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Earthrise: The Franciscan Story

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Abstract

This article uses Franciscan history to explore an alternative approach to global history. Following Benjamin Lazier's observations about 'Earthrise', which showed that images of the world have been entangled with intellectual and political discourses, this article explores the Franciscans' own Earthrise perspective which can be traced in the spiritual and mystical writings produced in the late Middle Ages. The aim of this article is not only to contest the kind of periodization which has seen the global turn and 'global era' as peculiarly 'modern', but to suggest that any study of the 'global' must incorporate an analysis of the multi-layered nature of that concept. It suggests that the global is not so much a scale as an idea, and considers how the hyper-local place of the body can be a site for realising a global vision.

Introduction

In 1968 the Apollo 8 space mission transmitted an image of the world as a whole as seen from space, Earthrise. Benjamin Lazier contended that this image inaugurated a new global consciousness, which was entangled with discourses of modernity,¹ writing that ‘the word “globalisation” and the phrase “global environment,” “global humanity” simply did not exist before the Earthrise era’.² Yet, as Lazier was also aware,³ for all its posturing novelty, Earthrise, the image of the world seen as a whole from space, had a long history. Denis Cosgrove has observed: ‘for all its radical newness, actually witnessing the globe culminates a long genealogy of imagining and reflecting upon the possibility of doing so’.⁴ Visions of the world were produced throughout the Middle Ages, in the cloisters of monasteries, and in the minds of mystics.⁵ From the perspective of the Middle Ages we see that the ‘global’ is not so much a scale as an idea, which reminds us that conceptualisations of the world have epistemological and political dimensions.⁶ This does not only hold true for the global Middle Ages, but also contemporary global history; Duncan Bell defined global history as the ‘study of practices of world-making’,⁷ and explained that ““global” is not a geographical designation of a synonym for “non-Western” but instead denotes the perceptual scope of an argument or other act of imagination’.⁸ This concurs with the cross-cultural study of Yi-Fu Tuan, who explored the mythical space which humans construct at the boundaries of experience.⁹ This article presents the case of the Franciscans global vision, and I use the term vision here since, as Denis Cosgrove observed, the word ‘incorporates both the ocular act of registering the

¹ Lazier, ‘Earthrise’.

² Ibid: 606.

³ Ibid: 620.

⁴ Cosgrove, *Apollo’s Eye*: ix.

⁵ For broader discussions of spiritual communities in the Middle Ages see Grundmann, *Religious Movements*.

⁶ Debates over the meaning of the ideological construct of modernity have raged amongst historians for years. This paper does not reproduce those debates but questions some of the assumptions of its uniqueness.

⁷ Bell, ‘Making and Taking Worlds, Intellectual History’: 257. As Bell acknowledges, the term ‘worldmaking’ comes from Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Tuan, *Space and Place*.

external world, and more the abstract and imaginative sense of creating and projecting images',¹⁰ and suggests the ways in which Franciscan history offers an alternative approach to global history by showing the role of beliefs and ideas in envisioning the world as a whole. Existing studies on the contribution of pre-modern religious groups to global history have focused on the physical scale of their enterprise as missionaries; instead this paper uses religious history to historicise the construction of perspectives on the world as a whole and to relativise the notion of scale. The history of the Franciscan Order offers a significant case study since they did not conceptualise their movement through the world as missionaries but as pilgrims (*peregrini*), they did not seek to possess the world but to renounce it, and they were driven by a unique ideology of poverty.

Franciscan history is a critical lens for bringing this subject into focus since the mechanics of the Franciscan global vision was driven by the dialogue between the transcendent and immanent ways of viewing the world;¹¹ transcendence is the spirituality of above and beyond, while immanent, from the Latin '*in manere*', is to remain within. This distinction parallels the distinction between place (*locus*) and space (lit. *spatium*, but also *caelus / coelus* (heaven)); while space is more abstract, place is more known.¹² The Franciscans' obsession with poverty linked immanent and transcendent spiritualities, place and space; concern for the poor and the materiality of poverty suggests an immanent spirituality, but the spiritual significance with which this was imbued was more suggestive of a transcendental position. This emerges in the writings of the early Franciscans but was developed in particular by the more radical Spiritual Franciscans in the thirteenth century, ideas which become influential amongst the first Franciscans in the Americas in the sixteenth

¹⁰ Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision*.

¹¹ Although I focus on the Franciscans, the dialogue between immanent and transcendental religions can be found in other world religions. See Strathern. 'Transcendental Intransigence'.

¹² See Tuan, *Space and Place*: 6.

century.¹³ The Franciscans' ideology of poverty played an important role in their construction of their global vision; this poverty, which was first realised in the hyper-local place of the Franciscan body, created a liminal space, blending the physical and metaphysical, which became a platform for the Franciscan's global vision, their own Earthrise.

The Franciscans' vision of the world is not as readily accessible as the Earthrise image that can be summoned in a fraction of a second by any search engine, since it was, to use Duncan Bell's phrase, 'an act of imagination'.¹⁴ The global vision of the Franciscans cannot be located on the surface of a map or globe or in a collection of instruments devoted to the measurement of space, such as astrolabes and armillary spheres, but can be traced in the Franciscans spiritual writings, the descriptions of their beliefs, actions, perception of the world and, above all, the meaning of that world. Franciscan history consequently offers an example of the multi-layered complexity, and indeed politics, of conceptualisations of the world which can be of interest to those dealing with modern conceptualisation of the world, for example those dealing with issues such as globalisation. In the *Fontes Franciscanae*, the word world (*mundus*, but also *saeculum*) was more common than globe (*globus*), which appears less frequently.¹⁵ Bruce Mazlish, a theorist of 'New Global History', used the Earthrise image to define global history as something particular to 'modernity' and considered the terminological shift from 'world' to 'globe' to indicate a transformation between modern and pre-modern understandings of the world. He wrote that '*world* comes from the Middle English for 'human existence,' while globe, from the Latin *globus*, or sphere, and 'permits the notion of standing outside our planet', a 'spaceship earth'.¹⁶ However, it is unwise to use this shift in linguistic signification to suggest an epistemological rupture in the complex ways in which we conceptualise the world. Firstly, Lazier's article

¹³ See my *The Franciscan Invention of the New World*.

¹⁴ Bell, 'Making and Taking Worlds': 257.

¹⁵ Menestò et al, *Fontes Franciscani*.

¹⁶ Mazlish, 'Comparing Global History to World History': 389.

indicated that the twentieth-century philosophers who reacted to the Earthrise image were very much concerned with the meaning of human existence, much like the Franciscans, who envisaged the globe before them. Secondly, while the word ‘world’, *saeculum* or *mundus*, was more common, at least in the Franciscans’ early writings (and I will use it here), this does not mean that different intellectual and ideological processes were involved in conceptualising the world in the Middle Ages than are at work in modernity; when the ‘modern’ eye scans a world map or gazes at the Earthrise image, the conceptualisation of the world that those images are linked to still involve an act of imagination.

The first part of this paper will explain how the Franciscans used their voluntary poverty to create a distanced perspective on the world, a perspective produced from an invented space beyond the material world. It thinks in particular about the importance of the place of the body in relation to the construction of ideas about the space of the world. The second part of this paper will explore the Franciscans’ vision of the world which was produced by the perspective of poverty. The conclusion will reflect upon the significance of connecting ‘Earthrise’ and the Franciscan story.

The Franciscans

While it is difficult to historicise the Franciscans, a community that has encompassed diverse individuals across the centuries, as a coherent group with a consistent story the Order had some unity through their affiliation to their institution.¹⁷ The Order was fractured by factionalism; there were ongoing disputes about the correct interpretation of poverty and Spiritualism and mysticism were endemic subcultures in the Order. The split between the more conservative *Conventuals* and more radical *Observants* was confirmed by the papal bull

¹⁷ Of course, the idea that institutions have particular shared characteristics is the subject of debate. Within the Roman Catholic Church this has been accepted at least since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which asserted that ‘each religious institution had its own particular characteristics’ (*carism*). Historians debate the extent and implications of the diversity of the Franciscans that have composed the Order, but despite this multilayered diversity they have not challenged the possibility of the Franciscan Order having an institutional history.

Ite Vos in 1517 but did not end the Order's factionalism. Despite this heretodoxy, by swearing the Franciscan Rule Franciscans became members of an Order that had revolutionised the institutional landscape of the late Middle Ages.¹⁸ Within Christianity, monastic Rules (for example Benedictine, Cluny, and Cistercian) had mandated flight from the world, *fuga mundi*, to the monastery,¹⁹ but the Franciscan Rule was a *Regula Vitae*, Rule of Life, establishing their status as ascetics, but locating them in the world. This marked the Franciscans as distinct from other mendicant orders, such as the Dominicans who followed the Rule of St Augustine rather than establishing a new Rule.²⁰

The Franciscans also had some unity through their textual tradition. The circulation of key authoritative texts, variants of the *Fontes Franciscanae* which includes the early writings of St Francis and the historical and hagiographical sources relating to the early Franciscans, were used to establish a Franciscan collective identity, and particularly a concern for poverty, that transcended the different factions of the Order. These texts established the collective identity of the Order and had a textual life influencing the ideas of the members of the Order throughout the late Middle Ages and early modernity; they enable access to a Franciscan global vision as it was textually constructed by the Franciscans. This paper uses these early texts, and those of the more radical Spiritualist branch of the Order, for whom poverty was most important. It also refers to travel writing from Franciscans experiencing the world from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. As this article will show, this global vision was particularly visible in the writings of the late medieval Spiritual Franciscans, such as Angelo Clareno (1247 - 1337) and Ubertino da Casale (1259 - c. 1329), and who did most to develop the Franciscans' ascetic theology. I have focused on the early Franciscan writings and the spiritualist texts, such as the *Assisi Compilation (Compilatio Assisiensis)* and the writings of

¹⁸ The way in which the Franciscans inaugurated an institutional revolution has been observed by Agamben, Knowles, Little, and others.

¹⁹ Parallels can be found in other world religions, with Buddhist Monks and Hindu sages.

²⁰ For a broader contextualisation of asceticism and the medieval institutional landscape see Kaelber *Schools of Asceticism*.

Angelo Clareno and Ubertino da Casale, especially since these feature in the *Floreto de Sant Francisco*, a compilation of Franciscan sources based on select Castilian translations of the *Fontes franciscanae* and containing many of the aforementioned Spiritualist writings, published in Seville in 1492, which was one of the first books taken by the Franciscans to the Americas.²¹ This textual tradition points to continuities across the history of the Order and indicates that the Spiritualist ideas were used as the Franciscans sought to invent a new world in the Americas in the sixteenth century. This article does not make a distinction between ‘fictitious’ and ‘real’ elements in Franciscan sources, as has often been the obsession in Franciscan historiography, in the debate known as the ‘Franciscan Question’,²² but treats all textual imaginings of the world equally in order to use the texts to understand the Franciscans’ conceptions of the world, this follows Yi-Fu Tuan, who critiqued the boundary of myth and reality in the construction of space and place.²³

The Franciscans, a mendicant Order that emerged in the thirteenth century and followed a radical doctrine of voluntary poverty, were critical of the material world that they inhabited and anxious about its moral condition. They committed themselves to a life of pilgrimage, which was both a physical journey throughout the world, and a metaphysical flight from it. The Franciscans conceptualisation of their pilgrimage as a movement between worlds came out of a strong and diverse intellectual culture in Europe that conceptualised man as *Homo Viator*, a wayfarer and ‘wanderer between two worlds, but in more than one sense’.²⁴ Both of the Franciscans’ journeys, physical and the metaphysical, negotiated a space in which it was possible to gain a perspective on the whole world and confront their anxiety about the human condition and man’s relationship with the world. Lazier’s article explained

²¹ See Arcelus Ulibarrena ed., *Floreto de Sant Francisco*.

²² This historiographical trend was established following Paul Sabatier’s 1894 publication of the *Life of St Francis of Assisi*, and debates continue in recent publications such as Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi, The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*.

²³ Tuan, *Space and Place*: 85.

²⁴ Ladner, ‘*Homo Viator*’: 233.

how Earthrise also prompted philosophers to reflect on the meaning of the world and man's place within it, referring in particular to Hannah Arendt who, like the Franciscans centuries earlier, was anxious about the world and man's relationship to it. Lazier noted that for Arendt, Earthrise was a source of anxiety since it depicted a 'man-made' planet, and ideas about this 'crystallised in reflections on what it means when we look back upon Earth from beyond'.²⁵ This article shows that the Earthrise perspective which was entangled with discourses of modernity and linked to the start of the new 'global era', is in fact just one example the visions of the world that people have created throughout history in accordance with their philosophical and ideological understandings and bodily perceptions.

The history of the Franciscan Order begins with Giovanni Bernardone (St Francis, 1181/1182-1226), a wealthy cloth merchant, who, in 1204, was struck by anxiety about the morality of his economic context and material condition, and renounced his possessions to lead a life of voluntary poverty.²⁶ Francis' disdain for his contemporaries' greedy attitude towards the world is reported in the *Anonymous Chronicle of Perugia (Anonimo Perugino)*, where he describes a priest as 'consumed by a burning passion of greed'.²⁷ The hagiographies of Francis describe how he rejected the material world; he not only rejected all his possessions and money but stripped himself naked of all his clothes, becoming just a body, naked before the creator.²⁸ Francis pursued the life of a mendicant, performing the ritual of begging for alms in different towns. Not content by these gestures of poverty he frequently left the towns altogether, climbing the vertical landscape of the Apennines to stay in the caves

²⁵ Lazier, 'Earthrise': 604.

²⁶ These legends of St Francis and the renunciation have been used as a guide for controlling the idealized collective identity of the order. In this project I am approaching the sources as artefacts of a discourse, and not engaging with the Franciscan Question that dominates Franciscan historiography. For more on handling Franciscan sources see Dalarun, *The Misadventure of Francis of Assisi*, and Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi*. For different interpretations of St Francis' renunciation see Trexler, *Naked Before the Father*. For more on their relationship with their economic context see Todeschini, *Franciscan Wealth, From Voluntary Poverty to Market Society*.

²⁷ *The Anonymous of Perugia*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (FA: ED)*, Vol. II, 34-58: 38.

²⁸ For example Thomas of Celano, *The Life of St Francis by Thomas of Celano (Vita Prima)*, FA: ED, Vol. I: 180-308.

that hang above Assisi or on the rocky pinnacle of La Verna in pursuit of the experience of spiritual poverty. In the caves of these mountains Francis used poverty and mortal deprivations to transcend the materiality of his physical existence and journey to the spiritual world of God. From this liminal space between the beyond the material world, Francis also looked back on the world, filled with anxiety. Francis' performance of poverty, achieved through his rejection of the material world, articulated his perspective that the material world was corrupt and governed by greed. *The Legend of the Three Companions (Legenda trium sociorum)* reported that Francis went into the cave, refusing food and water, and was 'inspired by a new and extraordinary spirit'.²⁹ It described how Francis 'endured great suffering and mental anxiety, unable to rest until he accomplished in action what he had conceived in mind': to initiate the Franciscan movement of voluntary poverty, a re-orientation of man's place in the world. Francis left the mountain cave where he had denied himself basic sustenance, but the perspective that he gained in those days defined the Franciscan Order, which was officially established with papal approval of a Franciscan Rule (*Regula Bullata*).

The *Regula Bullata*, which officially inaugurated the Franciscan institution, also defined their doctrine of poverty and their mode of realising this doctrine in life:

Let the Friars appropriate nothing for themselves,
neither **house** nor **place**, nor any thing. And **as pilgrims and**
exiles (cf. 1 Pt 2:11) in this age let them go about for alms
confidently, as ones serving the Lord in poverty and humility,
nor is it proper that they be ashamed (to do so), since the
Lord made Himself poor in this **world** (cf. 2 Cor 8:9) for us.
This is that **loftiness of most high poverty**, which has

²⁹ *The Legend of the Three Companions*, in FA: ED, Vol. II, 66-110: 75.

established you, my most dear Friars, as heirs and kings of the **Kingdom of Heaven**, making you poor in things, it has raised you high in virtues (cf Jm 2:5). Let this be your portion, **which leads you into the land of the living** (cf. Ps 141,6). Cleaving totally to this, most beloved Friars, may you want to have nothing other under heaven in perpetuity, for the sake of the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁰

*Fratres nihil sibi approprient nec **domum** nec **locum** nec aliquam rem. Et tanquam **peregrini et advenae** (cfr. 1 Ptr 2,11) in hoc **saeculo** in paupertate et humilitate Domino famulantes vadant pro eleemosyna confidenter, nec oportet eos verecundari, quia Dominus pro nobis se fecit pauperem in hoc **mundo** (cfe. 2 Cor 8, 9). Haec est illa **celsitudo altissimae paupertatis**, quae vos, carissimos fratres meos, heredes et reges **regni caelorum** instituit, pauperes rebus fecit, virtutibus sublimavit (cfr. Jac 2, 5). Haec sit portio vestra, **quae perducit in terram viventium** (cfr. Ps 141, 6). Cui, dilectissimi fratres, totaliter inhaerentes nihil aliud pro nomine Domini nostri Jesus Christi in perpetuum sub caelo habere velitis.³¹*

It is significant that the Franciscans are requested to go ‘as pilgrims and strangers in this world’.³² Thinking about the Franciscans as pilgrims, rather than narrating their history as missionaries, is the key to understanding their unique global history. For the Franciscans

³⁰ *Regula bullata*, Esser ed., *Gli Scritti de S. Francesco D’Assisi*: 426.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Regula bullata*, in FA: ED, Vol. I, 99-106: 103.

this pilgrimage was both physical and metaphysical, and their poverty, real or imagined, became a prism through which to view the world.³³

The *Regula Bullata* also requested that the Brothers ‘not make anything their own, neither house, nor place, nor anything at all’. The idealised Franciscan rejected the material world and dis-located himself from familiar genres of space such as those of home, of market, of monastery. They were pilgrims, or wayfarers; on his deathbed, Francis reminded the Brothers that they should ‘always be guests’ (*semper ibi hospitantes*) in the world, ‘avoid permanent residence’, and to ‘flee into another country to do penance’ (*fugiant in aliam terram*).³⁴ This perspective, the product of their poverty, led them to interpret the space of the world in a different way.

The dislocating violence of poverty pushed the Franciscans into a liminal space on the edge of the material world, yet the Franciscans were deeply concerned about the whole world; they simultaneously wanted to leave it behind and were committed to assisting in its salvation. Like the Apollo astronauts, they put themselves beyond the world and looked back on it, fearfully. As Francis, the founder, lay on his deathbed hanging between life and death he recorded the Franciscans’ concern with the whole world: ‘we adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the whole world (*in toto mundo*) and we bless You because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world’.³⁵ The Evening Sermon on St Francis (1267) described how, as a result of zeal for souls, ‘Francis became rapt in ecstasy and was raised to the heights’.³⁶ Elevated by poverty and raised by a zeal for souls, the Franciscans invented a location from which they were looking back and seeing the world as a whole from afar. *The Assisi Compilation* reported that in the sermon that Francis gave in

³³ This was also stated by Armstrong, *St Francis of Assisi, Writings for a Gospel Life*: 15.

³⁴ St Francis, *The Testament* (1226), FA: ED, Vol. I, 124-127: 126.

³⁵ *Ibid*: 124-125.

³⁶ *The Evening Sermon on Saint Francis* (1267), FA: ED, Vol. II, 759-765: 761.

Arezzo, not long after the General Chapter at the Portiuncula which had dedicated the Franciscans to their global mission, he began by saying to the people:

I speak to you as those in demons' chains. You bound and sold yourselves like animals in the market because of your wretched state. You betrayed yourselves into the hands of the demons when you placed yourselves at the will of those who have destroyed and continue to destroy themselves, and want to destroy you and the whole city. But you are wretched and ignorant people and ungrateful for the favour of God who, although unknown to many of you, at one time freed this city through the merits of a most holy brother, Sylvester.³⁷

This passage is indicative of the critical gaze and anxiety for the human condition which dominated the Franciscans' perspective as they looked back on the world from the flight of their pilgrimage. Here poverty also gave them a source of power for inventing their alternative spiritual world. By sacrificing their location in the physical world and inventing themselves as physical and metaphysical pilgrims they unlocked the door to their own Earthrise perspective since, seeing themselves in a sense beyond the physical world, they could then look back at it. This perspective was developed in particular by the more radical Spiritualist Franciscans. One important early text of the thirteenth century, which influenced the development of the Spiritualist branch of the Franciscans, was *The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty (Sacrum Commercium)* (ascribed to Giovanni da Palma). *The Sacred Exchange* encapsulated the connection between Franciscan poverty and the Franciscans' earthrise perspective; Francis' bride, Lady Poverty, a figure who symbolised the personification of the Franciscan ideal of poverty, is described as 'standing at the top of the mountain' and looking down its slopes.³⁸ The Franciscans' *altissimae paupertatis*, their

³⁷ *The Assisi Compilation*: 216.

³⁸ *The Sacred Exchange between St Francis and Lady Poverty*, in FA: ED, Vol. I, 529-554: 533.

highest poverty, was both a flight from the world and to it, a spiritual perspective driven by the dialectics of the transcendental and the immanent.

The Franciscans pioneering the Franciscans' global vision were tapping into a long tradition of asceticism. They are reminiscent of the Holy Men who rootlessly wandered the deserts of the Near East in Late Antiquity, mortifying their flesh. Peter Brown has described the importance of vertical landscapes to the literal and metaphorical rise of Holy Men in Late Antiquity; writing that 'the hermit deliberately placed himself on the mountain tops, as a usurper of the power of ba'alīm'.³⁹ Real and imagined, Franciscans used these familiar coordinates, of rocky mountains and steep slopes, to create their ascetic perspective on the world.

Dante's *Paradiso* is a powerful reminder that intellectuals in the late Middle Ages were no strangers to the Earthrise image; Dante wrote 'my eyes returned through all the seven spheres and saw the globe in such a way that I smiled at its scrawny image'.⁴⁰ In the *Commedia* Dante invested Francis with a similar global perspective, mirroring the Franciscans' Spiritual texts which depicted Francis on a hill looking down on the world, 'from this hillside, where it abates its rise, a sun was born into the world, much like this sun when it is climbing from the ganges'.⁴¹ Describing Francis as a son, Dante tapped into a familiar medieval metaphor which reminded readers that Francis was not simply another saint,⁴² but that his embodiment of *paupertas*, his marriage to Lady Poverty (*sacrum commercium*) and reception of the wounds of Christ at La Verna connected his body with Christ's.

The early Franciscan texts of the thirteenth century illustrate the way in which the Franciscans conceptualised poverty as something which transported them to another space in

³⁹ Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man': 83.

⁴⁰ Dante, *Commedia*, Canto XII.

⁴¹ Dante, *Commedia*, Canto XI, in FA: ED vol. III: 883.

⁴² See Auerbach, 'St Francis of Assisi in Dante's *Commedia*': 171.

which they were able to look back upon the world, fearfully and critically through the prism of poverty. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1221–1274), Minister General of the Franciscan Order from 1257, and a key contributor to the philosophical and historical core of the Franciscan Order, wrote how Francis was lifted up ‘from the dust of a worldly life’.⁴³ The Franciscan hagiographer Thomas of Celano (c. 1200 - c.1265) wrote that Francis ‘looked down on all earthly things’⁴⁴ (*cum cuncta terrena despicerent*).⁴⁵ Andre Vauchez has criticised Thomas of Celano for turning St Francis into ‘a kind of spiritual meteorite’ and tried to create a more restrained and balanced history of Francis.⁴⁶ However, the ‘meteorite’ perspective is something that the Franciscans actively constructed in their texts. Celano’s writing illustrates how the Franciscans’ poverty led to their unique perspective on the world; raised by poverty, the Franciscans’ ‘looking down’ on the world was both the perspective of their elevated state and an expression of disdain. We can also see from the writings of the Franciscans who travelled throughout the world in the thirteenth century that the prism of poverty shaped the Franciscans’ perspective of the world as they travelled through it. These Franciscans recorded the physical hardship and poverty of their journeys, for example Giovanni da Piano Carpini (c. 1185-1251) how the Franciscans travelling to the Far East in the thirteenth century were ‘enduring such hunger and thirst that we could scarcely keep alive’.⁴⁷ The Franciscans also recorded when they encountered the poverty of others, for example William of Rubruck (c. 1220-1293) described the Tartars as poor,⁴⁸ while the editor of another thirteenth-century travelogue by Oderic da Pordenone observed that concern for the poor was part of Oderic’s ‘vision of China.’⁴⁹ This tradition seeing the world through the

⁴³ Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, in FA: ED, Vol. II, 525-683: 526.

⁴⁴ *Vita Prima*, FA: ED: 218.

⁴⁵ *Vita Prima, Fontes Franciscanae*: 313.

⁴⁶ Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi*: 33.

⁴⁷ John of Plano Carpini, *History of the Mongols*: 66.

⁴⁸ Rockhill, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World*: 113.

⁴⁹ Bressan, ‘Oderic of Pordenone (1265-1331). His Vision of China and South East Asia’, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*: 13.

prism of poverty remained important in the history of the Order. Poverty was also important to the way the Franciscans perceived the Americas in the sixteenth century; for example, Geronimo Mendieta (1525-1604), a Franciscan very much informed by the Spiritualist tradition, described the ways in which the Amerindians shared poverty with the Franciscans, unlike the corrupt Spanish conquistadores, writing that it was not the Amerindians but the conquistadores who were slaves, as they were 'enslaved in the vile interests of the world'.⁵⁰ It is clear from such Franciscan travel writings, as well as the spiritual texts, that they thought that their poverty gave them a unique perspective on the world.

For the Franciscans, this bodily performance of apostolic poverty was more than a performance. According to the legends of St Francis, on top of the rocky cliffs of La Verna Francis received the stigmata, which linked the body of the founder of the Order to the body of Christ. As Massimo Cacciari explained, in the Franciscan tradition Francis was transcendental and transhuman in more than an allegoric way, but was 'a symbol in his very being'.⁵¹ Francis transcends time by receiving the stigmata and becoming like the body of Christ; the time travelling Francis is depicted in many works of art throughout the Renaissance as he is shown to be present in many paintings of scenes of the New Testament, even present at the birth of Christ. But this transcending of time is not about going back in time, in eschatological terms Francis is the angel of the sixth seal and figure of the future.⁵² In thinking about time-travelling message of Francis's incarnation, Cacciari reminds us of Dante, who was inspired by Francis, and described the movement from the eternal to the temporal. This is the complexity of the of the Franciscans' mysticism: it blended the immanent and the transcendental to encapsulate both a journey into and away from the world, a journey which was both spiritual and embodied. This journey for union with God was not restricted to St Francis, but open to all Franciscans through the culture of Franciscan

⁵⁰ Mendieta, *Historia*: III: 135.

⁵¹ Cacciari, *Doppio ritratto*: 14.

⁵² See my *Franciscan Invention of the New World*.

mysticism, which was developed in particular by Bonaventure, with his *Journey of the Mind to God (Itinerarium mentis in Deum)*.

From the body to the world: the Franciscan Earthrise

Creating a global vision

The Franciscans knew the role of the individual and the complexity of the knowledge at work in conceptualisations of the world. For the Franciscans, the space of the world could not be empirically calculated as its meaning was too complex and tied to the question of man's location in it. While contemplating knowledge of the world, the Spiritualist Franciscan Angelo Clareno cited the question:

Can you measure the waters with your hand and heaven with your palm?⁵³ Why then do you try to weigh and to hold within the grasp of your fingers the earth and the great elements which can be measured only by their maker? Know yourself first.⁵⁴

For the Spiritual Franciscans', the journey towards knowing and understanding the world started at the hyper-local place of the self.

As Yi-Fu Tuan wrote, 'the earth is a human body writ large'.⁵⁵ For the Franciscans, the body, which was both experienced and narrated, was the first place to realise their ideas about space which derived from their ideology of poverty. The Franciscans had an ideology of poverty which they achieved through the ritualised and routinized rejection of the material world. For the Franciscans this was a way to create a liminal space that combined the temporal and spiritual worlds. The hardships of poverty represented a way to shed the corrupt material world of the body and to journey to the spiritual world of Christ, but this did not mean that they became ascetic monks but rather that they harnessed the spiritual world

⁵³ Angelo Clareno cited 'Gregory', probably Gregory the Great, as posing this question, but the citation comes from Isaiah 40:12.

⁵⁴ Angelo Clareno, *A chronicle or history of the seven tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*: 98.

⁵⁵ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*: 89.

through poverty to transform their relationship with the material world and set them apart from the perceived greed of their contemporaries. Thomas of Celano explained that the Franciscans ‘so spurned earthly things that they barely accepted the most basic necessities of life’.⁵⁶ In the sixteenth century described Martin of Valencia (1474 - 1534), leader of Mexican ‘Twelve Apostles’, as entering a liminal state through poverty: ‘already so gaunt from so much abstinence and penitence, and from the affliction of his spirit, that he had nothing more than bones stuck to the skin and the flesh wasted away like another Job’.⁵⁷ This routine denial of sustenance placed the idealised Franciscan at the boundary of life and death, in a liminal space between the material and the spiritual world. This was an essential dimension of the Franciscans’ journey. While poverty cast the Franciscans outside of the property structures that bound communities to place and invented them as ‘pilgrims and strangers’ in this world, this led them to their de-territorialised journeying around the world, but the Franciscan journey was also an attempt to move from the material world to a spiritual world of poverty. This complex sense of pilgrimage is suggested by Thomas of Celano who wrote that Francis was ‘a pilgrim while in the body’.⁵⁸

The sense of the way in which the routine denials of poverty displaced the Franciscans from the corrupt material world and placed them in an alternative liminal space, from which they had a unique perspective on the world, can be found most strongly in the writings of the Spiritualist Franciscans. Ubertino da Casale described the way in which Francis had imitated Christ by routinely denying the body: ‘[Francis] disciplined himself so rigidly in regard to food, clothing, lodgings, sleep, and other similar bodily demands, that he scarcely took the minimum required to sustain nature.’⁵⁹ This illustrates the Franciscan idea that the existential rigors of poverty pushed Francis into a space beyond nature. The sense

⁵⁶ *Vita Prima*: 219.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*: 172.

⁵⁸ Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, FA: ED, Vol. II, 239-393: 308.

⁵⁹ Ubertino da Casale, *The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus*, FA: ED, Vol. II, 141-206: 153.

that the routines of poverty create a pathway away from the temporal world to the spiritual world is even clearer in the writing of Angelo Clareno, who wrote ‘he frees himself from earthly desires from the bottom up who wants to be free from the body, and wants by means and punishments and torture to cross over to Christ, who bore the suffering and the death of the cross for us, when we were enemies of God and servants of sin, mostly meriting eternal death’.⁶⁰ The Spiritualist Franciscans understood the violence of poverty as a mechanism for moving between worlds.

This movement between worlds was part of the Franciscans’ tradition of mysticism. The anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner explained the way in which mysticism linked external and internal pilgrimage: ‘if mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorised mysticism’.⁶¹ For the Franciscans, mysticism was linked to their pursuit of the Beatific vision; within this context it was necessary to shed corporal materiality in order to meet God as God. From the *Assisi Compilation* it is possible to see how the Franciscans believed that poverty was a mechanism for accessing the liminal space that put them between worlds:

you will pass from great toil to the greatest rest, from many sorrows and temptations to infinite happiness, from your great poverty, which you have always loved and carried from the beginning of your conversion to the day of your death, to the greatest, true, and infinite riches, from death in time to life in eternity. There you will forever behold face to face the Lord your God whom you have contemplated in this world with so much desire and love.⁶²

This notion of journeying towards God fitted within the intellectual discourse and spiritual experience of mysticism. In the *Sacrum Commercium*, poverty is described as a journey to

⁶⁰ Angelo Clareno, *A chronicle or history of the seven tribulations*: 20.

⁶¹ Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*: 7.

⁶² *The Assisi Compilation*: 121.

God: 'Among the other outstanding and exceptional virtues which prepare in us an abode and a dwelling for God and which show *an excellent* and unencumbered *path* of going to and arriving before Him, holy Poverty shines with a certain prerogative before them all'.⁶³ For the Franciscans poverty created a pathway for realising a spiritual, or anti-material, vision of the world.

The Franciscans' spiritual journey was eschatological as well as mystical. Like Earthrise, the Franciscans' global vision was connected to a movement between epochs. St Francis transcended the temporal distance between the time of the Franciscans and the time of Christ. Late medieval and Renaissance art depicted Francis as being present at the birth of Christ and inserted him into depictions of the life of Christ.⁶⁴ Ewert Cousins called this the mysticism of the historical event.⁶⁵ Cousins describes this as 'a form of consciousness whereby we remember a past event, of our own lives or of our collective history. But it is more than merely recalling for it makes us present to the event and event present to us'.⁶⁶ Again the body played the key role in this. The legend of St Francis receiving the stigmata on the mountain of La Verna visualised the metamorphosis of the body of Christ with the body of Francis, joined in the shared experience of the tortured human body. Francis' reception of the stigmata was seen as an indication that Francis was the Angel of the Sixth Seal, prophesied by Joachim of Fiore (a Calabrian abbot, c. 1135 – 1202) as heralding the start of the final age, the age of the spirit. Significantly, Joachim prophesied that this third age, the age of the Holy Spirit, would be realised on earth within the history of the world and would be characterised by the establishment of a state of evangelical poverty and peace, shared by all people. Such ideas were developed amongst the Spiritualist Franciscans

⁶³ *The Sacred Exchange between St Francis and Lady Poverty*: 529.

⁶⁴ This is visible in many of examples of renaissance art which depicted Francis at the birth of Christ. For example see the works of the fifteenth century Florentine painters Filippo Lippi and Alesso Baldovinetti. See Seubert and Bychkov eds, *Beyond the Text, Franciscan Art and the Construction of Religion*.

⁶⁵ Cousins, 'Francis of Assisi: Christian Mysticism at the Crossroads': 167.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

in the fourteenth century. Angelo Clareno described Francis' stigmata as evidence of Francis' identity of the Angel of Sixth Seal which heralded the new age, writing 'the dawn of a new time will be seen with a holy change for the better'.⁶⁷ The joining of the bodies of Francis and Christ through the stigmata symbolised the way in which the Franciscans were moving the history of the world into a new era. This new era was to be the Third Age predicted by Joachim, the time in which the world would be characterised by evangelical poverty. For Angelo Clareno, Francis 'marked by the seal; was the 'father of the poor' who initiated the new 'evangelical state'.⁶⁸

This creation of the evangelical state was replicated by the followers of Francis, who interpreted their poverty as a mechanism for emptying the body of the material world and using it as a space for realising the spiritual world. As Ubertino of Casale wrote:

those who imitate true poverty in fervour of spirit must, of necessity, *live of celestial fare*. Because they give no thought to earthly wares and relish instead, during their present exile the delicious crumbs that fall from the table of the angels, that is that most exalted virtue of Christ Jesus on which His unique seal is imprinted on those who strive to observe it through the course of their perfection.⁶⁹

Here Ubertino indicated how poverty transported the Franciscans beyond the material world. The Franciscans were not just seeing the world in another way but living it. They were creating the world of the spirit, predicted by Joachim, in the world in which they lived.

Poverty, which was realised through routinized and ritualised violence against the body, put the Franciscans on a pilgrimage away from the material world, facilitating their ability to form a critical perspective. As Ubertino da Casale summarised:

And this is why poverty and earthly persecution are sisters and why the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given them, not just in promise but to possess. For the

⁶⁷ Angelo Clareno, *A chronicle or history of the seven tribulations*: 219.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*: 220.

⁶⁹ Ubertino da Casale, *The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus*: 159-60. My italics.

persecution is able to sweep away an entire world, while evangelical poverty has no power to defend what is mundane. The most prudent Creator made none of his creatures without its proper place; and since Poverty and Persecution had in this world no place they could call their own, he gave them heavenly mansions.⁷⁰

Poverty moved the Franciscans to a space above the world, and from this location they gained a critical perspective on the world.

The Franciscan vision of the world

The Franciscans' had a spiritual vision of the world, a desire for deep knowledge. While the radical Franciscans' interpretation of Franciscan poverty and disdain for the material world flirted with the boundaries of gnostic heresy, Francis was not a dualist and his concern for the world and the environment is part of the legend of St Francis. Legendary images of St Francis include him preaching to the birds (Giotto), and using real flora and fauna to initiate the tradition of the nativity scene, a micro-space which encapsulates human history in the Christocentric tradition. Lazier noted that the Earthrise image precipitated a concern for global environment, but the Franciscans' own conception of the world was also linked to concern for the environment.⁷¹ Following the hagiographic tradition of St Francis, Franciscans have long been connected with concern for the natural world and indeed Pope Francis I began his 2014 Papal Encyclical with a reference to the writing of St Francis and the need to care for 'our common home'.⁷² The legend of Francis' concern for the environment is exemplified by the *Canticle of the Creatures* (*Canticum fratris solis*), an elegy to the flora and fauna of the world as well as its elements and climates.⁷³ This document embodies the Franciscan belief in their deep knowledge of the whole world, describing the moon, the stars, the water and the earth as sisters, and the sun, the wind, and fire as brothers.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 163.

⁷¹ See Sorrel. *St Francis of Assisi and Nature*.

⁷² Pope Francis I, 'Encyclical Letter Laudatio Si of the Holy Father Francis on care for our common home'.

⁷³ St Francis, *Canticle of the Creatures*, FA: ED, Vol. I: 113–4.

Jay M. Hammond argues that the *Canticle of the Creatures* ‘encapsulates his deeply sacramental vision of reality’ and illustrates the way in which the Franciscans linked ecology and eschatology.⁷⁴ It also indicates the Franciscan blend of the immanent and the transcendental.

The Franciscans invented their spiritual condition by imagining a particular spiritual landscape. Spatial metaphors dominated the Franciscans’ spiritual and instructive texts. They theorised their special spiritual state as a power to transform the landscapes of the world according to their vision; for example, explaining how faith was a mechanism for realising poverty by overcoming temptation, *The Assisi Compilation* explained: ‘if you have faith like a mustard seed, and you tell that mountain to move from its place and to move to another place, it will happen’.⁷⁵ The idea that Francis had a special link to nature and concern for the whole world is part of the legend of St Francis constructed in the hagiographical and spiritual texts. Thomas of Celano reported that Francis ‘carefully exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and also all sensible creatures, to praise and love the Creator, because daily, invoking the name of the Saviour, he observed their obedience in his own experience’.⁷⁶ These legends do not simply report that Francis travelled throughout the world preaching to all its creatures but that Francis had the power to change nature; trees bent, wild wolves were tamed, birds listened, and water turned to wine. The Franciscans invented their spiritual world by imagining that they controlled a sacred landscape. While many Francis’ miraculous manipulations of nature comply with hagiographical norms, Franciscan sources emphasised the uniqueness of the Franciscans’ relationship with the natural world, arguing that it was a consequence of their commitment to holy poverty. Reflecting on the thirteenth-century legends of St Francis, the fourteenth century Spiritualist Franciscan Ubertino da Casale explained:

⁷⁴ Hammond, ‘Francis’s Vernacular Prayers’: 227–228.

⁷⁵ *The Assisi Compilation*, FA: ED, Vol. I, 118-230: 166.

⁷⁶ *Vita Prima*: 234.

He [Francis] had become so candid in mind, so clean in heart, that he seemed to have attained the state of innocence at that time. For, as we read in his *Legend*, he had practically all creatures, even the inanimate, at his command; a level of grace, indeed, in which he surpassed natural innocence. There were instances of fire tempering its heat, water changing taste, the night sky shining like day, and a dry rock yielding a delicious spring. Thus did the elements put themselves at the service of the unspoiled Francis.⁷⁷

Within the Franciscan hagiographical tradition, there was a connection between Francis' vision of the world and power to change it. Nature metamorphosed under the gaze of Francis. This complex power dynamic between Francis and the natural world was also expressed in artistic representations of St Francis. Describing Jacopo Bellini (ca. 1400-1471)'s panel of St Francis in the Frick Collection, Marilyn Aronberg Lavin wrote that 'there is the unusual underlying reciprocity between the figure of St Francis and the landscape, in both a physical and an iconographical sense', arguing that Bellini depicted the saint 'as a physical entity whose spiritual force gives shape to the natural forms that surround him'.⁷⁸

Although the Franciscans were concerned with the natural world, they had their own vision of this world. The Franciscans were imagining a world of spiritual poverty. Their writings about their philosophy of poverty were entwined with spatial and architectural metaphors; the Franciscans were not only using poverty to escape the world but inventing an alternative world of poverty. Thomas of Celano wrote:

the noble building of charity rises
upon the foundation of perseverance;
and in it living stones,
gathered **from every part of the world,**

⁷⁷ Ubertino of Casale, *The tree of the crucified life of Jesus*: 153.

⁷⁸ Lavin, 'Bellini's Panel in the Frick Collection': 18.

have been built into a **dwelling place** of the Holy Spirit⁷⁹

*(Revera super constantiae fundamentum charitatis nobilis structura surrexit, in qua vivi lapides, ex omnibus mundi partibus coacervati, aedificati sunt in habitaculum Spiritus)*⁸⁰

Sancti)

The first site for the realisation of this world was the place of the Franciscan body. Thomas of Celano wrote that through their poverty and subjugation the Franciscans ‘might merit to be grounded on the solid rock of true humility and to have the well-designed spiritual structure all the virtues arise in them’.⁸¹ For the Franciscans the body was the hyper-local place where their global vision of a world of spiritual poverty could be realised.

The geographic location of the Franciscan was not important to the Franciscans’ location, since wherever they were they occupied a body, which, through the routine denials of poverty, was constructed as a Franciscan body. For the Franciscans, poverty emptied that body of the material world and filled it with the spiritual world, which enabled them to witness the world in another way and experience it according to their vision. This body was the place in which they located their understanding of the world. *The Assisi Compilation* reported Francis’ instruction to the brothers at the General Chapter which decided to send the brothers throughout the world:

Although you are travelling, nevertheless, let your behaviour be as decent as if you were staying in a hermitage or a cell because wherever we are or where we travel, we have a cell with us. Brother Body is our cell, and the soul is the hermit who remains inside the cell to pray to God and meditate. So if the soul does not remain in quiet and solitude in its cell, a cell made by hands does little good to a religious.⁸²

⁷⁹ *Vita Prima*, FA: ED: 217.

⁸⁰ *Vita Prima, Fontes Franciscanae*: 313.

⁸¹ *Vita Prima*, FA: ED: 217.

⁸² *The Assisi Compilation*: 215.

While the Franciscans travelled throughout the world in the Middle Ages, trekking to the iciest, dustiest, and most dangerous regions, from Scandinavia to Lithuania, North Africa and the Levant, reaching East Asia before Marco Polo, and joining the Vivaldi brothers on their expedition into the Near Atlantic, they had their own sense of the space of the world which was derived from their philosophy of poverty. The Franciscans realised their ideas about poverty through the place of the body, and took that as their key coordinate. The topographical location of place was not as important as the genre, or meaning of that space. This reminds us of the roles that experiences and beliefs play in conceptualisations of space.

Like all global visions, the Franciscans' global vision had its own power dynamics; they wanted to invent their vision of a world of evangelical poverty in the world which had previously been dominated by materialism and greed. Lazier described the Earthrise era as the rise and dominance in a certain image of the world. The Franciscans were also committed to inventing the world according to their image. The Franciscans did not invent this image of the world with a camera from space, but through bodily performance. Ubertino da Casale reminded the Franciscans that, as they walked barefooted around the world, they were following the example of Christ who had been told by God 'Wherever the soul of your foot treads shall be yours'.⁸³ Through their act of treading barefoot around the world the Franciscans saw themselves as inventing a world of evangelical poverty.

Using the ideas developed by Spiritual Franciscans such as Ubertino da Casale in the late Middle Ages, Franciscans in the sixteenth century actively set upon their project of 'world-making' which, as Bell informed us, is the subject of global history.⁸⁴ In the early sixteenth century the Franciscans saw the 'New World' as an opportunity to create their vision for an alternative world of spiritual poverty, and they became entangled with the early history of colonialism in the Americas. In this final brief example of the Franciscans in the

⁸³ Ubertino da Casale, *The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus*: 161

⁸⁴ Bell, 'Making and Taking Worlds, Intellectual History': 257.

Americas in the early sixteenth century, we see again the importance of the immanent and the transcendental to the Franciscans, their need for ‘this-worldly aid as well as other-worldly transportation, for “communal” as well as “salvation” religion’.⁸⁵

The Franciscans’ desire to create a world of spiritual poverty in the Americas can be seen in particular in the writings the sixteenth century Franciscans the aforementioned Mendieta, and also Toribio Motolinía (1482-1568).⁸⁶ The global imagination of these sixteenth century Franciscans was fed by the eschatological beliefs that had been developed by members of the Franciscan order throughout the late Middle Ages since, as previously mentioned, these texts made up the *Floreto* which was one of the first books to be taken to the New World. We know this since As previously mentioned, the eschatological framework of the Franciscans was particularly informed by Giacchino da Fiore (Joachim of Fiore), and the Franciscans saw themselves as the barefooted spiritual men, the *virii spirituales*, prophesied by Joachim of Fiore as ushering the ‘third age’, or age of the spirit, which, according to Joachim, would be realised upon the earth before the end of time. Driven by these eschatological beliefs and a sense of urgency which had been precipitated by the ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’ the Franciscans frantically sought to invent their world of evangelical poverty in the Americas.

The Franciscans interpreted the inhabitants of the ‘New World’, the Amerindians, as poor like them, and this convinced them that the New World was the space (a space beyond the known world) for realising their global vision on Earth. For the Franciscans, the Americas represented an opportunity to forge the new world of spiritual poverty with the Amerindians. According to Motolonía the Amerindian liked the Franciscans because of their shared state of poverty, ‘because they go about poor and barefoot like us, eat what we eat, live amongst us,

⁸⁵ This criteria was established by Alan Strathern, using the work of Ernst Gellner. See Strathern, ‘Transcendentalist Intransigence’: 361, and Gellner, *Plough Sword and Book*.

⁸⁶ See Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*.

and their talk among us is gentle'.⁸⁷ Through their bodily performance the Franciscans saw themselves as creating a shared world of poverty with the Amerindians. The *Oroz Codex* reported that the Franciscans travelling throughout the New World:

went about barefoot and with old and parched habits. They slept on the floor, with a piece of wood or stone for a headrest. They themselves carried small bags in which they took along the breviary and some sermon book. Their food was tortillas, which is the bread of the Indians and is made from maize – and chile, which they call axi by another name– and capulies, which are the cherries of the land, and tunas – and their drink was water.⁸⁸

As the Franciscans were no doubt aware, this consumption of Amerindian food differentiated them from other missionaries; as Rebecca Earle has explored, other missionaries were focused upon replacing maize with wheat and Christianising the diet of the Amerindians.⁸⁹ The Franciscans used their bodies, what they consumed, how they were dressed and kept, as the first place to realise their unique global vision. In the Americas the Franciscans used the place of their bodies, controlling its movements, the sustenance it contained, and the way it was covered, in order to invent their image of a world of spiritual poverty which they saw themselves as sharing with the Amerindians. According to the Franciscans' global vision the shared suffering of their poverty was a pathway to their shared salvation.

The Franciscans' invention of a world of poverty, in which they wanted the Amerindians to participate alongside the Franciscans, had a distinct power agenda and their attempt to realise this world could often be violent.⁹⁰ Motivated by the urgency and belief in their quest to realise their global vision, the Franciscans were often ambivalent to violent means. In order to control the identity of the New World as it unfolded, the Franciscans used

⁸⁷ Toribio de Benavente o Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*: 189.

⁸⁸ *Oroz Codex*: 93.

⁸⁹ See Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador*.

⁹⁰ See my *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* and Melvin, *Building Colonial Cities of God*.

the notorious holy violence mechanisms of Inquisition, decades before Inquisition was formally established in 1571. Martín de Valencia, whom we mentioned earlier as a Franciscan devoted to the existential rigors of poverty, was the first friar to be given Inquisitorial powers in the Americas, which he used to violently regulate Amerindians and conquistadores alike in the New World. Fray Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico, initiated the ‘Indian Inquisition’ between 1536 and 1543,⁹¹ and has been described as a ‘fanatic’ by one historian.⁹² Zumárraga was known for his extreme violence against the Amerindians. In 1539 he ordered the public execution of a Nahua noble (Don Carlos).⁹³ Another Franciscan, Diego de Landa inaugurated a period of extreme violence known as the ‘Franciscan terror’ in his pursuit of the Franciscans’ global vision. De Landa’s violence resulted in the deaths of approximately 157 Amerindians. The violence of the Franciscans’ actions around the world, which has been well-documented elsewhere,⁹⁴ acts as a reminder of the power agenda and violence that often accompanies the pursuit of global visions.

I include this final example of the way in which the ideological dimension of global visions is not only spiritual and intellectual but entangled with a power agenda. A similar point has been made by the Latin American scholar Walter D. Mignolo, who argued that what called ‘global designs’ are the product of local histories; ‘from the project of the *Orbis Universalis Christianum* [sic], through the standards of civilization at the turn of the twentieth century, to the current one of globalization (global market), global designs have been the hegemonic project for managing the planet’.⁹⁵ Mignolo also points to the importance of local history in understanding the construction of global visions, and does not

⁹¹ See Greenleaf, *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536–1543*, and Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture*.

⁹² Lopez et al, *Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación*: 88.

⁹³ For a transcription of the trial see *Proceso Inquisitorial del Cacique de Texcoco*, in *Publicaciones del Archivo de la Nación vol. I*. Tavárez notes that this was the last punishment of a native for crimes against Christianity in the public spaces of Mexico City until 1714. Tavárez, *The Invisible War, Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico*: 26.

⁹⁴ For example Clendinnen, ‘Disciplining the Indians’ and Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture*.

⁹⁵ Mignolo, *Local histories/global designs*: 21. Note the Latin should read *Orbis Universalis Christianus*.

distinguish between the, often violent, ideological dimension of past and present conceptualisations of the world. The interplay of power and ideas that govern conceptualisations of the 'global' are often too far in the background.

Concluding reflections on comparing 'Earthrise' and the Franciscans' global vision

Lazier explored how the Earthrise image produced a discourse on the world which was entangled with discourses of modernity and post-modernity; but the feelings precipitated by the 'Earthrise' image were similar to those anxieties that the Franciscans articulated as they contemplated the world and man's relationship to it. Lazier contrasted the reactions of Hans Blumenberg, who had confidence in modernity,⁹⁶ and Hannah Arendt, for whom modernity was a source of deep anxiety. As Lazier observed, Arendt's anxiety about the Earthrise image followed her comments about her anxiety man's relationship with the world which she made in *The Human Condition* (1958).⁹⁷ Like Arendt, the Franciscans had an anxiety concerning mankind, and the frightening possibilities of the way in which man is capable of acting in the world. The *Admonitions* told the Franciscans to hate their bodies, since Francis had warned that 'each one has the enemy in his power, that is his body through which he sins'.⁹⁸ The Franciscans were deeply critical of the world they looked back upon; as Clareno wrote, it was a world where 'the impious has prevailed over the just'.⁹⁹ For both Arendt and the Franciscans, the image of the world prompted an anxiety over the character of that world and man's relationship with it.

Blumenberg and Arendt had different perspectives on modernity; as Elizabeth Brient summarised: 'whereas Blumenberg emphasises *worldliness* as the characteristic feature of the

⁹⁶ Medievalists have already responded to the problematic periodization at work in Hans Blumenberg's *Legitimacy of the Modern Age*. See Cole and Vance Smith eds, *The Legitimacy of the Middle Ages*.

⁹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

⁹⁸ *The Admonitions*, FA: ED, Vol. I, 128-137: 132.

⁹⁹ Angelo of Clareno, *A chronicle or history of the seven tribulations*: 192.

modern age, Arendt points to an unequalled world^{lessness} as the hallmark of modernity',¹⁰⁰ both of these perspectives were could be found in the meaning of the Earthrise image. The Franciscans' story challenges the idea that the feeling of either worldliness or worldlessness, prompted by the experiencing of contemplating the image of the world as a whole seen from beyond, was a new phenomenon. As this story has shown, driven by poverty the Franciscans were engaged in a kind of 'unworlding' and 'reworlding'. Contemplating the world in this way was not unique to 'modernity'.

Lazier's article explored the Earthrise image in relation to the globalisation of the world picture. Lazier explained that the Earthrise image ushered what may be historicised as an 'Earthrise era' illustrated by the expression "think globally, act locally":

'there now holds sway a world picture in which the conditions of "earthliness" is conjured by way of a view from the most unearthly of places – the void; in which the horizons of earthbound experience compete with horizons which are planetary, or capital E- Earthly, in scope; and in which the vision of the naked earth is also the view of a globe in disguise, the greatest of organisms: a man-made planet'.¹⁰¹

The Franciscan example shows that the characteristics of the Earthrise era, of thinking globally and acting locally, and of considering 'earthliness' from a void, is not new but part of the longer history of global visions, and that conceptualisations of the world have always had ideological dimensions.

¹⁰⁰ Brient, 'Hans Blumenberg and Hannah Arendt on the "Unworldly Worldliness" of the Modern Age', *Journal of the History of Ideas*: 514.

¹⁰¹ Lazier, 'Earthrise': 609.

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