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Martha Snipstad

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## COMMENT

# COLONIALISM: AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM THAT BUILT THE WESTERN WORLD

MARTHA SNIPSTAD

### I. INTRODUCTION

The wealth and prosperity of the Western World is often taught in schools as a triumph of European ingenuity, discovery, and resourcefulness. The age of exploration is thought to be a time when men discovered fantastic new lands and cleverly harnessed the resources they found there to create great wealth for their homelands. This narrative paints a lovely picture that illustrates how white Europeans paved their own path with nothing but their own intelligence and desire to explore. It is a story we celebrate and commemorate with statues and holidays, one of the most noteworthy being Thanksgiving. This story may paint the development of the Western World as triumphant and beautiful; however, it is a story of fiction.

The true story of the building of wealth and culture in the Western World is not a fun story for anyone involved. It is a story of brutality and pain. It is in direct contrast with the lessons Western culture likes to teach its children. This tale is one in which violence was used to achieve goals, and the wellbeing of others is nothing more than an inconvenience. This is a story that proves that the good guys do not always finish first and the underdog does not always come out on top. This is an especially hard pill to swallow in the context of the “American Dream,” a concept that perpetuates the idea that success is waiting for anyone who plays by the rules and works hard enough. It is an ironic sentiment that can be found underlying every aspect of modern American culture. It is not surprising that people who have invested all their hope in the American Dream would want to believe a story that paints their forefathers as the same underdogs with rebellious souls that they are now. It presents a beautiful image that anything is possible.

Unfortunately, the true story behind the development of the Western World is far more sinister. It proves precisely the opposite of the American Dream. It demonstrates that brute force, financial backing, and indifference to the human suffering one has caused can win out time and time again. This

paper will examine the modern historical context of colonialism as well as modern takes on the long-lasting effects on victimized civilizations. This paper will also examine the morality of colonialism through the lens of Catholic doctrine, how the church has responded and how they are called to respond.

### A. Historical Context

Colonialism is defined as “the control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory, or people.”<sup>1</sup> Practically speaking, colonialism has often shown itself to be a means for Western, white nations to systematically strip minority-led societies of their land and resources in the name of exploration. Colonialism as a concept has existed for as long as there has been land to take and people to take it. Modern colonialism, as it is referred to in this paper, reflects colonialism that has taken place during recorded history. Modern colonialism can be split into two distinct eras: God, Gold, and Glory, and Scramble for Africa.<sup>2</sup> Bookmarked between these two eras, a crucial piece of historical context can be found – the transatlantic slave trade.

#### 1. God, Gold, and Glory

The first era is the one most commonly thought of in American culture. This era took place during Europe’s “Age of Discovery.”<sup>3</sup> This era began in the 1400s and consisted of many European nations taking and colonizing various lands in regions of North and South America.<sup>4</sup> The motives of this era of colonialism were simple. These explorers were pushing God, seeking gold, and determined to declare glory.<sup>5</sup> A very Christian Europe felt it was its religious and moral responsibility to convert those who did not hold their belief.<sup>6</sup> This led to missionaries seeking out groups ignorant to the word of God who were seeking a holy truth.<sup>7</sup> Gold is used more metaphorically in this context, although it was also the literal motivation for

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<sup>1</sup> *Colonialism*, DICTIONARY.COM, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/colonialism> (last visited Jan. 20, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Jamila Osman, *What is Colonialism? A History of Violence, Control and Exploitation*, TEEN VOGUE (Oct. 11, 2020), <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/colonialism-explained>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

manifest destiny that pushed United States settlers westward later in history. Here, gold represents Europe's desire to harvest the resources of other societies for their own economic gain.<sup>8</sup> Finally, a consistent competition between Europe's great powers led to an unquenching need for one nation to beat the other. This presented itself in a need to find new lands first and claim them.<sup>9</sup>

This era of colonialism brought us characters such as Christopher Columbus, a man who was revered for centuries as the man who discovered America.<sup>10</sup> He has been praised in history classes and taught in a very favorable light. Until very recently, he was even celebrated through a national holiday.<sup>11</sup> His favorable attention has waned quite a bit in recent history. Many states and cities in the United States of America have rejected Columbus Day and have replaced it with the more culturally favorable "Indigenous Peoples Day."<sup>12</sup> However, as of 2020, Columbus Day remains a national holiday in the United States. Christopher Columbus is a prime example of the whitewashing that happens in American history classes. The continued illustration of him as a great explorer who discovered the New World clearly shows American culture's difficulty of letting go of the fairy tale that has been painted about the development of the Western World.

Another great charade that came out of the first era of colonialism is American Thanksgiving. Much like the story of colonialism itself, the story of Thanksgiving presents a beautiful story of Native Americans wanting to help new white settlers understand the new lands before handing their homes over to the new settlers. However, much like the flowery sentiments surrounding colonialism, this story is far from accurate. It is indeed true that the Chief of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, which made contact with the Mayflower settlers, intended to form a civil alliance with the settlers.<sup>13</sup> However, the desired alliance was not one being forged out of friendship and comradery, but one out of pragmatic strategy.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Osman, *supra* note 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> Aura Bogado, *Indigenous Peoples Day: 4 Things to Know*, TEEN VOGUE (Oct. 9, 2017), <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/indigenous-peoples-day-4-things-to-know>.

<sup>13</sup> Claire Bugos, *The Myths of the Thanksgiving Story and the Lasting Damage They Imbue*, SMITHSONIAN MAG., (Nov. 26, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thanksgiving-myth-and-what-we-should-be-teaching-kids-180973655/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

The relationship that the Chief of the Wampanoag Tribe was seeking was a mutually beneficial relationship that he wanted as means to protect his people.<sup>15</sup> This alliance was not negotiated over a beautiful spread of autumn foods.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it is also important to note that the Wampanoag Tribe had much experience with the Western World at the time of their contact with the Mayflower settlers.<sup>17</sup> The Tribe's experience with the Western World was primarily stained with the blood of their own people after brutal interactions with European countries.<sup>18</sup> In fact, more than one member of the Wampanoag Tribe spoke English and was capable of communicating with the settlers.<sup>19</sup> Members of the Tribe had even visited Europe and returned by the time they met the Mayflower settlers.<sup>20</sup>

The story about Thanksgiving that is presented to children in popular culture is very different from the actual story. This discrepancy can likely be explained through a couple of explanations. First, the story that is taught is a better story, one that is based on friendship and a desire to help one another. It is a story perfect for teaching the virtue of caring for one another. There are not many clear morally significant lessons that can be drawn from two civilized cultures attempting and ultimately failing to form some sort of strategic relationship. The second reason is quite simple. History is often written by the winners. This story creates an image of the European settlers that is significantly better than the real story. When it is taught in schools, it perpetuates the false sentiment that nothing existed until Europeans touched it.<sup>21</sup> This is a thinly veiled justification for colonialism itself. The idea that a distinct and specific tribe of people were reduced down to nothing more than a mysterious group that appeared out of the trees to help the settlers prepare a meal, only to mysteriously disappear once the meal was over, is a means of dehumanization.<sup>22</sup> By writing a story of a friendly and peaceful meeting over food, it allows a picture of Native Americans being willing and welcoming to the idea of their lands being taken out from underneath them. This false dichotomy creates heroes out of people who were anything but heroes. It also

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<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> Bugos, *supra* note 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

creates naïve and undeveloped people who needed colonialism out of proud and highly civilized people.

This era of colonialism is likely the most well-known era for most Americans but it is shrouded in misinterpretations and ignorance. This is in part due to the decisions made by the Western World regarding how this material was to be taught to children of Westernized societies. Oftentimes, when the Western World thinks of slavery and the systems of the slave trade, they see it as a horrible dark moment in history. However, when viewed through the lens of greed that can be seen throughout the God, Gold, and Glory era, it becomes far easier to understand. In many places, slavery has existed for as long as man has existed. European-involved slavery, and in fact dominance, was just another example of the dehumanization of non-white, non-Western people in the hunt for more wealth.

## 2. Transatlantic Slave Trade

Situated in the midst of the two main eras of colonialism was the transatlantic slave trade. The transatlantic slave trade took place between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Overlapping both eras of colonialism, it provides an important backdrop for the events that took place during the colonial eras. The transatlantic slave trade was just one section of a larger global slave trade. However, this one period was responsible for the transportation of more than ten million African slaves across the Atlantic Ocean to North and South America.<sup>24</sup> Slave trade “was the second of three stages of the so-called triangular trade.”<sup>25</sup> The other two stages involved Europe sending wine and textiles to Africa, and the Americas sending coffee and sugar to Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The transatlantic slave trade began in the late 1400s.<sup>27</sup> For more than a century, the transatlantic slave trade was led by the Portuguese, with additional slaves being transported to the Caribbean by Spanish conquistadors.<sup>28</sup> The number of slaves transported to the Americas before 1600 was relatively low compared to later centuries.<sup>29</sup> In fact, it is likely that

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Lewis, *Transatlantic Slave Trade*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, (July 9, 2015), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transatlantic-slave-trade>.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> Lewis, *supra* note 23.

fewer than one percent of all slaves transported to the Americas were transported there before 1600.<sup>30</sup> In the seventeenth century, the demand for slaves had grown tremendously due to the rise of plantation needs in the Caribbean and North America.<sup>31</sup> The 1600s saw the Dutch become the largest slave traders.<sup>32</sup> In the century that followed, France and England took control of more than half of the transatlantic slave trade.<sup>33</sup>

A rise in demand for slave labor also saw a rise in interest from countries like England, which had previously looked down on the idea of the slave trade.<sup>34</sup> “In 1660, the English government chartered a company called the ‘Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa.’”<sup>35</sup> Despite initial management problems, by 1663, the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa was to be the only one from England allowed to engage in slave trade.<sup>36</sup> The Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa failed due to several factors, among which were economic hardships and the quality of their deliveries.<sup>37</sup> However, out of the ruins of the Company of Royal Adventurers came a new company that fared much better.<sup>38</sup> This was the birth of the Royal African Company.<sup>39</sup> Royal African Company was given complete control over England’s slave trade activity in 1672.<sup>40</sup> “Between 1680 and 1686, the Company transported an average of 5,000 slaves a year.”<sup>41</sup> During that same time period, the company made nearly 250 trips to Africa.<sup>42</sup> Royal African Company held their control over England’s slave trade until 1698, at which time the trade was open to everyone.<sup>43</sup> This led to a sharp increase in slaves brought to the Americas by English ships.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> *Royal African Company Established*, PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p269.html> (last visited Jan. 22, 2022).

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> *Royal African Company*, UNIV. MINN., [http://gallery.lib.umn.edu/exhibits/show/proclamations-on-trade-and-com/english\\_presence\\_in\\_africa/royal](http://gallery.lib.umn.edu/exhibits/show/proclamations-on-trade-and-com/english_presence_in_africa/royal) (last visited Jan. 22, 2022).

<sup>38</sup> *Royal African Company Established*, *supra* note 34.

<sup>39</sup> *Royal African Company*, *supra* note 37.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

<sup>41</sup> *Royal African Company Established*, *supra* note 34.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

The transatlantic slave trade wreaked havoc on the continent of Africa.<sup>45</sup> Warlords and members of tribes were offered economic perks in exchange for their assistance in the slave trade.<sup>46</sup> This created a dangerous atmosphere, which led to violence, fear, and anarchy.<sup>47</sup> The effects of this chaotic environment led to diminished economic and agricultural growth throughout the western part of the continent.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the slave trade robbed these tribes of a key demographic of their population, those who would be valuable for the purposes of labor.<sup>49</sup> This meant that slave traders focused their energy on capturing young, able-bodied men and women, both at the age to procreate.<sup>50</sup> In taking these young men and women, slave traders left behind the most vulnerable members of the tribes, individuals that would likely not have the capability to economically prosper by their own means.<sup>51</sup> The transatlantic slave trade left Western Africa ravaged and depleted. This is important context when looking at the Scramble for Africa era of colonialism, which began during the last century of the transatlantic slave trade.

### 3. Scramble for Africa

The second wave of modern colonialism is known as the Scramble for Africa.<sup>52</sup> This era began in the 1800s and involved European nations working to take as much of the continent for themselves as they could possibly manage.<sup>53</sup> The division of Africa had tremendously damaging effects on the entire continent.<sup>54</sup> Because these divisions were made based on the arbitrary desires of the European nation and not the needs of people already residing on the land, there was no consideration given to what would happen to tribes of people split into fractions and separated by invisible borders.<sup>55</sup> The tensions that these divisions caused are still very much present to this day in many places throughout the continent of Africa.<sup>56</sup> The European

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<sup>45</sup> Lewis, *supra* note 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> Lewis, *supra* note 23.

<sup>52</sup> Osman, *supra* note 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*



nations involved in the Scramble for Africa saw the tribes' way of life to be sub-standard, and subsequently demolished well established traditions regarding the very functioning of these places.<sup>57</sup> The fallout of this can still be seen today. Most of the world's most impoverished countries were at one time colonies of the Western World.<sup>58</sup> The colonization of the continent of Africa involved the harvesting of many of Africa's great resources.<sup>59</sup>

One of the more egregious aspects of the Scramble for Africa can be attributed to King Leopold II and his colonization of the Congo for his own personal use.<sup>60</sup> King Leopold took what is now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his own personal property.<sup>61</sup> Recognized internationally as King Leopold's personal land, it was the only privately owned colony at the time.<sup>62</sup> He referred to his land as Congo Free State.<sup>63</sup> When King Leopold raised his request in 1885 for land allocated specifically for him to other European leaders, he spun them a story about making life better for the people of the Congo.<sup>64</sup> He promised humane treatment of the people and moral practices.<sup>65</sup> His tale won them over and he was granted the land he requested.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, his tale turned out to be fiction. King Leopold committed many human rights violations on his private colony. His interest in this land could be attributed to his desire to grow his personal wealth.<sup>67</sup> His sights were initially pointed at ivory, a very versatile material at the time.<sup>68</sup> Years later he shifted his energy toward rubber.<sup>69</sup>

King Leopold would send his private army into villages.<sup>70</sup> The soldiers had a tendency to kidnap women and children, then force the men to

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<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> Osman, *supra* note 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

<sup>60</sup> Adam Hochschild, *Leopold II*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leopold-II-king-of-Belgium> (Dec. 13, 2021).

<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> Georgina Rannard & Eve Webster, *Leopold II: Belgium 'Wakes Up' to Its Bloody Colonial Past*, BBC NEWS, (June 13, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53017188>.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*

<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> Hochschild, *supra* note 60.

<sup>68</sup> *Id.*

<sup>69</sup> *Id.*

<sup>70</sup> *Id.*

collect a predetermined amount of wild rubber in order to free the women.<sup>71</sup> Soldiers had a reputation for cutting off the hands and feet of enslaved people if King Leopold's desired quota was not being met.<sup>72</sup> King Leopold's soldiers would also force children into "child colonies" where they were to "work or train as soldiers."<sup>73</sup> More than half of the children sent to these colonies are thought to have died there.<sup>74</sup> In addition to the monstrosities committed by King Leopold within his Congo Free State, he continued to abuse the Congolese people in Belgium.<sup>75</sup> King Leopold opened the Africa Museum on the grounds of his estate.<sup>76</sup> The museum included a "human zoo," which used Congolese people as exhibits.<sup>77</sup> The "zoo" featured more than 250 people held in captivity.<sup>78</sup> The Africa Museum was the last remaining colonial museum in the world until its renovation in 2018.<sup>79</sup>

These practices led to people working to death and hostages starving to death.<sup>80</sup> The lack of a healthy work force wreaked havoc on the country's economy, leading to famine-like conditions.<sup>81</sup> When all was said and done, the population of the Congo had been decimated and nearly ten million people were dead.<sup>82</sup> Word of the horrendous events that took place at the orders of King Leopold began to spread through Europe in the early 1900s.<sup>83</sup> By 1908, European leaders condemned King Leopold's regime.<sup>84</sup> The land was transferred from King Leopold's personal property to a Belgian colony.<sup>85</sup> Despite the wealth he accumulated from the Congo, and the misery he left behind, King Leopold never stepped foot on Congolese soil during his cruel reign over the land.<sup>86</sup> King Leopold died in 1909, but the Republic of the Congo did not gain its independence from Belgium until 1960.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Id.*

<sup>72</sup> Rannard, *supra* note 63.

<sup>73</sup> *Id.*

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> *Id.*

<sup>78</sup> Rannard, *supra* note 63.

<sup>79</sup> *Id.*

<sup>80</sup> *See* Hochschild, *supra* note 60.

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*

<sup>82</sup> *Id.*

<sup>83</sup> Rannard, *supra* note 63.

<sup>84</sup> *Id.*

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*

<sup>87</sup> *Id.*

King Leopold II is not a widely known historical figure outside of Belgium. However, new light has been shed on him in recent months. Following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, protests calling for justice sprung-up around the world. As a symbol of protest in Belgium, many statues of King Leopold II were vandalized, one statue was set on fire.<sup>88</sup> Despite condemnation from other European nations in the early 1900s, he remained revered in Belgium until quite recently.<sup>89</sup> “In 2010, former Belgian foreign minister Louis Michel and the father of future prime minister Charles Michel, called Leopold ‘a hero with ambitions for a small country like Belgium.’”<sup>90</sup> The fact that King Leopold II was about to maintain even the remnants of a positive reputation speaks to the Western World’s deep seeded sense of superiority over these once-colonized societies. The harm King Leopold’s regime caused was felt little in the Western World, so it is easy to brush aside. However, his impact on the Republic of the Congo was far-reaching and long-lasting. This reveals a fundamental truth about the West. When the Western World weighs the good a leader has created for the West against the human suffering the leader caused outside of the West, they find that the political good that benefits them outweighs any harm done to others. This is a dangerous truth – one that can, and oftentimes has, led to unspeakable evils committed against people.

Understanding the historical backdrop and keeping that history in mind as a means to contextualize the works of the time, is a crucially important part of analyzing the colonialism and its effects on the world at large.

## II. LITERARY HISTORY

There has been much criticism for colonialism and the institutions that build it in recent years. The modern take on colonialism is an important one that will be explored later in this paper. However, like many controversial moments in world history, it is crucial to first understand how citizens of the time period felt about the matter. In order to analyze the “merits of colonialism,” and the cultural unraveling that took place as a result, it is important to take a step back and view it through the lens of the eras in which it occurred.

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<sup>88</sup> *Id.*

<sup>89</sup> Rannard, *supra* note 63.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.*

### A. Regarding the Age of Discovery

Original source materials that date back to the Age of Discovery, beginning in the late 1400s, are scarce. One of the more important documents to come out of the Age of Discovery is arguably “Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú,” written by Agustín de Zárate. This document, which has been revised and translated many times, chronicles the exploration and conquering of Peru by the Spanish.<sup>91</sup> Although this document does not directly address colonialism taking place in North America during the God, Gold, and Glory era, it does provide compelling insight into the world’s attitude towards colonialism during that period of time. This is incredibly valuable given the limited resources from the era.

Zárate was a Spanish historian best known for “Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú.”<sup>92</sup> His work has served as a valuable resource for historians.<sup>93</sup> However, “Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú,” much like Zárate, has remained relatively obscure throughout history.<sup>94</sup> There are likely many reasons for that, one of which being that due to political tensions of the day, there were multiple versions released.<sup>95</sup> Most notably, several chapters from the original version were omitted in the 1577 version.<sup>96</sup> Despite the obscurity of the document, and the controversy surrounding later versions of it, it still served as a useful tool for future historians.<sup>97</sup> The original document presents itself as a challenging read for a modern observer.<sup>98</sup> However, the document has since been annotated in a manner that allows for a better understanding for the reader.<sup>99</sup>

The original version of “Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú” was published in 1555.<sup>100</sup> The original work documents events

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<sup>91</sup> Dorothy McMahon, *Some Observations on the Spanish and Foreign Editions of Zárate's 'Historia Del Descubrimiento y Conquista Del Perú,'* 49 PAPERS BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOC'Y AM. 2, 95-111, (1955).

<sup>92</sup> Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture, ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM, (Dec. 30, 2020) [www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/zarate-agustin-de-c-1508-1514-after-1578](http://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/zarate-agustin-de-c-1508-1514-after-1578).

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

<sup>94</sup> *Id.*

<sup>95</sup> *Id.*

<sup>96</sup> *Id.*

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*

<sup>98</sup> Abraham Arias-Larreta, *Historia Del Descubrimiento y Conquista Del Perú,* HISP. AM. HIST. REV. (1968).

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> McMahon, *supra* note 91.

surrounding the exploration of Peru by the Spanish.<sup>101</sup> The events chronicled in Zárate's piece start with the planning of an expedition by Francisco Pizarro and Diego Almagro.<sup>102</sup> It continues on to cover wars and rebellions, and concludes when peace was restored around 1550.<sup>103</sup> This work was written close enough to the time of the events that Zárate had the ability to witness these events first-hand.<sup>104</sup> "Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú" has been re-published several times.<sup>105</sup> The most at issue portion of the Zárate's chronicles is Book V.<sup>106</sup> Dorothy McMahon provided an insightful analysis on Book V in "Some Observations on the Spanish and Foreign Editions of Zárate's 'Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú.'" <sup>107</sup> In this article, she highlights the major differences between Book V in the original publication and the 1577 Spanish publication, the latter of which was published during Zárate's lifetime.

Book V of "Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú" addresses the rebellion of Gonzalo Pizarro, specifically "the defeat and death of the first Spanish viceroy to that region."<sup>108</sup> Zárate played some role in the events surrounding this rebellion.<sup>109</sup> McMahon hypothesizes that Zárate's 1555 account of events in Book V may have served as an apology of some sort for the role he played.<sup>110</sup> Regardless of his motives, Zárate's original account did not shine a particularly flattering light on the Spanish government.<sup>111</sup> His revisions, published in the 1577 Spanish publication, rectified that by painting the Viceroy in a far more flattering light.<sup>112</sup> "Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú" has been translated into several languages throughout history. The first English translation was published in 1581.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Id.*

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> *Id.*

<sup>106</sup> McMahon, *supra* note 91.

<sup>107</sup> *Id.*

<sup>108</sup> *Id.*

<sup>109</sup> *Id.*

<sup>110</sup> *Id.*

<sup>111</sup> *Id.*

<sup>112</sup> McMahon, *supra* note 91.

<sup>113</sup> AGUSTIN DE ZARATE & THOMAS NICHOLAS, THE STRANGE AND DELECTABLE HISTORY OF THE DISCOVERIE AND CONQUEST OF THE PROVINCES OF PERU, IN THE SOUTH SEA, AND OF THE NOTABLE THINGS WHICH THERE ARE FOUND: AND ALSO

There is considerable analysis that can be made regarding the changes and details made to those many translations as well.<sup>114</sup> The focus here remains on the Spanish translation and the difference between the 1555 and 1577 publications. Zárate is believed to be involved in both publications.<sup>115</sup> Given his firsthand experience with the events written about in the publications, his deviation on the facts speaks to the cultural atmosphere at the time. This deviation is a clear example of political pressure felt by not only Zárate, but likely other historians of the time as well. When analyzing events of the past, it is important to understand the ethical standing at the time the event occurred. It is clear that the events surrounding the exploration of Peru did not take place due to a perceived moral high ground. This is seen through the re-writing of events to favor the Spanish. Although this writing does not directly relate to the exploration of North America, it does speak to the overall mentality of the West during this era of colonialism — a mentality of superiority with a lapse in ethical judgement. This is helpful insight to contextualize the era as a whole.

#### B. Regarding the Slave Trade

By the late 1700s, many figures began to challenge the morality surrounding the fundamental practice of the slave trade. The conversation surrounding the slave trade became a biblical one. Many religious leaders were beginning to advocate for the abolition of the slave trade. As they saw it, the slave trade represented an injustice to mankind.<sup>116</sup> In response, supporters of the slave trade began to counter with biblical arguments of their own.

Works published in support of the abolition of the slave trade would not hold up against modern scrutiny regarding the treatment of minorities. However, the works provide a valuable look into the minds of the citizens of the time period. In 1788, Reverend Robert Boucher Nickolls wrote a letter to the treasurer of the Society Instituted for the Purpose of Effecting the

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OF THE BLOUDIE CIVIL WARRES WHICH THERE HAPPENED FOR GOVERNMENT (1581), *reprinted in* SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, 1500-1926, [https://www.link.gale.com/apps/doc/CY0101092824/SABN?u=clic\\_stthomas&sid=SABN&xid=fa4a33c5&pg=5](https://www.link.gale.com/apps/doc/CY0101092824/SABN?u=clic_stthomas&sid=SABN&xid=fa4a33c5&pg=5). (last visited Dec. 18, 2020).

<sup>114</sup> McMahan, *supra* note 91.

<sup>115</sup> *Id.*

<sup>116</sup> ROBERT BOUCHER NICKOLLS, ET AL., LETTER TO THE TREASURER OF THE SOCIETY INSTITUTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE IN SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, (4th ed. 1788).

Abolition of the Slave Trade.<sup>117</sup> In the letter, he raised several arguments to support his assertion that slavery should be abolished. One argument that Nickolls explores was in regards to climate and the impact the changing weather conditions had on slaves.<sup>118</sup> “It is very certain that negroes multiply in warm climates in an infinitely greater proportion than in cold.”<sup>119</sup> He asserts that “their natural complexion of glossy black is changed to a dark unhealthy tawney” in colder climates.<sup>120</sup> He goes on to discuss that in southern colonies and on islands, slaves should be thriving, assuming they are receiving acceptable treatment.<sup>121</sup> “But warm climates are congenial to them; in them with tolerable treatment they are prolific and long-lived.”<sup>122</sup> Nickolls connects these arguments by asserting that if slaves were treated in a manner that was tolerable while located in the warm climates of the south, then there would not be a need to traffic in new slaves yearly because they would multiply on their own.<sup>123</sup>

This argument is clearly not one against slavery, but against slave trade specifically. Although this argument does make points surrounding the cruel treatments of black people residing on the West Indie islands at the time, the argument that he makes here is not one that addresses the immoral treatment of slaves while engaged in act of slave. Quite the contrary; in fact, his argument raises the point that there is a more efficient way for slavery to be done. One that does not require the bringing in of new slaves on a yearly basis, but one that simply requires that citizens of the West Indie nations be allowed to “multiply.”<sup>124</sup> This argument holds very little factual ground when viewed retrospectively, given the lack of validity in this science-based argument. However, it does provide an interesting look into what was understood about the biology and life practices of black slaves at the time. Nickolls’ letter was written to encourage the abolition of the slave trade practice. Despite this, his writing was filled with inaccurate observations that read almost like a note Jane Goodall may have kept about her primates. It is important context that, no matter which side of the slave trade debate an

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<sup>117</sup> *Id.*

<sup>118</sup> *Id.*

<sup>119</sup> *Id.*

<sup>120</sup> *Id.*

<sup>121</sup> *Id.*

<sup>122</sup> NICKOLLS, ET AL., *supra* note 116.

<sup>123</sup> *Id.*

<sup>124</sup> *Id.*

author stood on in the eighteenth century, they stood on top of the African slave.

John Ranby wrote about his position opposing the abolition of the slave trade in 1790.<sup>125</sup> He began his argument by addressing the religious arguments of the day.<sup>126</sup> He stated that biblical text unequivocally allows for slavery.<sup>127</sup> “To Me it is clear beyond contradiction, that the keeping of slaves is allowed and even regulated in the Old Testament, and not forbidden in any part of the new.”<sup>128</sup> He goes on to address a specific argument made by Reverend Robert Boucher Nickolls.<sup>129</sup> Nickolls states “believers in divine providence will see much to dread in continuing the trade.”<sup>130</sup> Nickolls goes on to address the legislation.<sup>131</sup> “The legislation if it gives an authoritative sanction to this trade must take upon itself all its consequences.”<sup>132</sup> Ranby addresses the biblical argument made by Nickolls and others because it was a common argument of the time.<sup>133</sup> However, he does not give it much weight.<sup>134</sup> He points out that it is not his place to address deep-rooted arguments around sin.<sup>135</sup> He goes on to argue that religious arguments are not sound in this matter, nor are they in most political matters.<sup>136</sup> “Indeed few political questions are so perfectly clear as to warrant either party in appealing to the judgment of God as a ground of determination.”<sup>137</sup>

Ranby goes on to address an argument made by Nickolls and others at the time regarding the necessity of the slave trade. Nickolls’ argument, which is explained in part above, discusses that if the population of potential slaves in the West Indies would continue to breed at a rate greater than the population was dying, then there would not be a need for slave trade

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<sup>125</sup> JOHN RANBY, DOUBTS ON THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE (1790), reprinted in SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, 1500-1926, [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CY0101053906/SABN?u=clic\\_stthomas&sid=SABN&xid=1e98e2ff](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CY0101053906/SABN?u=clic_stthomas&sid=SABN&xid=1e98e2ff) (last visited Dec. 16, 2020).

<sup>126</sup> *Id.*

<sup>127</sup> *Id.*

<sup>128</sup> *Id.*

<sup>129</sup> *Id.*

<sup>130</sup> See, e.g., NICKOLLS ET. AL., *supra* note 116.

<sup>131</sup> *Id.*

<sup>132</sup> *Id.*

<sup>133</sup> RANBY, *supra* note 125.

<sup>134</sup> *Id.*

<sup>135</sup> *Id.*

<sup>136</sup> *Id.*

<sup>137</sup> *Id.*



practice.<sup>138</sup> Ranby does not give merit to this argument. Ranby debunks this argument by sorting through several population statistics for the West Indies during the late 1700s.<sup>139</sup> In short, Ranby argues that variation in population among the West Indie islands require the importing of new slaves from Africa.<sup>140</sup> “And we must also recollect, that in an extensive kingdom like this, any decrease of population in one quarter may be easily recruited from another; whereas, in the West-Indies, when the supplies from Africa are cut off, the stock of negroes, on any one island, may be irreparably reduced by the hurricanes, or disease or drought of a single year.”<sup>141</sup> Ranby’s argument is rather strategic and cold. It reduces African people to little more than livestock. This underscores the view towards African people at the time. Similar to the argument made by Nickolls, this argument clearly places a lower value on black people. This is a consistent thread throughout writings from the era. Similar to the writings from the Age of Discovery, writings from this time display a mentality of superiority with a lapse in ethical judgment.

### C. Regarding the Colonization of Africa

By the Scramble for Africa phase of colonization, some scholars were beginning to look at the previous eras with a harsher lens. Matthew Carey began his piece *African colonization*, thought to be written in 1829, by vigorously denouncing the slave trade.<sup>142</sup> “The accursed slave trade, one of the greatest stains that ever sullied the human character, maintained a struggle in Great Britain of thirty year duration, before its doom was finally sealed . . .”<sup>143</sup> This mental shift in Western thought regarding the past behaviors of their own people demonstrates a shift in moral thinking surrounded the treatment African people at the time. Still, while Carey acknowledges the understandable mistrust African citizen had towards Western Europeans, he still goes on to speak of the colonization of Africa as

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<sup>138</sup> See RANBY, *supra* note 125. (Ranby addresses this argument through population statistics).

<sup>139</sup> *Id.* at 77-86.

<sup>140</sup> *Id.*

<sup>141</sup> *Id.*

<sup>142</sup> MATTHEW CAREY, *AFRICAN COLONIZATION* (1829), *reprinted in* SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, 1500-1926, <https://archive.org/details/africancolonizat00care/page/n1/mode/2up72381261> (last visited Jan. 23, 2022).

<sup>143</sup> *Id.* at 1. (Carey also compares the hardships in colonies of Africa with the struggles of colonies such as Virginia and North Carolina).

a positive.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, despite the ability to retroactively critique the actions of the past, the Western world was still struggling with self-awareness surrounding their current treatment of African people.

Even some groups, whose mission was to stand up for the rights of the indigenous people of the African countries that had been colonized, were not necessarily against the colonization of the countries as a whole, just the mistreatment of the people. In the 1800s, protection groups were pleading for a more humane approach to colonization. However, they were not petitioning for the halting of colonization of aboriginal people. The Aborigines Protection Society published a piece in 1840 that called for better treatment towards natives in African colonies.<sup>145</sup> However, there is still an undertone of superiority in this piece. This is merely a request to approach the treatment of these people through a more just and moral lens. This piece, chiefly penned by Standish Motte, refers to the native people of this African lands as, among other things, “untutored.”<sup>146</sup> Throughout this piece there is a message of sympathy towards the native peoples, as well as a tone of superiority:

Hard indeed has been the lot of poor untutored aboriginal inhabitant: –suddenly invaded by a race of men whose very name and existence, in many cases, were previously unknown, he has been hunted as a wild beast, driven from his father land, and obliged to seek among a warlike and perhaps hostile tribe that home which civilized usurper denies him . . .<sup>147</sup>

The quote above speaks to the tone of the piece. While there is a stated understanding for the hardships and struggles felt by the native residents of the then newly colonized societies, there is still a lack of empathy towards the people that are being discussed. By referring to the white colonizers as

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<sup>144</sup> *Id.*

<sup>145</sup> STANDISH MOTTE & THE ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY, OUTLINE OF A SYSTEM OF LEGISLATION, FOR SECURING PROTECTION TO THE ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF ALL COUNTRIES COLONIZED BY GREAT BRITAIN: EXTENDING TO THEM POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS, AMELIORATING THEIR CONDITION AN PROMOTING THEIR CIVILIZATION: DRAWN UP AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF "THE ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY" (1840), *reprinted in* SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, 1500-1926, [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_47266](https://archive.org/details/cihm_47266) (last visited Jan. 23, 2022).

<sup>146</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>147</sup> *Id.*

the “civilized usurper,” it is insinuated that the African natives are not civilized. This mentality is one of many factors that allowed for the mistreatment that was taking place to occur. Motte uses very strong language throughout the piece to refer to the unjust treatment of the African natives.<sup>148</sup> However, his harsh criticism also ties in the interest of the British government. “[T]he injustice, the suffering, and the loss of life which have resulted to the aborigines, — the deep injury inflicted upon the political and commercial interest of Great Britain thereby, — and the stain upon our national honour, are too well known to require any lengthened detail.”<sup>149</sup> Although this push for better treatment of the African natives shows an important shift in mentality during the time of the Scramble for Africa, it still reflects a need for self-interest. This demonstrates that public thought regarding colonization had not yet moved too far from where it had been in the previous two eras. Although, it does show the beginning of a move towards a more moral look at the practices surrounding colonization.

Meanwhile, in the United States during this time, the American Colonization Society was pushing back on the new, more moral look at colonization.<sup>150</sup> In their publication “An Inquiry Into the Merits of the American Colonization Society: and a Reply to the Charges Brought Against It : With an Account of the British African Colonization Society,” they defend themselves against claims regarding the financial support the Society was receiving from southern states at the time.<sup>151</sup> The piece explains the colonization of Africa as a desire of many, including free states like Rhode Island, before the creation of the American Colonization Society.<sup>152</sup> This publication, which was published in 1833, decades before the freeing of slaves in the United States, went on to ask for sympathy for the slave-owning South.<sup>153</sup> “Many of the citizens of these States are to be pitied, rather than blamed, for belonging to the class of slaveholders.”<sup>154</sup> The publication goes on to explain the difficult process that would be required for a slaveowner to

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<sup>148</sup> *Id.*

<sup>149</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>150</sup> THOMAS HODGKIN, AN INQUIRY INTO THE MERITS OF THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY: AND A REPLY TO THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST IT: WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE BRITISH AFRICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY (1833), *reprinted in* SABIN AMERICANA: HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, 1500-1926, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.13100/?st=gallery> (last visited Jan. 23, 2022).

<sup>151</sup> *Id.*

<sup>152</sup> *Id.*

<sup>153</sup> *Id.*

<sup>154</sup> *Id.* at 5.

send their slave to the free North.<sup>155</sup> The publication goes as far as to claim that southern whites were suffering to the changing ideology surrounding slavery.<sup>156</sup>

This is an evil which we must not wholly attribute to the distinction of colour, and the prejudice which attends it. Something of the same kind may be seen and felt even in this country, when large emigration from the sister island had glutted the labour market.<sup>157</sup>

The American Colonization Society uses this as a way to justify the “philanthropic citizens” of southern states donated money to the Society. Despite the evolving attitudes in Western Europe at the time, this piece illustrates that the United States, or at least parts of it, was not ready to change its mentality surrounding colonization.

### III. MODERN TAKES

Today, public perception of colonialism is still very much split. There are strong opinions on both sides regarding the true and lasting consequences of colonialism on the people who have been colonized, as Marissa Jackson, a student at Columbia Law School at the time, explains in her 2009 article.<sup>158</sup> Jackson’s article states that colonialism is very much still a force for harm in the world; specifically, she lays out two additional models of colonialism, Neo-Colonialism and Internal Colonialism.<sup>159</sup>

Jackson explains that Neo-Colonialism is similar to the traditional colonialism model in the sense that it involves the encroachment on colonized peoples’ right of self-governance.<sup>160</sup> It differs in the way that Neo-Colonialism involves “the foreign economic exploitation or coercive political domination of states by other states or world powers.”<sup>161</sup> Jackson argues that Neo-Colonialism is exploitative in its nature as it drains the colonized of their

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<sup>155</sup> *Id.*

<sup>156</sup> HODGKIN, *supra* note 150.

<sup>157</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>158</sup> Marissa Jackson, *Neo-Colonialism, Same Old Racism: A Critical Analysis of the United States' Shift Toward Colorblindness as A Tool for the Protection of the American Colonial Empire and White Supremacy*, 11 BERKELEY J. AFR.-AM. L. & POL'Y 156, 161 (2009).

<sup>159</sup> *Id.*

<sup>160</sup> *Id.*

<sup>161</sup> *Id.* at 162.

wealth and resources.<sup>162</sup> Jackson also points to colonialism's close ties to white supremacy in America; she makes this connection through Internal Colonialism.<sup>163</sup> She describes Internal Colonialism as that which occurs within the United States against a group of its own citizens.<sup>164</sup> This form of colonialism can clearly be seen throughout the history of the United States—from more formal examples such as the perpetuation of slavery and Jim Crow laws, to the more systematic forms of racial inequality that can be seen today throughout the United States.<sup>165</sup> Jackson argues, “colonialism is in fact destructive of cultures, economies, and lives.”<sup>166</sup> Throughout the history of colonialism, the harmful nature of this can be seen. The brutal reign of King Leopold over the Democratic Republic of the Congo is just one example of the devastating effects that stripping a culture of its resources has on a region.<sup>167</sup> Despite the evidence to the contrary, there are still individuals who would argue colonialism is good, which has primarily provided benefits to the people who have been colonized.

Conservative political commentator, Dinesh D'Souza, is very much in favor of colonialism.<sup>168</sup> In his opinion piece written for SFGATE in 2002, D'Souza makes the initial argument that colonialism is in no way a Western institution.<sup>169</sup> He goes on to state that those who attribute it to the West have a lack of understanding regarding the history of colonialism.<sup>170</sup> The point he is making here is not inherently incorrect, however, it may be a bit misguided. As stated previously in this piece, as long as there has been land to take and people to take it, colonialism has existed. That fact alone does not dismiss or erase the harm caused by Western colonialism. In addition, acknowledging

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<sup>162</sup> *Id.*

<sup>163</sup> *Id.*

<sup>164</sup> Jackson, *supra* note 158 at 162.

<sup>165</sup> *Id.*

<sup>166</sup> *Id.* at 165. This argument is supported by the fact that a majority of the world's poorest countries were once colonized; Jamila Osman, *How Colonialism Destroyed Cultures and Shaped the World*. TEEN VOGUE (Nov. 22, 2017), <http://www.teenvogue.com/story/colonialism-explained>.

<sup>167</sup> See discussion *supra* Section I.c.

<sup>168</sup> Daniel Victor, *A Look at Dinesh D'Souza, Pardoned by Trump*, N.Y. TIMES (May 13, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/31/us/politics/dinesh-dsouza-facts-history.html>. Mr. Dinesh D'Souza was convicted of a felony charge of making illegal campaign contributions in 2014. He was later pardoned by President Donald Trump in 2018.

<sup>169</sup> Dinesh D'Souza, *Two Cheers for Colonialism*, SFGATE (July 7, 2002), <https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/Two-cheers-for-colonialism-2799327.php>.

<sup>170</sup> *Id.*

the harms and problems caused by modern colonialism does not disregard the harms caused by previous eras of colonialism.

D'Souza goes on to argue that "[t]he West could not have reached its current stage of wealth and influence by stealing from other cultures for the simple reason that there wasn't very much to take."<sup>171</sup> He goes on to quote historian P.T. Bauer, who claims Britain introduced resources such as rubber cocoa trees to African countries.<sup>172</sup> This assertion, which D'Souza backs up with only one source, does not explain the similar resources found and harvested in other African regions colonized by other European countries. King Leopold harvested much rubber from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's jungles, a region that was not colonized by Britain.<sup>173</sup> In addition, an assertion that claims entire continents had no valuable resources until the Western World brought them said resources is nonsensical. It is also inherently colonial. He is more or less asserting that without the civilized West, these regions would have had nothing. He goes on to claim that any actual exploitation of resources cannot account for the present wealth gap that can be seen today.<sup>174</sup> He does not support this with evidence.

This clear split in ideology can be seen even today and demonstrates that the Western World is still in the process of reconciling its history with colonialism. Despite an increase in reflection among some scholars when viewing the colonial past of the Western World, the underlying superiority that could be seen in the sixteenth century is still present in some capacity to this day.

Colonialism remains a strongly debated issue throughout the contemporary world. However, is there a *correct way* to view colonialism, and are Catholics called to take a definitive stance on this matter? In Pope Francis' October 3, 2020 encyclical, he writes:

Certain populist political regimes, as well as certain liberal economic approaches, maintain that an influx of migrants is to be prevented at all costs. Arguments are also made for the propriety of limiting aid to poor countries, so that they can hit rock bottom and find themselves forced to take austerity measures. One fails to realize that behind such statements,

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<sup>171</sup> *Id.*

<sup>172</sup> *Id.*

<sup>173</sup> See discussion *supra* Section I.c.

<sup>174</sup> D'Souza, *supra* note 169.

abstract and hard to support, great numbers of lives are at stake.<sup>175</sup>

He goes on to speak more directly about migrants, stating “[m]igrants are not seen as entitled like others to participate in the life of society, and it is forgotten that they possess the same intrinsic dignity as any person.”<sup>176</sup> What does this say about how Catholics, and Christians as a whole, should look onto colonialism? Although the problem of migrants seeking new homes may feel like an issue separate from colonialism, in many cases, they are compatible. In some instances, the poor and war-torn countries being fled were once colonies themselves. Many migrants are victims of the lasting effects of the exploitation of their nation for resources. In his encyclical, Pope Francis points to the humanity of these people.<sup>177</sup> He states that they hold the same human dignity as any other human.<sup>178</sup> Taking Pope Francis’ words and applying them to Internal Colonialism, one is called to respect the dignity of all humans. In his encyclical, Pope Francis empathized with the fear that many feel, however, he urges people to move beyond it.<sup>179</sup> He warns that racism can be the result when fear leads.<sup>180</sup> When placed in the context of the United States today, and the racial tension that has arisen from the Internal Colonialism still taking place in this country, the call for Catholics and Christians alike is clear. Pope Francis calls for love and human dignity to be placed at the forefront past fear of those who are different.<sup>181</sup> Catholics are called to see the dignity of those who are being oppressed.<sup>182</sup>

Additionally, Pope Francis’ encyclical goes on to address Neo-Colonialism:

My own country also shares responsibility for his or her development, although it can fulfil that responsibility in a variety of ways. It can offer a generous welcome to those in urgent need, or work to improve living conditions in their

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<sup>175</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, VATICAN: HOLY SEE ¶ 37 (Oct. 3, 2020), [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html).

<sup>176</sup> *Id.* ¶ 39.

<sup>177</sup> *Id.*

<sup>178</sup> *Id.*

<sup>179</sup> *Id.* ¶ 41.

<sup>180</sup> *Id.*

<sup>181</sup> Pope Francis, *supra* note 175.

<sup>182</sup> *Id.*

native lands by refusing to exploit those countries or to drain them of natural resources, backing corrupt systems that hinder the dignified development of their peoples. What applies to nations is true also for different regions within each country, since there too great inequalities often exist. At times, the inability to recognize equal human dignity leads the more developed regions in some countries to think that they can jettison the “dead weight” of poorer regions and so increase their level of consumption.<sup>183</sup>

He goes on to clarify that “[i]ndeed, justice requires recognizing and respecting not only the rights of individuals, but also social rights and the rights of peoples.”<sup>184</sup> Again, this is a clear call for Christians. In this writing, he speaks against the exploitation of regions for their resources and he points to a need for justice.<sup>185</sup> These statements, taken with the entirety of his message, look to point mankind away from the Neo-Colonialism that is still pervasive in some areas around the world. Here, Pope Francis creates a message of unity and peace for all people.<sup>186</sup> His writing swiftly undercuts the pervasive tone of superiority that can be found in contemporary writings about colonialism. He makes an argument based on morality and the importance of respecting and loving thy fellow humans.<sup>187</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Colonialism is a complex topic, hotly debated by some, wholly misunderstood by many. The history of the United States of America and, indeed, the world, is riddled with ethically questionable voyages done in the name of discovery. It is easy to turn a blind eye to the reality of what colonialism means for the world at large. It is convenient to accept the stories taught in American schools. However, the desire to accept “the easy” can create even more far-reaching consequences. As seen through this piece, the tone of the superiority of the Western white was pervasive for centuries, and it can still be found today. As a result, the West must look upon its history with a critical eye. The United States of America, and the world at large, is at a tipping point. The death of George Floyd on Memorial Day in

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<sup>183</sup> *Id.* ¶ 125.

<sup>184</sup> *Id.* ¶ 126.

<sup>185</sup> *Id.*

<sup>186</sup> *Id.*

<sup>187</sup> Pope Francis, *supra* note 175.



Minneapolis in 2020 led to worldwide outrage and spawned protests all around the globe. Monuments of men who were once heroes of colonialism have been destroyed.<sup>188</sup> Western society is beginning to face its past; however, it will not be easy. It is vitally important that society as a whole does not elect to take the easy way out. In order to fix the problems of centuries of white supremacy and damage done to black and brown citizens of the world, it must first be unequivocally acknowledged that those problems existed in the first place. From there, it can be beneficial to look to teachings by Pope Francis and others who encourage mankind to see each other with the human dignity that everyone deserves.

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<sup>188</sup> Johnny Diaz et al., *How Statues Are Falling Around the World*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 12, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html>.