in the private sector as a manager with the US technology corporation IBM.[63] In his eyes the inertia of the ministerial bureaucracy in Whitehall was emblematic of the generally fatalistic attitude of British elites toward their country's decline since 1945:

> The first thing to realise about civil servants is that few, if any, believe that the country can be saved. [. . .] Senior civil servants have been engaged in a twenty-five-year campaign with scarcely one significant victory [. . .]. As each government retired exhausted after another few years of fire fighting, the service had somehow to continue with the next. It has done so, I believe, [. . .] by persuading itself that the problem was insoluble in order to conserve its self-respect.[64]

The similarity between Hoskyns's view and the antiestablishment narrative put forward by Tony Benn and the Labour left wing was startling. The "New Right" thinkers on Thatcher's staff had taken an originally "New Left" narrative, but had adapted it to fit their free-market agenda. The ministerial bureaucracy's putative orientation toward the status quo was no longer critiqued as an impediment to state interventionism, but rather as an obstacle to Thatcher's small-government ideology. For the Thatcherites the only solution lay in private enterprise. In 1979 Sir Derek Rayner, a top executive in the Marks & Spencer department store group, was recruited as a special government adviser on reducing bureaucracy. The work of Rayner's Efficiency Unit eventually led to the launch in 1982 of the Financial Management Initiative, which instructed ministries to use cost-benefit assessments based on private-sector rationalization models in their budgets. In 1988 the reforms culminated in the program "Improving Management in Government—The Next Steps," which set in motion the hiving off of lower levels of the ministerial bureaucracy into semiautonomous executive agencies.[65]

Since Thatcher and her advisers based their neoliberal reading of the politics-administration dichotomy on the same (originally left-wing) antiestablishment narrative that had provided the basis for *Yes Minister*, the series' message could easily be connected with the new government's agenda, too. As in the days of the Labour government, Jay and Lynn maintained close contact with Thatcher's special advisers in 10 Downing Street, especially John Hoskyns. When the BBC published a book version of *Yes Minister* in 1984, the writers sent Hoskyns a complimentary copy signed "from two of your allies."[66]

And it was not only in the fight against the civil service that the writers felt solidarity with the Conservative government. Jay in particular became a staunch supporter of Thatcher and her Conservative government in the 1980s, and, under cover of anonymity, began writing entirely serious political speeches for prominent members of the government such as Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson. Indeed, during the 1987 general election campaign, Thatcher

herself sought Jay's advice for television appearances. Jay's knighthood in 1988 no doubt owed a great deal to the services he provided to the Conservatives, although the official reason given for the honor was his contribution to the Queen's BBC Christmas speeches in the 1960s.[67] In later years Lynn publicly distanced himself from his partner's political activities. At the time, however, he also attended Thatcher's dinner parties at 10 Downing Street and even sent the prime minister a letter congratulating her on her "magnificent and excellent election victory" after the 1983 general election.[68]

To what extent did Jay and Lynn's close relationship with the Thatcher government influence the political message of *Yes Minister*? On the one hand, the series' long lead times meant that the writers were unable to respond to current political news. On the other hand, over the years the show addressed a long series of hotly contested political issues. The show's peculiar burlesque humor actually meant that this generally was not even done with particular subtlety. In fact, one of the reasons *Yes Minister* worked so well as a tool of political education may have been that it always gave viewers plenty of hints as to which position was meant to be right or wrong in each of the conflicts depicted. In each episode there was a clearly identifiable confrontation between special interests and the common good. When all thirty-eight episodes are surveyed, it becomes apparent how very often the scriptwriters supported the Thatcher government's position on issues that were fiercely contested along party lines.

The Thatcher government's new, free-market spirit of reform vis-à-vis the civil service was first addressed toward the end of the second season of *Yes Minister*. In "A Question of Loyalty" (YM, S2, E7), which was first broadcast in April 1981, Hacker, while appearing before a parliamentary select committee, for once gains the upper hand over Sir Humphrey by refusing to go along with the latter's blocking tactics. Parliament and the government thus win a rare battle in their ongoing war with the ministerial bureaucracy. The select committee whose work Sir Humphrey seeks to stymie is investigating mismanagement in the civil service, and it produces as evidence a tell-all book of a former desk officer in Hacker's department. Here, the writers were obviously alluding to Leslie Chapman's *Your Disobedient Servant*. Also in this episode, the civil service is confronted for the first time with a reform-minded special adviser in 10 Downing Street. The name of the adviser in question is Sir Mark Spencer, a fairly blatant allusion to Sir Derek Rayner of Marks & Spencer. The episode "The Challenge" (YM, S3, E2), first broadcast in November 1982, in which Hacker tries to implement cost-benefit assessments in local government, made a similarly obvious reference to the Thatcher government's Financial Management Initiative.

Particular empathy with Thatcherism's embrace of the free-market economy was evident in the November 1982 episode "Equal Opportunities" (YM, S3, E1), which took on the issue of women in the civil service. Certainly not too far removed from the reality of the time,[69] Whitehall's mandarins are presented here as a chauvinistic clique of old men, whereas Hacker proposes the remarkably forward-looking idea of introducing a 25 percent quota of women in senior positions. Yet unfortunately Hacker's exceptionally capable female undersecretary Sarah Harrison does not want to be a beneficiary of positive discrimination. At the end of the episode, she quits the civil service to join a private bank, because in private enterprise, so she is convinced, women are judged solely according to their abilities. The episode thereby endorses the Thatcher government's rejection of legislative measures to promote women in the workplace, while the character of Sarah Harrison quite accurately captures the distance between Thatcherism (and indeed Thatcher herself) and feminism.[70]

This episode reveals that the political common ground between *Yes Minister* and the Thatcher government was not limited to antagonism toward the civil service. As described above, the series also reflected the Conservative government's hostility toward trade unions. On yet another domestic front, the Thatcher government was engaged in a battle against the power of local government throughout the 1980s. At the time, local councils in many metropolitan areas were still firmly in the hands of the Labour Party. In areas where the New Left was dominant, in particular, councils practiced a form of municipal socialism, attempting to offset government cuts in London by exceeding their budgets.[71] In their depiction of this battle, it was again clear which side the scriptwriters were on. In fact, this was one point on which Hacker and Sir Humphrey could agree. According to them, local councillors were "militant loonies," "corrupt morons," and "self-centred busybodies on a four-year ego trip." "They ruin the inner cities, let the schools fall to bits, demoralize the police, and undermine law and order—and then they blame me," Prime Minister Hacker complains in "Power to the People" (YPM, S2, E5).

In "The Challenge" (YM, S3, E2), Hacker (who at this point is still a minister) must take action against the fictional London Borough of Thames Marsh, whose councillors have blown their budget on "gay bereavement centres" and trips to Sandinista Nicaragua instead of building much-needed civil defense facilities. Also, as council leader of Thames March appears in this episode a character named Ben Stanley, who with his thin mustache bears a striking resemblance to the young Ken Livingstone. In 1981 the Greater London Council under the leadership of "Red Ken" had unilaterally proclaimed the capital a nuclear-free zone and cut all civil defense spending. The council even pub-

lished a top-secret list of 3,000 government officials for whom a place in a nuclear shelter was reserved in the event of nuclear war.[72] Tellingly, Jay and Lynn twisted this incident in "The Challenge," where it is the local councillors who have hypocritically reserved places in the bunker. The writers may also have had Ted Knight, the Trotskyist leader of London's Lambeth Borough Council, in mind when creating the character of Ben Stanley. "Red Ted" was a pioneer in providing municipal support for the gay and lesbian community and had personally delivered a message of solidarity from the citizens of Lambeth to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.[73] The character of Agnes Moorhouse, a Trotskyist councillor who appeared in "Power to the People" (YPM, S2, E5) in 1988, seems to have been loosely based on Linda Bellos, Knight's successor as leader of Lambeth Borough Council.[74]

The scriptwriters supported the Conservative government's position on education, too, another battleground in Thatcherism's campaign to dismantle the postwar consensus. The series taught its audience that the comprehensive education model promoted neither student welfare nor the overcoming of class divisions, but instead served only to increase the power of the National Union of Teachers. The 1988 episode "The National Education Service" (YPM, S2, E7) was practically a blatant commercial for the Thatcher government's Education Reform Act of that year.[75] Echoing the aims of the real-life education act, the fictional Hacker administration seeks to strengthen the rights of parents when selecting schools and to introduce a nationally mandatory core curriculum. This storyline provides plenty of opportunities for polemics about the anti-competitive ethos of state schools, which, according to the episode, teach children more about "homosexual techniques" in sex education than about arithmetic in math classes, and more Hindi than English. (The latter claim was, of course, a rather troubling comment on immigration.)

Meanwhile, environmentalists are portrayed in *Yes Minister* as far-left troublemakers. In the 1980 episode "The Right to Know" (YM, S1, E6), the minister finds to his embarrassment that his own daughter, a member of a Trotskyist student group, plans a nude protest to save a badger colony. In 1982's "The Middle-Class Rip-Off" (YM, S3, E7), it is the turn of the state-subsidized arts industry: Why should the working class's taxes be used to fund the leisure activities of educated elites? the episode asks. Why not subsidize football clubs instead of museums, opera houses, and ballet?[76] And in the 1988 episode "The Tangled Web" (YPM, S2, E8), Sir Humphrey's extremely radical views on mass unemployment, the most pressing political problem of the 1980s, go unchallenged:

> Nobody tells the truth about unemployment [. . .], because everybody knows, you could halve it in a few weeks. [. . .] Cut off all social security to any claimant who refuses two job offers! There's genuine unemployment in the North, but the South of England is awash with layabouts, many of them graduates living off the dole and housing benefit, plus quite a lot of cash they pick up without telling anybody. [. . .] Most employers will tell you they are short-staffed. But offer the unemployed a street-sweeping job or a dish-washing job, they'll be off the register before you can say "parasite." Frankly, this country can have as much unemployment as it prepared to pay for in social security. And no politicians have got the guts to do anything about it![77]

Jay and Lynn always used the same basic formula: every problem identified in the show was caused by vested interests and a particularistic sense of entitlement, while the solution always lay in the principles of competition, merit, and individual responsibility. It is clear here that the writers borrowed from the ideology of Thatcherism and its project of transcending class politics semantically by instituting a new language of *embourgeoisement*.[78]

It is hardly surprising, then, that the writers also reproduced the increasingly Euro-sceptic attitude of the British Conservatives under Thatcher.[79] In "The Devil You Know" (YM, S2, E5), Brussels, the capital of the EEC, is depicted as a place where politicians who were failures in their home countries live in luxury at the taxpayers' expense. In the 1984 episode "Party Games" (YM, Christmas special), actor André Maranne, who specialized in clichéd portrayals of Frenchmen in British films, plays Maurice, the shifty EC commissioner for agriculture who stirs up trouble in Britain by issuing an absurd directive to standardize the "Eurosausage." The position of *Yes Minister* on Britain's defense policy was a little more ambivalent, as the writers supported the Labour Party's criticism of the Trident nuclear program.[80] However, in the 1986 episode "The Grand Design" (YPM, S1, E1), Jay and Lynn departed from Labour in calling for strong conventional armament of the armed forces and the reintroduction of conscription—the latter not least because of its putative role in combating juvenile delinquency.

Overall, the political message of *Yes Minister* corresponded remarkably closely with the Thatcher government's agenda. Even at the time, this closeness did not go unnoticed, especially by left-wing critics of Thatcherism. "For ten years [. . .] *Yes Minister* has struck a popular middle-class chord," the historian Kenneth O. Morgan wrote in 1989. "It is part of the cultural pre-conditioning

of Thatcherite populism." In even stronger terms the journalist Bruce Eder called the series in 1988 "a weekly commercial in support of Thatcherism."[81]

Amalgams of Conservatism and the Many Faces of Sir Humphrey Appleby

As for Margaret Thatcher herself, she stated publicly on repeated occasions that *Yes Minister* was her favorite television show and that it had given her "hours of pure joy."[82] Jonathan Lynn has, of course rightly, pointed out that television producers are not responsible for who likes their shows.[83] Also, when *Yes Minister* was at its most popular, Thatcher was, naturally, far from being the only one to praise it publicly. In fact, politicians from all parties were keen to show they had a sense of humor by emphasizing in interviews how funny they found the jokes at their expense.[84] Even Leader of the Opposition Neil Kinnock said in a 1986 interview for a BBC documentary that he found *Yes Minister* "very, very close to the truth." Thatcher's fascination with the series, however, seemed to operate on another level. In the same documentary, the prime minister imagined being in the fictional world of *Yes Minister* and fantasized about what her relationship with the characters in the series would be like. In relation to Sir Humphrey Appleby, especially, her fantasy was not without sexual undertones, even though (or perhaps because) the Iron Lady imagined herself vanquishing the elegant villain: "I think we would get on rather well, 'cause we would both sort of see through one another. We might sort of have one of those debates, which is a sort of verbal minuet, and both know what the other wanted, and I think, ahem, I might get my way."[85]

Thatcher was by no means alone in her fascination with Sir Humphrey, either. The fictional permanent secretary, played by the experienced stage actor Nigel Hawthorne as a cross between the Shakespeare characters Iago and Malvolio, was the show's undisputed star. For many Britons this rhetorically brilliant, vain, but also smart mandarin became the personification of the civil service in the 1980s.[86] Thatcher, who was surrounded by enough civil servants to know better, nevertheless seemed to be haunted by her fantasy for a long time. Two years before the aforementioned BBC interview, she had even made an attempt to turn the fantasy into reality. Ironically, the opportunity arose at an award ceremony hosted by the NVALA.

During the satire boom of the 1960s, Mary Whitehouse had sharply attacked the satirical television show *That Was the Week That Was*, claiming that it was unpatriotic and obscene.[87] It was not entirely clear why she and her humorless pressure group for social purity chose to award a prize to *Yes Minister*

in January 1984. The actor Paul Eddington, who played Jim Hacker, later joked that it was supposedly for "being the cleanest show on the air."[88] In any case, Whitehouse invited Thatcher to give a speech at the award ceremony. Seizing her opportunity, Thatcher roped Eddington and Hawthorne into performing a sketch with her. In front of the television cameras, Thatcher claimed to have written the sketch herself, but in fact it was mostly penned by her press secretary, Bernard Ingham.[89] The plot revolves around the prime minister summoning "her" minister Jim Hacker and Sir Humphrey to give them instructions for a truly radical reform measure in the civil service: "I want you to abolish economists. [. . .] They just fill the heads of politicians with all sorts of curious notions, like the more you spend, the richer you get." Hacker, always deferential to his "boss," naturally agrees at once. Yet, Sir Humphrey is sceptical. But the prime minister won't leave it at that. What exactly had he studied, she asks, to which Sir Humphrey stammers in response: "Politics . . . er . . . and, er . . . economics." Thatcher: "Capital, my dear Sir Humphrey. You'll know exactly where to start."[90]

While this sketch was only moderately funny, it revealed a good deal about Thatcher's politics in that it differed from the television series in one important respect: In the fictional world of *Yes Minister*, it was well established that Sir Humphrey had studied "Greats" at Oxford and did not know the first thing about economics.[91] Here, the writers had taken up a common critique of the civil service in the postwar period. In the 1950s and 1960s, technocratic discourse on modernization had repeatedly identified Whitehall's "nineteenth-century hangover"—the amateur culture of the senior ministerial bureaucracy and its lack of technical and economic expertise—as a central cause of British decline.[92] And indeed, right into the postwar period, the special academic profile of Oxbridge graduates had created a distinctly literary-humanist culture within the civil service. Since the late 1950s, however, this culture had declined considerably as more and more lawyers and economists were appointed to senior positions.[93] Andrew Turnbull, the later cabinet secretary who had joined the civil service in 1968, recalled cultural transformation during his early years in the service: "We used to have people who were experts when I arrived, on Byron, and musicians. [. . .] Then, rather hard-nosed economists gradually took over and the dominant culture became not music, but football and golf."[94]

With the character of Sir Humphrey Appleby, Jay and Lynn had created a final and fairly exaggerated representation of this old stereotype. Sir Humphrey prefers to spend his free time at the Royal Opera House and considers football vulgar. He delights in making political decisions by plotting with his peers while relaxing in heavy leather armchairs at his club, and he has little time for

specialists. Thatcher and Ingham, in contrast, based the character on a new stereotype by turning Sir Humphrey into an economist. According to the new stereotype, Whitehall was overrun by Keynesian economic planners. In a diametrical reversal of the discourse of the 1960s, British decline was no longer attributed to the hangover of Victorian amateur culture, but rather to the planned-economy bureaucracy that had only been established after 1945 and that was implicitly based on a socialist view of society ("like the more you spend, the richer you get"). The instruction to "abolish economists" encapsulated in its simplest form Thatcherism's neoliberal agenda.[95]

By turning Sir Humphrey into some kind of social democrat, Thatcher and Ingham had unquestionably misinterpreted Jay and Lynn's intentions. But how did the *Yes Minister* writers actually see this character's political ethos? Was Sir Humphrey a conservative in their eyes? Their answer to this question seems to have undergone an interesting transformation over the course of the series' eight-year run. In the early seasons, Sir Humphrey's political ethos appeared to be fairly one-dimensional: he was "a moral vacuum." This is the harsh conclusion Hacker comes to in the December 1982 episode "The Whiskey Priest" (YM, S3, E6) after discussing with Sir Humphrey the moral implications of the arms trade. For Hacker, this is a question of "good and evil," but Sir Humphrey disagrees; governing is never a question of "good and evil," he insists, but of "order or chaos." The goal is not "morality," but "stability": "keeping things going, preventing anarchy, stopping society falling to bits, still being here tomorrow." Up to this point, it could be argued that Sir Humphrey advocates a technocratic conservatism reminiscent of Arnold Gehlen's theory of institutions.[96] But in conversation later in the episode with Bernard Woolley, Hacker's principal private secretary, he sounds even more hollow. Woolley believes that ideally civil servants should believe in the policies of the government they serve. Again, Sir Humphrey disagrees. If over the course of his thirty-year career he had embraced every position of every new government on issues such as nationalization, the single market, monetary theory, or even capital punishment, he would by now be "a stark, staring, raving schizophrenic." Here Sir Humphrey comes across as a pure embodiment of the soulless bureaucrat depicted in classic twentieth-century critiques of bureaucracy—a man who keeps the administrative wheels turning with mechanical precision but is uninterested in the higher purpose of his actions.[97] The permanent secretary explicitly formulates this view of bureaucracy as an end in itself in "The Skeleton in the Cupboard" (YM, S3, E3): "Minutes must be taken, records must be kept. [. . .] There are no ends in administration. [. . .] Administration is eternal, for ever and ever. Amen!"

But these were not the writers' final words on Sir Humphrey's political ethos. In *Yes, Prime Minister* in the late 1980s, the character's intrinsic motivation appeared considerably more complex. Take the January 1988 episode "Power to the People" (YPM, S2, E5), in which Sir Humphrey once again subjects poor Woolley to a lecture. His topic here, as so often in the series, is local government. Hacker wishes to introduce major reforms to make councils more transparent and democratic, but Sir Humphrey fears that Hacker's plan would transfer power from Whitehall to "Town Hall," which would run counter to the central dictum of his political philosophy: "If the right people don't have power, the wrong people get it." Woolley again plays the naïf: Isn't the point of democracy that the people govern themselves? "But this is a British democracy!" Sir Humphrey responds indignantly, and goes on to explain:

> British democracy recognises that you need a system to protect the important things of life, and keep them out of the hands of the barbarians. Things like the opera, Radio Three, the countryside, the law, the universities—both of them. And we are that system. [. . .] We run a civilised, aristocratic government machine, tempered by occasional General Elections. Since 1832, we have been gradually excluding the voter from government. Now we've got them to a point where they just vote once every five years for which bunch of buffoons will try to interfere with our policies. And you are happy to see all that thrown away?! [. . .] Do you want the Lake District turned into a gigantic caravan site? The Royal Opera House into a bingo hall? The National Theatre into a carpet sale warehouse? [. . .] Do you want Radio Three to broadcast pop music 24 hours a day? And how would you feel if they took all the culture programmes off television?

Here, the bureaucratic apparatus is for Sir Humphrey no longer an end in itself; he now believes there are "ends in administration." However, these ends are by now deeply conservative. The apparatus is primarily intended to maintain a system that preserves the cultural goods of the aristocratic classes ("the important things of life") from being destroyed by modern mass culture ("the hands of the barbarians"). Sir Humphrey articulates a deeply illiberal cultural pessimism. But the conservatism that was being skewered here by Jay and Lynn was at the same time oddly unreal, defined by the aesthetics of high culture, elite universities ("both of them"—in other words, Oxbridge), and "the countryside." Was this supposed to be an allusion to the landed gentry? Was Sir Humphrey a remnant of the anti-modernist True Toryism of the 1930s or even a relic of nineteenth-century High Toryism?[98]

In fact, what we find in the script of *Yes Minister* here is something different: namely, the medium of the Britcom being used to amalgamate the antiestablishment narrative of the New Left with the middle-class populism of the New Right. The writers mocked conservatives, but only by giving them outdated attributes that had long ceased to play a role in the real conservatism of the 1980s.[99] Meanwhile the jibe against the BBC's cultural programs subtly redirected the writers' attack to the liberal educated middle classes, for Radio 3 listeners were probably more likely to belong to this group than to the Conservative Party. The Establishment was solely defined by its cultural capital, not its economic capital. Like Thatcherism, *Yes Minister* appealed to the conservative instincts of middle-class voters to whom the Royal Opera House was as alien as the dreaded but imaginary "gay bereavement centres." This form of conservatism was socially inclusive and at the same time culturally exclusionary. The principle of merit continued to justify extreme inequalities in the distribution of wealth, but the resentment of those who did not benefit from socioeconomic transformation was redirected to the cultural elites of the postindustrial knowledge society.

In "Power to the People" (YPM, S2, E5), Sir Humphrey ultimately succeeds in thwarting Hacker's reform of local government by forming an alliance with the Trotskyist local councillor Agnes Moorhouse. The "municipal left," it is suggested, has the most to lose from open government and transparency. Sir Humphrey, the mandarin personified, hand in hand with a left-wing revolutionary? What might at first seem like an overly absurd twist of the plot makes sense when viewed in the context of the Thatcherite antiestablishment narrative, which held that the Establishment was united above all by its desire to paternalize the middle classes. Where the paternalism of the bureaucratic apparatus relied on directives and regulations, the left-wing bourgeoisie used the tools of cultural education for the ideological infiltration of daily life. To disempower both agencies of paternalism at the same time: this was the promise shared by *Yes Minister* and Thatcherism in their conservative reinterpretation of the populist formula "power to the people."

Notes

Translation by Sinéad Crowe

1. See Martina Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe: Politische Sprachen des Konservativen in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2017); Rudolf Vierhaus, "Konservativ, Konservatismus," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 3, ed. Otto Brunner,

Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 531–65; John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2009); Hans-Otto Hügel, *Lob des Mainstreams: Zu Begriff und Geschichte von Unterhaltung und Populärer Kultur* (Cologne: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2007). See also the introduction by Martina Steber, Tobias Becker, and Anna von der Goltz in the present volume.

2. See Charles More, *Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007), 170; Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), 222; Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005).

3. See Lawrence Black, "1968 and All That(cher): Cultures of Conservatism and the New Right in Britain," in *Inventing the Silent Majority in Western Europe and the United States: Conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s*, ed. Anna von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 356–76; Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 277–84; Sandbrook, *White Heat*, 570–93; Martin Durham, *Sex and Politics: The Family and Morality in the Thatcher Years* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991).

4. See Gregory Koseluk, *Great Brit-Coms: British Television Situation Comedy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000).

5. *Yes Minister* was also well known in Germany, thanks to multiple airings on German television. It was first broadcasted in Germany in January 1987. On the series' reception in West Germany, see "Mephisto in Whitehall," *Der Spiegel*, January 12, 1987.

6. Of the scholarship that has been published to date, see Jürgen Kamm, "Ignorant Master, Capable Servants: The Politics of *Yes Minister* and *Yes Prime Minister*," in *British TV Comedies: Cultural Concepts, Contexts and Controversies*, ed. Jürgen Kamm and Birgit Neumann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 114–35; Shannon Granville, "Downing Street's Favourite Soap Opera: Evaluating the Impact and Influence of *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*," *Contemporary British History* 23, no. 3 (September 2009): 315–36. The punctuation of the series' title varies; sometimes a comma is used and sometimes it is omitted. This essay follows the BBC's original titles, namely *Yes Minister* (without a comma) and *Yes, Prime Minister* (with a comma).

7. See Mark Lewisohn, *Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy* (London: BBC Worldwide, 1998), 734–35. In what follows, the series title "Yes Minister" will generally be used to refer to both *Yes Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*.

8. See Paul Cornell, Martin Day, and Keith Topping, eds., *The Guinness Book of Classic British TV* (Enfield: Guinness World Records, 1993), 114.

9. See BBC, "The Final Top 10 Sitcoms," April 30, 2013, via Internet Archive, accessed September 25, 2020, web.archive.org/web/20130430222338/http://www.bbc.co.uk/sitcom/winner.shtml.

10. BBC, "Armando Ianucci Advocated . . . ," February 6, 2013, via Internet Archive, accessed September 25, 2020, web.archive.org/web/20130206050220/http://www.bbc.co.uk/sitcom/advocate_yesminister.shtml. This website is also the source of the following quotations.

11. See also Granville, "Downing Street's Favourite Soap Opera," 315: "*Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister* have made a lasting contribution to the substance and content of political discourse in Britain, shaping public and political opinion on the relationship between politicians and civil servants."

12. See Wolfgang Seibel, *Verwaltung verstehen: Eine theoriegeschichtliche Einführung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016), 110–31; Patrick Overeem, *The Politics-Administration Dichotomy: Toward a Constitutional Perspective*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012); Luc Rouban, "Politicization of the Civil Service," in *Handbook of Public Administration*, ed. B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierre (London: Sage, 2003), 310–20; Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," in "Theory and Policy in International Relations," special issue, *World Politics* 24 (1972): 40–79.

13. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 220.

14. See Joel D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam, and Bert A. Rockman, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

15. See Barry J. O'Toole, *The Ideal of Public Service: Reflections on the Higher Civil Service in Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

16. See Gordon Hewart, *The New Despotism* (London: Ernest Benn, 1929).

17. See Nikolai Wehrs, "Elitenherrschaft im Zeitalter der 'Massendemokratie': Der Civil Service und die politische Kultur Großbritanniens im 20. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 61 (2021): 373–98. See also Martin J. Smith, *The Core Executive in Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 106–42; Peter Hennessy, *Whitehall*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Pimlico, 2001).

18. See Steven Fielding, *A State of Play: British Politics on Screen, Stage and Page, from Anthony Trollope to The Thick of It* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 227–29; Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, "A Practical Understanding of Literature on Screen: Two Conversations with Andrew Davies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 244.

19. C. P. Snow, *Corridors of Power* (London: Macmillan, 1964).

20. Jonathan Lynn, *Comedy Rules: From the Cambridge Footlights to Yes Prime Minister* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 119.

21. The originality of the satirical format of *Yes Minister* becomes even clearer if we compare it with other popular British satirical series of the 1980s, such as *Spitting Image* (ITV, 1984–96) and *The New Statesman* (ITV, 1987–92). While the latter two shows were artistically innovative, they were conventional in terms of their satirical targets in that they remained fixated on the idiosyncrasies of politicians and their power struggles. See Fielding, *State of Play*, 195–97.

22. Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857); see Ronald Amann, "The Circumlocution Office: A Snapshot of Civil Service Reform," *Political Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (July–September 2006): 334–59.

23. See Fielding, *State of Play*, 190.

24. Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 96.

25. See David Marsh, David Richards, and Martin J. Smith, *Changing Patterns of Governance in the United Kingdom: Reinventing Whitehall?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 164: "We contend that those who continue to advocate the *Yes Minister* model of Whitehall misunderstand the true dynamics involved in minister-civil servant relations." See also Gavin Drewry and Tony Butcher, *The Civil Service Today*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: John Wiley, 1991), 156–61.

26. See Humphrey Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was: Beyond the Fringe, The Establishment Club, Private Eye and That Was the Week That Was* (London: Gollancz, 2000); Roger Wilmut, *From Fringe to Flying Circus: Celebrating a Unique Generation of Comedy, 1960–1980* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980). The forty-seven part BBC documentary *Comedy Connections* (2003–8) provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship of later comedies to the satire boom.

27. See Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Little, Brown, 2005), 527–57; Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, 48–53; Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 94–112; Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was*, 92–127; Wilmut, *From Fringe to Flying Circus*, 1–51; David Behrens, "How Yorkshire's Harold Wilson Reinvented Politics," *Yorkshire Post*, August 24, 2020. For an example of autobiographies, see John Cleese, *So, Anyway* (London: Arrow, 2014). On public debates in Britain about the Establishment see Morten Reitmayer, "Die Elitesemantiken einer Klassengesellschaft: Großbritannien im 20. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 45, no. 2 (April–June 2019): 191–221; Hugh Thomas, ed., *The Establishment* (London: Blond, 1959).

28. See Stephen Bates, "Sir Antony Jay Obituary," *Guardian*, August 23, 2016; Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 32–42, 68–70, 81–83; Cleese, *So, Anyway*, 258–59; Koseluk, *Great Brit-Coms*, 328–29.

29. See Bates, "Sir Antony Jay Obituary"; Sean O'Grady, "Sir Antony Jay Dead: Yes Minister Co-Writer Was Both a Distinguished Product—and Critic—of the British Establishment," *Independent*, August 23, 2016.

30. Antony Jay, *Confessions of a Reformed BBC Producer* (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 2007), 1.

31. Antony Jay, *Management and Machiavelli: An Inquiry into the Politics of Corporate Life* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967); Antony Jay, *Corporation Man* (London: Random House, 1971). See Sören Brandes, " 'Free to Choose': Die Popularisierung des Neoliberalismus in Milton Friedmans Fernsehserie (1980/90)," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 12, no. 3 (2015): 528–29.

32. Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 96, 110, 113.

33. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 83, 97.

34. Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, vol. 1, *Minister of Housing, 1964–66* (London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975).

35. See David Reynolds, "Official History: How Churchill and the Cabinet Office Wrote the Second World War," *Historical Research* 78, no. 201 (August 2005): 400–422.

36. See Hugo Young, *The Crossman Affair* (London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1976).

37. Crossman, *Diaries*, 1:21; also the source of the following quotations, 1:22.

38. *Yes Minister*, season 1, episode 2: "The Official Visit." Episodes of *Yes Minister* will be cited hereafter as follows: "The Official Visit" (YM, S1, E2). *Yes, Prime Minister* will be cited as YPM, e.g., "Power to the People" (YPM, S2, E5).

39. See Crossman, *Diaries*, 1:26, 30, 618–19.

40. Crossman, *Diaries*, 1:22–23.

41. Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 97.

42. Barbara Castle, "Mandarin Power," *Sunday Times*, June 10, 1973. Kamm reports, without citing a source, that Jay attended a lecture by Castle at the Civil Service College in 1972: see Kamm, "Ignorant Master," 114.

43. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 98–99, 118; Bernard Donoughue, *The Heat of the Kitchen: An Autobiography* (London: Politico's Publishing, 2003), 297; Koseluk, *Great Brit-Coms*, 331.

44. See Ben Yong and Robert Hazell, *Special Advisers: Who They Are, What They Do and Why They Matter* (Oxford: Hart, 2014).

45. See Yong and Hazell, *Special Advisers*, 18–19; Marcia Williams, *Inside Number 10* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972); Bernard Donoughue, *Downing Street Diary with Harold Wilson in No. 10* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).

46. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 108; Yong and Hazell, *Special Advisers*, 23–26.

47. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 99; Williams, *Inside Number 10*, 20–22.

48. See Kevin Theakston, *The Labour Party and Whitehall* (London: Routledge, 1992), 25–31, 141–52; *The Reform of the Higher Civil Service: A Report by a Special Committee for the Fabian Society* (London: Fabian, 1947).

49. See Martin Pugh, *Speak for Britain! A New History of the Labour Party* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), 346–47, 362–71; Jad Adams, *Tony Benn: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 312–98.

50. Tony Benn, *Arguments for Democracy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981). See Antony Part, *The Making of a Mandarin* (London: A. Deutsch, 1990), 167–75; Tony Benn, *Against the Tide: Diaries, 1973–76* (London: Hutchinson, 1989).

51. Quoted in Hugo Young and Anne Sloman, *No, Minister: An Inquiry into the Civil Service* (London: BBC, 1982), 19–20.

52. Quoted in Fielding, *State of Play*, 191. See Roy Hattersley, "Of Ministers and Mandarins," *Listener*, March 20, 1980.

53. See Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber & Faber, 2009); John Shepherd, *Crisis? What Crisis? The Callaghan Government and the British "Winter of Discontent"* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

54. See Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn, *The Yes Minister Miscellany* (London: Biteback, 2010), 5.

55. See Beckett, *Lights*, 469–79.

56. This joke first appeared in the episode "The Right to Know" (YM, S1, E6) and became a running gag in subsequent seasons.

57. On the "postwar consensus," see Brian Harrison, "The Rise, Fall and Rise of Political Consensus in Britain since 1940," *History* 84, no. 274 (April 1999): 301–24; David Dutton,

British Politics since 1945: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Consensus, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley, 1997).

58. See Colin Hay, "Chronicles of a Death Foretold: The Winter of Discontent and Construction of the Crisis of British Keynesianism," *Parliamentary Affairs* 63, no. 3 (July 2010): 446–70; Jim Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline: Understanding Post-War Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014, eBook); Richard English and Michael Kenny, eds., *Rethinking British Decline* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000).

59. On the context, see Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, eds., *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain*.

60. See Granville, "Downing Street's Favourite Soap Opera," 327.

61. Leslie Chapman, *Your Disobedient Servant* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1978). See Hugo Young, *One of Us: A Biography of Margaret Thatcher*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1991), 70–74; David Richards, *The Civil Service under the Conservatives, 1979–1997: Whitehall's Political Poodles?* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 1997), 25–26.

62. John Hoskyns, *Just in Time: Inside the Thatcher Revolution* (London: Aurum, 2000), 141–42.

63. See Andy Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle: Why 1980–82 Made Modern Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 75–79.

64. John Hoskyns, "Whitehall and Westminster: An Outsider's View," *Parliamentary Affairs* 36, no. 1 (1983): 142.

65. See Richards, *Civil Service*, 23–45; John R. Greenaway, "Bureaucrats under Pressure: The Thatcher Government and the Mandarin Elite," *Teaching Politics* 13, no. 1 (1984): 66–84.

66. See Hoskyns, *Just in Time*, 150; Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay, eds., *The Complete Yes Minister: The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister* (London: BBC Books, 1984).

67. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 156; Bates, "Sir Antony Jay Obituary"; John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher*, vol. 2, *The Iron Lady* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003), 524; Michael Cockerell, *Live from Number 10: The Inside Story of Prime Ministers and Television* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), 288.

68. Quoted in Fielding, *State of Play*, 193; see Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 154–55.

69. See Elizabeth Brimelow, "Women in the Civil Service," *Public Administration* 59, no. 3 (September 1981): 313–35.

70. See Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 40–54; Laura Beers, "Thatcher and the Women's Vote," in Jackson and Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 113–31.

71. See Paul Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 306–12; Steward Lansley, Sue Goss, and Christian Wolmar, *Councils in Conflict: The Rise and Fall of the Municipal Left* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

72. See Andrew Hosken, *Ken: The Ups and Downs of Ken Livingstone* (London: Arcadia, 2008), 152–53.

73. See Addison, *No Turning Back*, 307.

74. See Linda Bellos, "Some History: Being Leader of Lambeth Council—Background," accessed June 25, 2023, www.lindabellos.com/some-history. The model is in this case less

evident, since Agnes Moorhouse was played by a white actor (Gwen Taylor), while Linda Bellos is Black.

75. See Addison, *No Turning Back*, 302–3.

76. On the Thatcher government's strained relationship with the subsidized arts industry, see Marwick, *British Society*, 316–32.

77. On the connection between public debates on benefit fraud and the Thatcher government's neoliberal shift in social policy, see Bernhard Rieger, "Making Britain Work Again: Unemployment and the Remaking of British Social Policy," *English Historical Review* 133 (2018): 634–66.

78. See Robert Saunders, " 'Crisis? What Crisis?' Thatcherism and the Seventies," in Jackson and Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 25–42; Jon Lawrence and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, "Margaret Thatcher and the Decline of Class Politics," in ibid., 132–47; Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 81–105.

79. See Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain*, 230–48.

80. See Richard Vinen, "Thatcherism and the Cold War," in Jackson and Saunders, *Making Thatcher's Britain*, 199–217.

81. Kenneth O. Morgan, "The Common Ground," *New Statesman and Society*, July 7, 1989; Bruce Eder quoted in Fielding, *State of Play*, 193.

82. Quoted in Margaret Thatcher, "Speech (and Sketch) for BBC1 Yes, Prime Minister," January 20, 1984, accessed September 26, 2020, www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105519; see also Fielding, *State of Play*, 192.

83. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 154.

84. See Granville, "Downing Street's Favourite Soap Opera," 323–26.

85. The interviews were part of the television documentary *That's Television Entertainment*, which was broadcast on BBC1 on January 11, 1986, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the BBC Television Service.

86. Between 1982 and 1988, Hawthorne received a total of four British Academy Television Awards for his performance in the role of Sir Humphrey Appleby. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 104, 116.

87. See Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain since 1945: The People's Peace*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 209.

88. Quoted in Granville, "Downing Street's Favourite Soap Opera," 316.

89. See Lynn, *Comedy Rules*, 158–60; Cockerell, *Live from Number 10*, 288. Besides Ingham, Robin Butler, Thatcher's principal private secretary, probably also helped to write the script. See Michael Jago, *Robin Butler: At the Heart of Power from Heath to Blair* (London: Biteback, 2017), 138–39.

90. Thatcher, "Speech (and Sketch)."

91. First established in "The Greasy Pole" (YM, S2, E4); repeated in episodes such as "A Real Partnership" (YPM, S1, E5).

92. Anthony Sampson, *Anatomy of Britain* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962), 110 (quoting Hugh Gaitskell's phrase "nineteenth-century hangover"). See Thomas Balogh, "The Apotheosis of the Dilettante: The Establishment of Mandarins," in Thomas, *The Establishment*, 82–126.

93. See Sampson, *Anatomy of Britain*, 224–26; Kevin Theakston and Geoffrey K. Fry, "Britain's Administrative Elite: Permanent Secretaries, 1900–1986," *Public Administration* 67, no. 2 (June 1989): 129–47.

94. Quoted in Aeron Davis, *Reckless Opportunists: Elites at the End of the Establishment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 12.

95. See Eric J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, 4th rev. ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 171–75.

96. See Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur: Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1956).

97. See Pascale Cancik, "Zuviel Staat?—Die Institutionalisierung der 'Bürokratie'-Kritik im 20. Jahrhundert," *Der Staat* 56, no. 1 (2017): 1–38.

98. See Bernhard Dietz, *Neo-Tories: Britische Konservative im Aufstand gegen Demokratie und politische Moderne (1929–1939)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012); Bruce Coleman, *Conservatism and the Conservative Party in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988), 55–88.

99. See Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 83–105; Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, 53–54; Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Strange Death of Tory England* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

Thatcherism and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Musicals

AMANDA EUBANKS WINKLER

This article delineates the key tenets of Thatcherism and considers the ways they might be enacted in Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1980's oeuvre. The author focuses on three shows that have often been linked with Thatcherite aesthetics: *Cats* (1981), *Startlight Express* (1984), and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). The article demonstrates how the musical language and dramaturgy of these musicals participated in larger cultural discourses shaped by Thatcherism, discourses that lauded "traditional values" and a "glorious" British past, that bridled against elitism, and that shifted the perception of the role of government and the relationship between the individual and the state.

Introduction

"Look at Andrew Lloyd Webber."[1] That was Margaret Thatcher's rejoinder to Peter Hall, director of the National Theatre, after he bitterly complained that British arts were being choked by lack of government funding. Thatcher's exemplar was carefully chosen: for her, success on the free market was interchangeable with artistic worth. Ergo, Lloyd Webber was the very model of a modern British composer. Lloyd Webber's path to musical theater success had begun in 1968 with his "pop cantata" for schoolchildren written with Tim Rice, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. He followed *Joseph*'s formula in subsequent works *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970) and *Evita* (1976), marrying the operatic principle of through-composition (i.e., no, or very little, spoken dialogue) with pop and rock sensibilities. By the 1980s, Lloyd Webber's collaboration with Rice had run its course, but his popularity had reached its zenith, as he produced a series of musicals that did massive box office business and became mainstream cultural phenomena.

The admiration between Thatcher and Lloyd Webber was mutual. Lloyd Webber had been a long-standing critic of British tax law, and in Thatcher's

economic policies he saw personal salvation—he would keep more of his revenue. So devoted was he to the causes of tax reform and free markets that he appeared in the British press, extolling the merits of Thatcher's policies.[2] He also served as a composer for the Tories, and in 1987 supplied music for a Conservative Party election broadcast.[3]

Because of the political sympathy between Lloyd Webber and Thatcher, scholars and journalists have frequently claimed that the composer's shows reflect Thatcherite ideologies. *Guardian* theater critic Michael Billington famously labeled the 1980s British musical as "Thatcherism in action."[4] Across the pond, critic Frank Rich drew frequent connections in the *New York Times* between politics and Lloyd Webber's shows. Reviewing *Phantom of the Opera*, he said, "Mr. Lloyd Webber is a creature, perhaps even a prisoner, of his time . . . he remakes La Belle Epoque in the image of our own Gilded Age," a swipe at the economic disparities and the excess consumption that resulted from Thatcher's and Reagan's emphasis on deregulation and free markets.[5] Billington's description also indicates that Thatcherism has a recognizable sound, a typical sort of plot, a standard production style—in other words, Thatcherism is performative. The type of musical that Billington was referring to is the so-called "megamusical," a term first used by the *New York Times* to describe the British and European imports that had flooded the Broadway stage in the 1980s. As developed by Lloyd Webber and his collaborators, the megamusical is both forward-thinking and backward-looking, for it combines elements of European opera with technologically advanced spectacle and popular music, synthesizing high culture with mass culture.[6]

Despite a broad consensus that Lloyd Webber's shows from the 1980s somehow purvey Thatcherism, a detailed analysis of this phenomenon has yet to be written.[7] This essay fills the gap by delineating the key tenets of Thatcherism and considering the ways they might be enacted in three of Lloyd Webber's megamusicals: *Cats* (1981), *Starlight Express* (1984), and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). Historical accounts of Thatcherism do not generally consider culture, or, if they do, it is largely to discuss how creators made art that opposed the policies of Thatcher's government.[8] By focusing on a composer who supported Thatcherism and who enjoyed great commercial success during the 1980s, I am expanding our knowledge of the intersection between culture and Thatcherism's neoliberal, populist version of conservatism.

A few brief methodological caveats are necessary before proceeding. Admittedly, Lloyd Webber's shows have broad, transnational appeal, and in some

locations (i.e., Germany, East Asia) they were not necessarily viewed through the lens of a particular political ideology; for this reason, I focus primarily on the British context. Furthermore, by drawing connections between his shows and Thatcherism I am not claiming that the composer intentionally wrote musicals that supported a particular political point of view. Musical theater is an inherently multivalent art form and Lloyd Webber's collaborators do not necessarily share his political beliefs. Nevertheless, his 1980s oeuvre participated in larger cultural discourses shaped by Thatcherism, discourses that lauded "traditional values" and a glorious British past that might be recaptured in the present, that bridled against "elitism" and shifted the perception of the role of government and the relationship between the individual and the state.[9]

Thatcher's Economic Policies and the Arts

When Margaret Thatcher took office in 1979, she inherited a British economy in deep recession, an economy that she believed had been stunted by an overly interventionist government. Her foreword to the 1979 Conservative Party general election manifesto identified the supposed problem: "the balance of our society has been increasingly tilted in favour of the State at the expense of individual freedom."[10] Her emphasis on "individual freedom" echoed the words of US economist Milton Friedman, who in the mid-twentieth century argued for a "new ideology" that would "give high priority to limiting the state's ability to intervene in the activities of the individual."[11] To shift power toward the individual, Thatcher's government privatized and deregulated industries, limited the power of trade unions, and lowered rates of taxation.[12]

The emphasis on privatization also had a substantial effect on cultural policy. In 1946 a royal charter had established the Arts Council to promote and support the fine arts in Britain. Economist John Maynard Keynes, a man who famously and influentially advocated for government intervention in fiscal policy and the markets, had served as chair of the preceding organization, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. During his four-year tenure with CEMA, Keynes developed the framework for the Arts Council and established the parameters of state patronage in Britain, a paradigm that was deeply influenced by his involvement with the avant-garde, bohemian Bloomsbury Group.[13] Keynes did not want government sponsorship to transform art into propaganda; rather, he hoped that state funding would insulate artists from the vicissitudes of the marketplace, encouraging the adventurous and avant-garde. According to his thinking, the state should also support elite culture, such as opera and ballet, genres that supposedly ennobled and elevat-

ed audiences.[14] To insulate the council from ideological meddling, Keynes explained that it would be a "semi-independent body" that used governmental funds to subsidize a variety of projects. He declared triumphantly, "At last the public exchequer has recognized the support and encouragement of the civilizing arts of life as a part of their duty."[15] Although Keynes saw grants and subsidies as temporary investments, over time the Arts Council grew in budget and size, and cultural institutions became dependent on Arts Council subvention for their survival.[16]

For Thatcher's government, such schemes were anathema: corporate sponsorship and individual donations should play a greater role, and elites should not make decisions about what art was best for the people. In other words, individuals should decide what art flourished and what failed. As Thatcher put it in 1979, "reductions to direct taxation will enable many private people to contribute to the arts who have not been able to do so before."[17] And in a 1980 speech to the Royal Academy, she continued to emphasize the importance of individual patronage:

> I believe that, even though the heights of artistic creation were often attained under a system of patronage, you cannot achieve a renaissance by simply substituting state patronage for private patronage. To suggest you can is to ignore the essential nature of the personal relationship between artist and patron, namely the cross fertilisation of two cultured minds.[18]

How did these views translate into policy? Thatcher's tenure started with a 4.8 percent cut to Arts Council grants and finished with one of 2.9 percent.[19] At the beginning of the 1980s, business sponsorship represented less than 2 percent of arts subsidy in Britain, and the private sector was slow to make up the shortfall.[20] Because the government was no longer playing a robust role in arts funding and corporations had yet to fill the gap, revenue had to be generated from ticket sales. In 1987 Thatcher's arts minister, Richard Luce, remarked that "the only test of our ability to succeed is whether we can attract enough customers."[21] Chairman of the Arts Council Lord Rees-Mogg echoed this Thatcherite dogma in his 1987–88 annual report: "We are coming to value the consumer's judgement as highly as that of the official or expert."[22] In this brave new world, cultural products competed on the free market, a shift which forced producers to mount shows that were "sure bets"—ones that would enjoy a large box office return. Audiences, not intellectuals or critics or elite policy makers, would henceforth decide a cultural product's worth.[23]

Rees-Mogg's privileging of the consumer's opinion over that of the "elite" aligns with a larger trend whereby the idea of culture and its role in society

was changed from the perception that it was a "public good" that needed to be funded by the government to thinking in terms of culture and creativity more generally in terms of their economic benefit as commodities.[24] In this emerging UK culture industry, worth was therefore defined not by experts (or critics) who assessed quality, but rather through economic impact: in the case of Lloyd Webber, this meant box office receipts.[25]

In a general sense such ideologies led to the policy prioritization of individual entrepreneurship over centralized governmental economic planning, but on a more granular level free-market ideologies had an inevitable impact on the kind of shows that were produced, for the value of cultural products was now more intensely predicated upon popularity and profitability. Reduced government funding meant that by the late 1980s the Royal Opera House (as well as the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre) had significant financial shortfalls. Peter Hall, the man who complained to Thatcher about the impact of her policies on the theater, assessed the fallout in a 1991 article for the *New York Times*. He claimed that the reliance on corporate sponsorship—the US model of arts funding—had silenced avant-garde voices during Thatcher's tenure. Even more perniciously, according to Hall, her cultural policies were designed to quell the political opposition:

> Thatcherism meant more than a reduction of subsidy; there was also a change of tone. From the start, the arts were suspected of encouraging left-wing tendencies. This is an insecurity common to authoritarian governments throughout history, whether radical or reactionary. Acceptable art must be bland and unresponsive. If you silence the avant-garde, you help silence dissent. In Mrs. Thatcher's Britain, artists were not valued. The attitude was that they should pull themselves together and get proper jobs. Paradoxically, a Conservative Prime Minister in no sense conserved. Innovation was disregarded and English nonconformity and eccentricity repressed.[26]

Reading this passage, we might say that Hall was a conservative (with a small "c") who wanted to retain Keynesian-style governmental subvention, a model deeply aligned with the ideals of a ruling class that, in the aftermath of war, sought to edify and educate the masses with high-quality, intellectually rigorous art, an art that reflected the "true" English character of "nonconformity and eccentricity." As Andrew Blake notes, some modernist composers and university-educated "experts" even harbored contempt "for the audience whose tastes they could bypass by means of subsidy from the Arts Council and elsewhere."[27] Other artistic institutions supported by the government—

the Royal Opera House, the National Theatre, and the Royal Shakespeare Company—were hardly bastions of avant-gardism, with their investment in the canon and perpetual revival of repertories that originated in the distant past. In fact, as Robert Hewison piquantly observes, the Arts Council has often proved to be a "force for cultural conservatism."[28]

Despite Hall's claims, Thatcher and her government had thought about ways to foster innovation, although they focused on the economic, not artistic, variety. Furthermore, they wanted to cultivate and celebrate a different kind of British character. Gone was the British eccentric. In was the British entrepreneur.[29] Necessity is the mother of invention, and as governmental support waned, the line between commercial and subsidized theater grew thin.[30] Trevor Nunn, then director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, was a frequent Lloyd Webber collaborator, and he was also the co-director with John Caird of the original RSC/Cameron Mackintosh production of *Les Misérables*. Thus, collaborators and, in the case of *Les Mis*, funding from the subsidized theater made Thatcherite musical theater possible.

Triumph of the Individual

Michael Billington claimed that the 1980s musical was "Thatcherism in action" not only because of its profitability, but also because of its content. It was "the ultimate celebrant of individualism."[31] Although there is a kernel of truth in this observation, Billington's conflation of Thatcherism and individualism may be too simplistic, for, as historians have noted, Thatcher's rise to power was made possible because during the postwar period the people had become more individualistic. In other words, Thatcher's policies reflected an increased desire across all classes for personal autonomy and self-determination.[32]

According to Thatcherism, the power of individuals to succeed had been curtailed by interventionist economic policies. By rolling back regulation, the individual could flourish and profit from hard work. This is meritocracy—the idea that exceptional individuals will succeed if they are allowed to compete. Thatcher's own personal experiences informed her political proclivities. She was the daughter of a grocer and she fervently believed that she had ascended to the very heights of power through talent and ability alone. In a 1983 interview with *The Sun*, she deployed an autobiographical meritocratic narrative to defend her rationale for keeping elite grammar schools in the UK:

> I again insisted on keeping the grammar schools because there were people like me who needed grammar schools to climb the ladder to be equal

> to the people who started in at the top, and that was twisted, that it was elitist, and I said it is not elitist at all, it doesn't matter what your background is. I believe in merit, I belong to meritocracy, and I don't care two hoots what your background is.[33]

Lloyd Webber's musical *Starlight Express* (1984), which focuses on an individual striver—the underdog steam engine Rusty—dramatizes meritocratic idealism. The original idea for the show came from Wilbert Vere Awdry's Thomas the Tank Engine stories. Lloyd Webber adored these tales of hard work, perseverance, and clear social hierarchies. He even named his company, the Really Useful Group, after the *Really Useful Engine* book in Awdry's series. As Lloyd Webber put it, the "moral of the books is that a properly brung up engine must be Really Useful all the time," a sentiment that echoes some of Thatcher's statements about the necessity of having a good work ethic.[34] According to Thatcher, her Victorian grandmother reinforced such values: "You were taught to work jolly hard, you were taught to improve yourself, you were taught self-reliance, you were taught to live within your income, you were taught that cleanliness was next to godliness. You were taught self-respect, you were taught always to give a hand to your neighbour, you were taught tremendous pride in your country, you were taught to be a good member of your community."[35]

In 1974 Lloyd Webber had approached Awdry about the idea of writing an animated musical television series and Awdry approved, although the show failed to come to fruition.[36] The composer's interest in the material lingered, and one can find the residual influence of Awdry woven throughout the musical. As in Awdry's stories, a steam train is at the center of the *Starlight Express* narrative. And like Awdry's stories, hard work and determination can overcome the limitations of one's origins. Steam triumphs over newfangled diesel and electricity.

Meritocratic competition, the power of the individual to succeed, lies at the heart of *Starlight Express*, for the plot of the musical—a child's dream about his toy trains—is really a flimsy excuse for a series of hair-raising races.[37] It is tempting to read the entire show as an allegorical enactment of the pleasures and pitfalls of free-market capitalism. Those who "won" enjoyed substantial benefits. Those who lost literally crashed. The show reinforces messages of meritocracy in other ways. The steam engine Rusty begs the mystical "Starlight Express" to help him in his racing endeavors, and discovers that the power to succeed is not external; salvation rests firmly in Rusty himself. In the words of the Starlight Express, you "Needn't beg the world to turn around and help you

/ If you draw on what is deep inside," a sentiment that Billington connected to Thatcherism: "As Rusty discovered that the magical Starlight Express lay within himself, the show combined the now obligatory numinous climax with a hymn to Thatcherite individualism."[38]

The score of *Starlight Express* also privileges musical individualism and consumer appeal, as it is a collection of diverse songs rather than a sonically unified piece. Lloyd Webber imitated a wide range of popular music styles, including country ("U.N.C.O.U.P.L.E.D."), Elvis-era rock and roll ("Pumping Iron"), synth-pop ("AC/DC"), rap ("The Rap"), power ballads ("Only He/ Only You"), and blues and gospel ("Poppa's Blues," "Light at the End of the Tunnel"). To keep the score fresh and current, Lloyd Webber has frequently updated the music over the years, even asking younger composers, including his son Alistair, to write new material. In essence, the parts of *Starlight Express*, like the train cars themselves, are detachable and interchangeable. If a number no longer seems relevant it can be cut and replaced to retain the work's commercial viability. The most important thing, to paraphrase Richard Luce, is whether or not a show sells. And *Starlight Express* sells. Despite largely negative reviews, it is staged throughout the world, and it has proven particularly popular in Germany, where it has run without interruption since 1988 at a custom-built theater in Bochum. Audiences outside the UK might not understand *Starlight Express* as a manifestation of Thatcherism, but the meritocratic ethos that underpins the show certainly resonates more broadly.

Starlight Express's structure is very similar to Lloyd Webber's previous hit musical, *Cats* (1981), which also foregrounds competition and a multiplicity of musical genres. *Cats* is like Eurovision for felines, as moggies offer various songs and dances to see who will achieve apotheosis in the Heaviside Layer, with Old Deuteronomy serving as their godlike judge. And like the trains of *Starlight Express*, the cats sing in diverse styles, although the score of *Cats* does not lean as heavily on late twentieth-century popular music. Instead, the songs of *Cats*, like the T. S. Eliot poems that inspired the show, are more rooted in the past, particularly the Victorian past, another aesthetic choice aligned with Thatcherism.

Victorian Nostalgia

The Victorian Age, according to Thatcher, was a time when hard work was valued, when traditional morality was respected, and when Britain enjoyed the "fruits" of empire. Although Britain had now waned as a world power and its economy was in shambles, Thatcher hoped to rekindle national pride through

appeals to the island nation's storied Victorian past, carefully avoiding any discussion of imperial evils and the class disparity that marred that era. Instead, she focused on hard work and "the values when our country became great."[39] As mentioned previously, Thatcher credited her Victorian grandmother for imbuing her with a solid work ethic, and in an interview with Brian Walden on *Weekend World* in 1983, she waxed rhapsodic about Victorian virtues. The Victorians' moral code caused them to contribute to the common good. No compulsion by the government was necessary:

> Those were the values when our country became great, but not only did our country become great internationally, also so much advance was made in this country. Colossal advance, as people prospered themselves so they gave great voluntary things to the State. So many of the schools we replace now were voluntary schools, so many of the hospitals we replace were hospitals given by this great benefaction feeling that we have in Britain, even some of the prisons, the Town Halls. As our people prospered, so they used their independence and initiative to prosper others, not compulsion by the State.[40]

According to Thatcher, a return to Victorian values would help rebuild the British nation. In terms of policy, this meant independent philanthropy taking the place of taxation or government mandates. Nigel Lawson, Thatcher's chancellor of the exchequer from 1983 to 1989, defined Thatcherism in very similar terms: "a mixture of free markets, financial discipline, firm control over public expenditure, tax cuts, nationalism, 'Victorian values' (of the Samuel Smiles self-help variety), privatization and a dash of populism."[41]

The Victorian past is everywhere present in *Cats*. Musical theater is inherently collaborative, so part of this Victoriana is a result of Lloyd Webber and his collaborators—director Trevor Nunn, designer John Napier, and choreographer Gillian Lynne—matching music and dramaturgy to T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), the poems that serve as the libretto for Lloyd Webber's musical. In these verses, as Kathryn Lowerre remarks, the US-born Eliot seemed to long "for an English Victorian childhood [he] never had."[42] Eliot has become a hero to conservative thinkers, and perhaps Lloyd Webber felt a kinship with the poet, a traditionalist who cast a jaundiced eye on modernity even as his poems spoke very much to the modern condition.[43] Indeed, the composer tells the tale of why he felt drawn to the material in revealing terms, perhaps inadvertently echoing Thatcher's rhetoric about Victorian values:

> I have, you see, a very sort of Victorian work ethic, which means I am constantly looking for things to do which I haven't tried my hand at before. I remembered the *Cats* book from when I was a kid, and I knew it was witty, funny and definitely lyrical, because Eliot shows his Americanism every other minute.[44]

Although Lloyd Webber's and Thatcher's definitions of Victorian values don't entirely correspond, both composer and politician have a nostalgic affection for an entrepreneurial spirit that, in its time, supposedly made Britain "great."[45]

Although they drew upon Eliot's Victorian-inflected poems, Lloyd Webber and his team did not precisely imitate Victorian musical and visual culture. Instead, just like Thatcher and her government, they picked and chose the elements that served their purposes. For instance, they retained the Victorian moral codes and gender roles found in Eliot's poems. As Lowerre has observed, the "Glamour Cat" Grizabella is an archetypal figure, the downtrodden yet sympathetic "fallen woman" who features in so many nineteenth-century cultural products.[46] The "Gumbie Cat" Jennyanydots is a typical Victorian "mother/teacher" transmuted into feline form, who combats idleness and immorality.[47] Every evening, after the day's "hustle and bustle is done," she forces various vermin into submission with rigid discipline, reforming their laziness through hard work. As her interlocutors, the so-called "Gumbie Trio" tell us, "She is deeply concerned with the ways of the mice," to which Jennyanydots responds, "Their behaviour's not good and their manners not nice." To improve the mice, she teaches them "Music, crocheting and tatting," appropriate domestic accomplishments. Similarly, the cockroaches need correction. According to Jenny, they "just need employment," so she assigns them tasks and they are transformed into "a troop of well-disciplined helpful boy scouts."

Musical sound helps to construct the Victorian, or at least broadly nineteenth-century, aesthetic, but Lloyd Webber amended things as necessary, sometimes settling on music evoking a more generalized past rather than a consistently Victorian one. For instance, the verses of the "Gumbie Cat" song, performed by Quaxo in the original London cast, sound somewhat like a Victorian parlor song, with its keyboard accompaniment; however, the music shifts into another genre for the choruses, which are sung Andrews Sisters style in three-part harmony. In essence, Lloyd Webber, born in 1948, sonically combines the world of Eliot's childhood with that of his own. Grizabella's famous power ballad "Memory" is also in dialogue with the past, although here the model may not have been as apparent to listeners. The melody was purpose-

ly written by Lloyd Webber in the style of Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini, a choice that aligns the fallen "Glamour Cat" with other operatic fallen women, including the poor tubercular seamstress Mimí from *La Bohème* (1896).[48]

Whereas the "Gumbie Cat" song and "Memory" combined various past musical styles, one number in the London production specifically drew upon Victorian popular culture. In the "Gus: The Theatre Cat" sequence, an old actor cat suffering from "palsy" recalls his theatrical triumph as the British pirate Growltiger. Toward the end of this episode, Growltiger and his beloved Griddlebone sing their "last duet," a Cockney music-hall waltz, "The Ballad of Billy McCaw." London-based music halls had flourished from the mid-nineteenth century until their demise in the early twentieth century. Many of the songs were comical or sentimental and were sung by costumed performers "in character," and they often incorporated dialects. Performers also encouraged the audience to sing along with the choruses.[49] Music-hall songs had a profound and lasting impact on British musicals (*Oliver!*, *My Fair Lady*) and British rock (e.g., "When I'm Sixty-Four"), and it is possible that Lloyd Webber came to know music-hall sounds via these two sources as well as actual Victorian cultural products.[50] Regardless of where Lloyd Webber first heard music hall, "The Ballad of Billy McCaw" contains many of the typical elements of music-hall songs: a sing-along chorus (Growltiger and Griddlebone sing together), a celebration of pub life, eccentric characters (a talented parrot, Billy McCaw), and the use of dialect (Cockney). By using music hall, Lloyd Webber adopts a similar strategy as his "Gumbie Cat" song, as he brings the tastes of his own generation together with those of the nineteenth century, weaving together the British baby-boomer affection for precedent styles of popular music with Thatcherism's populist, nationalist appeals to the age of Victoria.

The sequence also incorporates the darker side of the Victorian era (and the 1980s): casual racism. Eliot's poem "Growltiger's Last Stand" is explicitly racist in theme, as it pits the British antihero Growltiger against his Siamese enemies, who are referred to with a racial epithet in both the poem and the lyrics of the London production. The Siamese sing in a nasal tone and the musical sequence is replete with pentatonic (i.e., five-note) scales, a common Western musical signifier of the "exotic" East.[51] In other words, Lloyd Webber provided a racist musical setting for Eliot's racist poem, reinforcing views that allowed imperial ambitions to flourish in the nineteenth century and that continued to plague Britain into the twentieth century and beyond. Racist views circulated freely in Lloyd Webber's youth, most notably shadow defense secretary

Enoch Powell's infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech (1968), which deployed racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric to curry favor with white, urban, working-class British voters. Powell lost his job as a result of this speech, but by the time Thatcher's government rose to power, anti-immigrant sentiment and worries over the evaporating whiteness of British identity had become a reliable staple of Conservative rhetoric.[52]

Lloyd Webber's preoccupation with Victoriana can also be detected in his most famous show, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). The *Phantom* musical, like the 1911 novel by Gaston Leroux on which it draws, is set in Paris, but Victorian culture still played a role in how the creators conceptualized the work. We might find Victorian aesthetics in the curly, Pre-Raphaelite mane of the female protagonist, Christine Daaé, and Stacy Wolf has argued that the retrograde gender roles in *The Phantom of the Opera* (with a passive ingenue and active men) reflect the conservative retrenchment of the Reagan/Thatcher era, or, in the context of my argument, Thatcherite "Victorian values."[53] Certainly, Leroux's book employs conventions commonly found in Victorian literature, an element highlighted in the official study guide for *The Phantom of the Opera*. Author Peter Royston encourages teachers and students to consider *Phantom* through the lens of Victorian literature, particularly novels such as *Dracula*, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *Frankenstein* that incorporate gothic elements and a "fascination with horror, repressed sexuality and the dual nature of man."[54]

Anti-Intellectualism and Middlebrow Aesthetics

Phantom obviously incorporates common Victorian elements in its gothic plot, but the musical is not absorbed with Britishness in the same way as *Cats* and *Starlight Express*, for the setting is a nineteenth-century Parisian opera house, a location which invites engagement with the sounds of continental opera. And where *Cats* and *Starlight Express* celebrated the past with affectionate pastiche, the relationship with the past is far more conflicted in *Phantom*. Thatcher's populist policies and their impact on elite culture provide a useful context for Lloyd Webber's approach to opera in this show.

By the 1980s the "highbrow" culture which had been shored up in the postwar period through government subvention had been devalued by Thatcher and her government.[55] As Christopher Bradley put it, "Mrs Thatcher rejected the whole basis of the welfare state and the public good justification which had led to the postwar policy of saving highbrow culture."[56] This attitude affected her arts policy, as can be vividly seen in her conflict with Peter Hall over

government subsidies for the arts. She and her ministers strongly believed that consumers—not governments, not experts—should determine what art flourished. But, as Hall scathingly opined, these consumers did not have sufficient taste to judge: "I don't think Thatcherism bred any Mozarts. The most successful composer of the time was Andrew Lloyd Webber."[57]

But that was precisely the point. Thatcher and other conservatives rejected elitist attitudes that placed Mozart above Lloyd Webber. In truth, Thatcher adored opera, but, after the former prime minister's death in 2013, her friend the novelist Frederick Forsyth reshaped the narrative to retroactively match her government's anti-elitist purposes. He recalled, "She didn't hog any box at the Coliseum or the Royal Opera House [. . .]. For the trendies, she was anathema. She was very middle-brow [. . .]. She refused not to be one of the ordinary people."[58]

Forsyth's insistence on Thatcher's "middle-brow" tastes, that she was "one of the ordinary people," is representative of a broader conservative trend, an anti-intellectualism among right-leaning thinkers partially fueled by a suspicion of the elites who Conservatives believed were responsible for the postwar economic malaise. In 1955 British journalist Henry Fairlie had given this group of elites a name: the "Establishment." In an essay in the Conservative magazine *The Spectator*, Fairlie described how this "Establishment" worked:

> By the "Establishment," I do not only mean the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised. The exercise of power in the United Kingdom (more specifically, in England) cannot be understood unless it is recognized that it is exercised socially.[59]

The "official power" centers described by Fairlie encompassed the royal family, the aristocracy, and those in the professions (academics, clergy, teachers). Notably he included the chair of the Arts Council, the director general of the BBC, and the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* as members of the Establishment.[60] Thatcher's government sought to undermine this old Establishment and create a new ruling class, a ruling class more interested in individualism and wealth creation. Thatcher also wanted to dismantle old socialist/Marxist conceptions of class, so she appealed to an ill-defined group, "ordinary working people," pitting these industrious citizens against the "(liberal) 'Establishment.' "[61] Lord Turnbull, the former head of the civil service, explained the practical impact of Thatcher's views on her government:

> the classics people, the humanities people slowly got replaced. We used to have people who were experts when I arrived, on Byron, and musicians. Rather refined people. Then, rather hard-nosed economists gradually took over and the dominant culture became not music, but football and golf as the kind of cultural shift.[62]

The conflicted place of opera in *Phantom* results from the tension between the anti-intellectual, antiestablishment zeitgeist and Lloyd Webber's own background and proclivities. He was brought up in a family that revered classical music. His mother was an amateur violinist and a well-known piano teacher. His father, William Lloyd Webber, was an organist and classical composer whose musical talents had allowed him to transcend his working-class roots. After attending the Royal College of Music on scholarship, he became an academic, and taught composition at his alma mater before becoming the director of the London College of Music.[63] Thus, classical music was more than a family business; it had given the Lloyd Webbers entry into a solid middle-class existence.

Andrew Lloyd Webber was clearly conversant with the classical tradition, but both he and his father failed to find favor with the "classical music elite," albeit for different reasons. Andrew never managed to win the full-throated approbation of classical music critics, fellow composers, and musicologists, for they often viewed his engagement with classical music as derivative dilutions of the "real" thing.[64] His father faced a different problem: his tonal compositional idiom was out of step with mid-century musical modernism—hence, William's retreat to teaching. But, unlike his father, Andrew had another option available to him. He embraced popular music. This had not been possible for William, for, as Andrew described in his memoir, "in the 1930s it would have seemed like a heinous case of letting the side down for a working-class boy who had won every sort of academic gong to demean himself in the world of 'commercial' music."[65]

Lloyd Webber's age, middle-class status, and personal inclinations led him to adopt a populist, "middlebrow" style, one that combined Richard Rodgers, opera, and rock and roll. For Lloyd Webber "middlebrow" was not a dirty word, for the old hierarchies between "high" and "low" culture had been irrevocably blurred in his teenage years by 1960s British rock. Bands hired orchestral musicians to play on their albums and regularly engaged with classical and even avant-garde idioms (e.g., the orchestral baroque pop of "Eleanor Rigby," the sound collage "Revolution 9," the rock opera *Tommy*).[66] In similar fashion, Lloyd Webber's musical style effaced the boundary between classical and pop-

ular music genres.[67] *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* was originally designed as a "pop cantata" for schoolchildren. *Jesus Christ Superstar* is called a "rock opera" and *Evita* is simply designated as "an opera."

In keeping with these boundary-effacing impulses, Lloyd Webber's music for *Phantom* combines elements of pop, opera, and musical theater: it is an appealing commodification of elite culture, a transformation of elements of "highbrow" music into a product designed to appeal to a broad range of consumers on the free market. *Phantom* could even be seen as a harbinger of crossover classical, the democratization of opera and classical music that fully emerged in the early 1990s with the Three Tenors concerts and in Britain with the advent of Classic FM.[68]

Lloyd Webber's commodified "opera," his *Phantom*, also bears the marks of the antiestablishment attitudes that prevailed in Thatcherite Britain. In the musical the Phantom composes his own opera, *Don Juan Triumphant*, which he coerces the opera company into performing. Lloyd Webber—who called his memoir *Unmasked*—seems to have a personal sympathy with the character of the Phantom, and it is therefore unsurprising that the opera in the musical suffers a fate similar to Lloyd Webber's own compositions: the Phantom's work is utterly reviled by Establishment gatekeepers. The impresarios put it on under duress, and the old operatic guard, the tenor Piangi and the soprano Carlotta, loathe the score. Christine, the Phantom's protégée, is the only one who understands it. Piangi cannot even accurately sing the notes, but, as Carlotta snidely observes, his mistakes correct the Phantom's deficiencies as a composer—"At least he makes it sound like music."

Here and elsewhere in the musical, perhaps as a way of making opera less intimidating for a mass audience, Lloyd Webber subjects the genre to mockery. Text and mode of performance self-referentially send up the conventions and style of opera, even as the singers actively participate in those conventions. For instance, in the ensemble number "Prima Donna," the vocal stylings of the soprano Carlotta are an exaggerated parody of opera singing. She breaks into her native Italian to lament her fate, singing loudly at the very top of her range, and she later complains about the stress experienced by prima donnas who must achieve vocal feats when ill: "Still, the driest throat will reach the highest note." In true "meta" fashion, the opera house managers André and Firmin sing winkingly about the ludicrousness of opera ensembles, even as they participate in one:

> You'd never get away
> With all this in a play
> But if it's loudly sung

And in a foreign tongue
It's just the sort of story
Audiences adore
In fact, a perfect opera!

Lloyd Webber also parodies specific operatic styles; musical theater audiences may not be able to identify his particular targets, but the humorous intent is made plain, nevertheless. For instance, toward the beginning of the show, the opera company rehearses a fictional opera, *Hannibal*, by the equally fictional composer Chalumeau. Lloyd Webber adopts the style of nineteenth-century French grand opera for this parody, with a plodding chorus, ballet dancing, and stage spectacle (an elephant!). In this sequence the audience is also encouraged to view the Italian singers through a jaundiced eye. Piangi struggles with his high note and Carlotta significantly misjudges musical style. Carlotta sings a relatively simple aria, "Think of Me," but her mode of performance renders the song ridiculous, with her heavily rolled *r*'s and swooping portamenti, reinforcing long-standing xenophobic stereotypes of the over-the-top Italian opera singer that had circulated in Britain since the days of Handel. Thus, even if the audience is not conversant with the precise targets of Lloyd Webber's parody, these performative failures signal to the audience that while the opera singers have musical training—they may be "experts" in their field—they do not possess true musical discernment.

Thus, *Phantom of the Opera* reveals Lloyd Webber's intimate knowledge of operatic genres and forms even as he makes affectionate jibes at the genre he imitates. But affectionate jibes are still jibes. This mockery allows Lloyd Webber's audience to enjoy the trappings of opera in the middlebrow genre of musical theater. His audience is allowed to laugh at an "elite" art form as he deflates its self-importance through his parodic operas. Moreover, the opera singers Carlotta and Piangi are cast as the antagonistic enemies of true art. They deform music with their exaggerated performances and are snobbish gatekeepers who cannot understand the true genius of the Phantom's opera.

Exceptions to the Rule

And yet, with Lloyd Webber there are always contradictions and exceptions to neat and fast categorizations. Clearly he admired Margaret Thatcher and the feeling was mutual. He supported her and her economic policies. Like her, he loved Victorian culture and possessed, according to him, a Victorian work ethic. He too had populist proclivities. At the same time, he was also drawn to edgier subject matter and more challenging sounds. For instance, the Phantom's

opera, *Don Juan Triumphant*, stretches the bounds of traditional tonality—its idiom sounds avant-garde within the context of the rest of the score. Such predilections, perhaps born of a desire to curry critical favor or to compete with his US rival, the arch music-theater modernist Stephen Sondheim, sometimes led Lloyd Webber to commercial failure, for after *Phantom* he followed things up with a distinctly different tale, one replete with sexual intrigue, that completely rejected Victorian morality and nineteenth-century aesthetics: *Aspects of Love* (1989).

Lloyd Webber had frequently drawn inspiration from pre-existing literary sources, but David Garnett's 1955 novella *Aspects of Love* was the most overtly sexual material he had used. Garnett, a minor member of the Bloomsbury Group, shared the aesthetics of other members, who included E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and John Maynard Keynes, the very economist whose policies Thatcher, the Tories, and Lloyd Webber himself vehemently opposed.[69] The Bloomsbury Group also utterly rejected Victorian morality. Bohemianism is very much in evidence in Garnett's novel and Lloyd Webber's musical, which, as shaped by librettists Don Black and Charles Hart, details the complicated love quadrangle among Alex, his beloved Rose, his uncle George (who marries Rose), and George's (and later Alex's) bisexual lover Giulietta, who kisses Rose at her wedding, claiming "her best man's right." Alex also has a passionate unconsummated romance with his underage cousin Jenny. This is, of course, a world away from *Phantom* or *Cats* or *Starlight Express*. In terms of its musical structure, *Aspects* takes operatic procedures such as the use of repeated motifs a step further than *Phantom*, while deploying a thornier, sometimes Sondheim-inspired musical language (Frank Rich of the *New York Times* claimed that Lloyd Webber had "Sondheim envy" in this show).[70] *Aspects* didn't eschew crowd-pleasing music altogether: Alex's ballad "Love Changes Everything," sung with great earnestness by Michael Ball, rose to No. 2 on the UK pop charts. Despite the commercial success of the single, with *Aspects of Love* Lloyd Webber rejected the very things that had made him so popular with middlebrow audiences. In short, it is the closest Lloyd Webber came to composing a chamber opera, and accordingly the spectacular elements that characterized his megamusicals (the falling chandelier in *Phantom*, the innovative costumes and special effects in *Cats*, the roller-skating trains of *Starlight Express*) have disappeared, although director Trevor Nunn and his designer Maria Björnson did use a moving stage set, giving the production a cinematic quality.

Predictably, Lloyd Webber's aesthetic shift did not produce the desired commercial effect. Although the show ran for 1,325 performances on the West

End, it hardly had the staying power of his previous megahits. The fact it ran as long as it did was a testament to residual audience goodwill—*Aspects* enjoyed great advance sales.[71] People wanted to hear what the *Phantom* composer had up his sleeve. Once they found out, they were not interested. *Aspects of Love*'s transfer to Broadway was doomed to failure: it only ran for 376 performances and lost its entire $8 million investment.[72] Regardless, reviewers—particularly US ones such as Frank Rich, Lloyd Webber's long-standing archnemesis from the *New York Times*—persisted in thinking about the musical in terms of Thatcherism: "Even when women strip to lacy undergarments, the lingerie doesn't suggest the erotic fantasies of Frederick's of Hollywood so much as the no-nonsense austerity of Margaret Thatcher's Britain."[73] In his review of *Phantom*, Rich had accurately connected Lloyd Webber's idiom to the zeitgeist.[74] But Rich clearly misunderstood the times and was seemingly ignorant of Thatcher's own tenuous political position. In March 1990, a month before the opening of *Aspects* on Broadway, demonstrations and rioting had broken out in London in response to the Community Charge (i.e., the "poll tax"). By November of that year, Thatcher was no longer prime minister.

Certainly, Lloyd Webber's and Thatcher's fortunes seem to be linked. As she fell from power, so did he. He never again reached the heights of popularity that he enjoyed in the 1980s. By the time he composed *Aspects of Love*, he no longer had his finger on the pulse of popular taste. And after 1989 he left behind many of the things that had made him so popular with audiences in the 1980s: Victoriana, nostalgia, spectacle, and parodies of "high culture." Indeed, in *Aspects* and in later works, he fully embraced opera (particularly in *Love Never Dies*, *Phantom*'s sequel), and he continued to write material that challenged middlebrow sensibilities, as in *Stephen Ward* (2013), a chamber musical about the Profumo affair. *School of Rock* (2015) even includes the song "Stick It to the Man," although the irony of this sentiment coming from the toffs on the creative team, Baron Fellowes of West Stafford and Baron Lloyd-Webber of Sydmonton, has been duly noted by critics. These post-*Phantom* shows return to the rebelliousness and antiestablishment attitudes that characterized Lloyd Webber's late 1960s and 1970s collaborations with Tim Rice: *Jesus Christ Superstar* focuses on Judas as an antiheroic protagonist and *Evita* portrays Eva Peron in a quasi-sympathetic fashion, tracing her escape from poverty to the halls of power.

Perhaps Lloyd Webber's continuing preoccupation with disrupting the status quo can also be read through the lens of Thatcherism. The Thatcher government's dismantling of the trade unions, the welfare state, and arts funding, along with its aggressive free-market economic policies in opposition

to Keynesian conventional wisdom, radically overturned the postwar order. Thatcher herself was the ultimate antiestablishment outsider—the daughter of a grocer who (Evita-like) subverted the rules of the boys' club, rising to the ultimate position of authority. Indeed, Thatcher herself saw the parallel with the first lady of Argentina. Her speechwriter Ronald Millar took her to see *Evita* in 1978 and she wrote to him in thanks:

> It was a strangely wondrous evening yesterday leaving so much to think about. I still find myself rather disturbed by it. But if they [the Peronists] can do that *without* any ideals, then if we apply the same perfection and creativeness to *our* message, we should provide quite good historical material for an opera called Margaret in thirty years' time![75]

Conclusion

It is clearly too simplistic to cast Lloyd Webber as a Thatcherite court composer or to say that all his musicals from the Thatcher years neatly correspond to Thatcherite aesthetics or ideologies. With regard to Thatcher's philosophy of arts funding—that the commercial marketplace should determine what is worthy and that arts organizations should be weaned off government subsidy—Lloyd Webber does sometimes, as the prime minister herself suggested, provide a model for what works. The so-called megamusical genre with which Lloyd Webber made his name, featuring lavish special effects and a through-composed score, appealed to a wide range of people, corresponded to the aesthetic zeitgeist of opulent consumerism, and was eminently franchisable.[76]

Yet, other Lloyd Webber shows failed to find the same foothold, particularly the follow-up to *Phantom*, the chamber opera *Aspects of Love*, with its bohemian sexual mores and its thornier, more intimate score. *Aspects* was a serious commercial step down for Lloyd Webber—it certainly did not correspond to Thatcherite aesthetics, nor was it an easy exemplar of how Lloyd Webber's brand of musical could succeed on the free market. In this case Lloyd Webber's artistic impulses overrode (or clouded) his capitalist instincts—a pattern that would be repeated again and again in subsequent years as his musicals no longer fit the taste of the times.

Nevertheless, both Thatcher's and Lloyd Webber's influence on culture has been profound and long-lasting. Thatcher's economic philosophies—deregulation, low taxation, and minimal government intervention in the markets—are now standard policies in the UK. Similarly, her belief that the consumer should determine what is artistically worthy and her cuts to gov-

ernment arts subsidy reshaped the cultural landscape in the country. Collaborations between commercial theater and subsidized theater that were born of necessity in the 1980s continue to this day. Musicals are commonly produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and are frequently programmed by the National Theatre. And the 1980s-style megamusicals continue to appeal well after the age of Thatcher. She may be gone, Lloyd Webber may not consistently produce hit shows anymore, but their twinned cultural legacy remains, as long as *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, and *Phantom* reap profit in productions around the world.

Notes

1. As recounted in Michael Billington, "Margaret Thatcher Casts a Long Shadow over the Theatre and the Arts," *Guardian*, April 8, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-long-shadow-theatre.

2. See David Wigg, "Why I May Quit Britain for Good," *Daily Express*, January 19, 1988.

3. The Conservative election broadcast can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAagz7FLHEM, accessed May 3, 2022. Lloyd Webber's music plays at 6:37.

4. For a more extended consideration of Lloyd Webber and Thatcher, see Michael Billington, *State of the Nation: British Theatre since 1945* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007), 284–94, here 284.

5. Frank Rich, "Stage: 'Phantom of the Opera,'" *New York Times*, January 27, 1988, https://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/27/theater/stage-phantom-of-the-opera.html.

6. On the megamusical and its definition, see Jessica Sternfeld, *The Megamusical* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), especially 1–6.

7. I do not mean to imply that Thatcherism constitutes a single coherent ideology. Rather, I share the dominant view, articulated by Eric J. Evans, that Thatcherism was "a series of non-negotiable precepts," or "a series of interconnected political attitudes," rather than "a consistent body of thought": *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2019), 2, 5. For the Ur-explanation of Thatcherism from the left, see the essays in the collection Stuart Hall and Martin Jaques, eds., *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983).

8. For example, see D. Keith Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999), which primarily focuses on playwrights who opposed Thatcher.

9. The use of past musical styles in Lloyd Webber's musicals is similar to the traditionalist musical idiom employed by choral composer John Rutter; on Rutter, see Martina Steber, "'A Very English Superstar': John Rutter, Popular Classical Music, and Transnational Conservatism since the 1970s," in this volume. The key stylistic distinction between the two composers is Lloyd Webber's engagement with pop and rock, genres which Rutter eschews.

10. "Conservative General Election Manifesto, 1979," April 11, 1979, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110858, accessed September 21, 2020.

11. Quoted in Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3. On Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, and the history of the Chicago School more generally, see 82–133.

12. On Thatcher's economic policy and the connection between individualism and independence (as opposed to dependence) on the state, see Barbara Waine, *The Rhetoric of Independence: The Ideology and Practice of Social Policy in Thatcher's Britain* (New York: Berg, 1991), 7–67. On Thatcher's economic policies and their effects, see Mike Dunn and Sandy Smith, "Economic Policy and Privatisation," in *Public Policy under Thatcher*, ed. Stephen P. Savage and Lynton Robins (New York: Macmillan Education, 1990), 23–44; Rob Atkinson and Carol Lupton, "Towards an Enterprise Culture? Industrial Training Policy Under the Conservatives," in ibid., 45–59; and David Farnham, "Trade Union Policy 1979–89: Restriction or Reform?," in ibid., 60–74.

13. See Anna Upchurch, "John Maynard Keynes, the Bloomsbury Group and the Origins of the Arts Council Movement," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 10, no. 2 (2004): 203–17.

14. As explained by Andrew Sinclair, Keynes favored the support of high-quality professional companies over the populist "Art for the People" approach, which prior to his chairmanship of CEMA had supported amateurs across the country. See Andrew Sinclair, *Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), 34–46.

15. Sinclair, *Arts and Cultures*, 47.

16. See Upchurch, "Keynes," 216; Alan Peacock, *Paying the Piper: Culture, Music, and Money* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 118–19.

17. "House of Commons PQs," July 24, 1979, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104121, accessed September 25, 2020.

18. "Speech at Royal Academy Banquet," May 27, 1980, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104370, accessed September 25, 2020.

19. See Billington, "Margaret Thatcher." On the Arts Council grant cuts and Thatcher's relationship with the agency, see Christopher H. J. Bradley, *Mrs. Thatcher's Cultural Policies, 1979–1990: A Comparative Study of the Globalized Cultural System* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1998), 97–121.

20. See Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre*, 36. See also Chin-Tao Wu's discussion of Thatcher's arts policy, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2002), 53–70.

21. Quoted in Billington, "Margaret Thatcher."

22. Quoted in Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre*, 50.

23. See Bradley, *Cultural Policies*, 11.

24. Similar shifts took place in many other Western countries, including the United States; on this, see Timothy D. Taylor, *Music and Capitalism: A History of the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), esp. 44–79.

25. As Peter Campbell notes, the impulse to measure the outcomes of cultural practice is nothing new, but it does intensify considerably during this period; see particularly the discussion of economic value and neoliberal ideology in Peter Campbell, *Persistent Creativity:*

Making the Case for Art, Culture and the Creative Industries (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 18–23.

26. Peter Hall, "Theater: Taking Stock of Creativity during the Thatcher Years," *New York Times*, January 20, 1991, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/20/theater/theater-taking-stock-of-creativity-during-the-thatcher-years.html.

27. Andrew Blake, *The Land without Music: Music, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 63.

28. Robert Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940*, rev. ed. (1997; repr., London: Routledge, 2015), 29.

29. This observation aligns with the argument made by Raphael Samuel, "Mrs. Thatcher's Return to Victorian Values," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 78 (1992): 9–29, here 12.

30. Bryan Appleyard observes that the British arts had been moving in a more accessible direction before the advent of Thatcherism (i.e., postmodernism, pop art, etc.); Bryan Appleyard, "The Arts," in *The Thatcher Effect*, ed. Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 305–15, here 310.

31. Billington, *State of the Nation*, 284.

32. See Emily Robinson et al., "Telling Stories about Post-war Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s," *Twentieth Century British History* 28, no. 2 (June 2017): 268–304. On how this shift affected culture, commerce, and political life in Britain, see Andy Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle: Why 1980–82 Made Modern Britain* (London: Penguin, 2015).

33. Margaret Thatcher, interview, *The Sun*, February 28, 1983, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105089, accessed October 4, 2020.

34. Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked: A Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 196. Commentators have also noted that Awdry's stories purvey conservative, authoritarian, and even imperialist ideologies: Jia Tolentino, "The Repressive, Authoritarian Soul of 'Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends,' " *New Yorker*, September 28, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/rabbit-holes/the-repressive-authoritarian-soul-of-thomas-the-tank-engine-and-friends. On class and gender hierarchies in the children's television program based on Awdry's books, see Shauna Wilton, "A Very Useful Engine: The Politics of Thomas and Friends," in *The Politics of Popular Culture: Negotiating Power, Identity, and Place*, ed. Tim Nieguth (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 19–36.

35. Margaret Thatcher, "Radio Interview for IRN Programme *The Decision Makers*," April 15, 1983, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105291, accessed August 28, 2020.

36. See Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked*, 196–97.

37. Director Trevor Nunn was responsible for this idea, transforming a musical that Lloyd Webber had conceived as an intimate school musical for children into a racing spectacular; see Michael Coveney, *Cats on a Chandelier*: *The Andrew Lloyd Webber Story* (London: Hutchinson, 1999), 149.

38. Billington, *State of the Nation*, 289.

39. Margaret Thatcher, "TV Interview for London Weekend Television *Weekend World* ('Victorian Values')," January 16, 1983, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105087, accessed October 13, 2020.

40. Thatcher, "TV Interview." As Dominic Sandbrook notes, it is Walden who first mentions the nineteenth century; see Dominic Sandbrook, *The Great British Dream Factory: The Strange History of Our National Imagination* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 534.

41. Richard Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 274–75. However, as Raphael Samuel observes of Thatcher's Victorian values, her "traditionalism was perhaps more a matter of style than substance," as she actually pursued a radical refashioning of British life; see Samuel, "Return," 9–29, here 10.

42. Kathryn Lowerre, "Fallen Woman Redeemed: Eliot, Victorianism, and Opera in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*," *Journal of Musicological Research* 23, no. 3/4 (2004): 289–314, here 294.

43. For an example of Eliot as conservative hero, see George Scialabba, "The Critic as Radical: T.S. Eliot Sought the Still Point in the Turning World," *American Conservative* 9, no. 9 (September 2010): 26–29. The conservative embrace of Eliot was also articulated by Russell Kirk in *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953). He places Eliot in a long Anglo-American conservative tradition and calls Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) "among the most significant conservative writings of recent years" (411). For more on Eliot's conservatism, see Hewison, *Culture and Consensus*, 51–54.

44. Quoted in Gerald McKnight, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 187.

45. Martin J. Wiener argues the Victorian achievement of industrialization was "Janus-faced," for Britain's transformation into a modern society was incomplete. Capitalism was contained "within a new dominant bourgeois culture bearing the imprint of the old aristocracy": Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850–1980*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7, 10. Patrick Wright explains the 1980s' longing for the past in *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985); he identifies it as a typical phenomenon in times of "crisis and insecurity" (178). According to him, Thatcher's "utopian expression of nation" and her co-option of the "perennial values" of the Victorian Age thus found a ready-made audience in this period (184–85).

46. Lowerre, "Fallen Woman," 293.

47. On the slippage between mother and teacher in the Victorian era and their role in moral instruction, see Jennifer Fuller, " 'Ordinary Teacher-Woman': The Complicated Figure of the Mother/Teacher in Late Victorian Fiction," *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature* 135 (Summer 2019): 59–69.

48. See Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked*, 310.

49. On music hall, its typical song types, and audience behavior, see Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 80–150; Jacky Bratton, "The Music Hall," in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 164–82; Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840–1914: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 72–95.

50. For a full consideration of this phenomenon, see Barry J. Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967–1977: The Story of Music Hall in Rock* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

51. Derek Scott has discussed musical conventions associated with "the Far East" in nineteenth-century European music: see Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 309–35, esp. 323–26. The number has been cut from more recent productions.

52. On Powell and his influence, see Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). On how Powell's ideology fed into modern Conservatism as reconstituted by Thatcher, see Paul Gilroy, *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*: *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, new extended ed. (London: Routledge Classic, 2002), 47–53. See also Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*: *Britain, 1968–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). T. S. Eliot has been accused of antisemitism and racism, and there is considerable debate over his legacy in the academy and beyond; see, for instance, Anthony Julius, *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form*, rev. ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003). Eliot's poetry also includes anti-Black racism (e.g., "King Bolo" and "Inventions of the March Hare").

53. See Stacy Wolf, *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127–96.

54. Peter Royston, *The Study Guide for The Phantom of the Opera* (Cameron Mackintosh and the Really Useful Theatre Company, [2007]), 22, https://broadwaygps.com/GPSFiles/Phantom.pdf, accessed October 8, 2020.

55. John Storey describes how opera "was made unpopular" in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America and Britain by "elite social groups determined to situate it as the crowning glory of their culture." See John Storey, " 'Expecting Rain': Opera as Popular Culture?," in *High Pop: Making Culture into Popular Entertainment*, ed. Jim Collins (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 32–55, here 32–37.

56. Bradley, *Cultural Policies*, 11.

57. Hall, "Taking Stock of Creativity."

58. Tom Rowley, "Margaret Thatcher's Surprise All-Stars," *The Telegraph*, April 17, 2013, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/10000871/Margaret-Thatchers-surprise-all-stars.html.

59. Henry Fairlie, "Evolution of a Term: The Establishment," in *Bite the Hand that Feeds You: Essays and Provocations*, ed. Jeremy McCarter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 68–91, here 70. This quotation originally appeared in *The Spectator*, September 23, 1955.

60. Fairlie, "Evolution," 71.

61. Jon Lawrence and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, "Margaret Thatcher and the Decline of Class Politics," in *Making Thatcher's Britain*, ed. Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 132–47, here 134.

62. Quoted in Aeron Davis, *Reckless Opportunists: Elites at the End of the Establishment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 12. On the fraught status of the British "intellectual" in the twentieth century, see Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

63. See Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked*, 9, 11.

64. I discuss the critical response to Lloyd Webber's use of classical idioms in Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "Politics and the Reception of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 26, no. 3 (November 2014): 271–87. Lloyd Webber's music has inspired increased musicological attention: see Stephen Citron, *Sondheim and Lloyd-Webber: The New Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); John Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Sternfeld, *Megamusical*.

65. Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked*, 18.

66. Christopher Chowrimootoo discusses how "middlebrow" was often used as a pejorative in the first half of the twentieth century, although he also notes that for some critics "middlebrow" culture was viewed as refreshingly eclectic, with its blurring of high and low culture. Christopher Chowrimootoo, "Reviving the Middlebrow, or: Deconstructing Modernism from the Inside," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139, no. 1 (2014): 187–93.

67. Snelson, *Lloyd Webber*, 55–76.

68. See Storey, " 'Expecting Rain' "; Miranda Lundskaer-Nielsen, *Directors and the New Musical Drama: British and American Musical Theatre in the 1980s and 90s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 52–54. Classic FM was founded in 1992 with the mission to present classical music in a popular format. See also Blake, *Land without Music*, 65–68.

69. On Garnett and his relationship to the Bloomsbury Group, see Sarah Knights, *Bloomsbury's Outsider: A Life of David Garnett* (London: Bloomsbury Reader, 2015).

70. See John Snelson's motivic analysis of the prologue through scene 7, in Snelson, *Lloyd Webber*, 200–207; Sternfeld, *Megamusical*, 305–9. For Rich's scathing review, see Frank Rich, "Review/Theater; Lloyd Webber's 'Aspects of Love,' " *New York Times*, April 9, 1990, http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/09/theater/review-theater-lloyd-webber-s-aspects-of-love.html.

71. See Richard Bernstein, " 'Aspects,' the Musical That Had Everything, and Lost Everything," *New York Times*, March 7, 1991, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/07/theater/aspects-the-musical-that-had-everything-and-lost-everything.html.

72. See Bernstein, " 'Aspects.' "

73. Rich, "Lloyd Webber's 'Aspects of Love.' "

74. Rich, " 'Phantom of the Opera.' "

75. "MT: [Margaret Thatcher] to Ronnie Millar (Seeing *Evita*)," August 25, 1978, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111738, accessed September 4, 2017.

76. See Sandbrook, *Great British Dream Factory*, 521–24; Billington, *State of the Nation*, 284–91.

"A Very English Superstar"

John Rutter, Popular Classical Music, and Transnational Conservatism since the 1970s

MARTINA STEBER

Since the 1980s it has largely gone unnoticed how the British composer, conductor, and music entrepreneur John Rutter has become a leading figure in popular music—successful on the global music market, popular in the English-speaking world, and regularly at the top of the classical music charts with his Christmas song compositions. Rutter embodies precisely the opposite of commercial pop culture: he is the antitype of a pop star, he succeeds with sacred music, he addresses the middle class and the bourgeoisie, and he personifies family values, community spirit, and the preservation of tradition. Using the example of Rutter, the author demonstrates the importance of conservative pop cultures for the emergence and development of a transnational conservatism in Europe and North America since the 1970s. The article reveals the interplay between nationalization and transnationalization in conservatism, and points out the variety of forms and contexts in which conservative dispositions can appear in popular musical cultures. They offer opportunities for politicization, but can also remain effective purely in the cultural sphere. Rutter's sound worlds clearly transcend English cathedrals and college chapels.

John Rutter and Cultures of Conservatism

He was writing about a "very English superstar," the Australian journalist Nick Galvin informed his readers, when he portrayed the British composer, conductor, and producer John Rutter in a piece for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2019. With his spectacles and classic shirts, the balding Rutter resembled an English village vicar rather than the celebrated global star of classical music that he actually was, Galvin wrote. Yet the journalist was sure that "the world's greatest living composer" of sacred choral music would be well known to Australian audiences.[1] Since the 1970s, Rutter's Christmas carol compositions have been part of the musical repertoire of Anglo-American Christmas culture, in which choral music continues to play a significant role. This music

is associated with the social practice of choir singing and choral concerts as sociable local events; but choral Christmas carols are also a product of the global music industry that can be profitably marketed and sold. Rutter has dominated this global market since the 1990s, competing with pop icons for sales and chart hits every Christmas.

It is no surprise, then, that the Australian journalist, who associated Rutter with English rural life and the church, focused on the composer's Christmas music. After all, this music forms a crucial part of the mise-en-scène of a festival that is bound up with tradition, Christianity, village life, and intimacy that connects an English-speaking world shaped by the British Empire. This popular music culture is at odds with, and indeed deliberately opposed to, the common understanding of pop culture. Christmas choral music sees itself as conservative in a musical sense, and elements of the conservative can be found in the social practices associated with the music, as well as in its cultural connotations. Yet Rutter cannot be reduced to Christmas; in fact, he has enjoyed similar success with other sacred compositions—in the world of church music, on international concert stages, and on the commercial music market. He embodies everything not typically associated with commercial pop culture: he is the antithesis of a pop star; he scores hits with classical sacred music; he fills churches and concert halls; he appeals to the middle classes; and he personifies family values, a sense of community, and the preservation of tradition. Rutter therefore represents a side of popular culture that, precisely because of its contradictory nature, has gone completely unexamined by historical research.

This essay argues that a focus on Rutter and his contribution to popular classical music can be used to illustrate cultures of conservatism in popular music culture since the 1970s. What were the defining characteristics of these cultures? What made them conservative? And what might cultural conservatism actually mean? Rutter's music is sacred music that has transcended the confines of the church to achieve success on the entertainment market. It reveals the transformations in the relationship between conservatism and Christianity conditioned by religious pluralization and the rapid secularization of European society that can be reinterpreted through the lens of cultural history.

It is not by chance that the "superstar" of sacred choral music is a British musician. Since the eighteenth century the boundaries between high and popular culture have been particularly permeable in Britain. After the mid-twentieth century, owing to its role as the center of a former empire and because of the international dominance of the English language, the country evolved into a global hub of pop culture. In addition, the UK gave a key

impetus to the reshaping of political conservatism in Europe and North America, which also manifested itself in the cultural sphere.[2] Rutter's unlikely rise to "superstardom" is bound up with these processes. What forms, then, did cultures of conservatism take in popular music culture between the 1970s and the turn of the millennium? Where was potential for conservative politicization to be found? And what was the relationship between the transnationalism of popular culture and the conservative appreciation of the national in Britain?

Historians have barely engaged with the conservative potential of popular music cultures in the recent past. I will therefore begin by surveying the field and clarifying the terms. After that, I will introduce John Rutter as a composer, conductor, and music entrepreneur, before exploring the multilayered cultures of conservatism that have formed around him and his music. These cultures have manifested themselves in two ways: first, in the composer's self-characterizations and his positioning in the cultural-political discourse; and second, in the construction of national identity and the related transnational possibilities for identity construction in Western, Christian-shaped culture in the context of Christmas. I will conclude by illuminating the conservative potential of popular music cultures in recent history beyond the case study presented here. Rutter's music has always sounded conservative. This essay will demonstrate why.

Conservatism and Popular Music Cultures

Very rarely have historians interrogated the conservative potential of popular music cultures in the recent past. Instead, the focus has been on the genres, styles, and subcultures that have challenged familiar, established patterns of music consumption and music making and that have combined musical innovation with social experimentation. Since the 1960s, popular music cultures have become increasingly politicized, positioning themselves as countercultures and therefore largely on the left of a political spectrum[3] in a context where, from the early 1970s onward, the concepts "progressive" and "conservative" increasingly served as key categories for cultural self-understanding and self-validation in pop culture. Conservative voices could be heard in the pop of the 1960s, for example in anti-protest songs, German *schlager* (a German genre term for catchy pop music sung in German), and country music, and, from 1977 on, punk not only expressed radical skepticism about the future—for example, in its slogan "No Future"—but also emphatically adopted this pessimism. Nevertheless, a progressive, anti-conservative mainstream asserted itself

in many pop-related structures.[4] In the early 1980s, however, these certainties quickly crumbled.

Popular music was produced and received between the poles of transnational and national structures. It was required to succeed on the market, and it had heterogeneous fan communities. This also applied to its conservative varieties, which had indeed exhibited the fundamental characteristics of pop culture since the 1970s: thorough commercialization by the music industry, dissolution of the boundaries between serious and popular music, transnationalism, and multidirectional consumability. In the recent history of popular music, pop has been understood on the one hand as "a complex constellation of sounds, images, players, media, and spatial and temporal regimes" whose "elements were connected to each other neither arbitrarily nor deterministically."[5] On the other hand, it has been considered a "collective term for aesthetic phenomena with mass dissemination" that sets itself apart from high culture as an established elite culture, and is associated with pleasure and the popular.[6] This analytical understanding reveals the political openness and multidimensionality of the phenomenon, which therefore also includes conservative variants—all the more reason to examine the interconnections between popular culture and politics, particularly in the case of conservatism.

Pop culture is truly one of the epoch-defining phenomena of the late twentieth century.[7] It was driven by demand from affluent consumers and international market-oriented cultural industries, which further commercialized music and turned it into a multimillion-dollar business. Starting with rock music, this dynamic eventually encompassed all areas of musical culture, including classical music,[8] thereby permanently changing the relationship between culture, the market, and the state.[9] The music industries of the US and the UK dictated the directions of these developments.

In the history of conservatism, too, British and American intellectual and political forces gained influence in Western industrialized countries from the 1970s. As a result, both political conservatism and Christian democracy in North America and Europe—in terms of party politics firmly rooted in their respective nation-states—underwent a fundamental transformation with ideological, social, and cultural implications.[10] Ideologically, this transformation was characterized by a shift toward liberalization and secularization in economic and social thought. Socially, it was bound up with the dissolution of traditional milieus and the formation of new, middle-class lifeworlds among the upwardly mobile strata of affluent societies, which were characterized less by fixed milieu cultures than by pluralistic lifestyles.[11] And culturally, the transformation manifested itself in a recoding of (religious) worldviews,

a questioning of the "bourgeois canopy of values,"[12] and a fragmentation of bourgeois cultural practices.[13] These cultural shifts were driven by processes of social pluralization and individualization that became deeply imprinted on the new conservatisms. It was no accident that the individual came to play a significant role in the reformulated ideologies of conservatism as they took up forms of postmodern subjectivity and gave them a conservative twist.[14] Individuality was now being constantly redefined by means of choices on the cultural market, and it had to be reconciled with socially differentiated work- and lifestyles.[15] This posed a special challenge for the lifeworlds of conservatives. The rapid speed of change, which ran counter to the conservative principles of preservation and continuity, had to be met with the construction of enduring phenomena, something that was particularly difficult in pop culture, a medium characterized by short-lived fads.[16]

Initially, conservative cultural critics, like their left-wing counterparts, were extremely critical of the advance of mass entertainment culture.[17] These critical voices, however, became increasingly marginalized in conservative discourse. The Anglo-American New Conservatism of the 1980s embraced pop culture, and it was no coincidence that the conservative US government was headed by Ronald Reagan, a former actor from Hollywood, the international headquarters of the movie industry.[18] But in continental European countries like West Germany, too, Christian Democratic conservatism warmed to pop culture, as illustrated by the pop singer Nicole's success with "Ein bißchen Frieden" at the 1982 Eurovision Song Contest.[19]

However, it would be a mistake to describe the relationship between political conservatism and pop culture in terms of a simple alliance between political parties and the artists who were sympathetic to them. Admittedly, there have repeatedly been cases of this sort, such as Dieter Thomas Heck, host of the West German music television series *ZDF Hitparade*, who backed the CDU in the 1972 election campaign, combining his support for the party with his commitment to "German schlager."[20] But such instances reveal only one facet of a multilayered relationship characterized by fluidity far more than (party) political consistency. Listening to and experiencing popular music disseminated through individual artists, composers, bands, and orchestras—or by making music oneself in amateur formations of all kinds—allowed for the emergence of cultures that supported conservative ways of making sense of the world. Conservative lifestyles likewise manifested themselves in the cultural practices of listening to, experiencing, and making music.[21]

This was by no means a new phenomenon, but a product of bourgeois modernity; what was new was the turn toward a transnational pop culture,

as well as the wide range of choices available, thanks to an expanding music industry and a pluralization of styles. The conservative politicization of popular music thus became variously nuanced, not least of which was the labeling of musical cultures as genuinely apolitical. In conservative thought the restriction of politics to state affairs corresponded to the definition of culture as a space beyond politics, in which conservatism could be cultivated as an apolitical attitude to life.[22] The British philosopher Michael Oakeshott famously articulated this understanding of conservatism in the early 1960s, while in German discourse it became influential after 1945 due to its prevalence in anti-totalitarian thought.[23] When engaging with cultures of conservatism in recent history, then, we need a concept of conservatism that includes precisely these paradoxical political-apolitical forms rooted in everyday life. Such forms could certainly be politicized for conservative purposes if individual themes or moods were explicitly related to political projects or programs, but this rarely occurred. Rutter certainly did his utmost to avoid taking a political position. However, this does not mean that no cultures of conservatism emerged around him and his music; quite the contrary.

John Rutter: Conservative Soundscapes in Popular Classical Music

Born in 1945, Rutter is the star of the British choral music scene, and he has been a fixture of the popular classical music genre since the 1970s. His music is played on every British classical music radio station, most notably Classic FM and BBC Radio 3. As well as being a composer, arranger, and conductor of mainly sacred works, Rutter directs his own choir, the Cambridge Singers, and since 1984 he has run his own record label, Collegium Records, which produces and distributes mainly his compositions. The scores of these are published by Oxford University Press, as are the editions of sacred choral works from all epochs for which Rutter is partly responsible, notably *European Sacred Music* and *Carols for Choirs*.[24] The choir books are part of the canon, and they shape the repertoire of British choirs. In addition Rutter organizes major concerts, including sing-along concerts and those at which he rehearses his own works, as well as lavish performances at the Royal Albert Hall in London and Carnegie Hall in New York.

Since the 1980s, Rutter has been roughly equally popular in the US and the UK, his works sung by church, children's, youth, and school choirs as well as by popular community choirs.[25] His music is well liked in other countries, too, as evidenced by the numerous recordings of concert events on YouTube. In Germany, Rutter has formed part of the choral repertoire since the 1990s.[26]

In 2013 the Cäcilienverband der deutschsprachigen Länder—the association of Catholic church musicians in the German-speaking countries—awarded him the Orlando di Lasso Medal,[27] and in 2019 the city of Schwäbisch Gmünd honored him with the European Church Music Prize.[28] Yet musicologists have given Rutter a wide berth, as have church music historians, who have demonstrated little interest in analyzing the genre of popular sacred classical music of which Rutter is an exponent.[29]

Rutter combines all dimensions of the culture industry's music market, controlling everything from composition and arrangement to performance, recording, distribution, and marketing. He even seeks to control the interpretation of his works by producing CDs and by leading workshops and concert performances. With his "Renaissance-man approach to the business of making music," Rutter successfully defies all the typical practices of the music business.[30] After the success of *Gloria* in the 1970s, he systematically broke into the US market.[31] The commercial potential of the transatlantic market prompted him to quit his job as director of music at Clare College, Cambridge, in 1979 and go into business for himself. Not only did he become a successful entrepreneur, Rutter turned himself into a brand. He unapologetically promoted the commercialization of his music, inscribing his work into the consumer culture of both the US and the UK. In this regard, Rutter has benefited from the professionalization and commercialization of classical music in general and sacred music in Europe and the US in particular since the 1960s.[32] Such commercialization is exemplified by the use in 1993 of "What Sweeter Music," one of his Christmas carols, as background music for a US commercial for the Swedish car manufacturer Volvo.[33] Sales of his CDs—which are no longer produced only by his label but also by Naxos and Universal Classics—and of his sheet music run into the hundreds of thousands, and his CDs regularly secure high places in the classical music charts.[34] Rutter supplies a global market.[35]

While his influence in Germany and other European countries is limited to the field of sacred choral music, in Britain Rutter's reach is far wider. There are two reasons for this. First, commissions and performances of his works at major royal celebrations have elevated Rutter to the rank of prominent state-commissioned composer. In 2000 one of his works was played during the service for the Queen Mother's 100th birthday;[36] in 2002 he set Psalm 150 to music for Elizabeth II's golden jubilee;[37] in 2011 he wrote a hymn for the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton;[38] and his composition "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" was heard at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.[39] To mark the Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012, Rutter released a CD, *Music on Royal Occasions*, sung by the Cambridge Singers and

conducted by the maestro himself.[40] In Germany, meanwhile, the "Sanctus" from Rutter's *Requiem* was performed at the funeral service for Helmut Kohl in Speyer Cathedral in 2017 in a version specially arranged for the occasion. While this pointed to the composer's importance in German church music, it did not give him the national significance he enjoys in his home country. The same roughly applies in the US: Rutter's *Requiem* was chosen for the main central memorial services for the victims of the attacks on September 11, 2001,[41] and "The Lord Is My Shepherd," a movement from Rutter's *Requiem*, was heard on September 1, 2018, at the funeral service for John McCain in Washington National Cathedral, underscoring the composer's high position in American church music.[42]

The second reason for Rutter's more profound influence in his home country is that his renown as a composer of Christmas carols has made him a household name beyond the world of sacred music. Apart from major choral works such as the aforementioned *Requiem* (1985), *Gloria* (1974), *Magnificat* (1990), and *Mass of the Children* (2003), his oeuvre consists primarily of carols. In the UK and the US, Rutter's work is almost inescapable at Christmas, and the soundscapes of Rutter's carols are felt to epitomize Christmas on both sides of the Atlantic. But are these soundscapes conservative?

(Self-)Positioning: Conservative Music for All

When asked in 2020 how he would describe his compositional style, Rutter answered succinctly, "Eclectic. Conservative. Accessible. But I hope recognisable as my own."[43] Others have used more colorful language to describe the composer's soundscapes. "Rutter," according to *The Times* in 2002, "must be marzipan eaten wearing velvet slippers."[44] At a performance of Rutter's *Magnificat* in 1996, a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was reminded of "the cosmic expanse of a spaceship patrol in widescreen format or an overture to a wholesome family saga in bright autumn colors."[45] Rutter's music is melodious, harmonious, playful, catchy, downright joyful, and impactful. As early as 1982, the American church musician Robert M. McBain described Rutter's style as a mixture of innocence and childlike purity on the one hand and exuberance on the other, based on optimism and teleological certainty.[46] Rutter uses classical compositional techniques: diatonic melodies, simple triads, traditional chord progressions, strong tonality, and transparent textures, as well as rapid changes in tempo and dynamics, rhythmic syncopation, and a generous use of crescendos. He often chooses small forms, with arrangements that range from easy to moderately difficult and are designed to be achievable by even less

ambitious amateur choirs. Another factor that makes Rutter's works attractive to amateur singers is their versatility: they can be performed a cappella, with organ or piano accompaniment, or with an orchestra. This versatility is also good for sales. "Mr. Rutter is an able craftsman who has estimated the market shrewdly," the *New York Times* noted.[47]

Commercial considerations cannot fully account for Rutter's style, however. Even early in his career, one reviewer noted that his work sounded "surprisingly traditional for so young a man."[48] It is true that Rutter deliberately departed from the compositional styles that dominated classical music at the time. He did not want to be part of the avant-garde, which was looking for new forms of expression and new sounds to capture the fragmentation of contemporary life.[49] Instead, Rutter sought inspiration in the compositional tradition predating the atonal approaches of musical modernism, seeking a pleasantly melodious style that emphasized musical continuity with the old masters. But he was also inspired by American musical theater and film music by composers such as Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Stephen Sondheim, and Irving Berlin.[50] Rutter's style therefore combined European tradition with American innovations of the twentieth century. The American echoes were especially useful for Rutter's self-assured rooting of his music in the popular. He wanted "popular music" to be understood in a double sense: first, as art for a broad audience, and second, as music that was actually popular and was played, sung, and listened to.[51]

In combining classical tradition with new genres, Rutter turned to antecedents that he felt would give his popular sacred music historical depth. In the seventeenth century, he believed, classical style opened up to new genres and popular music, giving rise to the music that would shape the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Rutter, it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that this compositional tradition was abandoned by the self-proclaimed avant-garde, causing a rupture between art music and popular music.[52] Rutter's mission was to heal this rupture.[53]

Rutter developed this rather rudimentary conservative reading of music history—a reading with little theoretical support—early in his career. One of his sources of inspiration was the writing of the American music critic Henry Pleasants.[54] According to the latter's polemic against the avant-garde, the roots of music lay in song and dance. "Serious music is a dead art," he wrote in 1955, lamenting that the European creative spirit had perished and innovation had dried up, and arguing that this sorry state of affairs had existed since at least World War I, which had marked the end of the nineteenth century. After that, according to Pleasants, the US had picked up the baton as the world's cultural

leader: “Western civilization is now well into its American phase, and its music is the popular music of America,” he wrote.[55] For Pleasants, this popular music was jazz, not just because of its innovative forms of musical expression, its harnessing of American musical cultures, and its appreciation of melody and rhythm, but also because it thrilled the general population: “New music which cannot excite the enthusiastic participation of the lay listener has no claim to his sympathy and indulgence.”[56]

In many ways Pleasants’s music theory exuded the spirit of the Cold War.[57] First, there was his self-assured situating of contemporary cultural progress exclusively in the US, a notion indebted to the Hegelian idea of civilization progressing from East to West.[58] Second, there was Pleasants’s view that Europe and the US comprised Western civilization, for which transatlantic transfer was necessary and which formed a cultural basis for political alliances.[59] And third, Cold War ideology is evident in his almost imperialistic insistence on the superiority of American popular culture.[60] The music theorist and critic was in fact a cold warrior, serving as a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer in his main profession. Initially a liaison officer to the American high commissioner for the Austrian chancellor Leopold Figl in Vienna, Pleasants was then brought by James H. Critchfield to Pullach near Munich (the headquarters of the West German intelligence agency) for a few months before being appointed chief of the CIA office in Bern in 1950. Finally, from 1956 until his retirement from service in 1964, he headed the CIA office in Bonn. As a high-ranking American secret service agent in German-speaking Europe, he worked closely with Reinhard Gehlen.[61] After retiring from the CIA, Pleasants settled in London as a music critic for the *International Herald Tribune*.[62]

Following Pleasants’s ideal, Rutter’s music is based on melody, harmony, rhythm, and dance, as well as on the principles of catchy simplicity and ease. In this respect Rutter references Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in whose work extreme complexity is concealed beneath apparent simplicity, and Gabriel Fauré, whose *Requiem* Rutter republished in 1985.[63] Rutter’s openness to popular forms also encompasses Latin American rhythms, which he adopts and adapts to the European tradition.[64] It is probably no coincidence that the *Magnificat*—in Rutter’s words, a “bright Latin-flavoured fiesta”[65]—was commissioned by the concert production company MidAmerica Productions for a concert at Carnegie Hall, and was obviously aimed at the US market for Christian music.

Rutter’s compositional frame of reference remained Christian and occidental, and he wanted to be seen as part of this tradition. This was evident in many ways: in his use of old liturgical texts and the language of the King James Bible

(1611) and the Book of Common Prayer (1662);[66] in the musical quotations and integration of traditional stylistic elements such as Gregorian chant;[67] and in his editorial work for Oxford University Press, especially the choir book *European Sacred Music*. Designed for amateur choirs, the latter comprises a selection of classical works of continental European sacred choral literature from the Renaissance to the late nineteenth century.[68] *European Sacred Music* was published in response to the wave of Christian pop and rock music that had become popular in many church congregations since the 1970s, displacing the established church music repertoire.[69] For Rutter there was a danger that "the bedrock of Western classical music, which is what our tradition and choral experience rests upon," would be lost.[70] A few years later he was more explicit, insisting that Christian pop music had no compositional value: "It's junk, it's Kleenex music: You hear it once and throw it away."[71] He sought to establish as an alternative a new form of the popular, one that did not break with tradition but instead developed it by integrating the contemporary styles of popular music.

Rutter cited his education at the center of English church music, at Cambridge University and its colleges, to support the idea that his music possessed the qualities supposedly lacking in Christian pop music. He had laid the foundations for his musical training while a student at Highgate School, one of the country's most elite private schools; indeed, one of his schoolmates, John Tavener (1944–2013), would go on to become one of the most important British composers of sacred music. In 1964 Rutter began studying music at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was encouraged by David Willcocks (1919–2015), the influential director of music at King's College and conductor of its world-famous choir. A doctoral project in musicology on the divergence of art music from popular music in the nineteenth century led nowhere, but it indicates how committed Rutter was to this idea. Meanwhile, his work as a composer was growing in importance. After a brief period at the University of Southampton, he became director of music at Clare in 1975 and a fellow of the college a year later. He expanded the college choir, which a few years earlier had become mixed, something of a departure in an English choral landscape dominated by boys' and men's choirs, especially at the old universities.[72] Until his decision in 1979 to exchange his secure position at Clare College for self-employment, Rutter had been socialized in the small circle of Cambridge and thus in the bastion of the British church music tradition. He would remain closely connected to Cambridge, however; indeed, Rutter and his family still live in a small village near the university city.

Biographically, Rutter saw himself as a link in a long chain of British sacred

music culture and as an exponent of English cathedral music, so it is no surprise that one interviewer was struck by Rutter's "fervent love of the past."[73] He sought to defend this past in a typically conservative style, preserving it while cautiously developing it. His defensive campaign was waged on two fronts, with the avant-garde on one and pop and rock music's incursion into the church on the other. Rutter situated himself in the countermovement to the musical modernism of the 1960s, which he viewed as narrow and dogmatic, almost "Stalinist," and saw himself as part of a larger generational shift characterized by a conservative style and a turn toward the audience.[74] His stance was in line with the conservative positioning of English cathedral music in opposition to compositional modernism after 1945.[75] At the same time he located himself within a reformist current in American sacred music known as the "American school of sacred music composition," which was a response to the broader processes of transformation in American and European Christianity that had been taking place since the 1960s.[76]

The American church musician and musicologist Paul Westermeyer described Rutter as a "popular Romantic" whose music lacked any awareness of the dissonance, brokenness, and darkness of the world and the Gospel, transporting listeners to a "saccharine bubble" removed from reality.[77] Debra Bendis, editor of *Christian Century*, credited Rutter's popularity with revitalizing church music, but she also criticized the ephemerality of his work; its musical impact melted quickly, she wrote, leaving nothing behind.[78] A number of music critics came to similar conclusions, finding that the music was too transparent, gimmicky, simplistic, and smooth, characterized by "a cloying sweetness that tends toward the bland."[79] Such criticisms did not perturb Rutter's fans, nor did they lessen his commercial success. When Susan Elkin, a journalist for the *Daily Telegraph* and a chorister herself, called Rutter's music banal and his works "rubbish," she received outraged letters from her readers.[80] One young American organist described Rutter as the Bruce Springsteen of sacred music.[81] His music was popular. And it could be interpreted as conservative.

An English Christmas: National Identities and the Festive Season

Every Christmas, Rutter's popularity soars, his carols having become a staple of festive celebrations in both the UK and the US. In 2000 *The Guardian* described the composer as "the musical equivalent" of Charles Dickens—the literary embodiment of the British Christmas (*A Christmas Carol*, 1843)—thereby elevating Rutter to popular culture nobility.[82] In Rutter's carols, choirs rejoice

in the highest of notes and sing the baby Jesus to sleep to the accompaniment of tinkling bells, trilling piccolos, and harp arpeggios. "The cuter characters in Disney's vintage cartoons used to leave a trail of what was called 'Disney dust' as they moved around the screen; Rutter's tunes do exactly the same in sound," *The Times* caustically observed.[83]

Christmas choral pieces for the chamber orchestra and choir at Clare College were among Rutter's earliest compositions. On David Willcocks's recommendation, Oxford University Press published a selection, including Rutter's "Shepherd's Pipe Carol," which remains popular to this day.[84] This paved the way for an editing job that Willcocks had undertaken for the publisher: a series of Christmas choir books. He had co-edited the first volume of *Carols for Choirs* with the conductor Reginald Jacques,[85] and after the latter's death in 1969, Willcocks made Rutter his co-editor. Published in 1970, the second volume contained Rutter's "Shepherd's Pipe Carol." The series, comprising the volume Willcocks edited with Jacques and three volumes and a compendium he edited with Rutter between 1970 and 1987,[86] created a canon of Christmas carols that would become firmly established in the English-speaking world within a few decades. *Carols for Choirs 1* and *Carols for Choirs 2* are among the publisher's most successful books, with sales exceeding one million copies each.[87] Aimed at amateur choirs, the books offer traditional carols and sacred Christmas music from all over Europe, mostly newly arranged by the editors, as well as newer compositions by British composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, and William Walton. The choral settings were not used solely for liturgical purposes but soon filled the programs of Christmas concerts of secular choral societies.[88] As a result, the sacred compositions reached an audience far beyond the churches.

The choir book series was rooted in a musical culture that had decisively shaped the British Christmas since World War I and which had developed around King's College, Cambridge. Along with the country's major cathedrals, the college chapels of the old universities had exerted a profound influence on the sacred music of Britain for centuries. Charged with shaping the liturgy, the chapel choirs defined the sound of Anglican worship, focusing on choral music a cappella or with organ accompaniment. They have traditionally consisted of boys and men, and in many cases still do, although Rutter's work at Clare College in the 1970s reflected an opening up to women's voices. From the early twentieth century, the choir and choirmasters of King's College exerted an enormous influence on musical style for two reasons. First, the chapel's directors of music, in particular Arthur Henry Mann (1876–1929), Bernhard Ord (1929–57), and David Willcocks (1957–74), developed a

specific choral sound that fitted into the English cathedral tradition, was considered typically English, and was viewed as exemplary. Boys' voices, which achieved transparency and clarity without vibrato through the use of the head voice, played a key role in creating this distinctive sound. These upper voices blended with tenor and bass parts sung by young men. The dynamics and interpretation of the settings were restrained, but the words were clearly enunciated, creating a tapestry of sound carried to full effect by the acoustics of cathedrals and college chapels with their long reverberation times.[89] As well as pioneering this musical development, King's College adopted it as a brand. The figures responsible understood the music business, after all, and thanks to the professional marketing of the choir, its CD recordings, and its global tours, its sound was widely advertised. And indeed, the BBC turned the Choir of King's College into a national icon.[90]

The choir's style-defining impact also had much to do with its Christmas service, which takes place in the late afternoon every Christmas Eve and which the BBC has broadcast on its radio stations around the country since 1928 and internationally since 1932 (since 1965 on the BBC World Service). In 1938 the Mutual System Broadcasting System of America began broadcasting the service, and listeners in some European countries were able to tune into it too.[91] American broadcasters adopted the format again from 1979 with great success.[92] BBC Television has shown a prerecorded short version of the service since 1963. In the US, too, the radio broadcast has exerted a great influence since the 1980s, with the result that church services modeled on King's have entered the Christmas culture—a culture already molded by the imperial metropole—of many countries of the former empire.[93]

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is a sequence of scripture readings and carols derived from a service from the south of England dating back to the 1880s. It was first introduced as a liturgical form to King's College Chapel at Christmas 1918 by the chaplain at the time, Eric Milner-White, who hoped that a reformed liturgy would create an aesthetic and emotional experience of faith to counter the disillusionment, bitterness, and loss of faith experienced by many young men after World War I. At the same time, the liturgy was inscribed with a clear hierarchy: both theologically, in the sequence of readings from the Old to the New Testament, and socially, in that the order of readers for the individual readings was based on the church hierarchy. After rearrangements and deletions made the following year, the form of the service created in 1919 is still used as a model today.[94] Thanks to the broadcasting of the service on the BBC, *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* became a familiar element of middle-class festive celebrations, in both Britain and its former colonies,[95]

and so an integral part of the imperial culture of the British Christmas in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[96]

The service became further charged with national significance during World War II, when it linked war and home fronts across the empire in Christmas prayers and appeals for peace. In German prisoner-of-war camps, British soldiers performed their own "Nine Lessons and Carols" based on the service in the college chapel in Cambridge.[97] The service's growing significance was closely related to the transformation of the Anglican Church's role in English society in the 1930s and 1940s. Since then, the church has been perceived less as a religious institution and more as a symbol of Englishness and a preserver of national tradition.[98]

Reflecting on the two-hour broadcast of the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* in 2012, the journalist Michael Henderson commented with typical national ardor, "Cambridge once again becomes the centre of the world." The conservative columnist's words reflect, after the decline of the empire, decolonization, and Britain's loss of status as a global power, both a longing for past greatness and a conviction that an English-influenced, world-spanning culture exists and that its center can still be found in the imperial metropole. "The English choral tradition, rooted in cathedral choirs and the colleges of our two greatest seats of learning, gives the lie to the absurd nostrum that this is 'a land without music.' It is one of our greatest achievements and is still very much alive," Henderson added.[99] His anti-German jibe here is typical of current strains of English nationalism; one of the culturally arrogant motifs of German propaganda during World War I was the claim that Britain was a country without music, a claim that has since entered the trove of quotations invoked in British and English constructions of national identity.[100]

From the early twentieth century on, the style of choral singing developed by some cathedral and college choirs became imbued with national significance. Believed to express English traits such as restraint, politeness, and composure, the style became a symbol of authentic Englishness, and the Choir of King's College became the "ultimate symbol of English self-effacement."[101] Although it was in fact a twentieth-century invention, the style was felt to have a historic quality as the eternal singing of Christian England that had remained unchanged down through the centuries. Timothy Day has shown how this narrative emerged in the Romantic-inspired Oxford Movement, whose members sought to reform the Anglican Church as part of an attempt to substantiate national specifics of spirituality by invoking supposedly medieval models.[102]

From World War I onward, *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* played a critical role in popularizing this narrative and cementing its significance for

national identity, as the service came to be viewed as the epitome of a national tradition stretching back to the late Middle Ages.[103] The *Festival* clothed the narrative in music; the performance in the magnificent late Gothic church endowed the liturgy with a breathtaking visual aesthetic; and the radio broadcast made it accessible everywhere and to everyone. This concealed not only that the sense of historical continuity here was a construction, but also the elitism that King's College represented in British class society.[104] It is no wonder, then, that Eric Hobsbawm, who had studied at the college, gave the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* as a prime example in his influential book *The Invention of Tradition*.[105]

Rutter's Christmas carol compositions are situated in this institutional context, as exemplified in particular by two composition commissions from King's College for the *Festivals* of 1987 and 1999.[106] Rutter never tired of demonstrating his reverence for the carol form. In English-speaking countries, Christmas carols are part of a tradition of popular singing. Dating back to the Middle Ages, the term "carol" refers to songs in English or Latin in which verses and refrain alternate. Carols accompanied dancing or processions and were performed at court, during liturgical celebrations, and in popular culture. In the latter sphere, a form of religious-moral carol that mixed folk and dance songs and often focused on Christmas themes was prevalent, and this was the tradition to which the nineteenth-century rediscoverers of the carol form harked back. Having been excluded from the canon of sacred songs by Reformers and Puritans, carols became a collectors' object for English Romantics, who believed that the form was a relic of true folk art and that caroling—a tradition whereby groups of singers go from house to house delivering good wishes for Christmas—was a social practice deeply rooted in folk culture. As well as collecting carols, the Romantics adapted certain songs to Victorian tastes and composed new carols and editions, all with the aim of reviving a supposedly lost tradition in church and everyday culture.[107]

The edition by Willcocks and Rutter fits into this historical tradition. Carols and communal singing at Christmas, whether in church, on the street, or within one's own four walls, are a Victorian invention, just as the British culture of Christmas originated in the Victorian era.[108] They are regarded as an ingredient of a specifically English Christmas, even as a "key expression of Englishness,"[109] and this probably forms the core of the modern understanding of the carol, as this musical form is difficult to define or distinguish from other Christmas songs such as hymns or pop songs.

For Rutter, who has contributed in no small measure to their popularity in recent decades, carols seem to have three key characteristics: First, they oscil-

late between folk and art music, combining "art and artlessness, the polished and the instinctive," as one music critic noted.[110] Second, they emphasize melody and dance, simplicity and childlikeness.[111] Finally, there is their emotional power: "They have all this extraordinary ability to just awaken happy memories [. . .], somehow hearing the music of Christmas brings back the magic and the mood of Christmas," Rutter explained in one interview.[112] For him, carols ought to evoke happy memories of childhood Christmas celebrations, of carefree moments in an ordered world of family, community, and consumerism. A religious background is not necessary for such memories; certainly, Rutter—an agnostic—refrains from theologizing about his work.[113] The Christian texts and musical forms function rather as snippets of memory or vessels of tradition, and thus fit into the secularized Christmas culture of the present.[114] Yet Rutter's music fits just as easily into a Christmas culture that continues to be steeped in religion, much like his other sacred works. If by the end of the twentieth century two Christmas cultures had developed in Western societies, one religious and the other secular, Rutter's music worked in both.[115] His carols are suitable for the liturgy and the department store alike, and this is what makes them so popular.

Rutter's marketing machinery plays a significant role here, supplying the Christmas market with CDs, and now audio files, in ever new variations. In addition, the composer takes part in annual Christmas consumer and entertainment culture by staging "John Rutter's Christmas Celebration" at the Royal Albert Hall in London: a concert by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Rutter's baton with carol classics to sing along to, a Christmas quiz, and 5,200 paying attendees.[116] Such carol concerts are now an established part of the British Advent season.[117]

The nationalization of Christmas, a global phenomenon in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,[118] was also evident in Britain in certain interpretations of these seasonal celebrations. "It is one of the great joys of English life," commented *The Times* in the millennium year, "that the season of holly and ivy is also a time for sweet singing in the choir. [. . .] Choral music is at any time of year one of this country's most sublime musical achievements. It combines the austere purity of worship and our folk memories of mossy village churches in a green and pleasant land, building from them a haunting tonal architecture with foundations in the depths of our collective being."[119]

Communal singing in choirs was sometimes depicted as a unique good and a source of national pride: "These days, Britain might not be much cop at building domes and bridges, and it no longer seems able to run a health service or a railway system. But there are some things we can still do and that

you feel obliquely proud to be part of. Producing choirs out of communities is one of them."[120] Britain was in decline in all other respects, and only in the cultural sphere did it still hold its position of world supremacy: this, in a nutshell, was the message in the year 2000.[121] A decade later, the *Daily Telegraph* remained convinced not only that "British choirs lead the world," but also that the culture of church singing was the best way to escape the crisis-ridden present: "Anyone who feels assaulted by the weight of economic doom [. . .] should try an hour of Gibbons, Byrd or Herbert Howells with a decent choir"—or John Rutter, we might add.[122] Music served here as a foundation for national identity.[123]

This is precisely how Rutter's Christmas music and the culture that has formed around the practice of music making are described: as an expression of a true Englishness that is unchanging and outside time; as a way of life centered on the church, village, community, and family; as a pastoral and rural idyll. The music is shrouded in narrative—not least by the composer himself—as is Rutter's self-stylization as a simple musical craftsman in an English village. Journalists are only too happy to pass on this narrative, especially since it reinforces American clichés about Britain: "It is the sort of English village which you may find on Christmas cards: a medieval church, a placid river, thatched cottages, swans. So it's no great surprise that it is also where you can find John Rutter," a correspondent for the *New York Times* wrote in 2017.[124]

Such images and stories are drawn from an influential narrative of national identity that was established in the 1920s and described what was typically English, not British. This narrative centered on the notion of the "little man" as the guardian of national character traits and rhapsodies about the English countryside and its villages. Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative interwar prime minister, and George Orwell, the left-wing writer and publicist, were among the best-known constructors of this narrative, which was popular across party lines.[125] Rutter's Christmas music, *The Telegraph* mused in 2011, was successful because "his tolerant, nostalgic Englishness" struck a chord with listeners who cherished this idea of English identity.[126] It was a part of "pop Englishness" and thus a counterpart to punk, Britpop, and Northern Soul that few had paid much attention to.[127] Against this background, Rutter's popularity can be interpreted as a cultural expression of a new English nationalism that has been emerging since the turn of the millennium. Fueled and radicalized by devolution, deindustrialization, migration, cultural globalization, and populist politics, this nationalism's associated effects include the British decision to leave the European Union.[128] However, Rutter's music was not necessarily intended for such politicization and was certainly not one of its drivers.

Nevertheless, Rutter's works invoke notions of Englishness that have little in common with the British realities of recent history, reflecting neither the conflicts within a postimperial, multicultural, and multireligious society, nor the dominant metropolitan cultures, nor the social upheavals caused by British neoliberalism. Quite the opposite; the Christmas culture developed around Rutter's music evokes a white, Christian, well-ordered England of imperial grandeur, untouched by modernity. It has a decidedly conservative ring to it that has stretched far beyond the United Kingdom. Among American audiences, the music has played into the perception of a Christian occidental tradition shared by the Anglo-Saxon nations; in Australia and Canada, it has evoked an Anglosphere that had been popularized in conservative circles in the 1990s.[129] In some ways Rutter's carols are the counterpart of the Christmas pop songs that, as products of the American music business, have found their way into the British musical repertoire.[130] In Rutter's case, however, the transfer went in the other direction, borne by the transatlantic musical culture of popular classical music, which is no less a part of Western popular culture than rock, pop, and punk.[131]

The Conservative Potential of Popular Classical Music and the Fluidity of Pop Culture

Not every chorister who sang Rutter's music, not every harpist who played Rutter's chords, not every conductor who chose one of Rutter's compositions, and not every concertgoer who was beguiled by his soundscapes was conservative. It would be absurd to claim this. But every individual was free to appropriate the conservative potential of this music as evidence of an attitude toward life, as an ingredient of a certain lifestyle, or even as a political symbol.[132] Cultures of conservatism could form around the practice of making or listening to music, transferring the cultural conservatism of music into everyday social contexts. The multifarious ways in which Rutter's music could be appropriated is evident from its reception, which varied greatly when viewed in international comparison: whereas his music was charged with national significance in Britain, it remained within the framework of sacred choral music in Germany, where it testified to the new "stylistic plurality" in contemporary church music.[133] Yet the conservative character of Rutter's compositions, which is embedded in its musical form and structure and rooted in a shared understanding of (European) music history, transcended national borders. This character is literally inscribed in the music.

As a businessman, Rutter replicated the image of the successful individual

and the entrepreneurial self which was at the center of neoliberalism and of Thatcherism, in particular.[134] Without ever taking a political position publicly, he personified the type of artist Thatcher advocated.[135] Rutter continues to prosper from his art because it is attractive to a broad audience. He has been dependent on neither cultural subsidies nor state institutions, instead making his money on the market. In fact, it was the transatlantic music market, whose workings Rutter understood, that was instrumental to his success. He knew how to exploit key developments since the 1970s: the progressive transnationalization, commercialization, and consumerism of classical music, as well as the opportunities presented by digitization and the mass media.[136] He was also quick to recognize the potential of the internet. As long ago as 1998 he used emails, recordings, and web chat to prepare a choir in the US, assembled via the AOL Culture Finder website, for a performance of Handel's *Messiah* under his baton at Carnegie Hall in New York.[137] Rutter managed to transfer the figure of the revered artist-composer that had characterized modernism to the postmodern era. There was indeed space for a "composer hero" within pop culture, but it meant that such an idolized figure was no longer part of the compositional avant-garde.[138]

As apolitical as Rutter's music seemed, it was firmly positioned on the conservative side of cultural politics, in the sense that the cultural policies of Thatcherism corresponded in music to criticism of the avant-garde. Such policies promoted a musical conservatism that appealed to a specifically English tradition and focused on the popular, in contrast to putatively continental art music targeting a small, musically educated elite whose representatives and patrons occupied the decision-making positions on the Arts Council and the BBC.[139] According to this view, market success required art to do what art should do: reach and entertain the general public. The UK government's decision to issue a national radio license to the station Classic FM, which specializes in popular classical music and began broadcasting in 1992, was a move against the programming policy of the classical music station BBC Radio 3. Rutter's popularity in Britain owes a great deal to this competition. Conservative criticism of the BBC continues to be sparked by its attitude to popular classical music. It is hardly surprising that conservatives cite Rutter as an example of a classical music star who has been ostracized by the BBC,[140] and that they lament the general lack of attention paid to him by musicologists.[141] This conservative politicization went hand in hand with the nationalization of British choral and singing culture, and it continues to contribute to Rutter's success.

Rutter's ascent occurred against the backdrop of processes of religious

transformation that had been taking place in Europe and the US since the 1960s, though these processes moved in virtually opposite directions.[142] While Christianity has lost its dominant cultural and social status in Europe and has had to find a new place in a society that is both multireligious and secular, a missionary, evangelical strain of Protestantism has emerged as a political force in the US. As an important current within New Conservatism and the New Right, evangelical Protestantism has been profoundly shaping the development of the Republican Party since the 1970s and given conservative Christianity a culturally influential voice.[143]

These processes of transformation were by no means culturally unambiguous, however. On the one hand, they were initiated by reformist movements demanding an opening of churches to the world and therefore a liberalization of religious practices. On the other hand, the transformations were intended as an alternative to precisely this social liberalization, which was seen as a declaration of war on social order and living tradition. Rutter's music combined both these aspects. It integrated the new by opening itself to the popular and the American, and in so doing it reformed the soundscapes of sacred music culture. At the same time, however, Rutter's compositions adhered to the classical European tradition and defended the latter from the avant-garde and pop music. Yet his music was just as embedded in pop and consumer culture as it was in the world of church music. It represented a conservative idiom that sounded modern.

Rutter's music cannot be characterized as a simple countermovement to the liberalization of culture and society. Rather, it counts among the conservative new beginnings that emerged amid the cultural transformations gripping Western industrial societies from the 1960s on and that prepared the cultural ground on which political conservatism could unfold. The example of Rutter reveals the wide range of manifestations and contexts in which conservative attitudes could be expressed in popular music cultures, but also in which these attitudes emerged or were manufactured. It shows the spectrum of temporal qualities of cultures of conservatism, which could be only a fleeting phenomenon, but could also harden into dense and more long-lasting lifeworlds. Cultures of conservatism offered opportunities for politicization or political appropriation, which could be deliberately created by artists yet could also be beyond their control. Although the pluralization of cultures of conservatism since the 1970s and their potential for politicization are obvious, there is no evidence of a clear trend toward conservative politicization. Cultures of conservatism expressed a search for a new order at a time when traditional certainties were breaking down, progress in the familiar sense

seemed questionable, and the upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s had themselves become history. These cultures were part of the "age of fracture."[144]

The example of John Rutter also points to pop culture as an epoch-defining phenomenon of the late twentieth century. By this time, pop culture was not solely progressive, and it no longer comprised only youth cultures. The fact that pop culture had been thoroughly commercialized and therefore, thanks to the workings of the market, become inherently open, both culturally and politically,[145] contributed significantly to the possibilities that opened up for conservative appropriations. These reflected the modes of community formation produced by cultural industries. In many cases these communities were little more than "loose and transitory solidarities,"[146] but the success of Rutter's choral music in church-affiliated milieus shows that they could also lead to more stable social formations. As Lawrence Black has impressively shown with the example of the British Young Conservatives and as German research on the middle classes also suggests,[147] the social worlds of conservatism may have disintegrated in the 1960s, but new conservative worlds began to emerge. Popular music did not lead to a leveling of social structures and hierarchies, nor did it lead to general depoliticization.[148] Future research will need to analyze this process in more detail.[149]

The reservations of both conservative and left-wing cultural critics about mass consumer society and its cultural manifestations were swept aside, and pop cultural forms emerged from within the conservative spectrum.[150] From the 1970s, conservatives more or less embraced pop culture, and Rutter represents this new rapprochement. The pop culture entrepreneur became a role model for both American and British conservatism, and commercialized pop culture came to be seen as a crowning conservative achievement of Western culture. But this was only one element of a much deeper cultural symbiosis. Pop culture offered a "broad spectrum of possibilities for gaining, maintaining, asserting, or changing one's relationship to oneself," as Alexa Geisthövel has noted.[151] This was also true of conservatively oriented models of identity construction, especially from the 1970s, when increasingly individualistic ideas entered conservative thinking, and a wealth of opportunities for harnessing these became available in consumer-oriented pop culture.[152]

The role of pop culture in the transnationalization of conservatism since the 1970s is also evident. Pop culture has been one of the "most conspicuous manifestations" of globalization in recent history, as Bodo Mrozek has noted.[153] The pop cultural dominance of British and US artists and their work, a dominance that owed as much to the workings of the market as it did to the cultural constellations of the Cold War,[154] had its counterpart in the political

and intellectual influence of the new Anglo-American conservatism promulgated by Reagan and Thatcher. Pop culture established transatlantic spaces of shared culture, giving cultural substance to the Cold War idea of the West.[155] Pop culture could be endowed with conservative connotations, although, as the example of Rutter demonstrates, national cultures of interpretation could diverge from one another, and ideas of the West could also draw on the imperial past. In any case, here as elsewhere, universalizing and particularizing tendencies went hand in hand in the globalization process.[156] Transnational and national cultures of conservatism were mutually dependent.

Rutter's innocent Christmas carols reached far beyond English (and Australian) cathedrals and village churches. On the one hand, John Rutter was and indeed still is a "very English superstar"; on the other hand, he is something else entirely: a highly successful exponent of a culturally mediated transnational conservatism.

Notes

Translation by Sinéad Crowe

1. Nick Galvin, "A Very English Superstar," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 9, 2019.

2. See in the present volume: Martina Steber, Tobias Becker, and Anna von der Goltz, "Introduction: Cultures of Conservatism in Western Europe since the 1960s."

3. See Jeff Hayton, "Shouting Back: Popular Music and Protest," in *Musicking in Twentieth-Century Europe: A Handbook*, ed. Klaus Nathaus and Martin Rempe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 347–67.

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133. Krummacher, *Kirchenmusik*, 490; Gustav A. Krieg, "Kirchenmusik und Gesellschaft nach 1945," in *Musik im Raum der Kirche: Fragen und Perspektiven*, ed. Winfried Bönig (Ostfildern: Carus, 2007), 140–56, here 149; Peter Bubmann, "Wandlungen in der kirchlichen Musik in den 1960er und 70er Jahren," in *Umbrüche: Der deutsche Protestantismus und die sozialen Bewegungen in den 1960er und 70er Jahren*, ed. Siegfried Hermle, Claudia Lepp, and Harry Oelke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 303–24.

134. See Ulrich Bröckling, *Das unternehmerische Selbst: Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2007).

135. A study of the arts and cultural policies of the Thatcher governments is a desideratum. A source text is Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Press, 2011), 632–34; see also Bryan Appleyard, "The Arts," in *The Thatcher Effect*, ed. Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 305–15; Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2002).

136. For an overview, see Ruth Towse, *A Textbook of Cultural Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 405–33, and the relevant chapter in Ruth Towse, ed., *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, 2nd ed. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).

137. See "Halleluja for the Power of the Internet," *The Times*, February 18, 1998.

138. The loss of the figure of the "composer hero," by contrast, is diagnosed in Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (London: Fourth Estate, 2012), 562. On the mass cultural dramatization and veneration of musicians, see Tim Blanning, *The Triumph of Music: The Rise of Composers, Musicians and Their Art* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); Jürgen Osterhammel, "Kühle Meisterschaft: Dirigenten des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts zwischen Selbstdarstellung und Metierbeschreibung," in Müller, Rempe, and Osterhammel, *Kommunikation*, 154–78.

139. See Blake, *Land without Music*, 64–67, 223–30.

140. See, for example, Michael White, "A Seasonal Hit Can Really Lay a Musician Low," *Sunday Telegraph*, December 16, 2012.

141. See Michael White, "Bump Up the Volumes," *Daily Telegraph*, February 3, 2001.

142. On the background, see, among others, Jeffrey Cox, "Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change," in *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000*, ed. Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 201–17; Hugh McLeod, "The Crisis of Christianity in the West: Entering a Post-Christian Era?," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Hugh McLeod, vol. 9, *World Christianities, c.1914–c.2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 323–47; Hugh McLeod, "Being a Christian at the End of the Twentieth Century," in ibid., 636–47.

143. See Hugh McLeod, " 'Religious America, Secular Europe': Are They Really So Different?," in Hempton and McLeod, *Secularization*, 329–50; of the extensive literature on the American religious right, see, for example, Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

144. See Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011).

145. See Árpád von Klimó and Jürgen Danyel, "Popkultur und Zeitgeschichte," *Zeitgeschichte-online*, April 2006, 3, accessed July 26, 2021, https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/themen/popkultur-und-zeitgeschichte.

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147. See Lawrence Black, "The Lost World of Young Conservatism," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 4 (February 2008): 991–1024. On research on the German middle classes, see n. 13 above.

148. Andreas Wirsching, however, argues to the contrary in "Massenkultur in der Demokratie: Zur Entwicklung von Kultur und Gesellschaft in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich nach 1945," in *Wandel und Integration: Deutschfranzösische Annäherungen der fünfziger Jahre*, ed. Hélène Miard-Delacroix and Rainer Hudemann (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2005), 379–96.

149. Martin Rempe and Klaus Nathaus also point to this in "Introduction: Musicking in Twentieth-Century Europe," in Rempe and Nathaus, *Musicking*, 3–30, here 9–10, 21.

150. On the end of European cultural criticism and the ascent of the American model of consumer culture, see Wirsching, "Konsum statt Arbeit."

151. Alexa Geisthövel, "Lebenssteigerung: Selbstverhältnisse im Pop," in Geisthövel and Mrozek, *Popgeschichte*, 1:177–99, here 177.

152. See Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte: Die Bundesrepublik—1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2009), 406–8; on the development of "popular individualism" in Britain, see Robinson et al., "Telling Stories."

153. Mrozek, *Jugend*, 28.

154. From the perspective of music production, see Klaus Nathaus, "Nationale Produktionssysteme im transatlantischen Kulturtransfer: Zur 'Amerikanisierung' populärer Musik in Westdeutschland und Großbritannien im Vergleich, 1950–1980," in *Kulturen der Weltwirtschaft*, ed. Werner Abelshauser, David A. Gilgen, and Andreas Leutzsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 202–27; Klaus Nathaus, "Turning Values into Revenue: The Markets and the Field of Popular Music in the US, the UK and West Germany (1940s to 1980s)," *Historical Social Research* 36, no. 3 (2011): 136–63.

155. See, among others, Mrozek, *Jugend*, 28–33; Dietmar Hüser, ed., *Populärkultur transnational: Lesen, Hören, Sehen, Erleben im Europa der langen 1960er Jahre* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017); Vowinckel, Payk, and Lindenberger, *Cold War Cultures*.

156. See Roland Robertson, "Glokalisierung: Homogenität und Heterogenität in Raum und Zeit," in *Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft*, ed. Ulrich Beck (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1998), 192–220; Angelika Epple, "Globalisierung/en," Version: 1.0, *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, June 11, 2012, accessed July 26, 2021, https://doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok.2.273.v1.

Only Rock and Roll?

Rock Music and Cultures of Conservatism

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Rock and roll traditionally appears to exhibit a rebellious, subversive, and progressive connotation. Such ascriptions, however, ignore not only subgenres such as *Rechtsrock* (right-wing extremist rock), but also criticism, present from the onset, that accused mainstream rock of merely portraying and supporting the status quo rather than questioning it. Is rock and roll therefore a conservative genre? What do terms such as conservative and progressive really mean when they are applied to pop culture, music, and specifically rock and roll? Which findings are used to support these attributions? The article investigates these questions along an abbreviated history of rock from the 1950s to the 1980s in transnational perspective. The contribution shows that, inasmuch as rock is rebellious at all, its rebelliousness can be directed against a mainstream culture which is perceived as progressive just as much as against one which is perceived as conservative.

Ambivalent Affinities

After Margaret Thatcher's death on April 8, 2013, numerous obituaries appeared all over the world. Perhaps the most creative of these was the skit broadcast on April 13 on the US comedy show *Saturday Night Live*. Filmed in the style of a BBC pop documentary, the five-minute sketch "History of Punk" centered on the fictional singer Ian Rubbish and his band The Bizarros, obviously inspired by Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols. The boorish Rubbish fits the punk stereotype in both appearance and behavior, hostile toward all forms of authority and fulminating against the police and the Queen in foul-mouthed invectives. So when Thatcher is elected prime minister in 1979, his bandmates and fans expect more of the same. Instead, they are shocked to encounter a very different Rubbish, who, rather than maligning Thatcher, pays musical tribute to her: "You keep England safe!" he sings; "You're a very special lady!" When the

"special lady" subsequently receives him in Downing Street, the two get along famously.[1]

The irony of "History of Punk" rests on the juxtaposition of two apparently irreconcilable opposites. Even visually the primly dressed and coiffed politician and the punk with his spiky blond hair and red leather jacket seem to represent two different worlds: conservatism and the establishment versus anarchy and rebellion. In reality, however, things were not quite so straightforward. For much like the sketch, which portrayed Thatcher in a largely depoliticized and not exactly critical manner, the politics of punk—like rock as a whole—were anything but clear-cut.

After Thatcher's death, a competition for first place in the British charts ensued between her enemies, who sought to get "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead" from *The Wizard of Oz* to number one, and her fans, who were rooting for "I'm in Love with Margaret Thatcher." In the end, the first song made it to number two, while the second song only—or perhaps miraculously—came in at number thirty-five. Yet "I'm in Love with Margaret Thatcher" had originally been written and performed by a punk band, incongruously enough, the largely forgotten Notsensibles. Originally released in 1979, it was not, as its title suggests, a declaration of love like the one sung by Ian Rubbish. Nevertheless, it was ambiguous enough to be interpreted as a pro-Thatcher song thirty years later.

In April 1989 the words "This Woman Was Once a Punk" appeared under a portrait of Margaret Thatcher on the cover of the society magazine *Tatler*; only a close reading revealed that this was an April Fools' issue.[2] Readers would have had to examine the photo carefully to realize that what they were looking at was not the Iron Lady but Vivienne Westwood, the one-time Queen of Punk, who here bore a remarkable resemblance to the prime minister. Less attentive readers who simply smiled at the prank may have missed the subtle question it posed: was there not a secret punk inside Thatcher and a conservative inside the avowed leftist Westwood, whose fashion designs at the time were inspired by the traditional styles of the landed gentry?[3] Or to put it succinctly, was punk more conservative and Thatcher more anarchic than superficial observations and outdated stereotypes would have us believe?

But what might "conservative" mean when applied to punk and rock? I explore this question in dialog with the articles by Martina Steber and Amanda Eubanks Winkler elsewhere in this volume. However, I approach it from a different direction. Whereas in popular classical music (in the case of John Rutter) and musicals (in the case of Andrew Lloyd Webber) the adjective

"conservative" springs to mind owing to the traditional nature of these genres, the opposite seems to be the case in rock music. For decades, rock music was—and in many cases still is—associated with questioning, not preserving, the status quo. "From its beginnings, rock music has challenged the basic values of the culture in which it emerged," a book about rock asserted in 2012.[4] Arguably, the word that comes up most often in connection with rock is "rebellion." Rock, it has been claimed, was "born out of teenage rebellion"; it is "linked to ideas of rebellion and transgression"; its entire culture is characterized by a "rebellious spirit."[5] "Rebellion" in this context usually means revolt against traditional ideas, attitudes, and structures, and it is widely assumed that this inevitably lends rock a progressive quality. This progressiveness, in turn, is often believed to distinguish rock not only from classical music and musicals, but also from pop: "Rock is presented as progressive, moving culture and society forward, and pop is constructed as conservative, helping to maintain the status quo," the media scholar Mary Celeste Kearney notes. Here we find an example of the dichotomy often drawn between the progressive and the conservative in culture, with rock music supposedly neatly fitting into the progressive side of that dichotomy.[6]

But does the dichotomy hold true today? Did it ever? "Looking at the charts, it's easy to suspect that pop music cultivates only reactionary worldviews," music journalist Jens Balzer wrote in 2020, taking "pop" to encompass a broad mainstream that includes rap and rock.[7] Similarly, the writer Martin Büsser noted in 2001 that "music that for decades was perceived as left-wing or at least emancipatory" had long ceased to correspond to this perception.[8] Indeed, the phenomenon of right-wing rock has been a subject of scholarly interest for some time now. Yet, what meanings have terms like "progressive" and "conservative" taken on in rock's self-image and in the perceptions of outside observers? To what extent has rock offered conservatives—whether politicians, the church, or cultural critics—not a bête noire but points of contact? These questions, which have barely been discussed to date, form the focus of this essay. My understanding of "rock" is a broad one, encompassing early rock and roll as well as later subgenres, in particular punk rock. I refer repeatedly to genres that rock has sought to differentiate itself from, such as pop, disco, and *schlager* (a German genre term for catchy, often syrupy pop music sung in German), because it is in these differences that rock's contours are clearest. Following the work of the political scientist Ray Pratt, I distinguish between three overlapping, yet occasionally also contradictory, applications or dimensions of the term "conservative."[9]

When used in reference to music and genre conventions, the first possible

meaning of "conservative" is the opposite of innovative. In other words, instead of pursuing reinvention and change, conservative music operates within existing musical and performative conventions, reinforcing them within a tradition that it maintains and perhaps expands, but does not fundamentally question. Rutter and Lloyd Webber are obvious examples. But some seven decades after its birth, is rock actually all that different? Not only does it now resemble classical music and musicals insofar as it looks back on a long tradition, but it has been merging with these genres since the 1960s—consider the use of orchestras or orchestral instruments in rock music, for example, or the countless rock musicals. Certainly, the times when rock outraged critics—whether because of its artistic innovations or its violation of moral norms—seem to be long gone.

The second possible meaning of "conservative" relates to rock's political orientation. Where rock is associated with politics at all, it is usually with rebellion against existing conditions, the system, or "the Man," as the film musical *School of Rock* puts it.[10] But where does this association come from, and what about conservative forces such as Christian rock that have sought to co-opt rock music? Not to mention the numerous rock stars who have positioned themselves as conservatives, championed conservative causes, or even supported conservative parties?[11]

Finally, "conservative" can refer to a general attitude, and not just a musical or political one, based on a commitment to, possibly even a reinforcement of, the social status quo. "To be entertained means to be in agreement," Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer famously wrote in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, whose influence on thought about popular culture can hardly be overestimated.[12] Although Adorno and Horkheimer were referring primarily to jazz and operetta, others have applied their ideas on the "culture industry" to pop and rock. As far back as the 1960s, pop culture (and therefore rock too) was accused of not calling out and tackling the world's problems, but instead of cementing existing conditions by fostering passive acceptance. Yet the emancipatory potential of a music genre in which, at least theoretically, little to no special musical training is required to participate, and even achieve success, has gone unnoticed by critics, much as left-wing rock fans have ignored rock's conservative potential.

This essay will therefore examine the development of rock not from the perspective of rebellion, progressiveness, and protest, but in the context of "cultures of conservatism." In searching for commonalities and intersections with conservatism, I will engage with Martina Steber's programmatic reflections on conservatism as well as the approaches in recent scholarship on pop

history, as shaped in Germany by Bodo Mrozek in particular.[13] This promises to yield new perspectives not only on the history of rock, but also on how the terms "progressive" and "conservative" have been used in a cultural context.

Rebellion or Reinforcement? Rock and Roll in the 1950s

To understand why rock is perceived as rebellious, we must go back to its beginnings in the 1950s, when many viewed rock and roll as a completely new genre of popular music that challenged convention. At the time, many commentators—both critical and approving—reported on the "sonic shock" that emanated from rock and roll, a shock largely enabled by new technologies, especially electric amplification. The latter allowed rock stars to play their music at an unprecedented volume and to engage in an intensely performative, sometimes even acrobatic, physicality.[14]

Moreover, rock and roll was closely linked to the social figure of the teenager. The postwar years saw a demographic explosion in both the US and Western Europe, accompanied by improved educational opportunities and greater prosperity. The commercial world, in particular the record, film, and fashion industries, discovered young adults as a clearly defined and therefore easily targeted audience.[15] Although teenagers were not the only people who listened to rock and roll, they were its main consumers and the demographic group most closely associated with it by the wider public.

The focus of rock and roll on teenagers and their enthusiasm for the genre formed one of the grounds for criticism, which was often as loud as rock itself. With its volume and new forms of dance and expression, rock and roll was not just incomprehensible but downright dangerous in the eyes of many parents and conservative critics. Again and again the press claimed that this new music was leading young people astray, on a road of uninhibited consumption, sex, and even delinquency. Moral panics swept first the US and then Europe, taking the form of countless "pamphlets, polemics, and boycotts," not to mention some public record burnings.[16]

Critics regularly decried so-called "rock and roll riots." These supposed rampages, which broke out at concerts or in movie theaters during the screening of films containing rock and roll music, took on an almost mythical quality even at the time and have long since passed into legend. In hindsight, however, it is clear that for the most part such disturbances were isolated incidents. It was the media that turned them into "riots," thereby shaping the perception of rock and roll as a menace to society.[17] The movie industry also played a role by introducing the character of the young rebel, as embodied by Marlon Brando

in *The Wild One* (1953), James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), and Horst Buchholz in the German film *Die Halbstarken* (*Teenage Wolfpack*, 1956).[18]

In conservative eyes the onstage behavior of early rock and roll stars was wild, uninhibited, and lascivious. Some artists, such as Little Richard, lived up to the rebel stereotype in their offstage antics too, but many did not. For example, Elvis Presley's stage persona and public image contrasted sharply with his shy, polite offstage demeanor, as exemplified in his well-mannered defense of his fans against conservatives' criticism: "Sir, those kids that come here and pay their money to see this show, come to have a good time. If they wanna pay their money to come out and jump around, and scream and yell, it's their business. They'll grow up someday and grow out of that."[19] Mathias Haeussler therefore argues that Elvis represented neither rebellion nor conformity, but instead embodied the ambivalent atmosphere of the postwar years and their tentative oscillation between these poles. While the media and the critics cast Elvis as a rebel, he himself always professed to embrace conservative values such as religion, family, and the bourgeois lifestyle.

Elvis is thus an almost perfect embodiment of the image of rock and roll that emerges in more recent scholarship. "Rock & roll contained some elements of rebellion," writes Richard Aquila, for example, "but it also reflected the era's consensus behavior, conservatism, and conformity."[20] Over the course of the 1950s and early 1960s, experts, parents, and the public increasingly came to believe that rock and roll was not a dangerous revolution, but rather expressed the "rebellious attitudes" and challenging of their parents' generation that was perfectly normal for those transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.[21] In other words, far from posing a menace to society, rock and roll reinforced the social order by providing an outlet for youthful frustration. Looking back, Detlef Siegfried finds at most a "vague notion of rebellion" among rock fans, while Axel Schildt links the genre with the "formation of a youth subculture" rather than rebellion against parents.[22]

There was one more element that influenced the perception of the genre: skin color. When rhythm and blues became a rock and roll, a genre shaped by Black musicians and enjoyed by a mixed audience transformed into one from which primarily white musicians and producers earned money.[23] Nevertheless, since its origins were well known, hostility toward rock frequently had racist undertones, and in Europe this antagonism was mixed with anti-Americanism.[24] But at the same time, rock music can be viewed to some extent at least as a rebellion against racism, since it gave a platform to Black culture and Black performers such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry.[25] Listening to rock could be, but was not necessarily, an anti-racist statement. If rock had re-

bellious and anti-conservative connotations at the time, this was not due to a positive political positioning by its artists, because such a positioning did not take place: "None of the first generation rockers rocked the political boat," Robin Denselow pointedly remarks in his history of political pop.[26] Rather, the association between anti-conservatism and rock music at this point was due to conservatives' rejection of rock. Where the music was of interest to them at all, it was as a foil, though this was not unimportant. As the cultural scholar Lawrence Grossberg aptly puts it, rock was politicized "behind its back."[27]

Rock and Revolution: The 1960s

The situation described above changed little in the early 1960s. At the beginning of the decade, it was folk music, not rock, that was political and progressive, and so when its best-known exponent, Bob Dylan, distanced himself from politics, he also turned away from folk and toward rock.[28] After causing uproar at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 by switching to electric instrumentation, Dylan released a series of albums invoking the roots of rock and roll and even country, the popular genre seen in the US as most conservative in terms of both music and politics. This string of albums culminated in *Blonde on Blonde*, which Dylan recorded in Nashville, the country music capital.[29]

At around the same time, however, rock music was becoming politicized, now not by outside forces, but by internal ones linked to counterculture and student movements. Rock became the soundtrack of the 1960s, with rock and politics sometimes fusing to the point of indistinguishability. "MUSIC IS REVOLUTION," the US pop poet John Sinclair intoned in 1968: "Rock and roll music is one of the most vital revolutionary forces in the West. It blows people all the way back to their senses and makes them feel good, like they're alive again in the middle of this monstrous funeral parlor of western civilization. [. . .] Rock and roll music is a weapon of cultural revolution."[30] In Germany, Helmut Salzinger similarly described rock and roll as the "beginning of the revolution" in his 1972 book *Rock Power*.[31] If rock was not the revolution itself, then it was the means to the revolutionary end, and rock stars seemed to many to be revolutionaries and prophets.[32]

In those years "anyone who listened to the 'right' music could see themselves as 'progressive,' " according to Detlef Siegfried.[33] In other words, one's taste in music alone—specifically, a preference for rock over other musical styles, in particular pop and country (and in Germany, *schlager*)—expressed one's political stance. A stance could also be articulated in song lyrics, which

gained enormous importance in the 1960s. Not only did the Beatles write their own lyrics, they were also the first band to print them on the album cover. But fans could still enjoy songs as music without paying attention to the lyrics, and lyrics could be understood in completely different ways. As the US music journalist and critic Greil Marcus put it in 1972, "I didn't 'interpret' the words to 'Memphis Blues,' they interpreted my situation. They existed to act on me, not for me to figure out 'what they mean.' They'll mean something else the next time I hear them."[34] Song lyrics should therefore not be considered in isolation, and certainly not merely as texts, but must be read—or rather heard—and interpreted in the context of their origin and reception. Thus, a song whose lyrics were meaningless could express a political stance simply because it fell into the genre of rock, which was acquiring political connotations in the 1960s. Equally, though, an explicitly political song could simply serve as background music. Moreover, as Marcus pointed out, the same song might sometimes serve one function, sometimes another, depending on the context and recipient, and these functions could change over time.

Then there were songs that captured the revolutionary mood of many younger people while at the same time distancing themselves from it. Examples of these were released by the two biggest British bands of the late 1960s, many of whose fans categorized them—or at least wanted to categorize them—as politically left-wing. "Revolution" by the Beatles invoked revolt in its title, but the lyrics rejected it—at least in its violent forms: "But when you talk about destruction / Don't you know that you can count me out," John Lennon informed his audience. After fans protested, he replaced "out" with "out/in," but this sitting on the fence did not make things any better in the eyes of politically engaged Beatles fans.[35]

A piece in the *New Left Review* called the song a "lamentable petty bourgeois cry of fear."[36] To make matters worse, when asked why the Beatles were not revolutionaries, Paul McCartney responded, smirkingly self-satisfied, that they were in fact "the world's number one capitalists."[37] In the eyes of the New Left around the world, the Beatles were only undermining themselves with such comments. "A lot of the people were mad at the Beatles because their 'politics' didn't agree with ours. We felt tricked, because we had expected the Beatles to be our spokesmen (whoever 'we' were), to say what we wanted to hear, what we wanted to learn about," Greil Marcus wrote in 1969.[38] "There was once a time when the Beatles were considered the avant-garde of a cultural revolution," an article published in the German left-wing magazine *Konkret* had complained in 1968. As the article's title, "Scheiß-Beatles" (Screw the Beatles) made clear, that time was clearly over.[39]

To compensate, perhaps, Lennon became more political in the years after "Revolution." Between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, he was considered "the foremost politico in rock culture," assuming the role that Bob Dylan had held a few years earlier.[40] The Federal Bureau of Investigation, however, came to the conclusion that while Lennon had radical tendencies, he did not appear to be a true revolutionary, especially since he was constantly under the influence of drugs.[41]

Disappointed Beatles fans turned to the Rolling Stones, whose "Street-fighting Man" seemed to provide the perfect soundtrack for demonstrations and street battles—and certainly delivered on a musical level. Indeed, the song, which was released almost simultaneously with "Revolution," was received much more positively than the Beatles' contribution to 1968.[42] But listeners who paid attention to the lyrics were likely to be equally disappointed: "Where I live the game to play is compromise solution," Mick Jagger sang.[43] When a reporter from *Der Spiegel* remarked during an interview that Jagger sang about "politics, protest, and revolution," the latter protested, "Oh no, I don't sing about revolution." In America, he said, "rock and roll bands have become very political," but whenever he returned home, "everything is so very different, so quiet and peaceful." He personally had never been interested in the New Left, Jagger added, thereby making it clear that the Stones had as little intention of participating in the revolution as the Beatles.[44] "The Stones aren't protest and revolution, and they aren't a cry for peace in a new world. In fact, they are the banal and fatal opposite; namely, reactionary," the German music magazine *Sounds* claimed after the *Spiegel* interview, its disappointment equaling *Konkret*'s disillusionment with the Beatles.[45] "Reactionary" went further than "conservative," but the message was nonetheless clear: instead of challenging the status quo, these bands supported it by occasionally paying lip service to revolution, but otherwise remaining part of a capitalist music industry from which they earned a great deal of money.

In his history of British pop culture, historian Dominic Sandbrook repeatedly emphasizes its inherent conservatism from a conservative perspective, citing both the Beatles and the Stones as evidence. He details with relish how members of both bands bought country estates from impoverished aristocrats so that they could play lord of the manor.[46] Sandbrook rounds off his evidence with a photograph from 2012 in which a number of rock stars can be seen alongside McCartney, dutifully congratulating Queen Elizabeth on her diamond jubilee. As well as acquiring country piles, "Sir Paul" and "Sir Mick" had by then acquired titles. It does not get more Establishment than that.

When Eric Clapton was appointed to the Order of the British Empire

in 1994, he admitted, "As a kid I would not have been able to accept this. I was very immature about the way I looked at that. I was against the establishment."[47] Things had obviously changed. Not long after this interview, Clapton endorsed the Countryside Alliance, a conservative lobbying organization best known for championing fox hunting.[48] Bryan Ferry, Roger Waters and Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, Roger Daltrey of the Who, and Mike Rutherford of Genesis have also supported the pro-hunting cause.[49] Regardless of whether these rockers had undergone a change of heart that led them into the conservative camp or whether, as Sandbrook argues, they had always been closet conservatives, these representatives of the second generation of rock did not shake the status quo any more than did their predecessors.

The journalist Christopher Bray goes so far as to characterize the Beatles, the Kinks, and other bands of the 1960s as Thatcher's secret agents. He cites as an example George Harrison's "Taxman," which is sung from the perspective of the eponymous tax collector: "If you drive a car, I'll tax the street / If you try to sit, I'll tax your seat / If you get too cold, I'll tax the heat / If you take a walk, I'll tax your feet."[50] According to Bray, the generation that had benefited most from demand-side economic policies and the welfare state undermined both. So when Thatcher later claimed to be reaping what the 1960s had sown, she came closer to the truth than even she realized, Bray argues.[51]

In the end the Beatles may not have been the political revolutionaries some fans would have liked them to be. But there can be no doubt that musically they were an innovative force without rival in the history of pop music. A band that started out by imitating US forerunners evolved from album to album, their influence on rock music so transformative that the genre's history is now divided into pre- and post-Beatles. By taking elements from rock and roll, folk, music hall, classical, art, and world music and pushing studio technology to its limits, the Beatles expanded the musical expressions of rock, bringing it closer to art music. When rock turned into prog rock, "progressive" was meant politically as well as musically, initially at least. For the political scientist John Street, however, prog rock was the epitome of conservative music, because its elitism betrayed the popular origins of rock and promoted passivity among its listeners.[52] This raises the question whether rock really sought to become art, or whether it blurred the boundary between high and popular culture—a boundary that criticism such as Street's tries to maintain.

As with progressive rock as a whole, its German variety Krautrock was closely associated with counterculture in terms of generation and milieu. In a 2012 BBC documentary, Renate Knaup of Amon Düül II said that the band had once returned from a tour in 1968 to find Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas

Baader, members of the West German left-wing terrorist group Red Army Faction, waiting for them. Knaup and her bandmates threw them out, an anecdote that captures the mixture of closeness and distance in the relationship between Krautrock and counterculture.[53] Similarly, Holger Czukay from Can said that what "happened politically in 1968 [. . .] barely touched me. Even back then, I always said, 'Politics devours music,' " a statement that can be applied to Krautrock and prog rock alike. Musical progressiveness could, but by no means had to, go hand in hand with a progressive political stance.[54] "Let's come to the realization that the music we have long celebrated as our progressive, left-wing, consciousness-raising, consciousness-expanding, involving music, as it is presented, is actually nothing more than a long-integrated part of show business," *Konkret* quoted a disillusioned Henryk Broder, then a left-wing journalist, in October 1970.[55] Thus the brief love affair between rock and progressive politics ended in a disappointment that was possibly based from the start on a false perception of structural affinity.

The Birth of Punk in the Rock and Roll Revival: The 1970s

Woodstock 1969 marked both the zenith and the end of the countercultural movement and the fusion of rock and politics. In that year the Manson Family, which had originated in the hippie movement, murdered nine people, and a festival in Altamont, California, advertised as the "Woodstock of the West," ended in chaos and the death of a festivalgoer. The following year the Beatles disbanded, and Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin died. There was a widespread sense that an era was ending or had already ended. For the first time the death of rock and roll was announced—and it has been announced on a regular basis ever since.[56] The death knell was sounded in Don McLean's 1971 song "American Pie," for example, in which each verse ends with the line "The day the music died."[57] Here, McLean dates the demise of rock and roll all the way back to February 2, 1959, when Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J. P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson died in a plane crash. "American Pie" thus suggests that the innovations and developments of the following decade were mere departures and aberrations from the true rock and roll, a view shared by more than a few rock fans.

The alliance between progressivism and rock that had long been taken for granted appeared increasingly dubious. In the same year that "American Pie" was released, the writer Marion Meade took rock's gender politics to task in a *New York Times* article. With its rebellion against middle-class values, its advocacy of unisex clothing and long hair, rock might seem progressive, Meade

wrote, but "for all the hip camouflage sexism flourishes."[58] In reality, rock effectively excluded women, she argued; there were hardly any mixed-sex bands, and the few all-female groups that existed did not find success. And Meade's article does not even mention the overt misogyny of many rock lyrics.

With Nixon's resignation in 1974 and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the two essential elements that had just about held the great progressive coalition together fell away. That same year Lennon, like Dylan before him, turned his back on politics and returned to the roots of rock and roll with a covers album entitled simply *Rock 'n' Roll* and featuring a photograph of a young Hamburg-era Lennon on the cover.[59] Once again, depoliticization was accompanied by a return to traditional rock.

Lennon's album reflected a wider trend of the 1970s, a decade that, like "American Pie," seemed to be obsessed with the past. This had already become apparent at Woodstock in the form of Sha Na Na, a group that combined exaggerated 1950s musical and visual motifs.[60] In music and fashion, onstage with musicals such as *Grease* (1971), in concert halls with rock and roll revival shows, on the big screen with films such as *American Graffiti* (1972), and on television with the series *Happy Days* (1974–84), the 1950s and early rock and roll were being resurrected and rediscovered.

The fifties revival contributed significantly to the impression—discussed first in the US, and then in the UK and West Germany—that a "wave of nostalgia" was sweeping over society.[61] "Popular music has simply become haunted by the 50s," the British critic Michael Wood observed in 1974.[62] For the youth researcher Dieter Baacke, this nostalgia was neither conservative nor progressive. Instead, it was bound up with a complete rejection of "ideas, systems, demands" and a retreat into the private sphere; yet as the basis for a "critique of the process of modernization" it was ultimately "ultraconservative."[63]

Compared with the radical departures of the 1950s and the avant-gardism and revolutionary rhetoric of the 1960s, 1970s rock, with its back-to-the-roots and retro tendencies, now seemed more backward- than forward-looking. The genre was aging, as demonstrated by the publication of the first historical surveys and, even more strikingly, the transformation of its early hits, once considered the epitome of youthfulness, into oldies.[64]

Even new music seemed to be informed by the old. In a review of some young bands in *The Village Voice* in 1975, the critic James Wolcott wrote: "What's changed is the nature of the impulse to create rock. No longer is the impulse revolutionary—i.e., the transformation of oneself and society—but conservative: to carry on the rock tradition. To borrow from Eliot, a rocker now needs a historical sense."[65] As the reference to T. S. Eliot suggests, the stan-

dards that once applied to rock—and indeed pop culture more generally—had differed from those applied to high culture, in which tradition and intertextual allusions are valorized. But now that it was a quarter of a century old, rock, having become conservative, also had a tradition on which it could look back, especially when its innovative impulse appeared to be flagging.

For some, however, it was the innovations of the past decade that were the problem, because they had made rock more cerebral, fanciful, and artificial. For these critics, the only remedy was a radical new beginning in the form of a return to the original rock and roll sound of the 1950s. Punk was rooted in this paradox: as the music critic Simon Reynolds writes, "This most revolutionary movement in rock history was actually born from reactionary impulses."[66] Punk was both innovative and reactionary, a new genre that wanted to return to the origins of rock and roll. Occasionally, its exponents would distance themselves from everything that had come before, like the Clash in their song titled "1977": "No Elvis, Beatles or the Rolling Stones / In 1977."[67] On closer inspection, however, it is clear that, like the retro trends that preceded and accompanied it, punk grew out of a dissatisfaction with the way rock had evolved since the 1960s. To counter this, punk stripped back its sound to the bare essentials: one or two guitars, a drum kit, and a singer. The idea was to make rock sound like it did in its early days. "Punk is just real good basic rock & roll [. . .] real basic fifties and early sixties rock," claimed Nancy Spungen, the girlfriend of the Sex Pistols' bass player Sid Vicious.[68]

The brainchild of Malcolm McLaren, the Sex Pistols were initially created to promote SEX (hence the band's name), a clothing and lifestyle store on the King's Road in Chelsea that McLaren ran with Vivienne Westwood. Until recently, the store had been called "Let It Rock" and had been patronized by second-generation teddy boys (and girls), with whom McLaren was closely linked.[69] The invention of punk—or at least its British version—was merely the next step. Punk was faster, louder, and wilder than original rock and roll, creating something new from the remnants of the old. Perhaps that is why it was neither innovative nor reactionary, as Reynolds claims; rather, it was located somewhere between these two poles. Nevertheless, in returning to rock and roll and preserving this tradition, punk can ultimately be characterized as conservative.[70]

Politically, punk was similarly contradictory. On the one hand, it seemed even more rebellious than rock, and it later came to be associated with anti-Thatcherism and anti-Reaganism, even though punk's heyday was coming to an end by the time these leaders were in power. On the other hand, punk can-

not be described as progressive, for it detested hippies ("Never Trust a Hippy") at least as much as the Queen ("God Save the Queen"). It can probably best be characterized as libertarian to anarchic ("Anarchy in the UK"). Or maybe even conservative? This at least is the assessment of the Sex Pistols biographer Jon Savage, who holds that punk by the late 1970s had become as conservative as the forces it had originally rebelled against.[71] Furthermore, Savage argues that by this time conservatives had hijacked the countercultural glorification of individualism and freedom that punk had brought to the fore, reinterpreting and appropriating it for their own purposes. Much like Sandbrook's and Bray's views on the Beatles and the Stones, Savage sees punk as helping to pave the way for the neoliberalism and (neo)conservatism of the 1980s.

But ultimately it was not punk that created the greatest political controversy in the 1970s. At a concert in 1976, Eric Clapton—whose music would be inconceivable without the influence of Black predecessors—sided with the Conservative politician Enoch Powell, who had lambasted immigration from Commonwealth countries in his blatantly racist "Rivers of Blood" speech of 1968. Clapton proclaimed: "I think we should vote for Enoch Powell. Enoch's our man. I think Enoch's right, I think we should send them all back. Stop Britain from becoming a black colony. Get the foreigners out. Get the wogs out. Get the coons out. Keep Britain white."[72] This forced the left to finally accept "that rock music was no longer automatically left-leaning" and to take action.[73] Clapton's remarks, together with the use of swastikas by punk groups and David Bowie's roughly contemporaneous remarks about Adolf Hitler being one of the first rock stars, led to the establishment of the Rock Against Racism platform.[74]

Some punk bands, including the Clash, performed at Rock Against Racism festivals. However, this should again not be seen as evidence of punk's generally progressive orientation, since it must be noted that other punk figures aligned themselves with conservatives. Among these was Iggy Pop, whose 1980 song "I'm a Conservative" was not meant as a joke.[75] Having spent several years in Europe, the musician moved back to the US "as soon as I thought Reagan would get elected. I've campaigned quietly for him, asking people at my gigs to vote. [. . .] I've been waiting for someone who could communicate the joys of liberty as compared to the joys of equality."[76] Paul Weller of the Jam declared in 1979 that he would vote for the Tories.[77] Johnny Ramone was a Republican and by his own admission "ultraconservative," but that did not stop the Ramones from releasing the song "Bonzo Goes to Bitburg" in 1985 to protest Reagan's visit to the military cemetery in Bitburg.[78] As early as 1977 an arti-

cle in the *National Review*, the flagship publication of US conservatism, had called punk a "right-wing political protest" and tried to appropriate it for the conservative cause.[79]

Ultimately, then, the character of Ian Rubbish is not as far-fetched as the sketch mentioned at the beginning of this essay pretends. Like rock as a whole, punk was full of contradictions. Progressive elements—musical and political—existed alongside conservative ones. Or, as Peter Doggett puts it, "Punk, then, was freedom and conservatism; experimentation and conformity: a manifesto for changing one's life, or a comfort trap which would never require one to change."[80] Like rock, punk could be harnessed and taken in varying, even mutually exclusive, directions.

"Old Time Rock and Roll" versus Disco in the 1970s

While punk oscillated musically and politically between returning to its roots, preservation, and new beginnings, mainstream rock of the 1970s sometimes appeared resolutely conservative. One example is the 1978 song "Old Time Rock and Roll" by Bob Seger, one of the first exponents of heartland rock, another new subgenre heavily inspired by early rock and roll. Like the heartland genre in general, "Old Time Rock and Roll" combined rousing, stomping rock and roll with half-wistful, half-aggressive lyrics. The song is written from the perspective of an aging rocker who revisits his old records because contemporary music does not speak to him. Most likely addressing a woman, this emphatically old-fashioned and anti-progressive figure declares his loyalty to "Old Time Rock and Roll," grumpily refusing to give modern music a chance, let alone venture onto the dance floor.[81] While musically the song stands in the rock and roll tradition, it would have been unimaginable in the 1950s and 1960s. The teenagers of those decades had become men who were still rebelling against the mainstream, but now from a conservative standpoint. The zeitgeist they were rebelling against had a name—disco: "Don't try to take me to a disco / You'll never even get me out on the floor," sang Seger, reflecting the view of much of the rock community.[82] Disco was *the* cutting-edge musical development of the 1970s, surpassing punk in terms of innovativeness. And it must have seemed as if disco had thrown down the gauntlet if only because it contrasted with rock in almost every respect. It was also extremely successful, which further hardened the antipathy of rock and rollers.

First, unlike rock, which by now was feeling its age, disco was a new genre. Furthermore, it was not an US creation but an import from continental Europe, albeit one mixing with local elements. Second, disco was above all

dance music. Although early rock and roll was also meant to be danced to, those days had long passed. If anyone was still dancing to rock in the 1970s, it was mainly the people on the stage, not those in front of it. This raises two other points: The ideal form of rock was the live concert, where an adoring crowd watched a male lead singer—rarely a female vocalist—strut across the stage swinging a guitar. The term "cock rock" captures the macho, self-evidently heteronormative idea of masculinity inherent to the genre, even if certain forms, such as glam rock, deliberately undermined such gender stereotypes.[83]

Disco was different in every respect. The music came from records, and there was no separation between stage and audience. In fact, there was no stage at all: the dancers themselves were the performance. Then there was the democratic, diverse nature of disco. Its stars were Black singers like Gloria Gaynor and Donna Summer, heterogeneous groups like the Village People, who poked fun at ideals of hard masculinity, and disc jockeys (DJs) who created music under laboratory conditions, using increasingly elaborate electronic technology. European artists such as the Swedish group ABBA or the Italian-German DJ and producer Giorgio Moroder enjoyed the kind of success in disco that would have been unattainable for them in rock. Most importantly, disco's audience was inclusive, with women and gay people offered a safe space to party at night.[84]

Given that it was associated with permissiveness, it is no surprise that disco was a thorn in the eye of conservatives and, to an even greater extent, evangelicals. When the televangelist Jerry Fallwell listed the evils of modern life in a 1979 speech delivered in front of the Capitol in Washington, he named disco along with homosexuality, pornography, abortion, and sex education.[85] The genre's fiercest opponents were not to be found in organized conservatism, however, but among rock fans, especially when, thanks in no small part to the success of *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), disco's popularity soared to new heights. And as record labels, radio stations, and even seasoned rockers like the Rolling Stones (with "Miss You") and Rod Stewart (with "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy") jumped on the bandwagon, resistance grew. The backlash literally exploded at "Disco Demolition Night," which took place at a Chicago baseball stadium on July 13, 1979. The event was orchestrated by the radio DJ Steve Dahl, who had lost his job at a local radio station when it switched its programming from rock to disco. In response Dahl launched the "Disco Sucks!" campaign, which reached its climax that night in the detonation of disco records that attendees had brought with them and piled into pyres.[86]

The "Disco Sucks!" campaign went beyond its ostensible target to also

oppose equal rights for women, gay people, and African Americans, its homophobia and racism manifesting itself with varying degrees of subtlety. It can thus be understood as one of the anti-movements that were working toward the political victory of conservatism and the electoral victory of its representative, Ronald Reagan. The anti-disco movement also demonstrates how much rock and its social position had changed since its early days. Where conservatives had once seen rock as a threat and destroyed records, now rock's fans had resorted to the same means to combat the threat they believed was posed by disco music.

The decade that had been ushered in by "American Pie" ended in 1980 with Billy Joel's "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me," which took the view that not so much had changed at all. While music critics were accusing rock of failing to evolve, the song poked fun at the very idea of musical progress and those who promoted it: "Everybody's talkin' 'bout the new sound / Funny, but it's still rock and roll to me."[87] Some artists may claim to have reinvented rock and roll, Joel suggested, but ultimately they were all following a tradition that remained fundamentally unaltered. "It appears from the evidence that rock, like America itself, has gone conservative," Thomas N. Jewell wrote in 1981 looking back at the past decade's music—and given the above discussion, it is not difficult to understand why he came to this conclusion.[88]

Old Antagonisms and New Alliances: The 1980s

As the anti-disco movement demonstrates, the 1970s saw the positions of conservatives and rock fans move closer and even overlap in certain instances. But there were other signs that rock and conservatism were making peace with each other. For example, it was no longer unusual to find rock music being used during evangelical services.[89] Even the Republican establishment had started using rock music to appeal to voters. While the contest between Richard Nixon and George McGovern has been called "the first rock and roll presidential election in history," the campaign for Reagan's re-election in 1984 borrowed Bruce Springsteen's song "Born in the U.S.A."[90] This provides another example of how songs can be interpreted in very different ways and the minor role lyrics often play for how a song is perceived. Reagan's team simply ignored the fact that the lyrics of "Born in the U.S.A." criticize American society from the perspective of an unemployed Vietnam veteran; what mattered for them were the seemingly patriotic chorus and the powerful, defiant music.[91]

Like Seger, Springsteen is considered an exponent of heartland rock, which

emerged from the back-to-the-roots movement and drew on rock and roll, blues, folk, and country. Musically, Springsteen's work was conservative and tied to tradition, and so it was tempting to assume that he was politically conservative, too. In response to the Republican attempt to appropriate his work, Springsteen positioned himself within the progressive camp, as did other heartland rockers such as John Mellencamp, who openly opposed Reagan in his song "Country Gentleman."[92] In these examples, then, we find an easy coexistence of musical conservatism and political progressiveness.

Although signs of rapprochement were emerging in some quarters, elsewhere the conservative antagonism toward rock was being updated under new auspices. In his surprise 1987 bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind*, the philosopher Allan Bloom polemicized against rock music across several pages. In a critique reminiscent of the 1950s, Bloom accused rock of seducing young people with its "barbaric appeal to sexual desire" and thus contributing to general cultural degeneration.[93] However, the establishment of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) by the wives of some high-ranking Democratic and Republican politicians, notably Tipper Gore and Susan Baker, potentially posed a greater threat to rock than Bloom's pessimistic, culturally conservative lament. The center was founded in response to a campaign by the National Parent Teacher Association, which had claimed to be observing a veritable wave of pornographic songs.[94]

Much like the various back-to-the-roots movements within rock, some conservative critics romanticized rock and roll's early years. "Much has changed since Elvis' seemingly innocent times," lamented Republican senator Paula Hawkins, for example. "Subtleties, suggestions, and innuendo have given way to overt expressions and descriptions of often violent sexual acts, drug taking, and flirtations with the occult."[95] Hawkins seemed to have forgotten that virtually the same accusations had been made against rock and roll in the 1950s. Elvis, whose gyrations had once caused even more excitement among conservatives than among screaming teenagers, was now presented as the paragon of a simpler, more innocent time that made the obscene excesses of the present all the more apparent by comparison.[96]

Like rock itself, political conservatives were divided: while some wanted to exploit the music to appeal to broad sections of the population, others resisted it. The complex nature of the relationship between rock and conservatism is also demonstrated by the fact that the PMRC's fiercest opponent, Frank Zappa, somewhat surprisingly described himself as a conservative: "Politically, I consider myself to be a (don't laugh) Practical Conservative. I want a smaller,

less intrusive government, and lower taxes."[97] For Zappa, conservatism meant, in the spirit of Reagan, freedom from government paternalism and interference such as censorship and taxation.

In Europe, too, there was criticism of sexually explicit rock songs, and "parental advisory" stickers appeared on the latest American albums. Leaving these aside, however, there were few anti-rock campaigns similar to those in the US. In the UK, pop music in the 1980s was dominated by new wave, which had emerged from punk and therefore contrasted with it all the more. Hard rock was replaced by a soft, sometimes sweetly poppy electronic sound, the safety pin was replaced by a tie, and demonstrative rebelliousness was replaced by equally demonstrative conformity. For this reason, and because new wave bands were openly and unapologetically commercial, they were regarded by many as "Thatcherism on vinyl" or "secret Thatcherites."[98] Boy George stated in one interview: "With the punk thing everyone was making impractical attacks on being rich [. . .]. But they all wanted to be rich. You have to be. I've got plenty of money [. . .]. And I worked for it, really hard."[99]

Margaret Thatcher could only agree. In an interview with *Smash Hits*, a magazine for young adults, she enthused about the British music scene, albeit not necessarily from a musical perspective: "So good luck to your pop groups. They do very well for us for export—they do a fantastic job and if some of them want to have yellow hair, pink hair, long hair, short hair, blue jeans, yellow jeans, or these days, my goodness me, there are some smart ones. Marvellous."[100] For Thatcher, pop culture was solely about how performers looked, and this ultimately did not matter as long as money was being made. Thatcher's appreciation of commercial success was shared by many bands of the 1980s. Tony Hadley, the lead singer of Spandau Ballet, explicitly revealed himself as a Conservative and Thatcher admirer.[101] In contrast his bandmate Gary Kemp, exasperated by constant questions on the subject, stressed that he had joined the Labour Party as a teenager: "However much money I get, I could never vote Conservative."[102] Thus the political fault line sometimes ran through individual bands.

What is even more remarkable is that mainstream artists were acknowledging their conservatism, and moreover that party affiliation was being discussed publicly at all. Here one can see the influence of the 1960s and the repoliticization of rock. With respect to lyrics, however, politics rarely played a role in new wave. Its categorization as conservative therefore had little to do with lyrics or even political statements such as those made by Hadley; instead, it was based on new wave's emphasis on performers' appearance, their striving for success and profit, and the accompanying cultivation of mass appeal.

New wave helped shape the image of the 1980s as a period of consumerism, commercialism, and conformity beyond Britain too. What teenagers and hippies were to the 1950s and 1960s, respectively, yuppies were to the 1980s. And if the latter had an anthem, it was "Hip to Be Square" by Huey Lewis and the News, which described the conversion from hippie to yuppie that was a common occurrence at the time: "I used to be a renegade, I used to fool around / But I couldn't take the punishment and had to settle down / Now I'm playing it real straight, and yes, I cut my hair / You might think I'm crazy, but I don't even care / Because I can tell what's going on / It's hip to be square."[103] As Bret Easton Ellis puts it in *American Psycho*, a novel providing a violent reckoning with yuppie culture, "Hip to Be Square" celebrated "the pleasures of conformity and the importance of trends."[104]

This is not the whole story of the decade, however, for a progressive appropriation of rock running counter to the developments described above was also under way. The most extreme manifestation was Red Wedge, a collective founded by the left-wing singer-songwriter Billy Bragg, Paul Weller (who had threatened to vote for the Tories when Britain was under Labour), and singer-songwriter Jimmy Sommerville, which clearly positioned itself as anti-Thatcher and pro-Labour.[105] Less partisan, and probably for that reason much more successful, was the 1985 Live Aid benefit concert initiated by Bob Geldof, which took place simultaneously in London, in Philadelphia, and on TV screens.[106] Humanitarian rather than political—its goal being to raise money to combat famine in Ethiopia—Live Aid mobilized a broad front of participants. In London new wave bands such as Spandau Ballet, the Style Council, and Ultravox took to the stage along with rock groups such as Queen. Even Margaret Thatcher was impressed—"I thought it was marvellous"[107]—though this did not stop her from objecting to Geldof's criticism of politicians' inaction during the crisis.

New wave enjoyed great success in West Germany, too, in its German form, Neue Deutsche Welle (NDW). Indebted to the do-it-yourself philosophy of punk, many German bands now sang in German without immediately being placed in the *schlager* pigeonhole. Yet a comparison with *schlager* is not wholly inappropriate, given that NDW bands regularly borrowed elements of 1950s *schlager*.[108] Since punk could not push the boundaries any further in terms of rebellion, there was only one option left for those seeking to be radically subversive: demonstrative—albeit generally ironic—conservatism. "We're not rockers masquerading as social workers, and we're not schlager singers who mistake themselves for rockers," the short-lived duo Weltschmertz told *Die Zeit*, adding: "We're not quickfire intellectuals either. We're critical

conservatives heading toward the future. There's no room for stereotypical mono-tonies, for tedious teachers and Nato-doubletracked, bureaucratically constrained politicians. We believe in the subversive power of fun, mockery, and humor, in the elegance of feelings. That's the silver bullet. The frustration repellent."[109]

Designed to provoke the left, such statements met with some approval from the right. "Something is happening in this country," the philosopher Hans Wagner gushed in the right-wing conservative magazine *Criticón*. "Young people don't give a damn about German-American friendship," he opined, possibly alluding to the NDW band Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft, whose song "Tanz den Mussolini" (Dance the Mussolini) had caused outrage in 1981. Wagner had written the article after listening to a radio interview with an unnamed NDW singer who had said: "I only sing German lyrics. I'm into Germany."[110]

Such statements were probably deliberately intended to be misunderstood. Even more ambiguous than new wave, NDW deliberately created confusion time and again, the most prominent case being "Bruttosozialprodukt" (gross national product) by Geier Sturzflug. The song became so closely associated with Christian-conservative Helmut Kohl and his oft-cited politics of change that public broadcasters boycotted it during the 1983 election campaign in order to forestall accusations of swaying the election. The press called "Bruttosozialprodukt" a "cynical ballad about the German work ethic" (*Vorwärts*), "the new gospel" (*Bunte*), a "May song that trade unionists would rather not hum along to" (*Die Welt*), and a "CDU party conference song" (*Quick*).[111] In reality, however, the song had been written back in the late 1970s and had been intended as a satire on the West German obsession with work and consumerism.[112] But as with Nena's anti-war song "99 Luftballons," few listeners paid attention to the lyrics, which were drowned out by the upbeat melody. As a result, both of these songs became party songs that seemed to reflect the mood of West German self-satisfaction. Notwithstanding the intentions behind them, they ended up seeming more conservative than subversive, although their ambiguity made it all the easier for various factions to appropriate them.

Conclusions

On the scale between progressive and conservative, where should we place rock? As we have seen, doubts about rock's progressiveness were already being raised in the 1960s, and by the 1970s, tendencies had emerged that appeared

conservative even to contemporaries. These included antipathy toward progressive rock, various attempts to return to the roots of rock and roll, and the creation of a canon of sorts, whereby older hits were transformed into "oldies" and classic rock was established as a genre. The extent of rock's conservatism by this point was evident in its anxieties about its position and even survival, as well as in its hostility toward new developments such as disco. Where the latter was concerned, rock fans found themselves in agreement with conservative groups, exemplifying the potential, but by no means structural, overlaps between musical and political conservatism.

Apropos of political conservativism, the 1970s saw some rapprochement—or at least declining antagonism—between rock and conservatism. Churches and conservative parties gradually abandoned their opposition to rock and even began to adopt it for their own purposes. No artists were immune from such appropriation, regardless of whether they identified as conservative or progressive themselves. In 2006 the *National Review* published a list of fifty songs it considered conservative. The list included songs by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Creedence Clearwater Revival, David Bowie, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and even Bob Dylan and U2, as well as the only non-US and non-British entry, "Wind of Change" by the Scorpions.[113] But there were also individual rock stars who positioned themselves more or less openly as conservative, something that would have been virtually inconceivable in previous decades. In the 1960s the floodgates opened: where rock was political, it could swing to the right as well as to the left, and where it was rebellious, it could reject a progressive as well as a conservative mainstream.

From the perspective of society as a whole, perhaps nothing demonstrated rock's conservative potential as much as the New Left's disappointment with the genre's failure to produce progressive, revolutionary results. "The position of the music as an increasingly important cultural commodity within a consumer economy weakened any of the explicit antimaterialist content of the music," scholars Steven Chapple and Reebee Garofalo noted as early as 1977 in their history of the pop music industry.[114] This observation echoes the leftist critique of popular culture dating back to Horkheimer and Adorno, while expressing disappointment with how rock had evolved over time. "At this point it should be evident that the vast majority of rock music does little to challenge either the basis of American society [. . .] or even the sophisticated institutions and attitudes that hold it together," Chapple and Garofalo concluded.

The cultural studies scholar Lawrence Grossberg reiterated this diagnosis in the early 1990s: "There is little evidence that rock rejected the dominant liberal consensus of American society, or its major ideological assumptions,

including sexism, racism and classism."[115] Ultimately, rock did not so much challenge society's norms as reproduce them, and Chapple and Garofalo had already identified the main reason for this: as commercial entities relying on sales of records and concert tickets, bands needed to appeal to the widest possible audience. It therefore made more sense to focus on universal, largely noncontroversial topics such as love, sex, and relationships—which are indeed the subject of more than 90 percent of all rock songs—than on politics and society. "Economically speaking, ignoring politics makes sense," as journalist David Segal observes.[116]

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that rock as a whole is a conservative genre; such a generalization would be just as inaccurate as the familiar cliché of rock being rebellious and progressive. Rather, at different times over the decades, rock has been a source for various ideological appropriations and antagonisms, both progressive and conservative. As the *National Review*'s list of "conservative" songs illustrates, the same song can be claimed by both sides, or simply consumed as background music. It is partly because of these ambivalences, perhaps, that rock is still alive today, despite all proclamations to the contrary.

Notes

Translation by Sinéad Crowe

1. Saturday Night Live, "History of Punk," April 13, 2013, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEmIIl96zko. I am grateful to Mathias Haeussler, Bodo Mrozek, Martina Steber, Amanda Eubanks Winkler, and Barbara Wünnenberg for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

2. *Tatler*, April 1989, cover.

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"Gay Equals Left?"

Conservatism in Male Homosexual Politics in 1970s West Germany and the United States

CRAIG GRIFFITHS

The history of gay liberation in the 1970s has primarily been told through the prism of radical or left-alternative activists, focusing on groups like the Gay Liberation Front in New York or the Homosexual Action West Berlin. Complicating this narrative, this article analyses "cultures of conservatism" in male homosexual politics, comparing the Federal Republic with the United States in the 1970s. Zooming in on discourses of responsibility and caution, while focusing on the identifications of some gay men as "ordinary" and "sensible," and their rejection of confrontation and flamboyance, this article shows that concepts such as "liberation," "emancipation," or even "gay power" have no fixed meanings, far less meanings that are inherently "radical" or "conservative."

Introduction

Conservatism is not the first word that springs to mind when one thinks of homosexual politics in the 1970s. The events and images that loom large in queer historical memory include the Stonewall riots in June 1969 in Christopher Street, New York City, when gay, lesbian, and gender non-conforming patrons of the Stonewall Inn defended themselves against police oppression. One might also think, across the Atlantic, of the first public demonstration by gays and lesbians in German history, which took place in Münster in April 1972, and which featured Martin Dannecker's witty placard: "Brothers and sisters, whether queer or not, fighting capitalism is a duty we've got."[1] Equally, the names of the groups most associated with gay activism in the 1970s do not imply conservatism. The Stonewall riots inspired the founding of the New York Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a designation which paid homage to anti-imperialist struggle in the shape of the National Liberation Fronts in Algeria

and Vietnam.[2] The GLF later defined itself as "a revolutionary homosexual group of women and men formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished."[3] Dannecker, meanwhile, was a member of one of West Germany's most influential gay action groups, whose name leaves little doubt about its political orientation: the Frankfurt-based RotZSchwul (Rote Zelle Schwul—Red Cell Gay).

Upon closer inspection, however, the story becomes more complex. The Stonewall riots have become iconic because they, unlike previous examples of homosexual resistance, were successfully commemorated.[4] Activists organized a rally to mark the first anniversary in June 1970, an event which became annual and has since been exported around the world, whether called "gay pride" or—as in Germany—CSD or Christopher Street Liberation Day.[5] One of those activists was Foster Gunnison Jr., who in 1970 deplored "Marxian theorists, assorted crackpots and obvious headcases" in the GLF, and described himself as a "gung-ho rightwinger and damn well proud of it," but without whom the Stonewall riots might not have been so effectively memorialized.[6]

The demonstration in Münster in 1972, meanwhile, was organized by the HSM, a group which until the start of that year still adopted the cautious language of "homophile" in its name, instead of either homosexual or *schwul* (gay). This shows the legacy of the homosexual emancipation movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which called itself the homophile movement to avoid drawing attention to the *sexual* in homosexual, part of a political attempt to detoxify same-sex love.[7] In advance of the demonstration, organizers warned that the event was not about homosexual self-presentation in the sense of "gay and proud" or "gay is beautiful" (expressions which were written in English). All prospective publicity material was to be sent to the HSM a week in advance; no leaflets were allowed to be distributed without approval.[8] The group's leading member, Rainer Plein, dubbed by one publicist as the "mother of the movement," was by no means conservative in a party-political sense, but, unlike some of his more anti-imperialist fellow activists, sought inclusion in the military. He unsuccessfully challenged the rejection of his promotion to reserve senior lieutenant in 1976, a rejection which was justified on the grounds of his homosexuality and his activity in the HSM.[9] His case, though far less visible, was a West German counterpart to Leonard Matlovich, who in 1975 protested his discharge from the US Air Force due to his homosexuality, and swiftly appeared on the front page of *Time* magazine. Matlovich was described by his lawyer as "a patriotic, conservative middle-class war hero."[10]

Seen in a strictly political sense, the main ideological fault line in 1970s

homosexual politics was between liberalism and radicalism, with self-defined conservatives not getting much of a look-in.[11] Partly because of this reason, few historians have examined homosexual conservatives (or conservatism) in the 1970s. Clayton Howard writes of the media's "chronic bewilderment" at gay conservatism in the United States, adding that historians have "implicitly reinforced the tendency to view 'gay' and 'conservative' as mutually exclusive categories," despite figures such as Matlovich.[12] In the 1970s the collocation of "gay" and "conservative" may seem especially strange in the US context, given the powerful conservative mobilization against gay rights in the second half of the decade. In 1977 Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign successfully overturned a civil rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida, a law which had briefly outlawed discrimination against gays and lesbians in education, housing, and employment. The campaign soon spread from its Floridian roots to national exposure and an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to ban gay teachers from working in public schools in California.[13] There was no real counterpart to this mobilization of the religious right in West Germany, though in 1978 at least one activist in the National Working Group Repression against Gays (NARGS) wished that there had been. Complaining about the unsatisfactory participation of homosexuals in the group, he idealized the invigorating force of a figurehead of oppression: "We need a German Anita!"[14]

Owing to the close Cold War links between the two countries, West Germany and the United States have frequently been examined in a comparative framework by historians of 1970s activism, but rarely regarding conservatism or homosexual politics.[15] Although scholars have long since stressed the transnationalism of gay liberation, there have not yet been many comparative studies.[16] In popular understanding, the queer transatlantic flow of inspiration operates from the US to West Germany (and elsewhere in Europe), especially with the Stonewall riots in mind—and their commemoration in the form of the CSD. This was, sometimes, a view shared by West German contemporaries. In the program notes for his provocative film *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, but the Situation in Which He Lives*, first shown at the Berlin film festival in July 1971, Rosa von Praunheim reported on the first CSD in New York and praised the "historic act" of Stonewall, hoping that it would serve as an example, since the "inhibition and cowardice among German gays still stinks to high heaven."[17] Praunheim's film, co-written with Martin Dannecker, has itself been compared to Stonewall, in terms of the galvanizing effect it had on queer activism in West Germany: it was screened on television in North Rhine-Westphalia in January 1972 and then nationally in January 1973.[18] Still, the flow of activist ideas and messages was never unidirectional. Consider the

pink triangle, used by the Nazis to categorize homosexual concentration-camp prisoners, which was "rediscovered" in the 1970s, adopted by West German gay activists, and soon disseminated to the United States and beyond, becoming probably the most visible gay symbol before the advent of the rainbow flag in the 1980s.[19]

Not that they knew it at the time, but the predominantly left-wing activists who, armed with the pink triangle, argued that elements of Nazi persecution had continued into the 1970s Federal Republic were treading in the footsteps of prominent conservative intellectual Hans-Joachim Schoeps. Making the case for homosexual law reform, Schoeps dramatically declared in 1962 that "for homosexuals the Third Reich never ended."[20] Indeed, not a word of the 1935 version of the sodomy law, Paragraph 175, was changed in the Federal Republic until 1969, when—in an event rather more important than Stonewall for queer West Germans—a liberalization of the law decriminalized most sexual relations between men over the age of twenty-one.[21] Though he has been described as gay by at least one historian, Schoeps made no reference to his own sexuality in support of his argument, for he did not publicly claim a homosexual identity, neither in the 1960s nor 1970s.[22] Indeed, there were precious few same-sex desiring men who were public both about their conservatism and their homosexuality in the 1970s.[23]

Therefore, while this article will feature some same-sex desiring men who explicitly described themselves as conservative homosexuals, the more productive approach is to conceive of "conservative" more broadly, and to examine "cultures of conservatism" in homosexual politics—ways of thinking, feeling, and talking about homosexuality. Political and party-political belongings were important, but this article follows the call of Martina Steber, Tobias Becker, and Anna von der Goltz to conceptualize conservatism as a "multilayered cultural phenomenon," paying close attention to debates between homosexuals regarding dress, masculinity, and self-presentation.[24] Some of the source material analyzed for this purpose involves individuals using the term "conservative" about themselves (or their behavior, appearance, and lifestyles), while other sources feature the term used as a description by others, either in a neutral, or—more commonly—disowning manner. Going beyond the term itself, the article focuses on some of the vocabularies in the broad semantic context of "conservatism," especially as represented in homosexual print culture.[25] Tracing "conservatism," in this understanding, means focusing on the discourses of responsibility and caution, alongside individuals' identifications as "ordinary" and "sensible," and their repudiations of confrontation and flamboyance.

The aim here is not to argue that 1970s homosexual politics was somehow

intrinsically conservative, nor to *equate* conservatism with convention and caution, or the injunction to be responsible (none of these are synonyms). Homosexual politics was exceedingly complex in the 1970s, a period sandwiched between the Stonewall riots and the liberalization of Paragraph 175 in 1969, and the arrival of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the early 1980s. In the 1970s, especially at the start of the decade, change seemed afoot. Men who loved or desired other men now had greater possibilities for claiming a public identity and for coming together with others who shared their sexual and/or their political orientation. Yet not all reacted to this heady climate in the same manner. Gay liberation was a "plastic concept," capable of being understood in many different—and conflicting—ways.[26] Demands for social inclusion sat uneasily alongside rage at societies which had criminalized and marginalized their same-sex desiring citizens. Pushes toward confrontation were met by the pull of the desire for recognition. Increased visibility and flamboyance challenged, but did not supplant, conformism. Some threw caution to the wind, whereas others were more wary of the possible reactions of a hostile society, invoking President Nixon's usage of the "silent majority."[27] In demanding to be seen as responsible ordinary citizens in their everyday lives, some embraced that influential phrase from conservative political discourse, understanding themselves to be beleaguered members of a homosexual "silent majority." However, it is difficult—and ultimately unproductive—to make simple distinctions between "conservative" or "bourgeois" homosexuals and "radical" or "leftist" gays.[28] Rather than positing neat dividing lines between different groups and individuals, it is better to analyze how these tensions ran through the very heart of groups and individuals themselves.[29]

From Homophile to Gay

The period around 1969/70 has often been seen as a turning point in queer history, with the preceding homophile movement usurped by the gay movement. The popular understanding would run something like this: the old politics of respectability and conformism, of waiting behind the scenes for piecemeal reform and relying on appeals to sympathetic doctors and politicians, was over. It was dramatically eclipsed by the politics of confrontation, as angry gays and lesbians came together, came out, and waged war on anti-homosexual society, including those conservative homosexuals who sought to placate heterosexual opinion. Even if this account is too simplistic, there *was* an important shift in vocabulary around this time. Just as in the United States "gay" came to supplant "homophile," in West Germany *schwul* soon ousted *homophil*, though

"homosexual" remained fairly common in both national contexts. As we have seen, the HSM in Münster changed its name in 1972. According to one member, "whoever calls himself homophile apologizes for his sexuality and begs for tolerance—without realizing that in so doing he implies that sexuality—especially same-sex sexuality—is something bad, that society is actually right in condemning *homosexuals*, just as privately he does so himself." Rather, whoever calls himself *schwul* announces that "he knows he is in the right [. . .] *Therefore we're gay—and not homophile*!!!"[30]

In the United States, gay liberation moved beyond but also built on the foundations painstakingly constructed by the homophile movement. As John D'Emilio has argued, gay liberation could only spring up so quickly in the late 1960s because of the preceding community-building efforts of homophile organizations such as the Mattachine Society, founded in 1950.[31] Although Mattachine functioned on the national level only from 1950 to 1960, its regional chapters, including in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC, remained on the scene. The largest homophile organization in the US was the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), founded in San Francisco in 1964. In November 1969 it had over one thousand members, a figure which included subscribers to its magazine, *Vector*. Earlier that year the group's president, Larry Littlejohn, wrote that SIR was home to both "New Left radicals" and "Goldwater conservatives," referring to homosexual supporters of the deeply conservative Republican presidential nominee in 1964, Barry Goldwater.[32]

Because of SIR's refusal to take an explicit stand against the war in Vietnam, several activists broke away from the group in May 1969 and set up the Committee for Homosexual Freedom instead, which was renamed the Gay Liberation Front in August.[33] Reflecting this conflict, in November 1969 *Vector* editors resurrected the magazine's erstwhile subtitle, "responsible action by responsible people in responsible ways," underlining its focus on presenting a respectable face to the public. That subtitle was later judged too conservative for the times, and was removed in December 1972.[34] The gay newspaper with the widest circulation in the 1970s was also based on the West Coast, this time in Los Angeles: *The Advocate*, which is still in publication today. Like *Vector*, it had been founded before Stonewall, in 1967, and was initially the newsletter of the short-lived organization PRIDE, an acronym which stood for Personal Rights in Defense and Education. PRIDE's aim was to "help the homosexual find a sense of responsibility to himself as a human being and to society as a functioning member."[35]

The East Coast, too, saw contestations between those who placed an imper-

ative on homosexual responsibility and those who favored a more assertive approach. Following the Stonewall riots, the Mattachine Society New York had the following message daubed onto the boarded-up windows of the Stonewall Inn, in a clear note of moderation: "We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the Village." Finding the suggestion to commemorate the riots with a candlelight vigil far too meek, several activists stormed out of an open meeting which had been organized by Mattachine in early July 1969. They then began discussions which ended up in the establishment of the New York GLF.[36] A piece in Mattachine's newsletter in September 1969 commented on the new vocabulary which had recently entered homosexual discourse, such as "gay power" and "gay liberation," before concluding "us doddering oldsters" had long since sought such things: "The words were new to us, the substance was not."[37] As this usage suggests, conflict was not just ideological, strategic, or cultural, but also partly generational in nature, since those who rioted at Stonewall and joined the GLF tended to be much younger than Mattachine members. The same applies to West Germany; for example, the average age of members in RotZSchwul was twenty-six.[38]

In San Francisco, Leo Lawrence, in his last act as editor of *Vector* before he co-founded the Committee for Homosexual Freedom, castigated homophile leaders for "doing very little to spark the Homosexual Revolution of '69." He argued that the movement was being held back by "too many middle-aged up-tight conservatives" and their "middle class bigotry and racism." Long-standing homophile activist Frank Kameny—head of Mattachine Washington, DC—took offense, noting that it was he who had put forward the slogan "gay is good." Continuing, he admitted that "the new breed of young gay kids" might be where the future lay, but maintained that "they can still learn a thing or two from us who are a bit older" (Kameny was born in 1925).[39] It would be quite mistaken to see those homophile activists who remained on the scene in the 1970s only as conservative old-timers. Partly owing to Kameny's involvement, the US homophile movement had become increasingly militant over the course of the 1960s. Consider the pickets that took place outside the White House, the Pentagon, and the Civil Service Commission in April 1965, organized to protest the exclusion of homosexuals from federal employment (Kameny had been sacked from his civil service post because of his homosexuality, back in 1957).[40] These pickets were repeated in the guise of the "Annual Reminder," which took place outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia every Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969—a reminder to the public that "homosexual Americans are denied their basic rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happi-

ness."[41] As Kameny reminded Leo Lawrence, the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) chose "gay is good" as its new slogan in 1968. Kameny told conference delegates that "it is time to doff and to discard the secrecy, the disguise, and the camouflage [. . .]; it is time to live your homosexuality fully, joyously, openly, and proudly."[42]

However, one can detect a focus on caution and convention, even amid the militancy. Kameny argued that if homosexuals wanted to be employed by the federal government, they had to look employable to the federal government. He put this philosophy into practice during the Annual Reminder, instructing fellow picketers in 1966 that "Dress and appearance will be conservative and conventional." This meant suits for men and dresses for women; more broadly, "conservative" here indicated taking the utmost care to bend rather than to explode the rules of conduct of polite society. Lest there be any misunderstanding from countercultural parties, Kameny laid down the law. "Picketing is not an occasion of [. . .] anti-conformity," he proclaimed, adding that the public are more likely to listen to new ideas "if these are presented to them from sources bearing the symbols of acceptability, conventionality, and respectability. Good order, good appearance, and dignity of bearing are essential."[43]

The Annual Reminder took place for the fifth time on Fourth of July 1969. With this being a few days after the Stonewall riots, Kameny's conservative dress code and regulations had become more difficult to enforce. Indeed, they had always been controversial. One would-be picketer was turned away from the event in 1965 because he was not wearing a suit; in a subsequent letter to Craig Rodwell, one of the co-organizers, he complained, "I find such requirements arbitrary. They are capricious and tyrannical and to me they seem to cater to just those standards, terms and values which we hold offensive and are dedicated to overcome."[44] In the 1969 iteration two women held hands during the picket, until they were broken apart by Kameny.[45] This met with the ire of Rodwell, who had witnessed the Stonewall riots and realized their potential to invigorate activism. Writing to Rodwell after the picket, Kameny admitted that new forms of political action might have their place (he mentioned "love-ins"), but insisted that they should not be mixed with a "picketing demonstration." He saw the 1969 Reminder as being held in the same spirit as previous years: "That spirit has always been in the direction of a somewhat conservative, image-conscious, conventionally-dignified demonstration, intended to get a message across by avoidance of needless abrasion of the sensibilities and sensitivities of the large mass of people."[46]

This turned out to be the last such Annual Reminder, with the event—on the initiative of Rodwell—transformed into the Christopher Street Liberation

Day, where hand-holding was very much allowed.[47] The placards carried during the Annual Reminder bore slogans such as "Homosexuals are American Citizens too" and "Homosexual Citizens Want: Equality Before the Law"; one such placard during the first CSD in New York in 1970 read "sodomy is cool."[48] A change of style seemed to be taking place. However, another placard carried at the Los Angeles CSD, which took place on the same day as in New York, reminds us that those who took part cannot be reduced only to leftist radicals or countercultural activists: as reported by *Time* magazine, one demonstrator held a poster declaring "homosexuals for Reagan."[49] Moreover, as will be seen in section IV, how queer people should behave and present themselves during CSDs and other public events remained a key point of contention throughout the decade, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Long-standing groups such as Mattachine and SIR can be usefully compared to the Dutch COC (Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum), founded in 1946 and still in operation today, or to the French Arcadie, founded in 1954 and dissolved in 1982, but not to groups in the Federal Republic, where no single organization or publication straddled the 1960s and 1970s, the periods pre- and post-homosexual law reform.[50] Numerous homophile groups, including the Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (Society for Human Rights) in Hamburg and the Gesellschaft für Reform des Sexualstrafrechts (Society for Reform of the Sexual Criminal Code) in West Berlin, were founded in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but what might have blossomed into a more visible movement was smashed by the 1953 Law on the Dissemination of Youth-Endangering Texts, which set up a federal indexing board that could banish any publication judged to be "youth-endangering" from public view. This meant that the homophile associations were deprived of their main source of income, their magazines and journals, which were soon indexed.[51] In this inhospitable climate, only *Der Kreis* (published in Zurich) and *Der Weg* managed to achieve any longevity, before ceasing publication in 1967 and 1970 respectively. So rather than a context of a movement growing in size and confidence, the 1960s in West Germany saw an involuntary retreat by homophile activists. There was no West German parallel to the picket of the White House or of Independence Hall. There was also no equivalent to *Vector* or to *The Advocate*, magazines that straddled the 1960s and 1970s. The two largest commercial gay magazines, *du&ich* and *him*, were both new on the scene. The first, *du&ich*, initially adopted the subtitle "the post-September magazine," acknowledging its debt to the liberalization of Paragraph 175, which had come into effect in September 1969.[52]

"Gay Equals Left?"

While activists who took their experience of the 1950s and 1960s into the 1970s were relatively common in the United States, Johannes Werres was one of the very few examples in West Germany. Werres, born in 1923, spent most of the 1950s working for various homophile publications, both in West Germany and in Amsterdam, where between 1956 and 1958 he edited the ICSE (International Committee for Sexual Equality) newsletter on behalf of the Dutch COC; one of his tasks was to translate clippings from various US homophile publications.[53] Werres's biography reveals a transnationalism more often associated with left-wing activists. In addition to the time spent in the Netherlands, Werres also credited as a tremendous influence his five-month stay in the US in 1950, organized through a Catholic exchange program.[54] In September 1969 he informed readers of *The Advocate* about the impending decriminalization of homosexuality in his home country. Though he mentioned the possible emergence of *du&ich*, he declared that a publication such as *The Advocate* would not be possible in West Germany: "Jealously, German homosexuals look to the other side of the ocean, to America with its remarkable freedom of the mind and freedom to express ideas. Over there, apparently, no one is anxious about youngsters being seduced by the printed word or by catching sight of a picture of a male nude."[55] *The Advocate* seemed to concur with this assessment of US vanguard status. A piece in March 1970 found gay life in the United States to be "more sophisticated" than in Europe, with neither Amsterdam, Copenhagen, nor Berlin able to compete with the riches of San Francisco.[56]

Once a gay press and gay movement did emerge in the Federal Republic, Werres soon set up a press agency, *Gay News*, which syndicated relevant news coverage on homosexuality.[57] Nevertheless, he remained somewhat stuck on the margins. Werres would later deplore the attitude of younger activists: "They all acted more or less as if the world began with them. What had taken place earlier, what others had done or did parallel to them was of no interest."[58] His case was not helped by frequent expressions of support for the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the CSU's most divisive figure, Franz-Josef Strauß. Strauß was not exactly well known as a defender of gay rights, having declared in 1971: "Ich will lieber ein kalter Krieger sein als ein warmer Bruder" (loosely translated as "I'd rather be a cold war hawk than a flaming faggot").[59] Such was the aversion to Strauß among activists and publicists that—in a moment of rare unity—gay groups and magazines set up the action "Pink Front against Strauß" in 1979, when he was the CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor

in the forthcoming federal elections.[60] For Werres, activists' response to Strauß was symptomatic of the left-wing failure to differentiate between conservatism and fascism. That was one argument put forward in his article "Gay Equals Left?," published in *unter uns* in 1977. Werres defined what it meant, to him, to be conservative: "I want to preserve (conservare). Preserve what is good, what has been enshrined, and to only take on the new when it has been proven. *That* is actual progress, not that of the leftists!"[61]

There seem to have been precious few German homosexuals who described themselves as "conservative," even fewer than in the United States. In part this was because of the ambivalence of many Christian Democrats regarding the term "conservatism," which was seen in some quarters as tainted by its association with Nazism. Martina Steber shows how intellectual understandings of the term underwent a process of liberalization in the 1950s and 1960s, which went some way to shedding its reactionary political connotations. For example, at the party conference in 1965, former chancellor Konrad Adenauer described the CDU as a "party of conservative progress," whereas Strauß described being conservative as "marching at the pinnacle of progress."[62] Nevertheless, at a summit organized to discuss the 1972 election defeat, the CDU general secretary, Konrad Kraske, bemoaned that his party had "clearly suffered from being seen as a 'conservative party,' indeed as reactionary."[63] Christian Democrats were increasingly pushed onto the defensive in the mid-1970s by the attempt of some left-wingers to reawaken the term's association with fascism, exactly as Werres identified within homosexual politics.[64] Therefore, the CDU tended to stylize itself as a "people's party" or "party of the center," as opposed to a "conservative" party.[65]

Given the associations between the term and the Third Reich, it is unsurprising that so few homosexuals—of all people—called themselves conservatives, since it was exactly at this time that the history of Nazi persecution was "rediscovered." Heinz Heger's influential memoir from 1972, *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, was soon featured in both *du&ich* and in *him*.[66] Though not many used the term conservative, Werres was surely not the only homosexual Christian Democrat voter, even if data suggests the CDU/CSU did not fare well among West Germany's same-sex desiring population. *The Ordinary Homosexual*, a sociological study of 789 homosexual men, offers an interesting glimpse in this regard (the book was written by the aforementioned Martin Dannecker, along with student movement leader Reimut Reiche). According to the study, only 13 percent of homosexual men voted for the CDU/CSU in the 1969 federal election, as opposed to 46 percent of the population at large; 46 percent voted for the Social Democrats

(SPD), compared to 43 percent of the wider electorate, while 27 percent voted for the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), who polled only 5.8 percent among the general population.[67]

Perhaps the SPD, with its control of the justice ministry in the 1966–69 federal government, was rewarded for having liberalized the Nazi version of Paragraph 175, a reform which came into effect in the same month as the election. Though the FDP was the most vocal parliamentary supporter of the reform, the measure had been introduced by the 1966–69 Grand Coalition, that is, under Christian Democratic leadership. Unlike Johannes Werres, it seems most homosexuals were not ready to forgive the CDU for failing to reform Paragraph 175 in the previous twenty years of the Federal Republic's existence. No such voting data exists for the 1972, 1976, or 1980 elections, which saw the social-liberal coalition returned to power. Gay rights did not feature prominently in the Christian Democrats' political positioning during the decade, at least not until one of the CSU's election pamphlets in 1980 was entitled "For homosexuals, communists and violent criminals—the true face of the FDP," in which the FDP was accused of supporting the "free development of perversities."[68]

Werres's conservatism was not limited to political belonging, but also found cultural expression. In an article written in *him* in 1971, he lambasted "hideous tendencies" in the world of art, which he blamed upon the leftist derision of beauty as "bourgeois."[69] However, his main aesthetic concern was the male body. According to Werres, "smut, ugliness," and "offensiveness" in the hairstyle, dress, and appearance of young people made a mockery of the ideal of beauty. The combination of long hair and beards was especially to be avoided, as this provoked "aggressions" from the wider populace.[70] He was decidedly unimpressed by the Homolulu festival, a playful West German nod to the Hawaiian capital, which took place in Frankfurt in 1979. Werres was appalled by the behavior of demonstrators, in various stages of undress, bearing out-there placards and many in drag. According to Werres, not all homosexuals, and especially bisexuals and married men, could afford to take part in an event of that nature, not to mention a gay bank director or businessman. He even expressed his understanding if parents, teachers, and the police wanted to keep their children away from such carryings-on.[71]

Over in California, Craig Alfred Hanson adopted a similar perspective, arguing in *The Advocate* in 1978 that "the gay community can go on the offensive best by not being offensive" and "by not trying to be a circus freak show."[72] Hanson, like Werres, defined himself as a conservative, nailing his colors to the mast in a strident article in *Vector* in 1973. Hanson adopted the label "libertari-

an conservative," and was at pains to distinguish himself from "traditional conservatives," who might stress individual freedom regarding economic matters, but liked to "pick and choose what men can or cannot do" when it came to sex, usually under the influence of religion, the "root cause of homophobia."[73] His typology of libertarian versus traditional conservatism reflected contemporary debate and scholarship. In his influential *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, first published in 1976, George Nash identified three main intellectual currents in US conservatism: the libertarian, the traditionalist, and the anticommunist (although Nash, unlike Hanson, viewed libertarian and traditionalist perspectives as ultimately reconcilable, part of a "working conservative consensus").[74]

Hanson lamented that "conservative homosexuals have written almost nothing."[75] Seeking to overcome this reticence, the thirty-seven-year-old Californian set out his stall.[76] For Hanson, conservatism meant "support of laissez-faire free enterprise economics, as opposed to government controlled corporate capitalism: a cautious attitude towards change; belief that advancement comes through ability alone, and this leads to a certain social inequality," but also "the feeling that men and women have fundamental physical and psychological differences."[77] Indeed, Hanson focused at least as much on gender as he did on free markets, since he despised the androgynous style of some gay activists. In an article for *Gay Sunshine*, Hanson took aim at what he called the "fairy princess," by which he meant both those gay men who adopted effeminate styles of dress and also those who took refuge in fantasy, role-play, or "housekeeping," manifestations which he derided as "homo baroque."[78] Hanson's case shows the plasticity of the term "conservatism," since he used it not only as a mode of self-identification but also as a disavowal. In a critique of consumption that one might have expected from a more left-wing activist, he castigated "fairy princesses" as representatives of "cultural conservatism," nothing more than "past relics of a bygone era in their fantasy world of poodle dogs and Wedgewood teacups and chandeliers and all the fancy clothes and home furnishings any queen could ever desire."[79] Reviewing the anthology in which Hanson's article appeared, long-standing homophile activist Jim Kepner wrote that Hanson had joined the Marxists in his "intolerance," yet described Hanson as an "ultra-conservative."[80] Hanson took the opportunity, once again, to call himself a "libertarian conservative," and rejected being lumped together with "ultra," "totalitarian," or "traditional" conservatives.[81]

In a typical lionization of normality, Hanson wrote to *The Advocate* in 1978, insisting that "most of us are not drag queens, pederasts or leather fetish-

ists but rather ordinary people."[82] Werres would have agreed with most of this diagnosis, but not the critique of pederasty. Referring to his sublimated intergenerational desire, Leila Rupp argues that Werres's "personal life challenged the insistence on respectability that scholarship has associated with the homophile movement."[83] Werres might be seen as challenging respectability, but he also consistently sought to police the self-presentation of other homosexuals. Moreover, his attachment to "boy-love" formed part of a distinctly authoritarian view of the world.[84] In railing against young people's physical appearance, Werres argued that decisions such as whether to grow one's hair or beard were simply too important to be left to the individual. Rather, the "social instinct" must be considered.[85] Werres's idealized form of sexual relations involved an adolescent man submitting himself "naked and candidly" and "without an alienating beard" to an older male partner.[86] According to Werres, there existed an instinctive need to submit to higher ranks, whether sexually or socially. Monarchy and aristocracy therefore have a natural basis, while dictatorships fail only because of the lack of eros.[87] These views were influenced by his work with Willhart Schlegel, a "constitutional biologist," who suggested a relationship between various body measurements (such as hand and pelvis size) and sexuality.[88] His research ostensibly showed not only that homosexuality was congenitally determined, but also essential to humanity. Both Schlegel and Werres posited social benefits to sexual contact between men and adolescents or boys; Schlegel described reducing the age of consent to fourteen as a "social-biological necessity" for the preservation of humanity and culture.[89]

A more influential conservative in 1970s homosexual politics was Foster Gunnison Jr., who helped organize the first Christopher Street Liberation Day. Born in 1925, Gunnison set up a dealership for his father's home construction company in Florida, before settling in Connecticut, where he cut his teeth in organizational work on behalf of a men's choir. In 1964, during a visit to New York, he discovered the Mattachine Society, and soon threw himself into the homophile movement. He engaged in voluminous correspondence with homophile activists from across the country, seeking to build support for a national umbrella organization. He then became a founding member, in 1966, of NACHO.[90] In a letter written in 1972, Gunnison defined himself as a "gung-ho rightwinger and damn well proud of it, but I struggle against heavy odds to keep an open mind."[91] He did not always prevail in that personal struggle. Back in the 1960s, he argued that the homophile movement should close its doors to "beatniks and [. . .] nonconformists," and when appointed chairman of the Credentials Committee for the forthcoming NACHO conference

in 1967, he used the opportunity to assiduously police the list of participants, attempting to prevent more left-wing voices from attending.[92]

Gunnison attended a gay liberation caucus during the NACHO conference in 1970 in San Francisco, as he recounted in a letter later that year: " 'You big fat capitalist sucking on that big fat cigar'—so I offered him a cigar. Guerrilla theatre. More pandemonium. It was awful." Having left the relative safety of the conference venue, he also went to pay a visit to the local GLF. Gunnison was appalled to find that the meeting took place in a "deplorable ramshackle building" where thirty people were "living in filth and abomination"; he found the GLF in San Francisco just as unappealing as its New York counterpart.[93] Yet even a cigar-smoking conservative found the possibilities opened up by the Stonewall riots exciting. In December 1969 he wrote to *The Advocate*, objecting to the tone of a previous article which he thought too moderate. According to Gunnison, there could be a role for rioting and rebellion, which functioned as a "useful shortcut to results when other methods fail." He continued: "The extremists scare the hell out of us, but that is precisely what they are supposed to do [. . .]. They make the moderates seem that much more acceptable and the conservatives positively saintly. [. . .] Let us rejoice that the homophile movement has progressed to the point where homosexuals now have the guts to riot."[94]

Writing to homophile organizations and personal contacts to drum up financial support for the first commemoration of those riots, Gunnison praised the "massive and violent resistance" of Stonewall.[95] He underscored the significance of visibility: "the main problem holding us back from where we want to get to is that of secrecy or fear, and the failure of homosexuals to get out of the closet."[96] In this stance, he can be compared to Werres, because while the German activist demurred at confrontation—he was undecided if this was helpful or destructive—he was similarly clear that the homosexual must "show himself more, avow himself, step forward": in other words, come out. Otherwise, Werres bemoaned, prejudice would take generations to be dismantled.[97] Clearly, neither Gunnison nor Werres was a shrinking violet.

If Gunnison's suit and cigars made him stand out like a sore thumb in activist meetings, Craig Alfred Hanson had a similar experience. Hanson criticized GLF activists who had the "disgusting habit" of "attacking those who simply looked or dressed conservatively" (this did not stop him attacking effeminate homosexuals for the way *they* looked or dressed).[98] In fact appearance and masculinity were pressing concerns in the gay movement. Referring to activists in the Gay Liberation Fronts, Gunnison wrote in 1971 that "I have encountered

few more rigid examples of conformity—in dress, thought, and action, than in some of these professional non-conformists."[99] Perhaps he had a point. The closest equivalent to the GLF in West Germany was so-called "action groups," including the Homosexual Action West Berlin (HAW), which was formed in late 1971 (there was in fact a GLF in the Federal Republic too, in Cologne, but one that does not map onto the groups in New York, San Francisco, or elsewhere in the US).[100] One HAW activist complained in 1976 that what he called the "pink HAW norm" was damaging the gay movement, since it excluded all those who did not exhibit the "correct" consciousness, along with those who liked to wear leather or suits, or anyone who just came across as conformist.[101]

Focusing on the 1960s, Clayton Whisnant states that one appeal of donning leather for same-sex desiring men was that it "contained a sexual message, yet offered a rebuke to effeminacy."[102] This staging of masculinity was by no means innately conservative. Craig Hanson, for example, disavowed drag queens and "leather fetishists" in the same breath, since both styles flew in the face of a more circumspect or "ordinary" appearance.[103] In 1970s West Germany, a queer preference for leather was often associated not with the conservative but with the extreme right. Hans Eppendorfer, the editor in chief of *him* from 1976, became known to a wider audience under the name "the leather man," through a series of interviews with the novelist Hubert Fichte. Eppendorfer saw some fellow leather men as potential concentration-camp guards, since behind their leather there existed a "craving for recognition." Indeed, the wider leather scene was described as "simply purely fascist."[104] An activist in the HAW identified a growing preference for leather as one of several worrying contemporary developments that he identified as originating in the United States: he also lambasted a perceived Nazi cult in the gay scene, certain forms of pornography, and sex aids such as cock rings or poppers.[105]

Just as a masculine or hypermasculine appearance was not necessarily conservative, it was by no means the case that gay leftists always favored a more androgynous style. Indeed, the most contentious debate in the history of the HAW was the so-called *Tuntenstreit* ("queens' dispute"), kicked off by Italian and French activists who wore drag during a demonstration organized by the HAW in West Berlin in June 1973. Reporting in brief, the tabloid *Bild* remarked, "Some of the participants had full beards and wore long dresses, eye shadow, and blue nail varnish."[106] Several HAW members did not take kindly to this description, accusing gender-transgressive activists of endangering the gay movement's chances of winning support from the heterosexual left. Other gay male activists within the group who sought to subvert notions of

masculinity coalesced into a feminist caucus, and stressed the importance of working more closely with the women's movement (they also sought to change the name of the HAW to the SBF, the Schwule Befreiungsfront, the direct German translation of GLF).[107] In the aftermath of the debate, several activists who adopted a more normative version of masculinity left the HAW, including those who were also members of the SEW, the West Berlin chapter of the ruling East German state party.[108] Therefore, given how *both* conservatives *and* leftists were concerned about the "correct" mode of self-presentation, it is problematic to characterize a concern for "respectable" appearance as a clear-cut dividing line. If we equate left-wing or "progressive" with "avant-garde" cultural expression, then the response of some left-wing activists to gender transgression will fall out of view.[109] Focusing on cultures of conservatism allows us to appreciate that debates over dress and self-presentation did not always neatly map onto ideological and political differences.[110]

Electoral Politics, Gay Power, and Vietnam

The editorial line of the two largest gay magazines in West Germany, *him* and *du&ich*, was broadly sympathetic to the governing social-liberal coalition. In advance of the November 1972 federal election, a columnist in *du&ich* warned readers against voting for the Christian Democrats, arguing that a further reform to Paragraph 175 was only politically possible if the SPD-FDP coalition stayed in power (a reform reducing the age of consent to eighteen did indeed follow, in 1973). This call to back the center-left status quo was accompanied by a typical reproach to more militant activists, whose "revolutionary slogans" and "all too aggressive appearance and approach" would merely cement or worsen prejudice.[111]

Similarly, in an editorial for *him*, Dieter Michael Specht took exception to slogans such as "down with capitalism!" favored by "left-militant forces" at the demonstration in Münster in 1972; his ire was particularly incited by Martin Dannecker. According to Specht, the demonstration had been "derailed" by irresponsible student gay activists, but his remedy was clear: "homosexual emancipation is and remains the task of the level-headed in the homosexual camp"—adding for good measure that as long as he retained editorial control, *him* would remain in the field of the "level-headed."[112] In articulating this view, gay publicists such as Specht would echo the contention of the mainstream liberal press: in two cover stories on homosexuality, both *Der Spiegel* in 1973 and *Stern* in 1978 took exception to Dannecker's anti-capitalist placard carried during the Münster demonstration.[113] Johannes Werres went further, writing

in the conservative broadsheet *Die Welt* that Dannecker's socialist background and membership of RotZSchwul made him incapable of authoring a reliable academic book, referring to the sociological study *The Ordinary Homosexual*, which Dannecker co-authored with Reimut Reiche (former leader of the Socialist German Student League; Werres was not taken with Reiche's politics, either).[114]

In 1972 the International Homophile World Organization (IHWO) organized a podium event with representatives of the SPD, FDP, and CDU standing for election in Hamburg. The group did not endorse a specific party, but was positive about only the SPD and FDP representatives.[115] Over in the United States, Frank Kameny reached a similar conclusion when he canvassed members of Congress in advance of the 1972 presidential election, which saw Nixon returned to power. Though promises were not particularly forthcoming from any of the politicians, he lamented that "Coming to the Republicans after the Democrats was like plunging into an icy-cold pool after basking in a warm bath."[116] After SIR had invited candidates standing for election in the San Francisco area to a podium event in advance of the 1972 elections, an article in *Vector* revealed that although it was mainly Democrats who had received the SIR "stamp of approval"—George McGovern for president, and six Democrats for Congress, state senate, or local assembly seats—the number also included two Republicans.[117] One of them, Milton Marks, who was reelected to the state senate, was interviewed by the magazine early the next year. Introducing the interview, SIR editors explained that the "ingrained liberalism and tolerance" peculiar to San Francisco had directed Marks's thinking "away from the more conservative elements in his party," including California's governor, Ronald Reagan.[118] The editors remarked that liberal Republicans were somewhat of a rare breed in the state (and they would become rarer still, on the federal level, as the decade progressed).[119] At the time of the 1972 election, the SIR president, Bill Plath, was in fact a registered Republican himself, even if he claimed in an interview to have joined the party only to vote against Nixon in the 1968 primaries: the *Vector* interviewer asked him "why would *any* gay person wish to be a Republican?"[120]

In both the Federal Republic and the United States, gay groups and individuals increasingly came to reflect on their potential political strength in the 1970s. At the start of the decade, *du&ich* editors estimated West Germany's homosexual population at three million, and called on them to be active: "That means three million consumers, three million newspaper readers, three million car drivers and last but not least, three million voters!"[121] This was a not dissimilar attitude to New York Mattachine, which had argued a year earlier

that "gay power is in the ballot box."[122] "Gay power" did not denote street action or extra-parliamentary activism alone. In August 1969 editors of *The Advocate* announced that they were increasing the pressrun of the magazine to 23,000, adding that "Gay power *does* work! When enough homosexuals can be talked into going to the polls in an election and concentrating their votes in a certain direction, they can make their power felt."[123]

Some homosexuals took to running for office themselves. Kameny did so in 1971, unsuccessfully seeking to represent the District of Columbia in the House of Representatives.[124] In El Paso County, Colorado, David McCord sought the Democratic nomination to run for county commissioner in 1976; he did not win the nomination, but was reelected to the party's local executive committee. McCord mentioned the lack of support from "radicals in the gay community," but told *The Advocate* that those radicals were beginning to realize that a "destructive revolution" was unnecessary in order to make some changes to what was "a basically sound system."[125] Exploiting a loophole in Colorado law, McCord married his male partner in 1975, commenting, "Just another way of showing I'm a normal, red-blooded, middle-of-the-road, all-American boy who, just by the way, happens to be gay."[126] The *Advocate* editors entitled the article "Conservatism Working in Colorado": it was not only McCord's views of the political system but also his presentation of "normality" that was constitutive of this conservatism. Most famously, Harvey Milk—who had been a Republican supporter of Barry Goldwater earlier in his career—became the first openly gay elected official in San Francisco, for the Democrats, and served less than a year before his assassination in 1978.[127] That same year it was a Homosexual Action Hamburg (HAH) member, Wolfgang Krömer, who became the first openly gay candidate for public office in the Federal Republic. He unsuccessfully stood for election to the Hamburg state parliament as part of the Bunte Liste (Multicolored List, a precursor to the Greens), thus revealing that it was not only more "conservative" homosexuals who began to perceive the ballot box as a valid means of gay liberation.[128]

In homosexual politics in the US, the concept of "gay power" was taken from "Black Power," a framework less available in West Germany. For this reason, gay liberation iconography had different connotations: in the Federal Republic the symbol of the clenched fist, which was incorporated into the HAH's logo, signified an adherence to socialism, whereas in the United States the association with Black Power was more apparent.[129] In the US, homosexual groups and individuals from across the political spectrum took inspiration from the fight for racial justice. Nowhere is this clearer than in the slogan "gay is good," which owed much to "black is beautiful"—the German iteration was

closer still, *schwul ist schön* (gay is beautiful).[130] For some gay liberationists, the Black Panther Party was a direct stimulus, with activists from around the country traveling to the party's Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1970, encouraged by Huey Newton, who, unlike some other Black Panther leaders, denounced homophobia within the movement: "There is nothing to say that a homosexual cannot also be a revolutionary [. . .] maybe a homosexual could be the most revolutionary."[131] Though links between gay liberation and Black Power were less immediate in West Germany, the model of anti-racist resistance hovered in the background. For example, at the conclusion of Rosa von Praunheim's film *Not the Homosexual*, the narrator urges the viewer to show solidarity with the Black Panther movement, alongside the women's movement.[132]

Other voices in homosexual politics looked not to Black Power, but to the more moderate African American civil rights movement. "The black militants in this country have done more to harm the negro cause than any KKK," argued Arthur Schircliffe, president of the discreetly named Personal Rights Organization of Toledo, in a letter to *Come Out!*, the magazine of the New York GLF. "Heeding historical examples," the gay movement should instead "follow the peaceful philosophies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King."[133] Indeed, the US homophile movement had long been inspired by King, and sought to echo his presentation of a respectable, dignified minority. The very notion that homosexuals represented an oppressed minority group, articulated in Edward Sagarin's *The Homosexual in America* in 1951, was partly inspired by the civil rights movement.[134] Two and a half decades later, in March 1977, the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) won an invite to the White House to address Margaret "Midge" Costanza, the domestic policy liaison of President Jimmy Carter, by stylizing homosexuals as the "nation's second largest minority."[135] According to Leonard Matlovich, "the Blacks showed us the way forward."[136] The way forward, for Matlovich and other "conservative" homosexuals, lay first and foremost in presenting a dignified patriotism, not in seeking to overthrow the existing order. That said, Matlovich did not endorse endless patience. Following the Black example, according to the dismissed US Air Force sergeant and subsequent member of the Republican Party, meant "we must be very aggressive."[137]

In the United States, how homosexuals should respond to the military was a key point of contention. Gay Liberation Fronts were explicitly anti-imperialistic, as evident already in their choice of name. According to the GLF at Columbia University, the task at hand was to fight back against a "whole system which has been killing us for centuries," the same system which "en-

slaved Blacks and women" and which was "trying to destroy the peoples of South-East Asia."[138] Foster Gunnison, on the other hand, was reluctant to make common cause with other groups, whether feminist, peace, or Black Power, and objected in 1969 to the "injection of these other issues" into "our homophile cause."[139] According to Justin David Suran, the rise of gay liberation was in fact intimately connected with anti-war activism, both in terms of ideological links, but also practically, as marches against the war in Vietnam brought gays and lesbians out onto the streets in large numbers.[140] Moreover, in seeking to avoid the draft, some gay men revealed their homosexuality to the authorities for the first time, since that should (in theory) have prevented their enlistment. One protestor at a gay demonstration in San Francisco declared, "Coming out publicly as a gay person is a great act against the war itself."[141]

West Germans were not at risk of being sent to fight in Vietnam, though the fact that residents of West Berlin did not have to complete the military service that was otherwise compulsory for men was one reason for the particular appeal of that city to countercultural or anti-war activists, gays included. Demonstrations and actions against the war in Vietnam were the occasions for some of the West German groups' earliest public appearances, including the HAW in November 1972. Explaining their participation in the "Vietnam Subbotnik," HAW activists neglected to comment on the war in Vietnam, but saw the occasion as an opportunity to show their credentials to the heterosexual left, and to challenge discrimination.[142] Indeed, in West Germany most public appearances by gay groups coincided with wider anti-war or left-wing concerns, for example participation in demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, the military putsch in Chile, and on annual May Day rallies. Even the gay movement's tradition of coming together over Whitsun (an occasion marked by a public holiday in Germany) was a custom taken from the workers' movement.[143] This debt to the left-wing calendar did not diminish until 1979, both with the Homolulu festival in Frankfurt and with the first CSDs in Bremen and in West Berlin.

Focusing on California, Suran argues that "to claim a gay identity meant to rebel against the very system waging war in Vietnam" and "First and foremost, being gay in 1969, 1970, or 1971 meant being out of the closet and against the Vietnam War."[144] Not all homosexuals agreed. An editorial in *Vector* in December 1969 opposed the interpretation that the best way forward for the gay movement was to take a stand on such issues as Vietnam, striking workers, or student protests: "This position is in dramatic opposition to what is the traditional position of S.I.R. namely that S.I.R. is a one issue organization

limiting itself to a concern for the welfare and rights of the homosexual as a homosexual."[145] These tensions were cast in sharper relief later in the decade, when in March 1975 Leonard Matlovich, who had served three tours of duty in Vietnam with the US Air Force, came out as homosexual, and was promptly discharged by a board of inquiry.[146] Later that year, his story was featured on the front cover of *Time* magazine, with the title "I Am a Homosexual: The Gay Drive for Acceptance."[147]

Simon Hall detects in Leonard Matlovich an example of "patriotic dissent," and therefore an element of continuity between the homophile and the gay movements, since this type of dissent was equally clear in the Annual Reminder pickets between 1965 and 1969; in both cases, activists wrapping themselves in the flag and appealing to the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the promise of liberty. In this light, Matlovich was building on the foundations laid by the sixteen homosexuals who picketed outside the Pentagon a decade earlier, carrying placards with slogans such as "Homosexual citizens want to serve their country too."[148] Despite his protests, Matlovich was not reinstated, but he did receive a financial settlement from the air force, from which he gave $3,000 to Cornerstone, a new civil rights organization set up by gay members of the Republican Party, included those who were already organized in the CRIR (Concerned Republicans for Individual Rights), based in San Francisco.[149] The CRIR was one of the regional homosexual networks which first appeared in the late 1970s and which would eventually coalesce into the Log Cabin Republicans, the national federation of gay and lesbian Republicans, founded in 1991.[150]

Matlovich's influence was not only financial. Clayton Howard argues that Matlovich's story and his emphasis on patriotism was a particular inspiration to gay conservatives; according to Simon Hall, "in stressing his conservative beliefs and desire to settle down in a monogamous relationship," Matlovich and his supporters "valorized a particular kind of homosexual—conservative, patriotic, conventional, unthreatening."[151] It would be remiss to argue that Matlovich's case, and the pull of patriotism, spoke *only* to "conservatives," but neither did he meet with universal homosexual support. Emily Hobson argues that inclusion in the military was one of the "assimilatory rights" that the gay left, in particular, did not think worth seeking.[152] In 1975 Brian Kelly wrote to the Boston-based *Gay Community News* denouncing the air force sergeant: "Matlovich is not our brother. He doesn't stand for freedom for people, he stands for the freedom to oppress. We cannot support him if we truly believe in Liberation and Human Dignity."[153]

Debates over military inclusion were less important in the West German

context: there was certainly no German Leonard Matlovich wrapping himself in the black, red, and gold of the German flag. A faint echo can be observed with Rainer Plein, the co-founder of one of West Germany's first gay action groups, the HSM in Münster. Concerns over homosexuality in the military were one reason why the age of consent was set at twenty-one rather than eighteen when Paragraph 175 was liberalized in 1969, so as to "protect" the military from young gay men carrying out their military service.[154] Even when the age of consent was reduced to eighteen in 1973, homosexuality still remained a reason for discharge from the military.[155] Plein was a reserve lieutenant in the army, but disclosed his homosexuality during the process for his promotion to reserve senior lieutenant. He was not appointed to the higher rank, a decision later upheld by the Federal Administrative Court. The court drew particular attention to Plein's role in the HSM, which, according to the court, meant his homosexuality was no longer restricted to the "intimate sphere" but intruded on the realm of military service.[156]

Other activists seem to have paid little attention to Plein's case, and his unsuccessful legal challenge was self-funded.[157] Activists *did* expend much energy on defending homosexuals sacked from their positions, but the two highest-profile cases featured the church youth worker Klaus Kindel and the schoolteacher Reiner Koepp, perhaps reflecting some skepticism over the comparative merits of military careers.[158] Plein, like Matlovich, was a controversial figure in the movement. He was not a conservative in a political sense, but placed a great emphasis on circumspect and responsible self-presentation. Introducing an interview with Plein in 1971, *him* commented that the activist did not think the "combative actions" of American homosexuals should be emulated in West Germany, not because of any objections in principle, but rather for "strategic prudence."[159] Plein overcame these reservations to help organize West Germany's first gay demonstration in 1972, but, as we have seen, did his utmost to ensure the event presented a respectable face to the public. He faced criticism from those activists further to the left, who, according to Plein, labeled everything that was not "extremely left" as "right-wing and *faschistoid*."[160] This was a similar complaint to that made by Johannes Werres, but Plein was not averse to throwing around this language either, having himself labeled Werres "*faschistoid*" in 1976.[161]

"Out of the Closets and into the Streets"

One of the most iconic gay liberation slogans was "Out of the closets and into the streets!," underscoring the importance activists placed on same-sex desiring

people coming out, claiming a gay identity, and increasing queer visibility. There is no exact German equivalent to the notion of the "closet"; Rosa von Praunheim mistranslated the term for his film *Not the Homosexual*, with the slogan blazoned across the screen at the conclusion reading "Out of the toilets and into the streets!"[162] The closest German equivalent to the "closet" was *Löcher* (holes, hiding places). For example, in 1974 RotZSchwul activists launched what they referred to as Frankfurt's first "gay commune," as part of the *Häuserkampf*, a struggle waged by various leftist groups and local residents over housing conditions. The banner hung outside their squatted building included the slogan "Come out of your hiding places!"[163] The emphasis placed on coming out, on overcoming secrecy, was not one limited to left-wing activists, as we have seen with Johannes Werres, Craig Alfred Hanson, and Foster Gunnison. Nevertheless, struggles over visibility were a running feature of 1970s homosexual politics. These debates cannot be used to construct neat dividing lines between "radical" and "conservative" homosexuals, but they do offer an opportunity to consider the voices of those who tended to prioritize caution and responsibility over more exuberant presentations of queer subjectivity.

The stakes over homosexual self-presentation were particularly high during demonstrations and parades, and when homosexuality reached an even larger public audience: on television. Roland Gaedke wrote to *The Advocate* in 1975, following the CSD parade in Los Angeles that year. He was decidedly unimpressed by examples of drag, makeup, and nudity, and did not see his own lifestyle represented. Gaedke and his long-term partner did not behave like any of these demonstrators: "We learned our rules, lived by them and were hassled only when we stepped over the line." In contrast, "demonstrations such as these parades scare the shit out of people who live in the San Fernando Valley."[164] Another Californian subscriber wrote that the parade was "a cheap sensationalist event perpetuating the gay stereotypes that haunt us and bring on societal scorn."[165] This concern over societal scorn was certainly not restricted to those who called themselves conservatives, but can be understood as a broadly "conservative" misgiving that same-sex desiring people felt more or less exposed to.

In West Germany the CSD did not become a fixture in the queer calendar until 1979. More controversial was the furor over Rosa von Praunheim's *Not the Homosexual*. The film offered a scathing portrayal of various aspects of gay life, taking aim at those homosexuals who were seen as leading hidden lives, in thrall to conventional morality, culture, and masculinity, or engaging in anonymous sex, the leather scene, and prostitution. According to its director, the film "thoroughly confirms every prejudice held by heterosexuals."

Praunheim predicted that "from the oft-cited woman in the Bavarian Forest to the ignorant liberal, a new wave of hate will rise against gays."[166] As it happens, the woman in the Bavarian Forest would probably never have seen the film, since the regional broadcaster refused to take part in the film's January 1973 national screening. Indeed, the film was contentious not just on the level of state politics but also among homosexuals. For example, the leaders of the IHWO called on the WDR to cancel the film's nationwide screening on ARD in 1973, a broadcast which would have "devastating consequences" for homosexuals.[167] One seventy-two-year-old self-defined homophile from Duisburg wrote to the WDR, complaining that the effeminate figures portrayed on screen had nothing to do with real homosexuals; rather, they represented "the scum of humanity." Another homosexual concluded his letter with the statement: "That homosexuality is deviant must surely be clear to all." After watching the film, "I was for the first time ashamed of being homosexual," lamented a third viewer, who justified his decision to remain anonymous on the grounds that he was active in public life.[168]

Clearly these individuals did not identify with what was presented on screen. The homosexual who referenced his shame may not have been representative. Yet his remark that he felt ashamed for the first time is telling, for while this shame may have been nurtured by isolation and silence before 1969, it was in fact let loose not by exclusion but by representation. As Elspeth Probyn writes, exposure is key to shame, and thus the increased depiction of marginalized groups on television, or in public events such as CSD parades, was very much a double-edged sword: "While a lack of representation may have been painful, it may have been less shaming."[169] The aim here is *not* to link shame with conservatism.[170] Rather, the aim is to keep in mind the diverse responses of queer people to public representations of homosexuality, a diversity which is elided if we interpret the 1970s primarily as a time characterized by an attitude of "anything goes," a "radical" interlude between the greater social ostracization of the 1960s and the increasing stigmatization during the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s.

According to Christopher Stone, writing to *The Advocate*, the 1975 CSD parade in Los Angeles was "lackluster, tedious and tacky" and "totally devoid of pride and dignity." Stone moved on to appropriate a phrase from contemporary conservative political discourse, arguing that "the silent majority of gay women and men once again remained mute and invisible," allowing a much smaller group of "self-centered and slightly hysterical individuals" to solidify anti-gay stereotypes.[171] In response Troy Perry, who in 1971 set up an autonomous church for gays and lesbians, the Metropolitan Community Church,

launched a robust defense of the CSD, arguing it had been the best yet. He voiced his frustrations with some critical homosexuals, which he put down to their "oppression sickness," and he suggested that those who opposed the CSD in 1975 would surely have denounced the Stonewall riots in 1969, had they been there.[172]

Perry took particular exception to Stone's use of the phrase "silent majority," a term that was popularized by President Nixon in a televised address in November 1969, watched by some 70 million Americans.[173] First and foremost, Nixon was referring to those who, like him, opposed what was seen as a vocal anti-war minority, and the proliferation of street demonstrations since the early 1960s. Though sexual matters were not mentioned in his speech, the term "silent majority" was also understood as denoting opposition to pornography and sexual liberalization, all the more so since Nixon's advisers had counseled him to stage raids on porn shops in the vicinity of the White House earlier that year.[174] The label was successful because it spoke to conservatives' sense of "marginalization in the public realm."[175] Certainly, loud homosexuals were perceived as part of the problem. Referring to an episode of the sitcom *All in the Family* that briefly featured a gay character, Nixon was recorded on the White House Tapes in May 1971 venting his spleen: "Goddamn, I do not think that you glorify on public television homosexuality [. . .]. You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality, in general, these are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and left-wingers are pushing the stuff, they're trying to destroy us."[176]

But how about conservative homosexuals? The term "silent majority" spoke to their sense of marginalization within the broader gay community, their lack of voice, their lack of visibility. Though the term had a limited reach in the Federal Republic, Johannes Werres accused Martin Dannecker and Reimut Reiche of having neglected the "silent majority" of West German homosexuals in their sociological study, since their research insufficiently took into account those same-sex desiring men who were not organized in groups, who were not active on the scene, who were less likely to be promiscuous, and who were older, and those who identified as bisexuals.[177] Six years later, in advance of the 1980 federal election, Werres gave a more overtly political reading of the term, in a letter sent to *du&ich* and addressed "to the homosexual silent majority," urging them to consider voting Christian Democrat, despite the warnings of the magazine.[178]

Back in 1971, C. David Hollenbeck wrote to *The Advocate*, criticizing the stance of the Los Angeles GLF, which had given out advice to those seeking to avoid the military draft. He found the assumption of the GLF that gay men do

not want to serve in the military to be irritating. He admitted that "GLF-like organizations" had their place, but suggested that the "silent majority" of gays were those, like himself, who considered "military service to their homeland" as "part of their duty."[179] A representative of a gay group at Arizona State University wrote to *The Advocate* in 1976, praising the editorial stance of the magazine, which the group tried to emulate on campus. "Looking and speaking like the legislator you are trying to convince of the worthiness of the gay cause is not a cop-out," but a "sensible, straightforward" approach to gay activism. According to the activist, "it is a shame that gay people were so long represented by persons, who, in many cases, were warmed over by-products of the hippie era, with whom no-one but fellow hippie lovers can identify."[180] The desire to look and speak "like the legislator" was not merely a strategic concern, but sprang from a culture of conservatism in homosexual politics, consisting of the allure of normativity, the trumpeting of "sensible" activism, and, in this case, the repudiation of gender-bending hippies.

It would be mistaken to view all those who were ambivalent about CSDs, or critical of the GLF, as conservatives in a political sense. Many homosexuals were exceedingly cautious about provoking a reaction from the societies in which they lived, and tended to stress their resemblance to other citizens and to normative standards of behavior. This was certainly the case for at least some activists in the Homosexual Action Collective Bremen, who in 1979 responded to Germany's first CSD with a missive explaining that the "average homosexual" could be distinguished from the "average normal citizen" only through his same-sex preference, a private matter, adding: "we oppose demonstrative and provocative behavior!"[181] This culture of conservatism is reminiscent of Frank Kameny's insistence on a "somewhat conservative, image-conscious, conventionally-dignified demonstration" in the Annual Reminder pickets in the 1960s. The lure of "conservative" presentation and respectability would remain salient throughout the 1970s and on both sides of the Atlantic.

Conclusion

John D'Emilio argues that "young gay radicals" could act on the slogan "Out of the Closets and into the Streets" because "they did not fear the consequences": the threat of exclusion from the military or a government job meant little to them.[182] In his foreword to the anthology *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, he wrote that "they had broken with the values of American society" and were hence "virtually immune to the penalties that kept homosexuals in line."[183] Of course, this does not apply to *all* homosexuals. The editors of that influen-

tial anthology wrote that, as they were compiling the book, "we were acutely aware of other gay voices which were more conservative or more accommodating to mainstream culture." However, they were not included, because "we believed that the radical voices were the ones that offered the best promise for a better existence."[184] Deborah Gould underscores the historiographical risk of sanitizing social movements, contributing to a "developmental narrative that relegates the need for confrontational activism to the distant past."[185] This danger certainly exists, and it is important not to erase the confrontational gay activism that was highly significant in the 1970s (and beyond). At the same time, it seems that "conservative" homosexuals who were active in the 1970s are less well known than their more "radical" counterparts because their voices were less likely to be remembered, less likely to be anthologized. Instead, they tend to be associated with the time "before" or "after" gay liberation—that is, with the homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s, or with the somewhat accommodationist gay and lesbian movement that has developed since the 1990s.

Looking back at the 1970s, the editors of *Out of the Closets* asked, "So what is the 'real' gay liberation? Is it the assimilation of gay people into every stitch of the fabric of existing American life? Or is it the total revolutionary movement that motivated the writers of *Out of the Closets*?" They answered: "Perhaps it's both of these at the same time."[186] According to a writer in *Vector* in 1974, "Gay Liberation must be an umbrella that can cover conservatives and radicals, all genders, all ages, and must be prepared to move in many directions at once."[187] Shining a light on some of the more cautious and conservative voices in homosexual politics does not involve deprecating those who were more "radical," those who took to the streets, or those for whom sexual identity was inextricably connected with hopes of political transformation. Rather, looking at homosexual politics through the lens of cultures of conservatism means appreciating that those "radical" desires and visions were formed, in part, as a result of contestations with those who took a different view. Debates over military inclusion, how to behave on public demonstrations, how homosexuals should be presented on screen, how they should perform their gender, and what lessons should be drawn from other movements were not incidental to 1970s homosexual politics, but central to its course.

We might also conceptualize those contestations taking place on a more internal, personal level, with the pulls of "conservatism" and the pushes of "radicalism" giving rise to an ambivalence which confounds any attempt to construct neat dividing lines between this and that wing of gay liberation. Even those who did identify as conservative homosexuals were certainly not free of those tensions and contradictions. Johannes Werres adopted a deep-

ly conservative perspective on contemporary life, which left little room for artistic experimentation, confrontational activism, or personal freedom in style and appearance. In his defense of intergenerational homosexual relationships, however, he would go much further—be more "radical," and much less respectable—than the majority of younger and more left-wing gay activists. Foster Gunnison, besuited and puffing on his cigar, saw the GLF as a disturbing assortment of uncouth firebrands, yet was prepared to defend the role of confrontation and rioting. Only by widening our field of vision can we hope to reach a richer, more complex historicization of gay liberation and its legacy.

Notes

1. Translation adapted from Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 155.

2. Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993), 216.

3. *Come Out! A Liberation Forum for the Gay Community* 1, no. 3 (1970): 1.

4. Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," *American Sociological Review* 71 (2006): 724–51.

5. The first CSDs took place in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago in June 1970. The first such event in Europe took place in London in 1972, then in Amsterdam and Paris in 1977 and in Bremen and West Berlin in 1979. See Craig Griffiths, "The International Effects of the Stonewall Riots," in *Global Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) History*, vol. 3, ed. Howard Chiang (Farmington Hills: Gale, 2019), 1548–55.

6. Duberman, *Stonewall*, 230, 311. Gunnison was the treasurer in the Christopher Street Liberation Day Umbrella Committee.

7. The HSM was founded in April 1971. HSM initially stood for Homophile Student Group Münster, but by 1972 the group called itself the Student Action Group Homosexuality. See Raimund Wolfert, *Gegen Einsamkeit und 'Einsiedelei': Die Geschichte der Internationalen Homophilen Welt-Organisation* (Hamburg: Männerschwarm Verlag, 2009), 138.

8. Spinnboden. Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek e.V. Berlin, Sammlung (Monne) Monika Kühn, 3 1972–73, Einladung an Alle, April 13, 1972.

9. Dieter Michael Specht, "Zum Tode Rainer Pleins," *Emanzipation: Zeitschrift homosexueller Gruppen*, no. 1 (January/February 1977): 16; Rüdiger Lautmann, "Wie man Außenseiter draußen hält: Zur Kriminal- und Ordnungspolitik gegenüber homosexuellen Männern und Frauen," *Kritische Justiz* 12, no. 1 (1979): 1–21, here 11. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

10. Simon Hall, "Leonard Matlovich: From Military Hero to Gay Rights Poster Boy," in *Warring over Valor: How Race and Gender Shaped American Military Heroism in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, ed. Simon Wendt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 113–27, here 115.

11. Focusing on the US in the early 1970s, Marc Stein states that "radical gay liberation and radical lesbian feminism were initially ascendant, but reformist gay and lesbian liberal-

ism was dominant by the end of this period." Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 82.

12. Clayton Howard, "Gay and Conservative: An Early History of the Log Cabin Republicans," in *Beyond the Politics of the Closet: Gay Rights and the American State since the 1970s*, ed. Jonathan Bell (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 141–64, here 142.

13. Gillian Frank, " 'The Civil Rights of Parents': Race and Conservative Politics in Anita Bryant's Campaign against Gay Rights in 1970s Florida," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 1 (January 2013): 126–60.

14. Archive of the Schwules Museum Berlin (henceforth: SMU), NARGS, box 1, 1978, Untitled minutes of organizing meeting, January 1978.

15. Belinda Davis et al., eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

16. Barry D. Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and André Krouwel, eds., *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

17. SMU, Sammlung Holy, Rosa von Praunheim, "Von Homosexuellen für Homosexuelle gemacht," *Internationales Forum des jungen Films* 25 (1971), unpaginated.

18. Michael Holy, "Lange hieß es, Homosexualität sei gegen die Ordnung: Die westdeutsche Schwulenbewegung (1969–1980)," in *100 Jahre Schwulenbewegung*, ed. Manfred Herzer (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1998), 83–109, here 92; Jim Steakley, "The Gay Movement in Germany Today," *Body Politic*, no. 13 (May/June 1974): 14–15, 21, 23, here 14.

19. Sébastien Tremblay, " 'Ich konnte ihren Schmerz körperlich spüren': Die Historisierung der NS-Verfolgung und die Wiederaneignung des Rosa Winkels in der westdeutschen Schwulenbewegung der 1970er Jahre," *Invertito* 21 (2019): 179–202; W. Jake Newsome, *Pink Triangle Legacies: Coming Out in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022).

20. Hans-Joachim Schoeps, "Soll Homosexualität strafbar bleiben?," *Der Monat* 15, no. 169 (October 1962): 19–27, here 27. Exiled in Sweden during the Third Reich, upon his return to Germany Schoeps called for the restoration of the monarchy. In 1969–70, in an attempt to push the Christian Democrats further to the right, or even to lead to the founding of a conservative party, he set up a network of intellectuals and politicians, the Konservative Sammlung (the project was short-lived). Martina Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe: Politische Sprachen des Konservativen in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2017), 151–53, 291–92.

21. On debates over Paragraph 175 across the course of the twentieth century, see Michael Schwartz, "Homosexuelle im modernen Deutschland: Eine Langzeitperspektive auf historische Transformationen," *Viertelsjahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 69, no. 3 (October 2021): 377–414. See also Samuel Clowes Huneke, *States of Liberation: Gay Men between*

Dictatorship and Democracy in Cold War Germany (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 22–62.

22. Jens Dobler, "Schwules Leben in Berlin zwischen 1945 and 1969 im Ost-West-Vergleich," in *Ohnmacht und Aufbegehren: Homosexuelle Männer in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, ed. Andreas Pretzel and Volker Weiß (Hamburg: Männerschwarm Verlag, 2010), 152–63, here 153.

23. This article focuses on male homosexual politics only, as opposed to conducting an equal analysis of gay liberation and lesbian feminism. There was some cooperation between gay and lesbian activists, especially at the decade's start, but this often broke down in acrimonious disputes, an observation which holds broadly true whether we focus on West Germany or on the United States, or on groups which are traditionally seen as "radical" or more "conservative." In the context of the 1970s, it would be erroneous to talk of a gay *and* lesbian movement, since lesbians tended to organize separately, with and in the women's movement. This also applies to print culture: all of the homosexual publications cited in this article were overwhelmingly gay male in their coverage.

24. Martina Steber, Tobias Becker, and Anna von der Goltz, "Introduction: Cultures of Conservatism in Western Europe since the 1960's" in this volume, here 5.

25. In her book on intellectual debates surrounding "conservatism," Martina Steber analyses the semantic networks in which that term was embedded. In the West German case, these included descriptions of a political style as "sober, objective, anti-utopian, pragmatic or realistic," as well as terms including (but not limited to) "institution," "order," and "stability." Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 239, 262.

26. Ian Baldwin, " 'A Ray of Sunshine': Housing, Family, and Gay Political Power in 1970s Los Angeles," in Bell, *Beyond the Politics of the Closet*, 4–57, here 44.

27. Anna von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, eds., *Inventing the Silent Majority in Western Europe and the United States: Conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

28. Benno Gammerl, "Ist frei sein normal? Männliche Homosexualitäten seit den 1960er Jahren zwischen Emanzipation und Normalisierung," in *Sexuelle Revolution? Zur Geschichte der Sexualität im deutschsprachigen Raum seit den 1960er Jahren*, ed. Peter-Paul Bänziger et al. (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015), 223–43, here 236. The same point applies to the *spaces* of queer life: Benno Gammerl, *anders fühlen: Schwules und lesbisches Leben in der Bundesrepublik; Eine Emotionsgeschichte* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2021), 201.

29. On ambivalence, see further Craig Griffiths, *The Ambivalence of Gay Liberation: Male Homosexual Politics in 1970s West Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 16–30.

30. Emphasis in the original. m.m., "Die Preisfrage," *Wir: Info der HSM*, no. 4 (1973): 23.

31. John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). See further Martin Meeker, "Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (January 2001): 78–116.

32. Larry Littlejohn, "The President's Corner," *Vector* 5, no. 11 (1969): 10; Larry Littlejohn, "The President's Corner," *Vector* 5, no. 7 (1969): 14. Torben Lütjen argues that Goldwater's

nomination marked "the birth of a new conservatism," which—despite Goldwater's heavy defeat in the presidential election—paved the way for Ronald Reagan's victory in 1980. Lütjen, "Aufstieg und Anatomie des amerikanischen Konservativismus nach 1945: Ein Forschungsbericht," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 54 (2014): 417–32, here 417.

33. Emily K. Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 24–26.

34. *Vector* 5, no. 11 (1969): 13; *Vector* 8, no. 11 (1972): 3.

35. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Frank Kameny papers, box 73, fol. 1, PRIDE, no. 1 (September 1967).

36. Duberman, *Stonewall*, 207, 211–18.

37. "What is 'Gay Power'?," *New York Mattachine Newsletter* (September 1969): 1–2.

38. Calculated in 1973. Barbara Wackernagel, "Die Gruppe RotZSchwul: Eine Analyse homosexueller Subkultur" (diploma thesis, Saarland University, 1975), 25–27.

39. Leo Lawrence, "Gay Revolution," *Vector* 5, no. 4 (1969): 11; Franklin E. Kameny, untitled letter, *Vector* 5, no. 6 (1969): 24.

40. See further David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 179–208.

41. Duberman, *Stonewall*, 113.

42. Franklin E. Kameny, "Gay Is Good," in *The Same Sex: An Appraisal of Homosexuality*, ed. Ralph W. Weltge (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), 129–45, here 145.

43. New York Public Library (henceforth: NYPL), Craig Rodwell papers, box 4, 2nd Annual Reminder 1966, Mattachine Society of Washington—Committee on Picketing and other Lawful Demonstrations—Regulations.

44. NYPL, Craig Rodwell papers, box 4, 2nd Annual Reminder, Gregory Battcock to Craig Rodwell, June 5, 1966.

45. Duberman, *Stonewall*, 210.

46. NYPL, Craig Rodwell papers, box 4, 5th Annual Reminder, Franklin E. Kameny to Craig Rodwell, July 11, 1969.

47. Armstrong and Crage, "Movements and Memory," 738.

48. Martha Shelley, "Gays Riot Again!," *Come Out! A Liberation Forum for the Gay Community* 1, no. 5 (1970): 5.

49. "Gay Pride," *Time*, July 13, 1970. According to *The Advocate*, about 1,200 people took part in the march down Hollywood Boulevard, and "wildly militant" and "conservative groups" cooperated effectively. The march was smaller than in New York, but larger than in Chicago, described in the editorial as a "midwestern bulwark of conservatism." "Historic Day!," *The Advocate* 4, no. 11 (1970): 18.

50. On Arcadie, see Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics and Morality in France from the Liberation to AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

51. On the West German homophile movement, see Clayton J. Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality in West Germany: Between Persecution and Freedom, 1945–1969* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), especially 64–111; Pretzel and Weiß, *Ohnmacht und Aufbegehren*.

52. The first two issues of *du&ich* were published in late 1969, before monthly installments began in 1970; *him* followed in May 1970.

53. On the ICSE, see Leila J. Rupp, "The Persistence of Transnational Organizing: The Case of the Homophile Movement," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 4 (October 2011): 1014–39.

54. Johannes Werres, "Als Aktivist der ersten Stunde: Meine Begegnung mit homosexuellen Gruppen und Zeitschriften nach 1945," *Capri: Zeitschrift für schwule Geschichte*, no. 1 (1990): 33–51, here 38.

55. Johannes Werres, "Nation at a Turning-Point: Some Progress, Much More to Go," *The Advocate* 3, no. 8 (1969): 16.

56. "U.S. Gay Life More Sophisticated than Europe's," *The Advocate* 4, no. 3 (1970): 26.

57. The title was rendered in English, and in 1975 changed to *Gay News Germany*, following a complaint by the British magazine *Gay News*. JW, "Sieben Jahre homosexuelle Emanzipationsbewegung in Deutschland," *Gay News Germany*, no. 64 (1976): 14–19, here 17.

58. Johannes Werres, " 'Alles zog sich ins Ghetto zurück': Leben in deutschen Großstädten nach 1945," in *Keine Zeit für gute Freunde: Homosexuelle in Deutschland 1933–1969*, ed. Joachim Hohmann (Berlin: Foerster, 1982), 82–92, here 90.

59. "Worte des Jahres," *Die Zeit*, January 1, 1971.

60. "Rosa Front gegen Strauß," *him*, no. 11/12 (1979): 24–27. Axel Schildt argues that Strauß's polarizing candidacy cost the CDU/CSU victory at the 1980 election. Schildt, " 'Die Kräfte der Gegenreform sind auf breiter Front angetreten': Zur konservativen Tendenzwende in den Siebzigerjahren," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004): 449–78, here 477.

61. Johannes Werres, "Schwul gleich links? Die Gleichung, die nicht aufgeht," *unter uns*, no. 7/8 (1977): 41–46, here 45.

62. Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 200, 219.

63. Günter Buchstab with Denise Lindsay, eds., *Barzel: "Unsere Alternativen für die Zeit der Opposition"; Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1969–1973* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2009), 1100.

64. Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 240, 357.

65. Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 348.

66. Heinz Heger [pseud.], "Die Entarteten im KZ," *du&ich*, no. 11 (1972): 10–12; Wilhelm Sorge, "Unterdrückt, getreten, vernichtet," *him*, no. 9 (1973): 22.

67. Martin Dannecker and Reimut Reiche, *Der gewöhnliche Homosexuelle: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über männliche Homosexuelle in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1974), 371.

68. Quoted in Michael Schwartz, " 'Warum machen Sie sich für die Homos stark?' Homosexualität und Medienöffentlichkeit in der westdeutschen Reformzeit der 1960er und 1970er Jahre," in *Jahrbuch Sexualitäten 2016*, ed. Maria Borowski et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 51–93, here 86.

69. Johannes Werres, "Häßlichkeit ist Trumpf! Gegen alles Schöne, weil es 'bürgerlich' ist?," *him*, no. 5 (1971): 48–49.

70. Werres, "Häßlichkeit ist Trumpf!," 48.

71. Johannes Werres and Heinz Liehr [his partner], letter to the editor, *Homosexuelle Emanzipation*, no. 6 (November/December 1979): 3.

72. Craig Alfred Hanson, “Defensive Editorial,” *The Advocate*, July 26, 1978.

73. Craig Alfred Hanson, “Homosexual Freedom: A Libertarian Conservative Statement,” *Vector* 9, no. 1 (1973): 27–28.

74. George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, anniversary ed. (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2006), 548. On the impact of Nash’s book, see Lütjen, “Aufstieg und Anatomie,” 420; Kim Phillips-Fein, “Conservatism: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (December 2011): 723–43, here 729.

75. Hanson, “Homosexual Freedom,” 27.

76. “In Memory: Craig Alfred Hanson—Class of 1953,” South Pasadena High School Alumni Association, accessed December 5, 2021, https://www.sphsaa.org/class_profile.cfm?member_id=1355607. I have not been able to retrieve further biographical information.

77. Hanson, “Homosexual Freedom,” 28.

78. Craig Alfred Hanson, “The Fairy Princess Exposed,” in *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, ed. Karla Jay and Allen Young, twentieth-anniversary ed. (1972; New York: New York University Press, 1992), 266–69, here 266 and 269. First printed in *Gay Sunshine*.

79. Hanson, “Fairy Princess Exposed,” 266.

80. Jim Kepner, “Anthology Has Some Fine Gay Writing,” *The Advocate*, June 20, 1973.

81. Craig Alfred Hanson, “Not Ultra,” *The Advocate*, July 4, 1973.

82. Hanson, “Defensive Editorial.”

83. Rupp, “Persistence of Transnational Organizing,” 1020.

84. Werres stated that his form of “boy-love” was partly based on the ideas of Hans Blüher. Werres, “Als Aktivist der ersten Stunde,” 38.

85. Werres, “Häßlichkeit ist Trumpf!,” 49.

86. Werres, “Häßlichkeit ist Trumpf!,” 49.

87. Werres, “Schwul gleich links,” 43.

88. Willhart S. Schlegel, “Über die Ursachen homosexuellen Verhaltens,” in *Das große Tabu: Zeugnisse und Dokumente zum Problem der Homosexualität*, ed. Schlegel (Munich: Rütten & Loening, 1967), 147–62.

89. “Die unvollendete Reform,” *unter uns*, no. 12 (1977): 11–12, here 12.

90. This biographical information is taken from Duberman, *Stonewall*, 30–35, 53–57, 100–105, 146–60.

91. Quoted in Duberman, *Stonewall*, 311.

92. Duberman, *Stonewall*, 104, 157–58. See further Charles McGraw, “The Papers of Foster Gunnison, Jr, and the Politics of Queer Preservation,” *History Workshop Journal* 65 (Spring 2008): 179–87.

93. NYPL, Craig Rodwell papers, Letters from Foster Gunnison Jr, 1969–70, Gunnison to Sandy Penn, September 19, 1970.

94. Foster Gunnison, letter to the editor, *The Advocate* 3, no. 11 (1969): 25.

95. NYPL, Craig Rodwell papers, box 4, CSLDUC 1970, CSLDUC bulletin 2, April 10, 1970.

96. Quoted in Duberman, *Stonewall*, 262.

97. Werres, “Schwul gleich links,” 46.

98. Hanson, “Homosexual Freedom,” 27.

99. Quoted in Duberman, *Stonewall*, 257.

100. The glf-Köln used the English initialism in lower-case. An activist differentiated the group from "extremist and militant organizations" which dreamed of creating "heaven on earth for homosexuals" by radical social change. Dieter Beheng, "2 Jahre GLF! Versuch einer Bilanz," *GLF-Journal*, no. 5 (1973): 1–4, here 1.

101. Claire, "Zur SM-Diskussion: Thesen zur Funny," *HAW-Info*, no. 22 (May 1976): 18–19.

102. Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality*, 50.

103. Hanson, "Defensive Editorial."

104. Hans Eppendorfer, *Der Ledermann spricht mit Hubert Fichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), 203–4; 207.

105. "Männer lasst das Knollen sein kommt herauf und reiht euch ein!," *HAW-Info*, no. 20 (December 1975): 60–62, here 60.

106. "Marsch der Lidschatten," *Bild*, June 12, 1973.

107. SMU, HAW Feministengruppe, Feministenpapier, October 1973, 3.

108. See further Griffiths, *Ambivalence*, 166–76.

109. Steber, Becker, and von der Goltz, "Introduction: Cultures of Conservatism," 10.

110. In her study on center-right students in the Federal Republic, Anna von der Goltz argues that while the symbolic styles favored by different political camps were important in the 1960s, by the 1970s "woolly sweaters, full beards, and longer hair on men" had lost their "countercultural connotation" and become more mainstream. Von der Goltz, *The Other '68ers: Student Protest and Christian Democracy in West Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 112–14.

111. Jakobus, "unter uns gesagt," *du&ich*, no. 11 (1972): 52.

112. Dieter Michael Specht, "Editorial," *him*, no. 7 (1972): 6.

113. "Bekennt, daß ihr anders seid," *Der Spiegel*, March 11, 1973. "Ich bin schwul," *Stern*, October 5, 1978.

114. Hans Daniel [pseud.], "Wie zuverlässig sind wissenschaftliche Aussagen von Agitatoren?," *Die Welt*, January 27, 1973.

115. One of the first homosexual groups set up in West Germany following homosexual law reform, the IHWO was originally envisioned as the German chapter of a Danish organization, but the umbrella group was defunct by 1970. Wolfert, *Gegen Einsamkeit*, 82, 98. On the podium event, see SMU, IHWO, box 1, IHWO Rundbrief, November/December 1972.

116. Frank Kameny, "The November Choice: Democrats or Republicans?," *Vector* 8, no. 10 (1972): 17.

117. Mike Newton, "Election '72: SIR Stamps Approval," *Vector* 8, no. 11 (1972): 10–11.

118. Milton Marks, interview by Duke Smith, *Vector* 9, no. 2 (1973): 7 and 36–38, here 7.

119. Marks, interview, 7; Julian E. Zelizer, "Rethinking the History of American Conservatism," *Reviews in American History* 38, no. 2 (June 2010): 367–92, here 381.

120. Emphasis in the original. Bill Plath, interview, *Vector* 8, no. 12 (1972): 37–39, here 38.

121. "Wir sind stärker als die FDP," *du&ich*, no. 3 (1970): 1. See further Huneke, *States of Liberation*, 118–41.

122. *New York Mattachine Newsletter* (October 1969): 6.

123. "Using Our Strength," *The Advocate* 3, no. 7 (1969): 30. Emphasis in the original.

124. Johnson, *Lavender Scare*, 213.

125. "Conservatism Working in Colorado," *The Advocate*, July 28, 1976.

126. "Conservatism Working in Colorado."

127. Simon Hall, "The American Gay Rights Movement and Patriotic Protest," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (September 2010): 536–62, here 559.

128. SMU, Hamburg–Schwulenbewegung–HAH, Ab jetzt gibt's unser Programm: ein Schwuler kandidiert zur Bürgerschaftswahl, March 1978, 4.

129. A Black German movement did not emerge until the mid-1980s. The Berlin chapter of Initiative Schwarze Deutsche referenced the "empowering symbol of the fist" in its journal *Onkel Tom's Faust*, first published in 1988. Tiffany N. Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 70.

130. "Schwul ist schön" was a slogan used, at the latest, by 1972. See Jakobus, "unter uns gesagt." From the late 1960s, Christian Democratic youth groups appropriated "black is beautiful" (in the English original) on advertising materials, referring not to anti-racism but to the color associated with the party. Von der Goltz, *The Other '68ers*, 164.

131. Hobson, *Lavender and Red*, 31–32.

132. On the lack of attention to race and racism in the likes of *du&ich* and *him*, see Christopher Ewing, " 'Color Him Black': Erotic Representations and the Politics of Race in West German Homosexual Magazines, 1949–1974," *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 2 (June 2017): 382–403.

133. Arthur Schircliffe, letter to the editor, *Come Out! A Liberation Forum for the Gay Community* 1, no. 3 (1970): 12.

134. The book was published under the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory. Johnson, *Lavender Scare*, 182.

135. Jonathan Bell, "Making Sexual Citizens: LGBT Politics, Health Care and the State in the 1970s," in Bell, *Beyond the Politics of the Closet*, 58–80, here 68. Costanza was the key player behind the meeting; at the time, she was in a romantic relationship with the co-director of the NGTF, Jean O'Leary. See further Doreen J. Mattingly and Ashley Boyd, "Bringing Gay and Lesbian Activism to the White House: Midge Costanza and the National Gay Task Force Meeting," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 17, no. 3/4 (July 2013): 365–79, here 373.

136. Leonard Matlovich, interview by Ike Nahem, in *Militant*. Reprinted in Cheryl Adams et al., *Gay Liberation Today: An Exchange of Views* (New York: Pathfinder, 1977), 35–36, here 36.

137. Matlovich, interview, 36.

138. GLF Columbia, "GAY," *GLF Washington D.C. Newsletter* 1, no. 2 (1970): 4.

139. Quoted in Duberman, *Stonewall*, 229.

140. Justin David Suran, "Coming Out against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam," *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2001): 452–88, here 471.

141. Suran, "Coming Out against the War," 475.

142. HAW, *Homosexuellen-Diskriminierung ist mit dem Kampf für Sozialismus unvereinbar!* (November 1972), leaflet printed as appendix to Andreas Pareik, "Kampf um eine Identität: Entwicklung, Probleme, Perspektiven der neuen Homosexuellen-

Emanzipationsbewegung am Beispiel der Homosexuellen Aktion Westberlin" (PhD diss., Berlin, 1977), 285.

143. The first such gathering took place in 1972, in both Münster and West Berlin. West Berlin was also the location for the *Pfingsttreffen* in 1973, 1974, and 1975, before Munich hosted the event in 1976 and Hamburg in 1977.

144. Suran, "Coming Out against the War," 463.

145. Larry Littlejohn, "President's Column," *Vector* 6, no. 1 (1970): 10.

146. Matlovich planned the measure as a deliberate action against the military's blanket ban on homosexuals. Hall, "Leonard Matlovich," 113.

147. *Time*, September 8, 1975, accessed March 25, 2001, http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19750908,00.html.

148. Quoted in Hall, "American Gay Rights Movement," 543.

149. "Gay Republicans Form New Organization in San Francisco," *Lambda News* 6, no. 4 (1981): 11. Matlovich is described as a longtime Republican by both Simon Hall and Clayton Howard, but this brief article suggested he had recently switched allegiance from the Democrats.

150. Howard, "Gay and Conservative," 147.

151. Howard, "Gay and Conservative," 150; Hall, "Leonard Matlovich," 120.

152. Hobson, *Lavender and Red*, 87.

153. Quoted in Hall, "Leonard Matlovich," 118.

154. Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality*, 201.

155. In 1974 the federal defense minister confirmed in an interview that gay recruits would not be allowed to complete their military service. Georg Leber, interview, *du&ich*, no. 10 (1974): 19.

156. Lautmann, "Wie man Außenseiter draußen hält," 11.

157. Rosa Geschichten, ed., *Eine Tunte bist du auf jeden Fall: 20 Jahre Schwulenbewegung in Münster* (Münster: KCM, 1992), 22.

158. Plein's case was mentioned in at least one meeting of the umbrella group NARGS in 1978. Plein died by suicide in 1977, which may have made it difficult to uncover sufficient materials about the case. SMU, NARGS, box 1, 1978, Untitled minutes of organizing meeting, January 1978.

159. Rainer Plein, "Aufbruch an deutschen Universitäten," interview, *him*, no. 10 (1971): 16–17.

160. "Schwule Aktion Münster," *him*, no. 8 (1972): 47.

161. Quoted in Wolfert, *Gegen Einsamkeit*, 208.

162. *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt*, directed by Rosa von Praunheim (Bavaria Atelier, 1971).

163. "Wir sind geräumt!" [1974]. Poster printed as appendix to Wackernagel, "Die Gruppe RotZSchwul."

164. Roland Gaedke, letter to the editor, *The Advocate*, August 27, 1975.

165. J. Atkinson, letter to the editor, *The Advocate*, August 27, 1975.

166. Praunheim, "Von Homosexuellen für Homosexuelle gemacht."

167. Historisches Archiv des Westdeutschen Rundfunks, Cologne (henceforth: WDR), fol. 12285, Claus Fischdick and Carl Stoewahs to Klaus von Bismarck, November 30, 1971.

168. Letters sent to the broadcaster: WDR, fol. 08585, January 16, 1973; fol. 08586, February 2, 1972; fol. 08585, February 1972.

169. Elspeth Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 86.

170. In light of the associations provoked by the term, Kurt Sontheimer felt it necessary to remind readers in 1971 that it was "no shame to be a conservative." "Verstohlener Konservatismus," *Merkur* 25 (1971): 700–703, here 702. Quoted in Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 248.

171. Christopher Stone, "Circus?," *The Advocate*, July 30, 1975.

172. Troy Perry, "Pride's Postscript," *The Advocate*, August 27, 1975. On Perry and the US gay religious movement, see Jim Downs, *Stand by Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 41–64.

173. Anna von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, "Introduction: Silent Majorities and Conservative Mobilization in the 1960s and 1970s in Transatlantic Perspective," in von der Goltz and Waldschmidt-Nelson, *Inventing the Silent Majority*, 1–15, here 1.

174. Whitney Strub, "Pornography, Heteronormativity, and the Genealogy of New Right Sexual Citizenship in the United States," in von der Goltz and Waldschmidt-Nelson, *Inventing the Silent Majority*, 339–55, here 347.

175. Von der Goltz and Waldschmidt-Nelson, "Introduction," 2.

176. Quoted in Christina von Hodenberg, *Television's Moment: Sitcom Audiences and the Sixties Cultural Revolution* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 165.

177. Johannes Werres, "Schweigende Mehrheit," *Sexualmedizin* 3, no. 5 (May 1974): 268. Outside of homosexual politics, Hans-Joachim Schoeps was one of the few conservative intellectuals to adopt the phrase: Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, 283.

178. Quoted in Magdalena Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten? Eine Geschichte der Subjektivierung männlicher Homosexualität in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren der BRD* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014), 61.

179. C. David Hollenbeck, "Polarity Will Destroy Us," *The Advocate*, August 4, 1971.

180. Greg Carmack, "Sensible Approach," *The Advocate*, March 24, 1976.

181. Homosexuelle Aktionsgemeinschaft Bremen, "Nicht Provozieren sondern Diskutieren und Informieren," *AHA-Info*, no. 7 (July 1979): 20.

182. D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 246.

183. John D'Emilio, "Foreword," in Jay and Young, *Out of the Closets*, xi–xxix, here xx.

184. Karla Jay and Allen Young, "Introduction," in Jay and Young, *Out of the Closets*, xxxi–lvi, here xxxiv. The exception was Craig Alfred Hanson, one of whose articles was included. Hanson, "Fairy Princess Exposed."

185. Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 45.

186. Jay and Young, "Introduction," xliv.

187. Norman Davis, "Thanks but No Thanks," *Vector* 11, no. 3 (1975): 25.

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