

The Thin Line between Saturday Night and Sunday Morning

Meaning and Community among Jimmy Buffett's Parrotheads

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The sea of people dressed in brightly colored clothes surrounds me as I walk the rows between the thousands of cars. Lyrics from different Jimmy Buffett songs blend together as I move out of range of one stereo system and into another. Everyone I pass is singing one song or another. But the parking lot partiers wearing beach clothes and tropical attire are not as surprising as the makeshift beaches, portable resorts, and volcanic islands they have brought with them. More than one group of cars has parked in such a way as to leave room for the sand they brought with them in pickup trucks. On the mounds of sand they have set up beach chairs and blankets, beach balls and other inflatable toys. There is even a volleyball net.

One group of parrotheads¹ has rented a flatbed to transport a generator that provides energy for the Jacuzzi that bubbles and steams beneath the group's papier-maché palm trees. Another parrothead club has set up an island-themed bar complete with a pencil-thin mustached bartender (in a Ricky Ricardo jacket) and blenders for the frozen margaritas that members share with passersby. And finally—my favorite—an enormous volcano has been erected in the center of the parking lot; the attached parrotheads in Hawaiian shirts and grass skirts sing, "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know where I'm gonna go when the volcano blows .. :'

The party was held at Irvine Meadows Amphitheater in the fall of 1995. The annual Irvine Buffett Shows run for two nights each year, and (at least according to parrothead lore) this is one of the biggest parking lot parties at any of the shows. It starts about noon on Friday and runs until the wee hours of Sunday morning when the last of the long line of cars drives out of the lot.²

While one might be surprised at the level of creativity here, on the surface, at least, this is pretty much what one would probably expect of fans of Jimmy Buffett, whose two best-known songs are "[Wasted Away Again in] Margaritaville," and "Cheeseburger in Paradise." There's no seriousness here; and if there is anything resembling religion it is just pure unadulterated hedonism, right?

The rationale for a religious analysis of parrothead life³ is unlike the typical rationale for scholarly undertaking; interest in the topic cannot be attributed to its uniqueness. On the contrary, this topic is academically interesting because it clearly illustrates an underrecognized influence of "religion" in our everyday world. Two basic questions frame this inquiry. First, in this apparently irreligious phenomenon, how many parallels to aspects of traditional religions can we find? And second, can our positing this seemingly irreligious phenomenon as "religion" give us theoretical insight into questions about the nature of religion and its role in modern "secular" society?

THE PARROTHEADS

According to the *60 Minutes* interview that aired on May 11, 1997, Buffett had thirty concert dates scheduled for the season—all of which sold out—with more than one million people attending his shows annually. Buffett himself has called the parrotheads "cult-like" (in an affectionate sort of way).⁴ Many parrotheads know the words to all his songs—and since play lists are readily available on the World Wide Web well before the shows, pretty much everyone in the audience knows the lyrics to each of the songs played at any given show. It is not unusual for the fans to drown out the band in their "hymn" singing.

A typical parrothead at a pre-concert party in Nashville, February 1999. Photo by Wanda Stewart.

Perhaps most surprising, though, is the broad age span of fans. Parrotheads range in age from children of seven or eight years old to retired folks. I sat next to a couple in their sixties (in lawn seats, no less) at their first show in San Francisco two years ago. I have played guess-the-song lyrics with a nine-year-old (and nearly lost) and I have had a critical mass of self-described parrot heads in several of the undergraduate courses I have taught. While parrotheads include people of all levels of education and economic status (I know at least three religious studies Ph.D.s who consider themselves part of the phlock⁵),

they are predominantly middle and upper middle class. The sociological characteristic that seems most constant among them is race: they are invariably white.

THE ANTIRELIGIOUS STANCE OF BUFFETT, HIS MUSIC, AND HIS FANS

By all accounts Jimmy Buffett has led a life that flouts traditional religious sensibilities.⁶ He glorifies sex and drugs, he seemingly advocates irresponsibility in the name of freedom, and he openly derides traditional religion. In one of many possible examples, on a recent album this former Catholic altar boy sings: "Religion, religion. Oh there's a thin line between Saturday night and Sunday morning." Poking fun at both Catholics and Protestants, the same song from the *Fruitcakes* album goes on to include the "Mea Culpa" and then to lampoon the simplemindedness of televangelists. As Buffett puts it, "Religion's in the hands of some crazy ass people" (Buffett 1994).

On another recent album he parodies the "Seven Deadly Sins" (Buffett 1995) while an older album includes a song titled "My Head Hurts, My Feet Stink, and I Don't Love Jesus" (Buffett 1976a). In another example, this self-proclaimed Calypso poet tells us more than we may want to know when he sings: "I don't wear underwear, I don't go to church, and I don't cut my hair" (Buffett 1976b).

Parrotheads are equally irreverent toward institutional religion and yet often draw analogies between the way Buffett philosophy shapes their views of the world and "spirituality."

PARALLELS BETWEEN PARROTHEADISM AND TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Despite its irreverent tone and occasional hostility toward religion, there are many ways in which parrotheadism functions in the lives of Buffett fans that parallel aspects of traditional religion.⁸

The first parallel, which helps make sense of many of the others, is the parrotheads' notions of utopian paradise. Parrotheads are considered citizens of Margaritaville. (Before performing the hit song "[Wasted Away Again in] Margaritaville," Buffett often begins: "Please rise for the national anthem.") A website

titled "Bubba [a nickname for Jimmy] for Beginners" includes a "Survival Guide for New Parrotheads /or/ Where is Margaritaville Anyway?"

So, where IS Margaritaville, anyway?! Well, that's a tough one to answer. For some it's a paradise island in the Caribbean; for others it's a powder white beach along the Yucatan; and for some, sleeping along a gentle river as their rod bends at a biting fish. It's as much a state of mind as anything.⁹

Margaritaville is the community of parrotheads that is not geographically bound. It exists across space and time in the hearts and minds of Buffett followers. These parrotheads measure the here and now against their conception of mythic sacred space: a tropical island and a sailboat; a world characterized by freedom, good friends, and time to play (i.e., fishing and flying especially). This is not escapism. On the contrary, parrotheads strive to make this paradise part of their everyday lives and look upon those who put off the enjoyment of life in favor of drive and ambition with derision as, at best, hopelessly misguided or, at worst, lacking in real humanity. Many Buffett songs celebrate this orientation toward life, but one that lays it out most clearly is Buffett's 1978 "Cowboy in the Jungle." It talks about out-of-place tourists who "try to cram lost years into five or six days" because it "seems that blind ambition erased their intuition" (Buffett 1978).

Forget suburban homes. Even trailers are a bit too pedestrian in Buffett ideals. In 1974 he sang

Mobile home's are smotherin' my Keys [a reference to the Florida Keys]

I hate those bastards so much

I wish a summer squall would blow them all

The way up to fantasy land

Yeah they're ugly and square and they don't belong here

They looked a lot better as beer cans. (Buffett 1974)

For parrotheads, the limits to our ability to live in this mythic paradise (i.e., sin) are our materialism and lack of appreciation for the simple things in life. "Life Is Just a Tire Swing," Buffett sings in one song, while in another he longs for the days before he put "quarters in his [penny] loafers." And he confesses: "Now times are rough and I've got too much stuff-I can't explain the likes of me" and critiques a world overrun by self-storage units and lacking in poets. But sacred space does exist in real time and not just as mythic imaginings of Buffett and his flock of parrots. New Orleans, Louisiana, and Key West, Florida, are two places that have had a great impact on Buffett and his music, and these places loom large in the minds of parrotheads; many have visited the sacred sites and many more long to do so. When devotees pull out a photo album of their travels to Buffett shows, the albums often also include pictures from trips to either of these pilgrimage sites.

Recreational use of alcohol and drugs is celebrated and elevated to the point of ritual that transports parrotheads from their everyday existence. Other ritual aspects include an annual pilgrimage to shows and participation in the preconcert gatherings. The Head Parrot himself has pointed to the ritual aspect of the events: "It's a tribal celebration—a rite of summer passage no different than the kinds of parties thrown by our primitive relatives in the cave days."¹⁰ Sacred time is marked off from profane time as parrotheads participate in the madness surrounding a show. According to Buffett's interpretation, "They transform into Parrotheads ... they come to the show with their own personal Mardi Gras attached to them." They have "their feeding frenzy [a song reference] and return to normal life."

Just as Mardi Gras precedes Lent, the preshow party prepares devotees for the transcendent experience to come. There is a revival-like atmosphere inside the concert venue in which concertgoers sing lyrics to songs, many of which they consider profoundly poetic and meaningful. When Buffett sings about a friend of his who, upon reaching the age of forty, reflects on somber realizations of midlife in "A Pirate Looks at Forty" (which he performs at every show now), it is not at all uncommon to see middle-aged men, eyes closed, sitting and quietly singing along. I have even seen them join hands and sway together in what seems clearly to be a shared experience of something transcendent.

On a website that asked parrotheads to write on the topic "Why I Love Jimmy Buffett Music," fans posted comments that sounded decidedly like descriptions of mystical experiences. One said that "Jimmy's music is a drug; the best kind of drug." Another wrote, "His music is medicine for my mind. It clears out all the stress and anxiety. He takes us to our own Margaritaville.... He gives me my only peace of mind.... My world revolves around his music. I've left the planet for a minute:'

At least two contributors to this site actually made the comparison between Buffett and the transcendent. One noted that he loved Buffett's music because "he [Buffett] makes life seem not so threatening ... he's like a god because he creates parrotheads wherever he goes:' Another wrote, "Jimmy knows how to spell life out in simple terms. What he writes about is [sic] those issues that we all have to deal with on a daily basis. If I thought god had a brother it would be Jimmy for sure. He speaks the Truth!"¹¹

But most parrotheads would see Buffett as more of a prophet than a savior, a religious leader rather than a god. Buffett espouses a philosophy of life and a value system¹² that parrotheads are drawn to, but the community of parrotheads has taken on a life of its own. The clearest way to illustrate this is to point to the concert/preconcert party experience. While the concert is the ostensible reason for gathering, in many ways the real event is the preconcert party. I have been to shows where the venue officials squelched the preconcert party by opening the parking lot only a couple of hours before the show and by prohibiting (and enforcing the prohibition of) barbecue grills and alcoholic beverages in the parking lot. The atmosphere at such shows is decidedly different.

Irvine Meadows, on the other hand, seems to encourage the parrothead gathering. According to parrotheads, a key official at that venue is a member of the phlock—and indeed, I have seen a parking lot security cart (resembling a golf cart) decorated with crepe paper and parrots, cruising the aisles of cars and parking lot partiers. Parrotheads who don't manage to get tickets to the Irvine show sometimes come to the parking lot party anyway. They often do manage to buy tickets from someone once they are there but I have heard people say that if they didn't get into the show, the party itself was worth coming for. In some ways the show itself is just the icing on the cake. Parrotheads gather

to renew old friendships; to sing and dance; to drink margaritas, rum drinks, and Coronas; and to renew their Caribbean souls. Then they go to the show.

And while Buffett lampoons traditional religion, the fact that he sees the mythic element to his work is made clear with his dedication of the album *Off to See the Lizard* to Joseph Campbell. A song line specifically refers to a comment made by Campbell to Bill Moyers. Campbell told Moyers that he pitied people with "no invisible means of support," a phrase that became a line in a Buffett song.¹³

But there are more parallels between parrotheadism and traditional religion than these philosophical, mystical, and ritual comparisons. There is also a sociological similarity in terms of the way membership as a parrothead contributes to both an individual sense of identity and a sense of community. As explained earlier, a group of parrotheads is referred to as a flock (phlock) and while the intended reference is clearly to a flock of birds, in the case of the argument at hand it is notable that the term "flock" also commonly refers to the members of a church congregation. One has to wonder if the multiple meanings might not be intentional. Parrotheads make friends at concerts and meet up again with the same people year after year, but they also connect with each other in a nationwide network of parrothead clubs and a multitude of websites and chat rooms on the Internet.

Parrotheads in Paradise is the officially recognized club network, which in 1995 boasted fifteen thousand members in eighty-one clubs. The network's annual convention, called "The Meeting of the Minds," drew 750 participants in that same year. Clubs typically meet on a monthly basis for "fellowship" (their term) and to work on the ongoing community service and environmental projects they undertake. According to *Coconut Telegraph*, the national club newsletter, "Civic minded parrotheads in cities across the country have voluntarily gathered under the Buffett banner to promote peace, justice and the American way." Clubs have provided volunteers for the Red Cross, Unicef, and the Children's Wish Foundation. They have organized to help flood victims, participated in "adopt a-highway" programs, and joined environmental cleanup efforts. According to local club newsletters, a parrothead club in Massachusetts organized a Special Olympics and the Left Coast Parrotheads in Southern California work for Habitat for Humanity and the area's Ronald McDonald House.¹⁴

Parrothead club members not only meet regularly during the year but also have special events including concert trips, camping trips, and fishing trips. One northern California couple invited parrothead friends from around the country to their parrot-themed wedding.

But Buffett fans also connect with one another over the Internet. There are innumerable websites, but one in particular seems most suited for discussion in this paper. The Church of Buffett, Orthodox, invites visitors with this greeting: "All ye faithful believers enter our hallowed halls. Those who believe in Jimmy Buffett the musician, not Jimmy Buffett the entertainer.... Please, kick the dust off your sandals and enter these holy pages by clicking on the menu:"¹⁵

While most parrotheads consider their sacred text to be the entire canon of Buffett lyrics, the Church of Buffett, Orthodox, argues that the "revered chief poet" has succumbed to the influence of commercialism and that his music has suffered. They mark *Changes in Latitudes Changes in Attitudes* as the turning point with some including it in the "holy writ" (their term) and others not. In particular they label "Margaritaville" as "apostasy."

COUNTERCULTURE OR MAINSTREAM?

The Church of Buffett, Orthodox, is the prophetic voice in Margaritaville calling the parrotheads (and the Head Parrot) to be faithful to the anti-materialism of Buffett philosophy, calling them to be mindful of what they trade for their material success. But the larger segment of parrotheads looks a lot like the rest of the American middle class. They are lawyers, corporate employees, entrepreneurs, nurses, and teachers.

A quick look around the parking lot party confirms this social and economic status of the parrotheads. There are few BMWs and Mercedes (even at a southern California concert) but there are also very few older cars. Parrotheads drive Hondas and Toyotas; they drive late-model small pickups and sport utility vehicles. Many own expensive motor homes in which they travel to Buffett shows (which is not easily done without some financial means). Also, the annual trek many parrotheads make to the

Meeting of the Minds in New Orleans, as well as the trips to the Caribbean and Key West, also indicates a certain degree of financial stability.

Parrotheads' position in the middle class is nowhere more clear than in the social service/reform efforts of the parrothead clubs. Members who have logged sufficient participation in these activities get first crack at concert tickets (which can often be hard to get as the shows sometimes sell out in the first few hours of ticket sales).

Voluntary societies that work to help victims of tragedy, bring joy to terminally ill children, and build houses for the poor (and most recently to preserve the environment) are quintessential of the American middle class. Voluntarism, as we know it, developed concurrently with the middle class in the nineteenth century. The willingness to organize to "better the lot of the less fortunate" was a badge of social status that came with material success sufficient to allow time for such activities (Roof and McKinney 1987, 40-71; Albanese 1992, 402-24).

Yet parrotheads revere those who would make themselves free by throwing away the trappings of materialism and wealth. They recognize that out-of-control consumption in our society diminishes freedom, but, by all appearances, they join enthusiastically in America's acquisitiveness. Buffett himself is a case in point. A man of tremendous wealth, Buffett owns boats, planes, and real estate; he does not live the vagabond lifestyle about which he sings. While in many ways parrotheads put forth an incisive critique of the values embraced by the American middle class, in other ways they embrace those values.

So what can we make of this paradox? Are the parrotheads merely idealizing one value system and living an opposing one? Are they insincere? Are they hypocrites? Or is there something more going on here? Our positing parrotheadism as a religion raises parrothead activities to the level of ritual and points us to Victor Turner's work on ritual to explain how we might be able to take seriously both sides of this paradox.

In his seminal work *The Ritual Process* ([1969] 1995, especially "Liminality and Communitas," 94ff), Turner explores various dimensions and characteristics of ritual. Turner writes, specifically, about liminality and communitas as they function—and are created—in rites of passage, but his observations also fit well the parrothead ritual

attached to the annual pilgrimage to a Buffett show and help to explain how parrothead values make sense in the context of the realities of parrothead lives.

With concert ritual, parrotheads detach from their everyday lives. They enter what Turner calls a liminal stage. And finally they are reincorporated into the structure of their old lives but exist in that structure in a new way.

The detachment consists of shedding the order and reserve of their everyday lives (what Turner calls "structure"): making preparations including buying tickets, planning costumes, decorating the car, and making the trip. Such detachment is the precursor to the liminal phase, in which the transformation of character takes place. Turner points to the ways in which the liminal phase creates an "intense comradeship and egalitarianism" where "distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homogenized" (95). (It is hard to tell a doctor from an electrician when both are barefoot on a portable "beach" wearing straw hats and Hawaiian shirts and drinking shots of tequila.)

It is in the egalitarian moment, according to Turner, that *communitas* emerges: "*communitas* emerges where social structure is not" (126). Turner even points to the paradox of *communitas* and structure existing side by side:

It is as though there are here two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals. (96)

Turner then goes on to apply the label "*communitas*" to this second type of community. He explains that the egalitarian values espoused as part of the ritual process are carried back into the structure to maintain a tension between hierarchy and egalitarianism in the larger society: There is a dialectic here, for the immediacy of *communitas* gives way to the mediacy of structure.... Men are released from structure into

communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas" (129).

Turner's focus is on the value of this dialectic for society as a whole; he goes so far as to argue that no society can function adequately without it (129). But what does this process mean for the individual? How are parrotheads transformed when they make their pilgrimage from their middle-class lives, through the "carnival" that is a Buffett concert, and back again? Instead of one competing value system undermining the other (middle-class consumption versus antimaterialist freedom), the ritual process actually allows the competing value systems to exist in creative tension with each other. Parrotheads may dream of giving it all up to live on a sailboat in the islands, but parrothead ritual gives them just enough time in that "one particular harbor" to allow them to keep it all together in the structure of the real world. They can keep the vision of Margaritaville alive in their hearts and minds while living their lives in Los Angeles, New York, or Cincinnati. And the nongeographical utopia has an added advantage over the geographical one: it can more readily survive the forces of history.

A RETURN TO OUR INITIAL THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

Granted, many of the analogies to religion, drawn by Buffett and the parrotheads themselves, are made as tongue-in-cheek remarks; they are drawn with irony and a sense of humor. But I contend that they make sense, and indeed are funny, only because there is more to them than the irony alone. So how does our playing with categories of religion and applying them to a seemingly irreligious phenomenon aid us in the study of religion?

First, this examination shows us something important about an issue that has occupied sociologists of religion in recent years. Proponents of secularization theories have posited the "decline of religion," coinciding with the rise of modernity. According to secularizationists, in an older society where a single religious tradition dominated, the plausibility of that tradition was maintained by the fact that most everyone in the society subscribed to it. With modernity has come increasing exposure to a plurality of world views that has, in turn, undermined the plausibility structures of these once-dominant religions.

Critics of this theory point to several apparent flaws. First, they note the vitality of religion in North America where a significant degree of pluralism and religious competition has been the norm. Second, they call attention to the worldwide increase in conservative religiopolitical movements (often called fundamentalisms). Third, they argue that new religious movements are flourishing. Fourth, and probably greatest in significance, they point to the rise of what people prefer to call "spirituality" (personalized, individualized religion).

They argue that religion hasn't declined; it has been reshaped and may no longer be recognizable to those who define "religion" in terms of churches and other institutions. Most recently they have focused on whether this increased individualism is a thing to be mourned or celebrated. "Sheila," a research subject who appeared in *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah et al. 1985), has become the classic example of individualism run rampant as she coined her own term for her individual personal religion: "Sheilatism." Bellah and his colleagues expressed their concern over our society's loss of a sense of community (plausibility structure). Wade Clark Roof, on the other hand, has celebrated the diversity and creativity he found in the often individualistic "spirituality" of his research subjects in *A Generation of Seekers* (1993). He concludes that the renewed emphasis on "spirituality" in the 1990s is actually a more "mature expression" of "the quest for a spiritual style" that took hold of baby boomers nearly three decades ago (242). Roof sees this new spirituality as being sophisticated in its grappling with questions of meaning and its embracing of the multilayeredness of belief and practice. He is hopeful about the ways in which he sees this new spirituality embracing authentic pluralism, calling people to live as transformed individuals while at the same time committed to a new sense of community.

Secularizationists have rejoined the debate, asserting that their theory had been mischaracterized and that what was meant in the phrase *decline of religion* was a decline of the cultural authority of religious institutions; that the decline predicted by secularization theory in no way refers to the elimination of religious sensibilities altogether (Yamane 1997). If these latest contributions to the debate by secularizationists are correct, then what we have is merely a disagreement of the definition of

secularization with both sides agreeing that religion (outside of institutions) may still be thriving.

The case of Jimmy Buffett's parrotheads adds to the discussion of the role of religion in contemporary American life because, as we have seen, parrotheadism is not merely an individual phenomenon; it has a profoundly communal character. It is precisely the transcendent sense parrotheads have of being connected to something bigger than themselves that gives meaning to this experience. There are probably many people who buy Jimmy Buffett CDs and even attend a concert or two—who never make the move to identifying themselves with the collectivity.¹⁶ Being a parrothead is, by definition, seeking to align yourself with others who connect with Buffett's music and philosophy in a similar way. We may not have to choose, theoretically, between seeing religion as institutionally focused and seeing it as individually focused. It seems there may be a third form of religion and religious experience that is nontraditional, noninstitutional, but at the same time shared and communal.¹⁷

The second theoretical consideration that is illuminated by this examination engages an older debate in religious studies over the very nature of religion. Often scholars have focused on religion and asked if there was something about the religious experience that drew people to it. The question has made religion seem to be a "thing" out there that automatically attracted adherents. I would propose that an examination of the religiosity of a particular group of music fans such as this one shows us that this traditional framing of the question misses the mark. What we have, it seems, is not necessarily something essentially religious that draws people in, but something essentially human that makes them seek it, whatever its form.

Essential human needs for meaning, purpose, ritual, community, and "transcendent" experience (in which I include any experience that satisfies our need to feel a part of something bigger than ourselves, whether it is an Eastern mystical oneness with the universe or Christian communion), have been met in different ways in different societies. Most recently in the West those needs have been met by institutional religion. For this reason, institutional religion has functioned as our benchmark. However, these needs are so essentially human that human beings will always find ways to fulfill them. Parrotheads, who live in a secular world in which institutional religion has lost its cultural

clout and is imbued with skeptical cynicism about institutions generally, will create a sense of community where they find the necessary tools to do so.

Let me close with a parrothead benediction:

Let those winds of time

Blow over my head

I'd rather die while I'm livin'

Than live while I'm dead.

NOTES

1. The label "parrotheads" refers to fans of musician Jimmy Buffet. As with most aspects of these folk, there is no uniformity in the appellation; it is written as Parrot Head, Parrothead, parrot head, or parrothead. I have opted, for the most part, to use the latter, but when citing someone else's use of the term (or the name of a club, for instance) I have retained the form used.
2. The data for the above description and the material which follows were gathered over the course of many years of participant observation. Having been a parrothead myself for nearly twenty- five years, I have attended eleven shows in six venues, visited Margaritaville in New Orleans, Louisiana, several times, and am a member of the Left Coast Parrot Heads. I wish to thank Jon Reese of Santa Barbara, California, for his assistance with song lyrics and citations, and Rasa Lemmond, a religious studies major at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, for her help with research and analysis.
3. While Buffett himself, as "Head Parrot," and the lyrics of his songs are discussed insofar as they are relevant, the focus of the paper is, specifically, on the culture of the parrotheads.
4. "Parrot Head Phenomenon," <http://pilot.msu.edu/user/gibbensr/jimmy.phenom.htm> (9/8/97).

5. Birds commonly travel in flocks, and parrotheads often exchange an "f" at the beginning of a word with a "ph" (parrothead). Thus, a group of parrotheads is referred to as a phlock.
6. Born Christmas Day in 1946 (Pascagoula, Mississippi), Buffett was raised as a Catholic—a tradition he resoundingly rejected. His first album, *Down to Earth*, (1970) included three songs highly critical of religion and religious people whom he saw as hypocritical ("The Christian," "the Missionary," and "Truck Stop Salvation").
7. Copyright restrictions forbid lengthier use of lyrics.
8. <http://www.homecom.com/mhall/cobo/aboutbct.html> (9/11/97). I first saw the term "parrotheadism" on the webpage for the Church of Buffett, Orthodox, which will be discussed later in the chapter.
9. <http://galenalink.com/~parrothd/buffettBubba.htm> (9/12/97). IO. "Feeding Frenzy," interview with Buffett.
<http://pilot.msu.edu/user/gibbensr/jimmy/feeding.htm> (9/8/97).
11. <http://www.suresite.com/cgi-bin/WebX.cgi?l3@2I0@.ee6bcOf> (7/16/97).
12. This philosophy of life and value system are perhaps most clearly spelled out in Buffett's recent autobiographical bestseller, written as he reached his fiftieth birthday, Jimmy Buffett: *A Pirate Looks at Fifty*. (The book title is a reference to his much loved song, "A Pirate Looks at Forty.") It is also readily apparent in song lyrics too numerous to reproduce here.
13. Taken from a list of literary references found in Buffett's work on a parrotheads web page: <http://homecom.com/cobo/FAQ/litrefs.html#1> (9/11/97).
14. In the nineteenth century, the rise of the middle class was marked by an increase in social "do-gooder" societies. Catherine Albanese has argued that the "moralism" which gave rise to the volunteerism was (and is) a central component to American civil religion (Albanese 1992).
15. <http://www.homecom.com/mhall/cobo/> (9/11/97).
16. Actually, articles in magazine such as *High Times* and *Rolling Stone* belie this point and argue that Buffett's following is relatively small but so loyal that it will snap up any record he makes (or novel he writes). This is interesting and, if true,

- would bolster my argument, but I do not have the resources to evaluate its accuracy.
17. I am not claiming that this is a finding which is opposite that of Bellah or Roof. It is merely a refocusing on a different aspect of the various forms of religion uncovered by these and other researchers.

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