

---

Senior Projects Spring 2017

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

---

Spring 2017

## Fundamentalism and Cultural Anxieties: Scott Lively and the Ugandan Christian Right

Wylie Milton Earp  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2017](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017)



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Earp, Wylie Milton, "Fundamentalism and Cultural Anxieties: Scott Lively and the Ugandan Christian Right" (2017). *Senior Projects Spring 2017*. 139.

[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2017/139](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017/139)

This Open Access work is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been provided to you by Bard College's Stevenson Library with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this work in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

Fundamentalism and Cultural Anxieties:  
Scott Lively and the Ugandan Christian Right

Senior Project submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College

Wylie Earp  
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2017

## Table of Contents

Introduction - 1

Context – 3

Chapter 1: Museveni - 6

Chapter 2: American Activists - 13

Chapter 3: Lively - 23

Chapter 4: Nationalism - 36

Bibliography - 48

## Introduction

In 2009 an international controversy arose over legislation proposed in the Ugandan parliament which would have dramatically increased penalties for the crime of homosexuality. Introduced by a first-term politician named David Bahati, the original draft of the law called for the death penalty to be used in some cases, and the legislation signaled a growing backlash against homosexuality taking place in the country. Much of the international discussion that followed focused on the role American anti-gay activists played in shaping Ugandan attitudes about sexuality in the years prior to the bill's introduction. One of the activist figures who emerged as central to this narrative was Scott Lively, a born-again Christian from a small town in western Massachusetts.

This paper will explore how notions of traditionalism functioned both in Uganda, as well as in Scott Lively's life. Rather than seeking to parcel out what influence Lively had in shaping Ugandan attitudes, I will instead draw a parallel between how the traditionalist ideology of the anti-gay movement assuaged Ugandan cultural anxieties, and how Lively's turn to such ideology was preceded by a chaotic childhood.

Chapter one describes the Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni's relationship to the anti-gay movement. Museveni has been in power for over thirty years, and because of the amount of control he has over the Ugandan political system, he is an important figure to address when discussing gay rights in the country. Chapter two addresses the role of American activists, such as Scott Lively, who traveled to Uganda in the 2000s, and how their influence was over-emphasized in the western media. By criticizing the shortcomings of reports which portrayed the

Ugandan anti-gay movement as an exportation of American homophobia, this chapter also outlines some of the cultural anxieties present in the country that the movement's ideology assuaged. Chapter three provides a biography of Scott Lively's activist career and early life. By using newspaper articles from his hometown dating back to the early 1970s, this chapter provides evidence to suggest that his fundamentalist beliefs were influenced by traumatic formative years. Lastly, chapter four describes the prevalence of nationalist rhetoric in the Ugandan anti-gay movement, and how such rhetoric functioned to associate the movement's ideology with notions of traditionalism. To provide context for the analysis in these four chapters, a brief first section outlines the history of the Ugandan anti-gay movement's legal efforts between 2009-2014, and the history of Scott Lively's activism in the country prior to the introduction of Bahati's first bill.

## Context

### Legislative Efforts 2009-2014 and Scott Lively in Uganda

LGBT persons have no specific legal protections in Uganda. In 1950, the colonial-era Penal Code outlawed "carnal knowledge against the order of nature," and while this language is vague, the law remains in place. In September of 2005, president Museveni passed a constitutional amendment specifically banning gay marriage and, as previously mentioned, David Bahati introduced further legislation in 2009. Bahati's bill sought not only to specifically define what acts the penal code references, but also to impose harsher penalties for those crimes.<sup>1</sup>

One clause of his first draft made knowing of a gay person and failing to report them to the police punishable by up to three years in prison. Another clause demanded that foreign governments extradite Ugandan citizens accused of homosexuality in order to stand trial. Central to the international outrage over the proposed law, another clause allowed for the death penalty to be considered in cases of "aggravated" or "serial" homosexuality. Critics, both within Uganda and internationally, labeled such measures as extreme, and the draft was struck down in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

Bahati continued to press for new legislation, and introduced a revised version of the bill which President Museveni signed into law in 2014. The draft that passed replaced the death penalty with life in prison and removed the clause pertaining to extradition. In response, several

---

<sup>1</sup> *Country of Origin Report: Sexual and Gender Minorities Uganda*. Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration, October, 2014. Accessed January 15, 2017, [http://oramrefugee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Countryoforigin\\_report.pdf](http://oramrefugee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Countryoforigin_report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

countries, including the U.S. leveled financial sanctions against Uganda, and six months later, in August of 2014, the Ugandan High Court repealed the Anti-Homosexuality Act, citing an incomplete quorum present when it was voted on in parliament.<sup>3</sup>

Lively's work in Uganda began in 2002, when he first traveled to the country as part of an anti-pornography conference where he met the right wing Ugandan pastor Stephen Langa, who Lively would later refer to as his "ministry partner" in the anti-gay movement. Later that year, Langa invited Lively to return to Uganda and the two men went on a speaking tour around the country. During the tour Lively appeared in multiple media outlets, met with politicians, and gave lectures at universities, in addition to co-hosting private conferences with Langa for local pastors. Lively later described the focus of these private meetings as "the way in which America was brought low by homosexual activism."<sup>4</sup>

Between 2002 and 2009 Lively maintained correspondence with Langa and other Ugandan ministers including Martin Ssempe, a Kampala based pastor who would later become one of the bill's most vocal advocates, but he made no other documented trips to the country. This changed in 2008 when a major victory for gay rights activists in Uganda prompted Lively to organize a return. On December twenty-second, 2008, the Ugandan High Court ruled that articles of the Ugandan Constitution applied to all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.<sup>5</sup> This decision was the result of a successful lawsuit brought to the court by a group of gay rights activists who contended they had been unlawfully arrested on the basis of their sexuality in order to dissuade their activism. In response, Lively reached out to

---

<sup>3</sup> "Uganda Court Annuls Anti-Homosexuality Law," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, August 1, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> SMUG v. Lively, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Kapya Kaoma, *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia* (Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 2009).

Langa and Ssempe, and the three organized a conference in Kampala to outline the encroaching threat of the “international gay agenda.”<sup>6</sup>

Lively was the keynote speaker on the conference’s third and final day. His presentation ran over three hours and was filmed and broadcast on national television. In attendance were several members of the Ugandan parliament.<sup>7</sup> His presentation included an appeal to “actively discourage” same-sex relations, so that Uganda’s children aren’t “thrown into orgies” or forced to “perform oral sex on school buses.” He outlined a global conspiracy enacted by the gay movement, which he described as an “evil institution,” with the ultimate goal to “defeat the marriage-based society.”<sup>8</sup> These two concepts, that homosexuality targets children, and that the gay movement is international and seeks to dismantle Ugandan civil society, were echoed prominently in the rhetoric of the future legislation’s proponents.

After this first conference, Stephen Langa hosted a private follow up event for Ugandan politicians and religious leaders who were moved by the presentation. At this meeting, the group summarized Lively’s ideas, and focused on developing a political strategy moving forward. In attendance at both Lively’s presentation and Langa’s follow-up meeting was David Bahati, who introduced the original draft of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act three months later.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *Scott Lively* (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>

<sup>7</sup> Kapya Kaoma, *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia* (Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Political Research Associates, (2009). FULL – Scott Lively Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Conference 2009 [video] Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9F9k4guN3M>.

<sup>9</sup> Kapya Kaoma, *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia* (Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 2009).



## Chapter 1

### Museveni

The character of Uganda's long serving President Yoweri Museveni looms large in the ongoing debates over gay rights in the country. Given his uniquely powerful position within the Ugandan political system, it's impossible to discuss the influence of the anti-gay movement without addressing his stance towards it. On the one hand, Museveni has been overtly supportive. He signed the revised version of the Anti-Homosexuality Act into law in 2014, and many of his speeches and public remarks on the issue echo the views and ideas of the bill's proponents. The financial support he receives from the anti-gay group *The Family* is also well documented.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Museveni has made a career out of being relevant and well-regarded internationally, and is an adroit politician who recognizes the political liability of taking too extreme a stance. In this section, I will outline Museveni's career, and describe the political pressures which have influenced his successful efforts to remain in power. His early career was marked by international popularity, but as his reputation for reform diminished, his political influence became increasingly associated with support from Uganda's Christian Right. Both influences inform his relationship to the anti-gay movement.

Museveni did not come to power by being elected. Rather, after a half decade of internal conflict, known as the Ugandan Bush War, Museveni's faction, the National Resistance Army,

---

<sup>10</sup> Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 23.

overthrew the socialist president Milton Obote and he was sworn in as president in 1986.<sup>11</sup> From the outset Museveni was popular with the international community, especially in the west where he was generally perceived throughout the 1980s and 90s as a pro-democracy reform figure.<sup>12</sup>

In his swearing in ceremony, Museveni spoke of a “fundamental change” in Ugandan politics, and he promised the restoration of democracy and parliamentary elections.<sup>13</sup> Following two decades of political turmoil and intermittent civil war, his successful consolidation of power was seen by many Ugandans as a relief from the chaos of the Amin and Obote eras.<sup>14</sup> He also had a gift for speaking across global political divides, and maintained positive relationships with such disparate heads of state as Margaret Thatcher and Muammar Qaddafi.<sup>15</sup>

This international goodwill was connected to his early reform efforts. Rather than executing officials from the former government, as he claimed a faction within the National Resistance Army was in favor of,<sup>16</sup> opposition groups were included in the five-tiered council system of local government he established, albeit in positions of limited influence. As violence with remaining militant groups continued through the late 80s, he was able to restructure the country’s civil service, increase wages for government employees, and also enact a campaign of privatizing industry and courting foreign investment.<sup>17</sup> Despite some initial trepidation, Museveni participated in the IMF Economic Recovery Program in 1987, which resulted in a

---

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Oloka-Onyango, “New Breed” Leadership, Conflict, and Recondstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Sociopoligial Biography of Uganda’s Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,” *Africa Today* 50, no.4 (2004): 35.

<sup>12</sup> Oloka-Onyango, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Sheila Rule, “Rebel Sworn in as Uganda President,” *New York Times*, January 30, 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Ali Mari Tipp, *Museveni’s Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Oloka-Onyango, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Sheila Rule, “Rebel Sworn in as Uganda President,” *New York Times*, January 30, 1986.

<sup>17</sup> Tripp, 2.

further emphasis on developing an export economy geared towards international business.<sup>18</sup>

These reforms effectively restructured all of Ugandan society, and the country experienced major economic growth. GDP, which had been marginal or negative during the war, stayed between 6.5 and 8.7 percent from the time he assumed office until the late 2000s, and resulted in a seven-fold increase in the size of Uganda's economy. Between 1990 and 2005 poverty levels also decreased from 56 to 31 percent, even as the country's total population doubled within the same time frame.<sup>19</sup> Because of these impressive statistics, Uganda was held as an example of the benefits of economic globalization by the west, and Bill Clinton was an especially vocal proponent of his leadership.<sup>20</sup>

While this early international popularity contributed to his political influence, Museveni's global reputation slowly deteriorated as he pursued increasingly authoritarian means to sustain his presidency. He delayed fulfilling his original promise of open elections until 1996, and, in a measure ostensibly meant to prevent factional violence, banned political parties all together. In the place of political parties, Museveni established a system of "movements," which, until 2003, weren't allowed to campaign directly or endorse individual candidates.<sup>21</sup> The Movements were granted the ability to function as political parties in exchange for removing term limits on his presidency, and the election results that have kept him in power have been routinely questioned.<sup>22</sup> In the 2001 book *Museveni's Uganda*, the political scientist Ali-Mari Tripp describes him as a "semi-authoritarian" figure and characterizes his leadership as only ever

---

<sup>18</sup> Arne Bigstein and Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, "Is Uganda an Emerging Economy: A Report for the OECD Project Emerging Africa," *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*, 1999, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Keith Muhakanizi, "Where the Economists Went Wrong," *The Independent*, April 15, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Rosenblum, "Irrational Exuberance: The Clinton Administration in Africa," *Current History* 101, no.665 (2002): 195.

<sup>21</sup> Sabiti Makara, Lise Rakner and Lars Svasand, "Turnaround: The National Resistance Movement and the Reintroduction of a Multiparty System in Uganda," *International Political Science Review* 30, no.2 (2009): 194.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Green, "A Real Debated Before Uganda's Fake Election," *Foreign Policy*, February 17, 2016.

“adopting the trappings of democracy.” She argues that because he has “sought power through violence and patronage,” there is no easy exit for him as president, and he holds onto power out of fear that his violent means could meet violent ends.

While his career has been shaped by, and is somewhat beholden to, his international reputation, a significant amount of Museveni’s domestic support comes from his association with the Christian Right.<sup>23</sup> After the turn of the century, as his global reputation diminished, many of his domestic initiatives deepened this support by increasing the role of the evangelical community in Ugandan politics. This trend is exemplified by Museveni’s handling of the HIV epidemic, and his government’s promotion of “abstinence only” sexual health programs in the 2000s. These initiatives were a major departure from the successful programs of the 80s and 90s, and effectively positioned religious ideology at the center of public health debates.<sup>24</sup>

In *Socializing the Biomedical Turn in HIV Prevention*, Susan Kippax and Niam Stephenson analyze this change in policy. They argue that in addition to increasing rates of HIV incidence, the abstinence programs of the 2000s contributed to a culture of heightened stigmatization of people who engaged in sexual behavior perceived to be outside the cultural norm. They connect Museveni’s change in policy to the influence of the Bush administration’s HIV initiative, which heavily funded faith based abstinence programs, and trace the origins of the evangelical community’s involvement to a 2003 speech given to the U.S. congress by Janet Museveni, the president’s born-again wife, in which she retroactively described Uganda’s

---

<sup>23</sup> Jeff Sharlet, *C Street: The Fundamentalist Threat to American Democracy* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010), 131.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Cohen and Tony Tate, “The Less They Know, the Better: Abstinence-Only HIV/AIDS Programs in Uganda,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 14 (2006): 174

decrease in HIV rates as the result of “abstinence promotion” and secured one billion dollars of American funds to develop such initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

Kippax and Stephenson refer to the initiatives of the 80s and 90s as a “social vaccine,” which emphasized delayed initiation of sexual behavior, using condoms, and having fewer partners, by fostering a culture of open discussion about sexuality. Museveni promoted this discussion by structuring initiatives around local “resistance councils” that traveled door to door and convened public meetings on sexual health.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to this open forum format, the abstinence programs he enacted in the 2000s were mediated by religious groups that could elect not to present material they found offensive. As a result, condoms were portrayed negatively and instead of encouraging discussion of sexual behavior, a culture of silence was enforced by branding pre-marital sex as amoral, and ignoring the potential of contracting HIV within marriage.<sup>27</sup>

The abstinence program’s ideologically driven enforcement of sexual norms contributed to a linkage between homosexuality and HIV, which in turn promoted a culture of scandal surrounding any form of sexuality outside of marriage. These themes of stigmatized sexuality and conservative religious ideology were later echoed by the legislative efforts of the anti-gay movement. But while Museveni supported a rise in conservative religious political culture over the 2000s, his hesitant response to David Bahati’s original bill suggests that his approval or disapproval of anti-gay policies is influenced more by his own instinct for self-preservation than ideological commitment.

---

<sup>25</sup> Susan Kippax and Niam Stephenson, *Socializing the Biomedical Turn in HIV Prevention* (London: Anaheim Press, 2016): 37.

<sup>26</sup> Kippax and Stephenson.

<sup>27</sup> Cohen and Tate.

Museveni's cabinet made no comment on the bill when it was originally introduced, and only articulated an official stance on the issue after the international outcry. In a brief television appearance, the cabinet member Sam Kutesa stated, "the government does not support the promotion of homosexuality," and pointed out that the issue was "already addressed" by other laws on the books.<sup>28</sup> By addressing the "promotion of homosexuality," rather than the blatant human rights violations contained in the bill, this response rejected the legal necessity of the law while also granting tacit approval to the anti-gay movement's belief system, and could be read as an attempt by Museveni to simultaneously deflect international outrage while assuaging the administration's bloc of right-wing Christian supporters.

The Ugandan journalist Richard Ssebagalla covered Museveni's response to the controversy surrounding the original draft of the law. In the 2011 essay "Straight Talk on the Gay Question in Uganda," he argues that *who* was chosen to address the media over the issue of the legislation reveals more about Museveni's agenda than the content of their official statement. Ssebagalla notes that while the Directorate for Ethics and Integrity is the department usually associated with issues relating to sexuality, Sam Kutesa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, served as the administration's public face on the issue of the proposed law. While the content of the official government position spoke to the concerns of the right-wing religious community, Ssebagalla argues that the choice of the Directorate of Foreign Affairs as the department trusted to handle the situation shows Museveni viewed the controversy primarily through the lens of international scandal.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Richard Ssebagalla, "Straight Talk on the Gay Question in Uganda," *Transition* 106 (2011), 47.

<sup>29</sup> Ssebagalla, 48.

Ssebagalla provides further evidence that Museveni viewed the issue as a liability by describing a private meeting Museveni held with MPs from his party a month after Kutesa's initial public statements. He quotes Museveni describing the bill as "a sensitive foreign policy issue." This view is repeated in transcripts of U.S. embassy cables released by Wikileaks soon after the bill was introduced. In the transcripts, Museveni tells the American delegation that executions weren't going to happen, and, when asked if he thought the bill would pass, Museveni responded, "I'll handle it."<sup>30</sup> Despite the support he receives from the conservative religious community, comments such as these suggest Museveni is still influenced by how he is perceived internationally. While he has supported anti-gay initiatives, his relationship with the movement is tempered by his regard for his international standing.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ssebagalla, 49.

## Chapter 2

### American Activists

Shortly after David Bhatti introduced the original draft of the “Anti-Homosexuality Act” to the Ugandan Parliament, a video emerged online of the American preacher Scott Lively outlining the need for such increased legislation to a crowd of Ugandan politicians and religious figures.<sup>31</sup> The video was recorded at the conference he hosted in Kampala, titled *Exposing the International Homosexual Agenda*, which took place two months before the bill was introduced.<sup>32</sup> Rev. Dr. Kapya Kaoma recorded the video while attending the conference undercover on behalf of the human rights group Political Research Associates, and in addition to releasing this recording, PRA also published “Exporting the Culture Wars,” a lengthy report by Kaomo on the efforts of American conservatives to foment homophobia in Africa.<sup>33</sup> This report garnered a massive amount of international attention and criticism directed towards the law and the powerful trend of backlash against homosexuality taking place in the country. The law was quickly dubbed the “Kill the Gays Bill” in the United States,<sup>34</sup> and served as a lightning rod for journalists who sought to unravel the anti-gay movement’s complex web of international connections.

---

<sup>31</sup> Political Research Associates, (2009). FULL – Scott Lively Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Conference 2009 [video] Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9F9k4guN3M>.

<sup>32</sup> *Scott Lively* (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>.

<sup>33</sup> Kapya Kaoma, *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia* (Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Barry Malone, “Uganda’s ‘Kill the Gays’ Bill Shelved Again,” *Reuters*, May 11, 2011.



The “international conspiracy” angle became a popular story in the western press, and many articles and reports were published focusing on the role American religious activists played in influencing Ugandan attitudes about sexuality.<sup>35</sup> In addition to Scott Lively, the American missionary preachers Don Schmierer and Caleb Lee Brundage also emerged as central characters in many investigative reports.<sup>36</sup> Connections between *The Family*, a Washington DC based coalition of US politicians, and various Ugandan politicians associated with the anti-gay movement were also highlighted.<sup>37</sup> Noticeably less attention was given, however, to the cultural currents in Uganda which could explain the appeal of such ideology, and some academics have since criticized the western media’s over-emphasis on the role of American activists for creating a false narrative of Ugandan passivity and providing a limited framework for understanding both how, and why, the movement became so popular.

In this section I will address the role American activists played in shaping the ideology of the Ugandan anti-gay movement. I will argue that while figures like Scott Lively were influential, their presence doesn’t fully explain, or define, what emerged as a distinctly Ugandan ideology. I will use the 2015 Vice Media documentary, *A Prayer for Uganda*, which concluded that exported American ideology is “what’s behind” Uganda’s “war on homosexuality,” as an example of western journalism that failed to examine the issue completely.<sup>38</sup> By presenting the anti-gay movement as an American export, the documentary ignores the specific cultural forces within Uganda that allowed the movement to be successful. In contrast to such reporting, I will

---

<sup>35</sup> Rachel Maddow, *Uganda Be Kidding Me*, MSNBC, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Xan Rice, “Uganda Considers Death Sentence for Gay Sex in Bill Before Parliament,” *The Guardian*, November 29, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Terry Gross, “The Secret Political Reach of the Family,” *National Public Radio*, November 24, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Vice Media and HBO, *A Prayer for Uganda* (New York: Distributed in the US by Vice Media and HBO, 2015), Television (50 min).

reference the work of academics who focus on Ugandan cultural anxieties, rather international connections, in order to provide a more nuanced discussion of the role of American activists.

*A Prayer for Uganda* was produced in 2015, after the Ugandan court system overturned the 2014 version of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. While the Constitutional Court formally rejected the legislation on the technicality that a proper quorum wasn't reached in order for it to pass, many journalists connected the court's decision to a complex array of internal and external pressures which made the legislation unpopular.<sup>39</sup> Some reports connected the bill's failure to the politics of the impending Ugandan presidential election.<sup>40</sup> Others attributed the ruling to pressure from sanctions imposed against Uganda by foreign governments.<sup>41</sup> The legal savvy of Nicholas Opiyo, the lawyer who argued against the law, was also reported on,<sup>42</sup> as well as the influence of Ugandan LGBTI and anti-corruption activist groups.<sup>43</sup> Rather than examining these wide range of factors, which suggested a higher degree of nuance than the documentary's stated conclusion, *A Prayer for Uganda* instead tread the water of previous journalism focused on the cultural impact of American activists. The report's focus on this issue shows that, at the time of this writing, there is still a significant amount of attention in popular western media paid to the role of American activists, despite the changes within Uganda which have occurred since their presence first came to light in 2009.

*A Prayer for Uganda* opens with a montage of street preachers in Kampala proselytizing against the evils of Homosexuality, which includes a fiery sermon conducted by Pastor George Oduch at his Kampala based organization, Victory Church of Christ Ministries

---

<sup>39</sup> Uganda Court Annuls Anti-Homosexuality Law," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, August 1, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Elias Biryabarema, "Uganda's Ruling Party Urges Museveni to Run Again," Reuters, February 12, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Robyn Dixon, "Uganda Court Rejects Anti-Gay Bill," *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Brandon Ambrosino, "Meet the Attorney who got Uganda's Anti-Gay Bill Overturned," *Vox*, August 21, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Jason Wu, "Uganda's 'Kill the Gays' Bill is Back," *The Daily Beast*, March 1, 2015.

International. Over these shots, the host, Isobel Yeung, states the report's thesis: "harsh sermons such as these did not originate in Uganda," she narrates, "they're actually the result of American influence," and the documentary continues, through a series of interviews, to suggest that this American influence is the root cause of the anti-gay movement's popularity. Two American figures, Scott Lively and the U.S. Senator James Inhofe (R, Oklahoma), are implicated specifically.

Lively is discussed as emblematic of the type of fundamentalist American preacher who traveled to the country throughout the 2000s. In an interview segment, Rev. Dr. Kaypa Kaoma, the prominent gay rights activist, connects Lively's arrival to a larger trend of American anti-gay preachers who turned their focus abroad after the U.S. began to legalize gay marriage. The narrator describes Lively as being responsible for introducing a linkage between homosexuality and pedophilia to Uganda, and shows clips from his 2009 Family Life Network conference in which he outlines this belief. His message, Yeung narrates, "was then reiterated by Ugandan preachers to the rest of the country." Pastor Martin Ssempe specifically, is described as playing a major role in propagating Lively's ideas. As evidence of their connection, the documentary plays clips of the two men appearing together on Ugandan television, as well as segments of a speech by Ssempe, in which he describes gays as "the men who rape our children." As further evidence of Lively's influence, the report references Ugandan tabloids which also described gay men as predatory pedophiles.<sup>44</sup>

While *A Prayer for Uganda* accurately identifies one of the novel element of Lively's ideology, it only discusses manifestations of a link between gay men and pedophilia as evidence of his influence, and provides no analysis of *why* that idea became popular. Influential Ugandan

---

<sup>44</sup> Vice Media and HBO, *A Prayer for Uganda*.

religious figures, like Ssempe, are described as conduits for Lively's beliefs, and the report makes no mention of if, or how, these local actors reinterpreted Lively's ideology, or what appeal it might have had to their audience. In their description of Lively's influence, the journalists appear to take the spread of his ideas for granted, and consistently gloss over the agency and motivations of Ugandan actors, as well as the cultural implications of the evidence they provide.

Senator Inhofe is implicated in the documentary as well. The report describes the Ugandan MP David Bhatti, the author of the original law, as a central figure in the legislative efforts of the anti-gay movement, and notes his public relationship with anti-gay religious figures such as Pastor George Oduch and Martin Ssempe. But beyond these connections to the domestic anti-gay movement, the documentary suggests that Bhatti has more clandestine international connections as well, including *The Family*, and possibly, Senator Inhofe. Bhatti is interviewed about these relationships in the documentary, and Yeung questions him specifically about an interview he gave to the New York Times in 2012, in which he alleged that American politicians had provided "technical support for the bill."<sup>45</sup> His responses were cryptic.

In the interview, Bhatti acknowledged connections with American politicians by saying, "we have very good friends," including, "brothers and sisters in the senate who are in support of what we are doing, who are against the sin of homosexuality," but refused to reference them by name, saying "it's wise not to expose people on where they stand." He also refused to give the

---

<sup>45</sup> Josh Kron, "Resentment Towards the West Bolsters Uganda's New Anti-Gay Bill," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2012.

reporters a specific number of American senators involved, because, he alleged, “the numbers would point to the names.”<sup>46</sup>

The documentary concludes its discussion of Senator Inhofe by interviewing Jeff Sharlet, a Dartmouth academic who has written extensively on the global reach of *The Family*, which, amongst other things, hosts the annual White House Prayer Breakfast. In the interview Sharlet alleges that Jim Inhofe is the group’s liaison to Ugandan politicians, and that he is the senator Bhatti is likely referencing. Inhofe has travelled to African countries over 137 times, which is more than any other US politician, and made five official trips to Uganda prior to the introduction of the bill’s original draft.<sup>47</sup> In a 2011 interview with NPR, Sharlet went so far as to say that some of these trips were likely illegal under the 2007 Open Government Act, and that Inhofe’s use of government funds blurred the line between his diplomatic role on behalf of the US government, and the lobbying he conducted to promote *The Family*’s legal agenda.<sup>48</sup> Inhofe’s office denied the documentarian’s request for an interview, and in their formal statement denounced the Ugandan law and denied ever meeting with David Bhatti. When Yeung asked directly if such a meeting ever took place, Bhatti paused before answering “I can say... I admire the work he does for building the relationship between Uganda and America”<sup>49</sup>

Similarly to the report’s discussion of Scott Lively, the section on Senator Inhofe also depicts the flow of political influence as a one way street, from Americans to Ugandans, and doesn’t address the motives of Ugandan politicians, or their agency in seeking out and leveraging such relationships. Rather, the local politicians are consistently depicted as receptors and

---

<sup>46</sup> Vice Media and HBO, *A Prayer for Uganda*.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Terry Gross, “The Secret Political Reach of the Family,” *National Public Radio*, November 24, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Vice Media and HBO, *A Prayer for Uganda*.

perpetuators of American influence. By focusing on the international connections, the report ignores how the anti-gay movement functioned within Ugandan society, and offers no explanation of its enduring appeal. The host's bias towards the conclusion that this movement begins and ends with American involvement is revealed when she asks the Ugandan Prime Minister, "do you think that if [American activists] hadn't come into Uganda, this topic would never have been raised?" and doesn't include any follow up questions.

Throughout the piece there are several comments made by Ugandan citizens in reference to larger cultural trends which are not followed up on. At one point a young female student says that homosexuality is bad because, "if a woman is with another woman, she cannot give birth." While filming Pastor Oduch's lectures in public schools, this belief is again reiterated. His presentation includes a series of one-act plays, in which student actors depict the various ways western groups use money to recruit Ugandans into homosexuality. In one play, both male and female students who have been granted western scholarship money use their funds to bribe their roommates into sex acts, and a female student, playing the victim of her roommate's lesbian advances, collapses to the ground in mock pain and yells, "now I cannot reproduce!"<sup>50</sup> These themes of denied reproduction and financial incentive are markedly different from American anti-gay rhetoric, which more often evokes sin, and the need for salvation. By focusing on the international influence of American groups, the documentary doesn't make special note of these themes, and by passing over such comments, the piece ignores the cultural markers which define the movement as distinctly Ugandan.

---

<sup>50</sup> Vice Media and HBO, *A Prayer for Uganda*.

While the documentary fails to notice these unique elements, many academics have made it their focus to address the Ugandan cultural anxieties which the anti-gay movement speaks to.<sup>51</sup> Such work provides a more in depth analysis of the movement's appeal, and isn't limited exclusively to the international connections of American activists. "The Problem with Freedom: Homosexuality and Human Rights in Uganda" by The University of North Carolina anthropologist Lydia Boyd, is one such piece which does a better job of explaining the movement by focusing on what makes it uniquely Ugandan.

In the essay, Boyd argues that anti-gay rhetoric is animated by more than a "parroting of American homophobia," but rather, reflects tensions within Ugandan society between "competing frameworks for ethical personhood."<sup>52</sup> She broadly defines these two "frameworks" as the traditional Ghandan value of *ekitiibwa* (respect/honor), which emphasizes interconnectivity, and western Kantian ethics, which instead emphasizes individual sovereignty. She's critical of human rights groups which have inserted themselves into sensitive Ugandan discourses assuming the universality of their ethical framework. Drawing on over thirty years of fieldwork within Kampala's born-again community, she notes that, without acknowledging the local cultural norms, these group's efforts are prone to backfire, and cites many interviews in which Ugandans express skepticism or disdain for the "freedoms" advocated by such groups that are perceived as destructive and contrary to social interdependence. Rather than being theologically driven, like, she argues, American homophobia is, Boyd claims that the Ugandan anti-gay movement is rooted in these contemporary ethical conflicts, and outlines the way anti-gay rhetoric uses gay sex as a symbol for "extractive, excessive, and spiritually dangerous"

---

<sup>51</sup>Joanna Sadgrove, "Morality Plays and Money Matters: Towards a More Situated Understanding of the Politics of Homosexuality in Uganda," *Journal of Modern Africa Studies* 50 (2012), 107.

<sup>52</sup> Lydia Boyd, "The Problem with Freedom: Homosexuality and Human Rights in Uganda," *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (2013), 698.

behavior.<sup>53</sup> Her analysis focuses on three consistent themes in Ugandan anti-gay ideology: 1) respectability, 2) recruitment myths, and 3) secrecy and spiritual danger.

In relation to the theme of respectability, she notes how deeply Ugandan attitudes about sex are connected to notions of kinship and lineage. She claims that the latter half of 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by a growing emphasis on personal choice and compatibility, but in her research she has observed Ugandan attitudes towards identity and selfhood are still deeply connected to relationship to kin and the ability to reproduce. She quotes many young people she interviewed who frequently referenced “etikiibwa” (respect/honor) and “empisa” (good manners) while talking about sexuality as a sign that experiences of kinship and community are still connected to what is perceived as healthy sexual conduct.

Paradoxically, she cites other studies on the custom of maintaining long term sexual relationships outside of marriage, and also notes her surprise at how many born-again Christians she interviewed acknowledged a tradition of Ugandan same sex relations which were kept secret, while the same interview subjects described themselves publically as “guardians” against such “foreign” practice.<sup>54</sup> She suggests that the connecting tissue between this understanding of extramarital sex and homosexuality is that both practices were perceived to exist outside of the public realm, and because of their secrecy, weren’t seen as threatening to familial structures or the ability to reproduce. She argues that contemporary discourses which emphasize homosexuality as a universal “right” are seen as threatening, because the public expression of non-reproductive forms of sexuality is understood to erode structures of kinship. The testimony of the girls in *A Prayer for Uganda*, who referenced the inability to reproduce as central to their

---

<sup>53</sup> Boyd, 701.

<sup>54</sup> Boyd, 706



fear of lesbian relations, takes on an added significance in this framework, while the documentary failed to make note of this trend.

In Boyd's interviews, the language of sexual "rights" was also seen as threatening because it connoted an "independence from family discipline."<sup>55</sup> Anti-gay rhetoric, in this context, provided authority figures within families, specifically men, a means to reaffirm their place within kinship structures. She notes that pathways for "modern manhood," which she describes as marriage and a wage-earning job, have become increasingly scarce in Uganda in the 2000s, and anti-homosexual rhetoric reflects the need for young men to reassert their sense of participating in a respectable social role.

Boyd also notes a connection to themes of threatened kinship structures and social harmony in relation to the prevalence of recruitment myths within Ugandan anti-gay rhetoric. The concept that gays must seek out and initiate others is not new. The "recruitment myth" originated in the American activist Anita Bryant's successful campaign to overturn Miami's anti-discrimination laws in the late 1970s.<sup>56</sup> The concept is also central to Scott Lively's ideology.<sup>57</sup> In Uganda, figures like Bhatti, Ssempe, and Buturo (the Minister of Ethics) evoked the recruitment myth as well, but their rhetoric differs slightly by specifically focusing on children being lured away from their families as the result of financial bribes.<sup>58</sup> Boyd notes this financial component, and connects the appeal of the recruitment myth in Uganda to fears about changes in the economic system.

---

<sup>55</sup> Boyd, 708.

<sup>56</sup> Tina Fetner, "Working Anita Bryant: The Impact of Christian Anti-Gay Activism on Lesbian and Gay Movement Claims," *Social Problems* 48 (2001), 415.

<sup>57</sup> Scott Lively, *Redeeming the Rainbow* (Springfield, MA: Veritas Aeterna Press, 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Herbert Ssempego, "Religious Groups Demonstrate Against Homosexuals," *New Vision*, August 21, 2007.

In addition to assuaging longstanding cultural anxieties about familial erosion and anti-social behavior, she suggests that the recruitment myth spoke to a growing trend in Ugandan society of economic possibilities forcing geographical migration away from local communities. She references interviews in which members of the Kampala born-again community described gays as wealthy or foreign, and threatening because of their ability to leverage bribes.<sup>59</sup> In this way, the recruitment myth spoke to anxieties over the threat economic migration posed to familial structures within local communities. Again, *A Prayer for Uganda* did not consider this trend significant, despite including scenes in which Oduch and the students he lectured specifically referenced bribery.

Lastly, Boyd discusses how gay sex is perceived in Uganda to have negative spiritual consequences, which she connects to the secrecy required to engage in such acts. Sexuality is understood by many Ugandans, she argues, as having a spiritual element, which affects not only the individual, but also their family and society as a whole. One woman she interviewed plainly stated, “everything that happens in the physical, has implications for the spiritual.” Intra-personal relationships are seen as connected to spiritual well-being, and Boyd references born-again religious services which include prayer sessions intended to “cast out” relationships that are viewed as spiritually harmful.<sup>60</sup> Gay sex, she argues, is seen as negative because it involves secrecy, and in Ugandan spirituality, secrecy has a longstanding connotation with deception, witchcraft, and detachment from the spiritual whole.

She notes how a major component of the Anti-Homosexuality Act which was overlooked by the western media’s focus on the more severe punishments it ascribed, was the goal of

---

<sup>59</sup> Boyd, 710.

<sup>60</sup> Boyd, 714.

“defining” homosexuality, and thereby removing its secrecy. She draws a connection between the negative spiritual connotations of secrecy, with anti-gay activist’s frequent use of extreme gay pornography in their presentations. Such imagery, she suggests, is not only shocking and salacious, but also serves to fully expose the air of secrecy around homosexuality and strip it of spiritual power.<sup>61</sup> While Boyd doesn’t make note of this trend, I feel it’s also salient to mention here that Uganda consistently ranks the highest amongst African countries in internet searches for gay porn.<sup>62</sup> Again, this concept was not addressed by *A Prayer for Uganda*, which favored instead to reference the country’s tabloid culture of exposing gay “pedophiles” as evidence of Scott Lively’s influence. The documentary also contained a scene in which Oduch uses extreme imagery in one of his school presentations, but the journalists didn’t ask him why he would include such material.

Boyd’s work is especially useful because it focuses on contemporary discourses. While *A Prayer for Uganda* depicted the influence of American activists as occurring in somewhat of a cultural vacuum, Boyd’s analysis of Ugandan anxieties specifically situates the anti-gay movement in historical context. By describing these three fields in which anti-gay rhetoric was especially salient within Uganda, the role of American activists like Scott Lively appears much more culturally contingent. Boyd’s analysis shows why Lively’s concepts of gay-recruitment and a moneyed international agenda resonated so well within the country. Her analysis also describes why and how the movement continued to spread on the auspices of Ugandan activists after figures like Lively distanced themselves in the wake of the negative international attention

---

<sup>61</sup> Boyd, 715.

<sup>62</sup> Jasse Peeples, “Uganda Among World’s Top Gay Porn Consumers,” *The Advocate*, January 16, 2014.

they received.<sup>63</sup> By focusing on the connections between international organizations, *A Prayer for Uganda* failed to notice the cultural trends Boyd describes, even though the documentary contains scenes in which those trends are expressed.

The implications of Boyd's work also points to different conclusions than *A Prayer for Uganda*. While the documentary begins and ends its analysis with the presence of American activists, Boyd argues that specific contemporary cultural anxieties are a better explanation of the success of the anti-gay movement. This situated approach implicates contemporary neoliberal economic conditions much more so than the documentary, which only understands the movement as an echo of American religious ideology. The Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe describes the modern era in Africa as "fictive," and focused on consumption during a period of scarcity. In the essay, "African Modes of Self-Writing" he writes that "where the capture and consumption of desired but inaccessible goods becomes problematic, other regimes of subjectivity come into the making."<sup>64</sup> This is an apt description of the cultural trends Boyd observes. Where the capitalist economic system, and, to a lesser extent, human rights groups, failed to fulfill their promises of individual sovereignty and self-empowerment, the anti-gay movement emerged as a new "regime of subjectivity" to reinforce structure and personhood.

---

<sup>63</sup> Michael Martin, "U.S. Evangelical Leaders Blamed for Uganda Anti-Gay Sentiment," *National Public Radio*, December 18, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self Writing," *Public Culture* 14 (2002), 271.

## Chapter 3

### Lively

In the controversy surrounding the Ugandan efforts to legislate homosexuality, Scott Lively became well-known as an international anti-gay activist. A wide range of media outlets reported on his work, and his activist career, spanning back to the early 1990s, has been well documented by human rights groups.<sup>65</sup> Less attention has been given to the events in his life which preceded his involvement with religious fundamentalism and the anti-gay movement. Lively claims that he became an alcoholic at the age of 12 and traveled the United States as a homeless drifter for 16 years before becoming a born-again Christian in the late 1980s.<sup>66</sup> In this section I describe his activist career and use newspaper articles from the rural part of Massachusetts where he grew up to provide evidence of his troubled childhood and suggest that the fundamentalist ideology Lively adopted later in life was preceded by chaotic and aimless formative years.

Lively has extensive credentials as an anti-gay activist. His career in this field began in the early 1990s in Oregon, where he worked for campaigns by the Oregon Citizens Alliance to promote anti-gay ballot initiatives.<sup>67</sup> On a municipal level, the OCA campaigns were very effective. In the late 1980s and early 90s the group successfully passed what they referred to as “no special rights” ordinances in 16 different towns and cities banning local governments from

---

<sup>65</sup> “Scott Lively” (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>.

<sup>66</sup> Scott Lively, “A Brief Autobiography,” *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

<sup>67</sup> “Scott Lively” (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>.

recognizing LGBT people.<sup>68</sup> The largest city to pass one of their initiatives was Eugene, which, in 1992, banned public funds from being used in “promoting, encouraging, or facilitating homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism.”<sup>69</sup>

Scott Lively first appeared in newspaper articles about the OCA during their failed efforts to promote such initiatives on the state level. In 1992 the OCA introduced Ballot Measure 9, which would have amended Oregon’s state constitution to define homosexuality as “abnormal” and “perverse.”<sup>70</sup> The initiative drew national condemnation and was marked by a heated campaign in the Eugene suburb of Springfield, where Scott Lively was based. Lively was sued during the campaign for releasing a press report that outed one of the politicians who opposed the initiative as “a practicing homosexual man.”<sup>71</sup> When a photojournalist critical of the initiative attempted to attend one of the OCA meetings, Lively threw her against a wall, grabbed her by the hair, and dragged her out of the Church where the meeting took place.<sup>72</sup> During a later campaign over a similar ballot measure in 1994, Lively again courted controversy. In response to hecklers who called him and OCA president Lon Mabon “Nazis,” Lively appeared on television to refute the title and, in a counter-claim, improbably charged that homosexuality was the foundation of the Nazi movement and caused the holocaust.<sup>73</sup>

After the Oregon campaigns, Lively continued to be involved with anti-gay activism by writing and promoting books on the subject of an international gay agenda. In 1995 he expanded on his earlier televised remarks by co-authoring a 300 page holocaust revisionist history book

---

<sup>68</sup> “OCA Gets Ready to Take its Battle to 1994 Ballots,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, November 11, 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Ann Portal, “Voters Approve Anti-Gay Measure,” *Eugene Register-Guard*. May 20<sup>th</sup> 1992.

<sup>70</sup> Brent Walth, “Poll: Voters would nix less-extreme Measure 9,” *Eugene Register-Guard*. December 18<sup>th</sup> 1992.

<sup>71</sup> Bill Bishop, “OCA Prevails in Lawsuit,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, nov 6 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Katia Dunn, “Honor Thy Debts,” *The Portland Mercury*, October 5, 2000.

<sup>73</sup> Randi Bjornstad, Nazi Issue Clouds ‘13’ Fight,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, 1994.

titled *The Pink Swastika*.<sup>74</sup> The book's central thesis, that homosexuality was the guiding force behind Nazi atrocities, has been widely discredited by mainstream historians,<sup>75</sup> but the text formed the basis of his continued claims of being an "expert" on the topic and was one of the central components of his presentation at the 2009 Family Life Network conference in Kampala.<sup>76</sup> Two years later he published another book, *The Poisoned Stream*, which alleges that a "dark and powerful homosexual presence" has influenced all of human history, including, as he claims in the book's introduction, "the Spanish Inquisition, the French Reign of Terror, South African Apartheid, and American Slavery."<sup>77</sup>

While the market for these books was, by his own admission, "limited,"<sup>78</sup> his theories about homosexuality and Nazi atrocities found an audience in the evangelical eastern European immigrant community in Sacramento, California, where he lived in the late 1990s. In California he worked on anti-gay campaigns for the American Family Association and founded his own group, Abiding Truth Ministries. The connections Lively made in Sacramento's immigrant community formed the basis for his international campaigns, and in 2007 he partnered with Sacramento radio host Vlad Kusekin, Seattle megachurch pastor Kenneth Hutcherson, and Latvian megachurch pastor Alexey Ledyayev, to form the international evangelical group Watchmen on the Wall.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Scott Lively and Kevin Abrams, *The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in The Nazi Party* (Sacramento: Veritas Aterna Press, 1995), 6.

<sup>75</sup> Erik N Jensen, "The Pink Triangle and Political Consciousness: Gays, Lesbians, and the Memory of Nazi Persecution," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11 (2002).

<sup>76</sup> Political Research Associates, (2009). FULL – Scott Lively Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Conference 2009 [video] Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9F9k4guN3M>.

<sup>77</sup> Scott Lively, *The Poisoned Stream* (Keizer, OR: Founders Publishing Company 1997).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> "Scott Lively" (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>

Over the course of the 2000s Lively used these connections to extend his activism abroad. On his blog he describes himself as “an attorney, pastor and human rights consultant,” and claims to be active in “more than 30 countries.”<sup>80</sup> Other than Uganda, most of his missions have been in Eastern Europe, and have been facilitated by his connection with Alexey Ledyayev. In their profile of Scott Lively, the Southern Poverty Law Center says he has worked in Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, in addition to his more widely reported work in Africa.<sup>81</sup> In a 2013 interview with the conservative radio host Bryan Fincher, Lively referred to Russia’s widely condemned “gay propaganda” law as “one of the proudest achievements of my career,” and considers his speaking tours in Eastern Europe to have contributed to the implementation of the legislation, as well as similar laws in other countries.<sup>82</sup>

While Lively’s career has been marked by international ambitions, he has also continued to be active in the U.S. In 2014, he ran for governor of Massachusetts, and while the goal of his campaign was not to win, but rather to promote a “biblical platform,”<sup>83</sup> he garnered enough support to participate in the debates.<sup>84</sup> His tax-exempt religious group, Abiding Truth Ministries, is based in Massachusetts as well, where he’s lived since 2008. Massachusetts is his home state, and Abiding Truth Ministries’ location in Springfield is less than an hour drive from where he

---

<sup>80</sup> Scott Lively, “Praise for Putin,” 2013, *Scott Lively Ministries* <http://www.scottlively.net/2013/09/03/praise-for-putin/>.

<sup>81</sup> “Scott Lively” (accessed May 1, 2017); available from <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>.

<sup>82</sup> Kyle Mantyala, “Lively: Russia’s Anti-Gay Law Is ‘One Of The Proudest Achievements Of My Career,’” *Right Wing Watch*, accessed April 10, 2017 <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/lively-russias-anti-gay-law-is-one-of-the-proudest-achievements-of-my-career/>.

<sup>83</sup> Scott Lively, “My Run for Governor,” *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/the-run-for-governor/>.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Rizzuto, “2014 Massachusetts campaign spending topped \$33M; statewide candidates who spent most won,” *Mass Live*, February 18, 2015. Accessed April 19, 2017, [http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/02/massachusetts\\_political\\_candid.html#incart\\_river\\_index\\_to\\_pics](http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/02/massachusetts_political_candid.html#incart_river_index_to_pics).



grew up, in the rural village of Shelburne Falls. This proximity is interesting given how troubled a childhood he had there.

In the “brief autobiography” section of his website, Lively writes that he became an alcoholic at the age of twelve in order to cope with his difficult family situation. He says he was the oldest of six children and describes his father as “suffering from a severe form of mental illness.” According to the autobiography, an argument, caused by Lively’s decision to drop out of school, caused his father to become so enraged he was taken away by police and spent the rest of his life in a mental hospital. Lively says he became addicted to drugs soon after this event and traveled around the country for sixteen years, often “homeless, sleeping under bridges and begging for spare change on street corners.” He writes that all this changed when he accepted Christ in 1986 at an alcohol treatment facility in Portland, Oregon.

The autobiography says that in 1987 he ran into his “former drug dealer and partner in partying and occult circles,” who had also become a Christian, and the two attended Portland Foursquare Church, where pro-life groups, showing him pictures of aborted babies, introduced him to religious activism. He says he gravitated towards the OCA because of their anti-abortion initiatives. However, as they transitioned to focus more on anti-gay campaigns, Lively became caught up in the issue and writes that he had his “eyes opened to things very few Christians have ever seen or experienced” and “realized that homosexuality was even more destructive to society than abortion.”<sup>85</sup>

While some of what Lively describes in this brief autobiography is difficult to verify, newspaper articles from the area where he grew up provide evidence of his difficult adolescence.

---

<sup>85</sup> Scott Lively, “A Brief Autobiography,” *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

The incident Lively mentions on his website in which his father was taken away by police is described in depth in a *Greenfield Recorder* article from 1974. The article, titled “Disturbed man Removed From S.F. Residence,” says that police received a phone call from the wife of a man named Maurice Lively, saying she and her children had been thrown out of their home. When the police arrived they found the man barricaded in the house with several guns, saying he would kill anybody who came near him. After a three hour standoff the police heard shots fired inside the house and used tear gas to force Maurice Lively to surrender. No criminal charges were filed, but he was charged with being a “disturbed person” and taken to police barracks.<sup>86</sup>

Scott Lively’s name first appears in the *Greenfield Recorder’s* archives in October of 1975 attached to a poem in the paper’s “Poets Corner” column. Published less than a year after his father’s standoff with the police, the piece is titled “Regarding Blue Gnomes,” and tells a dark and surreal story about a monster haunting an elderly home. The subject matter provides a window into his mental state during this time in his life, and it is reproduced below. It reads in full:

*Lurking in the basement of the old folks home  
lives a social degradation, a perverted young gnome*

*locates himself beneath the room of Alice J. Gripes  
and keeps his quarters spic and span, between the sewage pipes*

*How he came to live there, no one really knows  
and few have really seen him, they say he rarely shows*

---

<sup>86</sup> *Disturbed Man Removed from S.F. Residence*. *Greenfield Recorder*, January 25, 1974.

*they claim that he has bluish skin, and warts upon his bod  
all agree he's very short, and quite a little clod*

*One day at work I heard of him, and soon made up my mind  
I'd sneak a look see for myself and see what I would find*

*That very afternoon at five, I got into my car  
and drove over to the nursing home, it wasn't very far*

*Pretending to be visiting, they invited me to eat  
I slipped into the dining hall and grabbed myself a seat*

*The meal they put before me soon made my stomach weak  
I had to find the bathroom so out the door I sneaked*

*Down the hall and to the left I very quickly sped  
I dove into the mens room and lost what I was fed*

*A hand reached up from in the bowl and grabbed me by the chin  
I shut my eyes and held my breath as the creature pulled me in*

*In seconds, maybe minutes of travelling through the pipes  
I found myself beneath the room of Alice J. Gripes*

*A candle in the corner lit up the gloomy place  
and the light lit shown clearly marked the little creature's face*

*Now lurking in the basement of the old folks home  
lives two social degradations, a perverted young gnome*

*And me*

*Now you see, they were wrong, the few that saw*

*Not a He, a she. And Me.*<sup>87</sup>

The next mention of Scott Lively in the *Greenfield Recorder* is in the district court log in August of 1975. Lively had allegedly “denied being a minor possessing alcohol” and was also charged with “possessing stolen property.”<sup>88</sup> Another court log entry from later that month says Lively was issued a Continuance Without a Finding for a year and he was fined 50 dollars.<sup>89</sup> The court log lists him as seventeen, and these charges are evidence in support of the claim he makes on his website of having become an alcoholic at a young age.

Lively had an internship with the newspaper through an alternative school called the King Philip Project, and wrote a handful of human interest stories throughout 1976.<sup>90</sup> One of these articles details the efforts of a local organization called the Native American Solidarity Committee.<sup>91</sup> Another describes a local man’s career as a vaudeville magician.<sup>92</sup> One article he wrote describes the mission of the King Philip Project, which he refers to as an “experiment in education,” and gives examples of some of the student’s projects.<sup>93</sup> The autobiography on

---

<sup>87</sup> Scott Lively, “Regarding Blue Gnomes,” *Greenfield Recorder*, October 7, 1975.

<sup>88</sup> “District Court,” *Greenfield Recorder*, August 6, 1975.

<sup>89</sup> “District Court,” *Greenfield Recorder*, August 26, 1975.

<sup>90</sup> Scott Lively, “King Philip: alive and well,” *Greenfield Recorder*, September 29, 1976.

<sup>91</sup> Scott Lively, “Solidarity Group for Indian Rights,” *Greenfield Recorder*, October 9, 1976.

<sup>92</sup> Students at the King Philip School, “Dan Patch, at 70, relives his vaudeville years,” *Greenfield Recorder*, July 2, 1976.

<sup>93</sup> Scott Lively, “King Philip.”

Lively's website describes the King Philip Project derogatively as "a hippie alternative school," where he finished his high school credits. He says he was the only student to graduate from the program's class of 1976 before it closed due to "lack of funding."<sup>94</sup>

These funding issues are mentioned in a *Recorder* article from 1977 on the allotment of proposed funds from a state drug rehabilitation initiative. The article describes the King Philip Project as a school for "students who do not adjust to normal classroom activities," and says the program stood to receive the "largest proposed recommendation" of funds for groups supported by the state Division of Drug Rehabilitation.<sup>95</sup> While far from conclusive, the association of the King Philip Project with drug rehabilitation funding supports Lively's self-characterization as a drug addict during this time in his life.

After graduating the King Philip Program in December of 1976, Lively is listed in the *Greenfield Recorder* court logs for a handful of petty crimes.<sup>96</sup> In March of that year, he was arrested for breaking into an auto body shop at 2 a.m. with another teenager named Harry Seager,<sup>97</sup> and the two were placed on probation for two years.<sup>98</sup> Three weeks after the court placed him on probation he was again arrested and charged with "operating a motor vehicle without authority,"<sup>99</sup> for which he was sentenced to thirty days in jail.<sup>100</sup> In August of 1976 charges were dismissed against him for being a minor in possession of alcohol,<sup>101</sup> and in March of 1977 he was again arrested for breaking and entering and sentenced to another thirty day stint

---

<sup>94</sup> Scott Lively, "A Brief Autobiography," *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

<sup>95</sup> "Children's Group urges drug rehab fund uses," *Greenfield Recorder*, April 22, 1977

<sup>96</sup> Scott Lively, "A Brief Autobiography," *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

<sup>97</sup> "Two arraigned for break in Bernardston," *Greenfield Recorder*, March 19, 1976.

<sup>98</sup> "District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, April 3, 1976.

<sup>99</sup> "District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, April 27, 1976.

<sup>100</sup> "District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, June 8, 1976.

<sup>101</sup> "District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, August 30, 1976.

in jail.<sup>102</sup> His name doesn't appear in the *Recorder's* archives again until 2013, when an article described the ongoing lawsuit against him by Ugandan gay-rights activists alleging his involvement in the country denied them of basic human rights.<sup>103</sup>

While some of the claims in Scott Lively's stated autobiography are difficult to verify, many newspaper articles provide evidence of a troubled adolescence. Participating in "occult circles," and traveling "over 25,000 miles by thumb, bus and train" as a homeless drifter, as he has stated,<sup>104</sup> may not have left as much of a paper trail, but records exist of his early criminal charges, participation in a program which received funds for drug rehabilitation, and his father's standoff with the police. These documents show that Lively's turn to fundamentalist anti-gay religious ideology was preceded by disorder and trauma during his formative years.

---

<sup>102</sup> "District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, March 23, 1977.

<sup>103</sup> Bob Dunn, "Shelburne Falls Native Accused in Ugandan Gay Rights Case," *Greenfield Recorder*, January 8 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Scott Lively, "A Brief Autobiography," *Scott Lively Ministries*, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

## Chapter 4

### Nationalism

This section links Bahati and Museveni's use of nationalist rhetoric to justify their beliefs as examples of Ugandan figures who sought to retroactively create a tradition of homophobia, despite the many aspects of the contemporary movement which were novel. This evocation of tradition was appealing because it articulated a stable and independent national identity. My use of the term "nationalism" in this section applies to the country at large, as opposed to what could be described as nationalist affiliations among smaller ethnic and regional groups within Uganda,<sup>105</sup> and is informed by the American anthropologist Lloyd Faller's description of nationalism as, "an ideological commitment to the pursuit of the unity, independence, and interests of a people who conceive of themselves as forming a community."<sup>106</sup>

In Chapter One, I addressed some of the cultural anxieties present in Uganda which surrounded the issue of gay rights, and referenced Lydia Boyd's description of how anti-gay ideology functioned to assuage those tensions. This section will expand on that earlier discussion by addressing the way nationalist rhetoric equated the rejection of homosexuality with Ugandan moral unity and political self-determination. To do this, I will discuss two examples. First, interviews David Bahati gave to various media outlets between 2010 and 2014 in which he responded to challenging questions about his legislative efforts by evoking Uganda's sovereignty as a democratic country. And second, Yoweri Museveni's 2010 Martyr's Day speech, in which

---

<sup>105</sup> M.S.M Kiwanuka, "Nationality and Nationalism in Africa: The Uganda Case," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4 (1970), 229.

<sup>106</sup> Lloyd A. Fallers, "Ideology and Culture in Uganda Nationalism," *American Anthropologist* 63 (1961), 667.

he reinterpreted the important national mythology of the Ugandan Martyrs as a historic precedent for the contemporary anti-gay movement. Bahati's evocation of political self-determination asserted a claim of legitimacy within the international system while also emphasizing Ugandan independence from western influence. Museveni's ascribing of new meanings to an old mythology created a historical narrative of cultural and moral continuity. I will argue that in both instances, nationalist rhetoric functioned to equate stability with the rejection of homosexuality. Before discussing these two cases, I will first mention the academic literature which refutes the anti-gay movement's "traditionalist" claims. While fully exploring the contradictions and ironies of the movement's ideology isn't the main focus of this paper, the evocation of tradition is a crucial element of the nationalist rhetoric I will discuss, and the anti-gay movement's erasure of African sexual diversity is an important context for my analysis.

Modern proponents of increased legislation against homosexuality often portrayed themselves as acting in defense of "traditional" Ugandan beliefs and values.<sup>107</sup> While this narrative appealed to contemporary cultural anxieties,<sup>108</sup> evocations of a uniformly heteronormative tradition are contradicted by a large body of academic work, which instead attests to a range of sexual practices and familial structures present throughout Ugandan history.

As early as the 1920s, ethnographies by colonial scholars on specific tribal groups within Uganda described forms of same-sex intimacies and contact.<sup>109</sup> More recently, the 1998 book,

---

<sup>107</sup> Kristen Cheney, "Locating Neocolonialism, 'Tradition,' and Human Rights in Uganda's 'Gay Death Penalty,'" *African Studies Review* 55 (2012), 81.

<sup>108</sup> Lydia Boyd, "The Problem with Freedom: Homosexuality and Human Rights in Uganda," *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (2013): 697-724.

<sup>109</sup> J. H. Driberg's 1923 study of the Lango peoples describes a class of males referred to as "mudoko dako" who were "treated as women" and sometimes married other men. A colonial era study of the Iteso (Lawrence 1957) people references same sex relationships as well. Post-colonial ethnographies on the Banyoro (Needham 1973) and the Baganda (Southwold 1973) also reference men having sexual relationships with other men. While contemporary western classifications of sexual identities may or may not translate as the most accurate



*Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, provided an in-depth survey of how these sexualities persisted from pre-colonial times into the modern era. The book includes an extensive study of the region which became Uganda, and the authors Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe characterize the idea that homosexuality was “absent or incidental in African societies” as a “myth” perpetuated by European colonizer’s racialized concept of a “noble savage.”<sup>110</sup>

The idea that a massive historical record of different types of sexual behaviors has been ignored is echoed in more recent scholarship which seeks to de-bunk the traditionalist arguments of the contemporary anti-gay movement. In the 2012 article, “Locating Neocolonialism, ‘Tradition’ and Gay Rights in Uganda’s ‘Gay Death Penalty,’” the Dutch anthropologist Kirsten Cheney argues that the movement’s characterization of homosexuality, rather than Christianity, as a colonial imposition, speaks to the success of early missionary efforts to erase African histories of sexual diversity. As a specific contemporary example, she notes the way language in the original draft of the Anti-Homosexuality Act characterized “traditional families” as heterosexual, nuclear units, despite the widespread practices of polygamy and informal child fosterage which took place throughout Ugandan history.<sup>111</sup>

Writers and academics from within Uganda have also addressed how the anti-gay movement’s definition of traditional values and relationships obscures history. Sylvia Tamale, a law professor at Makerere University, is a leading figure within the country’s feminist movement, and is considered to be one of the most prolific voices within Ugandan academia on

---

description of these practices, such early documentation is evidence that a tradition of sexual practices and behaviors outside of what the anti-gay movement characterized as “traditional” did exist in pre-colonial Uganda.

<sup>110</sup> Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities* (New York: Pillgrave, 1998), 11.

<sup>111</sup> Cheney, *Locating Neocolonialism*.

the subject of sexuality.<sup>112</sup> In a 2014 article for Al Jazeera she refutes the concept of anti-gay traditionalism as essentialist, selective, and based on faulty colonial notions of a homogenous “African culture.” To counter these narratives, she references a handful of African sub-cultures which practiced same-sex relations not only for erotic purposes, but also as parts of spiritual rituals, and points out that anti-gay legislation was originally introduced to Uganda by the British and is equally “alien” to Africa as the “Abrahamic religions that often accompany and augment the ‘un-African’ arguments about homosexuality.”<sup>113</sup> In the 2007 article “Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda,” she more explicitly rejects the suppression of sexual pluralities as political tool, and claims that “socio-cultural norms and religious beliefs,” like the anti-gay movement’s traditionalist claims, are used to shroud divergent sexualities in “secrecy and taboo” in order to “reinforce the gendered hierarchies of the patriarchal state.”<sup>114</sup>

While these works illuminate the fallacies of the anti-gay movement’s claimed protection of a fundamentally Ugandan tradition, historical evidence of a range of sexualities doesn’t as readily speak to why such rhetoric was successful. In the case of Bahati’s interviews, a “traditional” distain for homosexuality was evoked alongside nationalist rhetoric asserting Uganda’s independence from the west. One of the cultural anxieties Boyd described in “The Problem with Freedom,” was the perceived connection between a specter of western influence and morally suspicious behavior associated with the collapse of Ugandan kinship affiliations. By framing anti-gay legislation as an expression of Ugandan state sovereignty, Bahati spoke directly

---

<sup>112</sup> Tom Waidzunus, *The Straight Line: How the Fringe Science of Ex-Gay Therapy Reoriented Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 190.

<sup>113</sup> Sylvia Tamale, “Homosexuality is Not Un-African,” *Al Jazeera*, April 26, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Tamale, Sylvia. “Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda,” in *Africa After Gender?*, ed. Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan F. Miescher, (University of Indiana Press: 2007), 20.

to these fears. His nationalist rhetoric rejected western influence, and instead presented the anti-gay movement as an expression of consistent and stable cultural norms.

Beginning in 2009, Bahati's anti-gay legislation made him a well-known figure within Uganda and his legal efforts attracted the attention of the international press.<sup>115</sup> Rather than shy away from the increased media attention, he participated in several interviews with western news outlets as part of a campaign to draw more attention to the legislation and increase its political momentum. During these interviews, Bahati referenced the myth of widespread homosexual recruitment of children, as well as the protection of the traditional family, as the primary justification for new laws, but he also frequently evoked Ugandan sovereignty as a way to deflect more difficult questions.

Bahati's first appearance in the western press was on Rachel Maddow's show for MSNBC in 2010. During the interview, he defends the increased punishments outlined in his legislation as efforts to "make sure there is a way to protect our children, and make sure that our traditional family and the culture we live in is not polluted." He also makes repeated references to the "huge problem" of wealthy westerners coming to Uganda to "recruit children into homosexuality." When Maddow pressures him to provide evidence for these claims, and asks him what effect he thinks new laws will have on the gay community, Bahati evokes Ugandan sovereignty to defend his beliefs. "The law is debated in parliament in a democratic country," he tells her, "it's a Ugandan bill meant for Ugandans." He describes her questions about the influence of American activists as "racist," and again refers to the bill as a "law for Uganda within the constitution and legal framework of our country," that has "nothing to do with other people of the world because Uganda is a sovereign state." He tells Maddow, "we understand and

---

<sup>115</sup> Boyd, *The Problem with Freedom*.

respect your side of the story, and we ask you understand and respect our side.” In his final remarks he says the bill will “work within international law, and reflect the spirit of tolerance and respect for one another.” Throughout the interview he uses nationalist rhetoric pertaining to Ugandan sovereignty to avoid answering difficult questions and also to frame the anti-gay movement as a reflection of homogenous Ugandan traditions.<sup>116</sup>

Over the following years, Bahati continued to grant interviews to western journalists in which he made further nationalistic references to state sovereignty and cultural traditions. In objection to Barack Obama’s criticism of proposed legislation, Bahati told NPR, “we respect America for what they believe in, they should respect Uganda for what we believe in.”<sup>117</sup> This theme became more pronounced in his remarks after the 2014 version of his bill was signed into law, and international sanctions against Uganda were increased. In an interview with Reuters he described the financial pressure as “blackmail,” and exemplary of western “social imperialism.”<sup>118</sup>

His most dramatic criticism of western infringement on Ugandan sovereignty was documented in a 2012 interview with Vice Media, the same organization that produced the documentary *A Prayer for Uganda* criticized earlier in this chapter. When asked about the potential decrease in aid from western countries if his legislation was passed, Bahati told the reporter that aid “attached to the condition of homosexuality” is a “mistake” because, “Uganda is a sovereign state...doing this through a democratic process.” He became offended by the reporter’s questions, and the article quotes Bahati as saying,

---

<sup>116</sup> Rachel Maddow, “Ugana Be Kidding Me,” *MSNBC*, December 9, 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Barbara Bradley Hagerty, “Anti-Gay Atmosphere Permeates Uganda,” *National Public Radio*, December 20, 2010.

<sup>118</sup> Drazen Jorgic and Philippa Croome. “Uganda Anti-Gay Bill Author Says Aid Cuts Small Price to Pay,” *Reuters*, March 3, 2014.

Don't remind me that you took me as a slave. Don't remind me that you took our resources to enrich your countries. Don't tell me you're more superior than I am. You have funded us for over 50 years, have you changed anything? These [LGBT] activists are agents of imperialism and we're not going to take it easily. They are agents of colonialism. How can you continue to act like slave masters? The suggestion that Africa can only exist with America's help is wrong. Africa was here before you.<sup>119</sup>

These remarks explicitly associate the promotion of gay rights with other morally corrupt forms of western influence, and implied in such statements is link between efforts to increase the criminalization of homosexuality and previous forms of nationalist resistance to western political oppression. Bahati characterized anti-gay legislation as a form of resistance to western influence more explicitly in Ugandan media. In 2014 he was a guest on the nationally syndicated talk show, *Urban Today*, and when the host asked him about the international repercussions of the recently passed law, he responded by saying that “the people of Uganda have stood firm” to say that “we have our own culture and will defend it.” He also tells the host, “the future of our children and the institution of family is [worth] more than what we are getting from the west” and goes on to suggest that if Ugandan mineral wealth was tapped then western donors wouldn't be able to continue this “blackmail.”<sup>120</sup> He referred to sanctions as western “blackmail” in several other interviews as well, and later that year further connoted the anti-gay movement with

---

<sup>119</sup> Rachel Adams, “I Spoke to the Author of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill,” *Vice Media*, December 13, 2012.

<sup>120</sup> *Urban Today*, (2014). Road to 2016: David Bahati [video] Retrieved March 1, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1ZOXFuv-Xw>.

resistance to western influence when he told CGTN Africa that decreased aid is a worthwhile “cost” of “defending our family values and defending our children.”<sup>121</sup>

In these interviews Bahati used nationalist claims of political and cultural sovereignty to defend the anti-gay movement and portray its ideology as a reflection of traditional Ugandan values. President Museveni used nationalist rhetoric to similar effect in 2010, during a speech he gave in honor of Martyrs Day. The holiday celebrates a group of Christian converts who were executed in pre-colonial Buganda by the ruler Kabaka (King) Mwanga II. Museveni’s 2010 speech grafted the ideology of the anti-gay movement onto their story and, by referencing such important cultural figures, defined the rejection of same-sex intimacy as an essential component of Uganda’s national identity.

The history of the Martyrs, and how their story has been referenced by various political groups, is important to understand Museveni’s remarks. The Ugandan Martyrs were executed in the Kingdom of Buganda between 1885 and 1887. Prior to their deaths, they lived as pages in the court of Kabaka (King) Mwanga II, the ruler who ordered their executions. In total, forty-five court pages were killed over the two year period, and while some of those put to death had recently converted to Islam, the larger number of Christian converts are the focus of the national holiday in their name. Pope Paul VI canonized the Martyrs as saints in 1964, and their refusal to renounce their faith became a foundational myth of Christianity in the country. The Martyrs are such important cultural figures that each year Martyrs Day is preceded by a week of celebrations, during which time thousands of pilgrims from across Uganda and neighboring countries travel to the Namugongo Shrine, erected at the site of their executions, to attend religious services. The

---

<sup>121</sup> CGTN Africa, (2014). David Bahati: ‘Loss of Donor Aid to Uganda Worth Paying [video] 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNooZydEeoc>.

holiday has occasioned speeches by every Ugandan head of state since its inception, but rather than having one consistent meaning over time, the Martyrs have been evoked throughout Ugandan history by a wide range of political movements in order to support their claims.

The first written accounts of the Martyrs were made by the Anglican Church immediately after their deaths. These early church historians focused on the religious component of the story, and described the Martyr's execution as a punishment for converting to Christianity. This narrative was used by the Anglican Church to draw support from donors back in England for missionary efforts in East Africa. Early British colonists also cited the religious component of the Martyr's execution to justify imperial expansion as necessary in order to protect other Bugandan Christians.

Contrary to these narratives, Ugandan nationalist figures in the twentieth century referenced the Martyrs, but focused on the theme of western intervention. Milton Obote, Uganda's first post-colonial head of state, and Idi Amin, the dictator who succeeded him, both evoked Kabaka Mwanga as a heroic anti-colonial figure. In their descriptions, the Christian pages in his court appear as subversive puppets of foreign empires.<sup>122</sup> This understanding is almost entirely the inverse of how the contemporary anti-gay movement adopted the martyrs as symbolic of Ugandan Christianity, and how their story was evoked by Museveni in his 2010 speech.

Prior to Museveni's remarks, the story of the Ugandan Martyrs had been adopted by anti-gay activists on the Christian Right to situate their politics within the context of Ugandan history. Central to the Christian Right's understanding of the story, Kabaka Mwanga was known to have

---

<sup>122</sup> John Blevins, "When Sodomy Leads to Martyrdom: Sex, Religion and Politics in Historical and Contemporary Uganda and East Africa," *Theology & Sexuality* 17 (2011), 61.

sexual relations with the male subjects of his court, including some of the pages who were executed. While this element hadn't been the focus of previous discourse about the Martyrs, figures like Martin Ssempe and Scott Lively<sup>123</sup> presented Mwanga's sexuality, and the Martyrs rejection of his advances, as the cause of their deaths. It was in this tradition that Museveni addressed the crowd.

In his speech, Museveni reiterated the notion of homosexuality as foreign, and evoked the Martyrs as the historic precedent for the efforts of the contemporary anti-gay movement. He declared "the African Church is the only one that is still standing against homosexuality," and said that if Ugandans, like "Europeans," succumb to gay influences, the country "shall end up in Sodom and Gomorrah." He explicitly rejected Mwanga as a Ugandan historical figure by declaring that the homosexuality in his palace "was not part of our culture" and instead was the product of corruption by "the Arabs." He praised the Martyrs for rejecting the "dehumanization of people through homosexuality," and described their "faith-based" rejection of Mwanga's "immorality" as the reason they were killed.<sup>124</sup> By labelling Mwanga as un-Ugandan, and describing the sexual component of the story as the cause of the Martyrs deaths, these remarks create a notion of Ugandan moral continuity between the Martyrs and the proponents of increased anti-gay legislation.

This telling of the events not only establishes a precedent for Ugandan rejection of same-sex intimacy, but also reinforces recruitment myths by depicting homosexuality as being forced onto people and associated with violence. In the speech, Museveni presents the Martyrs as exemplary of what it means to be genuinely Ugandan, and uses their deaths as evidence of

---

<sup>123</sup> Michelle Martin, "Uganda Punishing Gays: 'Sodomy is Not A Human Right' Says Evangelical Leader," *National Public Radio*, February 27, 2014.

<sup>124</sup> Francis Kagolo, "Uganda: Museveni Warns on Dangers of Sodomy," *New Vision*, June 3, 2010.



homosexuality's incompatibility with Christian values. By arbitrarily labeling the Martyrs as Ugandans and Mwanga as foreign, Museveni's remarks connect Ugandan nationalism to the politics of the anti-gay movement.

In the 2011 essay, "When Sodomy Leads to Martyrdom: Sex, Religion and Politics in Historical and Contemporary Uganda and East Africa" the historian John Blevins argues against this narrative, and criticizes the historical record on which it's based. He notes how references to Mwanga's sexuality originate from a 1914 Vatican inquiry into the executions that exclusively relied on third person sources. Blevins contrasts the interviews in that survey that describe the Kabaka's sexuality as an important factor, with the eyewitness testimony of other court pages and royal subjects, recorded by the Anglican Church in 1887, that made no mention of sexual relationships whatsoever.<sup>125</sup> He cites the Pope's original beatification of the Martyrs, along with Museveni's Martyrs day speeches in the 1990s and early 2000s, which leave absent any mention of homosexuality as further evidence that the anti-gay relevance of the Martyr's execution is a contemporary phenomenon.<sup>126</sup> Blevin concludes that the Christian opposition to Mwanga's rule has been viewed differently throughout Ugandan history, and suggests that because colonial politics obscured the historical study of gender relations in the Kabaka's court, inaccurate western terms have filled the gaps in the historical record.<sup>127</sup>

In both of these examples Bahati and Museveni used nationalist rhetoric to justify their beliefs and portray the anti-gay movement as traditional. While Bahati evoked state sovereignty, and Museveni referenced figures from Uganda's past, both figures connected the ideology of the anti-gay movement with what it meant to be Ugandan. Bahati's arguments assuaged fears of

---

<sup>125</sup> Blevins, 42.

<sup>126</sup> Blevins, 70.

<sup>127</sup> Blevins, 62.

western influence, while Museveni's evocation of the Ugandan Martyrs created a notion of moral unity and continuity.

## Bibliography

“A Brief Autobiography,” Scott Lively Ministries, <http://www.scottlively.net/a-brief-autobiography/>.

Adams, Rachel. “I Spoke to the Author of Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill,” *Vice Media*, December 13, 2012.

Ambrosino, Brandon. “Meet the Attorney who got Uganda’s Anti-Gay Law Overtuned,” *Vox*, August 21, 2014.

Arne Bigstein and Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, “Is Uganda an Emerging Economy: A Report for the OECD Project Emerging Africa,” *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*, 1999.

Bigstein, Arne and Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa. *Is Uganda an Emerging Economy: A Report for the OECD Project Emerging Africa*. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1999. Assessed March 20, 2017. <https://www.oecd.org/countries/uganda/2674943.pdf>.

Bishop, Bill. “OCA Prevails in Lawsuit,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, November 6, 1993.

Biryabarema, Elias, “Uganda’s Ruling Party Urges Museveni to Run Again,” *Reuters*, February 12, 2014.

Blevins, John. “When Sodomy Leads to Martyrdom: Sex, Religion and Politics in Historical and Contemporary Uganda and East Africa,” *Theology & Sexuality* 17 (2011): 51-74.

Boyd, Lydia. “The Problem with Freedom: Homosexuality and Human Rights in Uganda,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (2013): 697-724.

Bjornstad, Randi. “Nazi Issue Clouds ‘13’ Fight.” *Eugene Register-Guard*, 1994.

Cheney, Kristen. “Locating Neocolonialism, ‘Tradition,’ and Human Rights in Uganda’s ‘Gay Death Penalty,’” *African Studies Review* 55 (2012): 77-95.

“Children’s Group urges drug rehab fund uses.” *Greenfield Recorder*, April 22, 1977.

Cohen, Jonathan and Tony Tate. “The Less They Know, the Better: Abstinence-Only HIV/AIDS Programs in Uganda,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 14 (2006): 174-178.

*Country of Origin Report: Sexual and Gender Minorities Uganda*. Organization for Refugee, Asylum and Migration, October, 2014.

Dunn, Bob. "Shelburne Falls Native Accused in Ugandan Gay Rights Case." *Greenfield Recorder*, January 8, 2013.

Dunn, Katia. "Honor Thy Debts." *The Portland Mercury*, October 5, 2000.

"Disturbed Man Removed from S.F. Residence." *Greenfield Recorder*, January 25, 1974.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, August 6, 1975.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, August 26, 1975.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, April 3, 1976.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, April 27, 1976.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, June 8, 1976.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, August 30, 1976.

"District Court," *Greenfield Recorder*, March 23, 1977.

Fetner, Tina. "Working Anita Bryant: The Impact of Christian Anti-Gay Activism on Lesbian and Gay Movement Claims," *Social Problems* 48 (2001): 411-428.

Fallers, Lloyd A. "Ideology and Culture in Uganda Nationalism," *American Anthropologist* 63 (1961): 677-686.

Gross, Terry. "The Secret Political Reach of the Family," *National Public Radio*, November 24, 2009.

Hagerty, Barbara Bradley. "Anti-Gay Atmosphere Permeates Uganda," *National Public Radio*, December 20, 2010.

Jorgic, Drazen and Philippa Croome. "Uganda Anti-Gay Bill Author Says Aid Cuts Small Price to Pay," March 3, 2014.

Jensen, Erik N. "The Pink Triangle and Political Consciousness: Gays, Lesbians, and the Memory of Nazi Persecution," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11 (2002): 319-349.

Kiwanuka, M.S.M. "Nationality and Nationalism in Africa: The Uganda Case," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4 (1970): 229-247.

Kaoma, Kapya. *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia*. Somerville, MA: Political Research Associates, 2009.

Kron, Josh. "Resentment Towards the West Bolsters Uganda's New Anti-Gay Bill," *New York Times*, February 28, 2012.

Lively, Scott. *Redeeming the Rainbow*. Springfield, MA: Veritas Aterna Press, 2009.  
[http://www.defendthefamily.com/\\_docs/resources/7803765.pdf](http://www.defendthefamily.com/_docs/resources/7803765.pdf)

Lively, Scott, "King Philip: alive and well," *Greenfield Recorder*, September 29, 1976.

Lively, Scott, "Solidarity Group for Indian Rights," *Greenfield Recorder*, October 9, 1796.

Lively, Scott, "Dan Patch, at 70, relives his vaudeville years," *Greenfield Recorder*, July 2, 1976.

Lively, Scott, "King Philip: alive and well." *Greenfield Recorder*, September 29, 1976.

Livley, Scott and Kevin Abrams. *The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in The Nazi Party*. Sacramento: Veritas Aterna Press, 1995.

Lively, Scott. *The Poisoned Stream*. Keizer: Founders Publishing Company, 1997.

Maddow, Rachel. "Ugana Be Kidding Me," *MSNBC*, December 9, 2010.

Makara, Sabati, Lise Rakner and Lars Svasand. "Turnaround: The National Resistance Movement and the Reintroduction of a Multiparty System in Uganda," *Interational Political Science Review* 30, no.2 (2009): 185-204.

Malone, Barry. "Uganda's Kill the Gay Bill Shelved Again," *Reuters*, May 13, 2011.

Martin, Michelle. "U.S. Evangelical Leaders Blamed for Uganda Anti-Gay Sentiment," *National Public Radio*, December 18, 2009.

Martin, Michelle. "Uganda Punish Gays: 'Sodomy is Not A Human Right' Says Evangelical Leader," *National Public Radio*, February 27, 2014.

Murray, Stephen O and Will Roscoe. *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities*. New York: Pillgrave, 1998.

"My Run for Governor," Scott Lively Ministries, <http://www.scottlively.net/the-run-for-governor/>.

- Mbebe, Achille. "African Modes of Self Writing," *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 239-273.
- Mantyla, Kyle, "Lively: Russia's Anti-Gay Law Is 'One Of The Proudest Achievements Of My Career,'" Right Wing Watch, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/lively-russias-anti-gay-law-is-one-of-the-proudest-achievements-of-my-career/>.
- "OCA Gets Ready to Take its Battle to 1994 Ballots," *Eugene Register Guard*, November 11, 1993.
- Oloka-Onyango, Joseph. "New Breed' Leadership, Conflict and Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Sociopolitical Biography of Uganda's Yoweri Kaguta Museveni," *Africa Today* 50 (2004): 29-52.
- Political Research Associates. "FULL - Scott Lively Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Conference 2009." Filmed [March 2009], Youtube video, 2:52:43. Posted [April 2014]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9F9k4guN3M>.
- Prortal, Ann. "Voters Approve Anti-Gay Measure," *Eugene Register-Guard*, May 20, 1992.
- Peeples, Jasse. "Uganda Among World's Top Gay Porn Consumers," *Advocate*, January 16, 2014.
- Rule, Sheila. "Rebel Sworn in as Uganda President," *New York Times*, January 30, 1986.
- Rice, Xan. "Uganda Considers Death Sentence for Gay Sex in Bill Before Parliament," *The Guardian*, November 29, 2009.
- Rizzuto, Robert, "2014 Massachusetts campaign spending topped \$33M; statewide candidates who spent most won," *Mass Live*, February 18, 2015. Accessed May 3, 2017, [http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/02/massachusetts\\_political\\_candid.html#incart\\_river\\_index\\_topics](http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/02/massachusetts_political_candid.html#incart_river_index_topics).
- Rosenblum, Peter. "Irrational Exuberance: The Clinton Administration in Africa," *Current History* 101, no.665 (2002): 101-103.
- Sadgrove, Joanna. "Morality Plays and Money Matters: Towards a More Situated Understanding of the Politics of Homosexuality in Uganda," *Journal of Modern Africa Studies* 50 (2012):103-129.
- Sharlet, Jeff. *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2009.
- Sharlet, Jeff. *C Street: The Fundamentalist Threat to American Democracy*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010.

“Scott Lively,” Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/scott-lively>.

Tamale, Sylvia. “Homosexuality is not un-African,” *Al Jazeera America*, April 26, 2014.

Tamale, Sylvia. “Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda,” in *Africa After Gender?*, ed. Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan F. Miescher, 17-29. University of Indiana Press: 2007.

Tipp, Ali-Mari. *Museveni’s Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime*. London: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

“Two arraigned for break in Bernardston,” *Greenfield Recorder*, March 19, 1976.

“Uganda Court Annuls Anti-Homosexuality Law,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, August 1, 2014.

*Vice Weekly*. “A Prayer for Uganda.” Season 3, Episode 10. Directed by Isobel Yeung. Vice Media and HBO, March 6, 2015.

Waidzunas, Tom. *The Straight Line: How the Fringe Science of Ex-Gay Therapy Reoriented Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Walth, Brent. “Poll: Voters would nix less-extreme Measure 9.” *Eugene Register-Guard*, December 18<sup>th</sup> 1992.

Wu, Jason. “Uganda’s Kill the Gay Bill is Back,” *The Daily Beast*, March 1, 2015.