Swarthmore Undergraduate History Journal

Contents

Cover Image

"NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt on National Mall" Smithsonian Institution Archives, Acc. 11-009, Image No. 89-20237. https://siarchives.si.edu/collections/siris_arc_394711.

About

The Swarthmore Undergraduate History Journal is a peer-reviewed, faculty-approved, student-run research publication that seeks to encourage undergraduate scholarship on diverse subjects. We uphold publishing ethics and are committed to the integrity of academic research. This journal is also specifically inclusive of historical narratives often overlooked in mainstream scholarship and allows for the submission of interdisciplinary articles so long as the focus remains historical.

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Our review process is a double-blind peer-review by our trained group of student editors. After a submission is approved, individual editors complete their reviews which they then bring to the larger group of editors for approval. After the submission and edits are cleared by the staff and the author, the article is sent to a senior faculty advisor who offers comments and suggestions. Then, the final product is published to our site, and will be included in our cohesive publication at the end of the academic year.

Meet the Editors

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It's Complicated:
Field Hockey and Feminism in the United States

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Field hockey is an odd sport to Americans. Take, for instance, the penalty corner: the whistle blows, and suddenly most of the defending team jogs to midfield only to turn around and sprint right back at the next whistle. This is one of many elements that would catch a first-time viewer off guard, especially if they were more familiar with soccer or ice hockey. That hitting-the-puck-back-and-forth action that feels like the essence of hockey on the ice? It would result in an automatic foul on the field. Many Americans have never watched a game of field hockey in their lives, and this is not by chance. For starters, its presence is regionally limited, sticking mostly to the Northeast and the states around the Great Lakes. But most crucial to its limited appeal in the United States is the fact that field hockey is unequivocally a women's sport. This is a particularly American idiosyncrasy. Around the world, hockey is popular for men and women, and attracts far greater interest in general than it does in the United States (Schwartz 2021). The unusual transformation of male-dominated "hockey" from the British Isles to women's-only "field hockey" in the United States reveals a deeper connection between sport, feminism, and society. At the turn of the twentieth century, field hockey is emblematic of a profound shift in societal perceptions of women's social role and biological constitution; by the 1970s, field hockey represented a battleground for debates about the upper limits of female ability.

Regardless of field hockey's current low profile, it was a smash hit when it first hit American shores in 1901. It had already been popular in Great Britain from the 1860s, and in 1894 the first women's league was established in Ireland, one year before the first international match was played between Ireland and Wales (Schwartz, 120–21). The world in which the first female field hockey players stepped onto the eponymous "field" was regulated by a distinctly Victorian conception of femininity, one that thought women were too fragile for any serious physical or mental exercise. Reproduction was considered to be a woman's best way of contributing to society,

which meant that women were sequestered in the home and barred from involvement in anything that might "distract" them from childrearing or "weaken" their bodies for pregnancy (Park 1985, 20). By the end of the 19th century, however, attitudes were changing, and increased participation of women in sport is a symptom of these larger cultural changes. On the one hand, sports in general took off in the States after the Civil War, and on the other, especially as the first women's universities flourished, educators began to realize that complete inactivity results in unhealthy women (Park, 11–12). One such person was Englishwoman Constance Applebee, born in 1873, who had been incapacitated with poor health as a child. Wisdom of the age demanded that she stay at home, because, as a woman, any extraneous exertion was expected to make her sicker ("Constance Applebee" 2005). When she reached young adulthood, however, she realized that physical activity had an unmistakably positive affect on her overall health, and earned a degree from the British College of Physical Education in order to promote exercise for women. Once Applebee traveled across the pond in 1901 to take a summer course at Harvard University (all female, of course), she happily demonstrated field hockey for her enraptured classmates. That very same year, she co-founded the American Field Hockey Association and was named athletic director at the historically women's college Bryn Mawr. The sport quickly spread to other all-female colleges in the Northeast, like Vassar and Mount Holyoke ("Constance Applebee").

Growing female participation in sports, including field hockey, was somewhat controversial. In her research of *The Sportswoman*, founded by Constance Applebee in 1922 as the first magazine in America for female athletes, Lynn E. Couturier discovered conflicting opinions among proponents of women in sports (2012). A big area of concern was the level of competition. Since competitiveness was associated with masculinity, writers were concerned that if girls appeared too attached to winning it would provoke negative backlash from the rest of

society against women playing sports in general (Couturier, 265). It is also important to recognize that many proponents of female participation in sports did not consider themselves feminists, particularly school administrators who were invested in the public's opinion that these institutions were the best place for a well-bred (i.e., of a family who could afford tuition) young woman. Their sympathy for women in sports was related more to the health benefits of physical activity than anything else (Couturier, 271). Another area of controversy was dress: field hockey requires a great deal of running, not to mention the tripping hazards posed by the sticks and ball during play, so some alterations to conventional dress were necessary ("Constance Applebee"). Skirts became shorter (as in, ankle length), and petticoats were replaced with bloomers; much work has been done on the impact of changing clothing on the women's rights movement, particularly clothes for bicycling (Park, 22). This did not, however, precipitate a sea change in women's dress, as sport organizers frequently set boundaries where propriety was considered more important than practicality, and athletes were strongly discouraged from wearing their modified clothing beyond the confines of their all-women's schools – oftentimes, the athletes themselves were more uncomfortable than their instructors with their new outfits. Writing about the history of women's physical education in colleges in 1930, Dorothy S. Ainsworth cites a Nebraska student from the 1890s:

> The new girls when first appearing in gym clothes, were overcome with shame, although no man, not even the janitor, was allowed to enter while the girls were there; most of the new girls were so shy, even before others of their own sex and age, that they could not take a step, but sank down in a heap on the gymnasium floor, huddling together and refusing, almost to tears, to take part. Within a week, however, under the urging of the older girls to 'get over their foolishness,' they exulted in their new freedom (1930, 95).

Encroaching too closely on male territory could be considered a serious social transgression with dangerous consequences, and women who wanted to play sports knew they were walking a very fine line (Couturier, 276). Ainsworth notes that schools would say "costume" to mentioning

controversial "bloomers," and would provide the "costumes" after students' arrival to circumvent preemptive objections (1930). The existence of such intense debate over women's health and dress – even to the point of "tears") – shows how radical these changes were.

In this light, it is easy to see why field hockey's marked difference from other socially acceptable sports for women made it an instant success. Deborah Park suggests that it managed to enter the ranks of "respectability" in the United States through an association with elite girls' boarding schools in Britain (1985, 23). One of the reasons for this interpretation is the Constance Applebee story cited above, which is widely circulated as the precise origin of field hockey in America. However, Ainsworth asserts that Goucher, in Maryland, established its field hockey program in 1898 (four years before Applebee crossed the Atlantic), calling this account into question (1930). The exact route of field hockey's American introduction warrants further investigation to get to the bottom of how it became "respectable." Other sports that were considered fit for female participation at the turn of the century included golf, tennis, swimming, and croquet. Field hockey stands out as the only team sport (Xie 2004). In America, basketball was also popular, but it was frequently played with modifications specifically calculated to minimize exertion and contact – as Roberta Park writes, "female hockey players might run nearly the length of the 100-yard field but be confined to half or less of an 80-foot basketball court" (Park, 23; "Constance Applebee"). Whatever the exact circumstances that precipitated this, field hockey spread primarily through all-women's educational institutions, and in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, women's colleges association with field hockey reaffirmed its position as a strictly female sport; it became the first team sport in America where women were allowed to play hard (Ware 2011, 122). The relative geographic isolation of all-women's colleges probably helped the sport retain its more aggressive elements. Team sports had long carried social value for men,

because they were thought to teach participants traditional masculine values like "vigor," sportsmanship, teamwork, perseverance, virility, etc., which made it particularly difficult for women to argue that team sports could also be beneficial for women without being called "mannish" (Park, 17; Couturier, 276).

As the "New Women," college girls at the turn of the twentieth century were acutely aware of the benefits of playing a team sport, although they intentionally avoided claiming all of the attributes of "muscular Christianity." An article entitled "Field Hockey for Women" appeared in *Harpers' Bazaar* in 1910, declaring:

> While sailing, canoeing, tennis, golf, and horseback-riding have always claimed many women devotees, they are all sports depending entirely on one's personal efforts. Field hockey, however, brings each girl on the team into closer athletic relationship, and develops a companionship free from petty jealousies and small things generally. This is because each is dependent on the other, and all must work together for the success of the team. It teaches quick response, trust, and unselfishness (Mange).

Certain words and sentiments found in traditional, masculine rhetoric around team sports are acutely missing from this article. For example, this article praises "unselfishness," – as opposed to the more traditional warlike language used for sports, like "sacrifice" – and "free[dom] from petty jealousies," something decidedly associated with feminine stereotypes. But the importance of playing on a team should not be underestimated. It proved to anyone watching, and to the players themselves, that women could be friends with each other. The women themselves can attest to this. For Eleanor Roosevelt, the day she "made the first team…was one of the proudest moments in [her] life." She further commented, "I liked playing with a team and winning their approbation. It was a rough enough game, with many hard knocks" (Cook 1993). Suffragette Alice Paul played field hockey at Swarthmore, and her fellow activist Inez Milholland played at Vassar (Fry 1972). Milholland's former classmate described her in an interview after her death:

> …I shall always remember her as the girl who played the fairest and squarest game of [field] hockey I ever witnessed. That is where I got an insight into her real character. She displayed the traits there that dominated her whole career, and showed her love of fair play ("Women's Suffrage: United States" 1916).

If a woman could be valuable to another woman in a sports setting, it also figured that a woman could have value outside of her reproductive potential. Most importantly, field hockey taught women that they could rely on each other – an important lesson, because the women at these elite eastern colleges would go on to lead the first wave feminist movement in the United States, which culminated in the ratification of the 18th Amendment in 1920.

In the early 20th century field hockey was protected from public scrutiny by its seclusion in women's colleges, but this would have negative implications for the sport down the line. By entering the country via women's colleges, field hockey had absorbed a few significant connotations that would become important later on. The biggest consequence is the obvious one, but it bears explicit mention: when women "feminized" field hockey in order to protect their right to play, they also imparted onto the sport the same position of inferiority within society that they occupied (Brake 2010, 61). This is why not a single college or university in America today funds a men's field hockey scholarship (Schwartz, 121). The geographic distribution of the all-female Seven Sisters schools maps remarkably well onto field hockey's limited regional reach. Lastly, as a result of field hockey's origins in costly and elitist institutions, participation is noticeably skewed on class and racial lines. Private schools are much more likely to have offer field hockey than public schools, not to mention that there are costs to entry (an average field hockey stick costs at least fifty dollars, and cheaper ones can be dangerous because they shatter), a problem field hockey shares with sports like ice hockey and lacrosse (Conrad et al. 2014, 11). Because of structural racism that makes it more difficult for people of color to amass flexible resources, field hockey's elitist tendencies have also made it one of the least diverse sports. The story of field hockey is not

so different from that first thrust of feminism, when white suffragettes secured women the vote but ignored the reality that Jim Crow laws would prevent Black women from exercising that right for decades after.

In the present day, field hockey's unique role as one of the only overwhelmingly female-played sports in the United States makes a singular case study for how arbitrary gender norms continue to be reproduced in society (Fields 2004, 132). One of the biggest wins for the 1970s' second wave feminist movement was the passing of Title IX, which "prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance."[1] After 1972, female athletes persistently fought through courts for the opportunity to try out for traditionally male sports like football, wrestling, and ice hockey when equivalent female teams did not exist (Brake).[a] However, when boys attempted to follow that precedent in order to play field hockey, they were overwhelmingly dismissed. There were factors at play beyond the legal justifications for these rulings. Specifically, courts felt that letting boys play field hockey would be: (a) unsafe for the girls (or, in other words, assuming that gender is an appropriate proxy for size and strength); (b) unfair for the girls (which assumes that gender is an accurate predictor of skill); and (c) damaging to female participation in sport in general, because field hockey teams would suddenly become flooded with boys (who the court has already accepted will all be bigger and better than the girls) and push girls out, or at the very least take a spot that would otherwise have gone to a girl (Fields, 135–38).

Arguments (a) and (b) are based on generalizations, while argument (c) is a bit more complicated. The issue of safety is an easy trap, because males *are* bigger on average than females,

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[a] From here forward, I will refrain from using gendered classifiers such as "female sports," even if it takes more words to do so. It is important to not use language that implies that something inherently belongs to one particular side of a socially constructed gender binary.

but there are flaws with using averages. If a five foot two inches, fourteen-year-old boy tried out for the football team, why is he any safer than a five foot eleven inches, one-hundred-and-forty-pound girl? If the issue was truly about safety, teams would be divided by height and weight, not sex. Picture a female field hockey player, at five foot two inches, one hundred and sixteen pounds, finding herself defending a five foot eleven inches, one-hundred-and-forty-pound boy playing his very first game. The size issue is not a factor, because anyone who is five foot two inches will almost always be the smallest player in the game no matter the gender identity of the opponent.[2] Beyond size advantage, is there any particular reason to assume that this male player – who just learned how to hold a stick – would suddenly transform into the best player on the pitch (Fields, 141)? In truth, there is no particular reason besides the sexist belief that genitals are directly related to skill. Notably, these points have negative implications for the prospect of transgender and non-binary participation in the sport because of their reliance on sex-based "biological" measures.[3]

Point (c) is trickier because there *are* reasons for preserving gender identity-segregated sports. The most popular and prestigious sports developed in male-dominant society to suit male physical excellence, not to mention that female athletes are systematically denied the support and resources that male athletes receive (Brake). The detainment of Brittney Griner in Russia has illuminated for many the precarious position of professional female athletes: even the highest paid WNBA players must play *two* basketball seasons every year in order to make enough money to justify all the time and energy that went into honing their craft in the short time they have before their abilities inevitably start to decline.[4] Until gender inequality can be addressed at deeper levels, it is important that female-identifying persons have spaces to excel without being penalized for structural obstacles that are out of their control. Unfortunately, the most troubling implication of blocking males from field hockey under gender equality legislation is also the subtlest, and it

speaks to the relative prestige given to "male sports" and "female sports" (Fields, 148). It's not just that schools only have girls' field hockey teams – it's that field hockey is a girls' *sport*, and courts consistently established that there had to be an overall pattern of gender- based discrimination at the athletic program in general in order for Title IX to apply to any one sport (Fields, 151). The argument is framed as if to say that boys had always *had* better opportunities, so giving them even more would not contribute to achieving gender equality; what it actually says is that boys always *have* better opportunities. Why would a boy who could play football choose field hockey instead? Implicit in this argument is the perception that being barred from playing field hockey is no loss at all for the male athlete, whereas being barred from football is a distinct injustice.

There's still an elephant in the room when talking about field hockey and gender: from middle school to the Olympics, most female field hockey players take the field in a skirt. At first glance, it is hard to imagine that athletes of this particular sport, which is played in a low, wide stance and requires a great deal of running, would perform best in a garment that is not conducive to any of those activities. Shorts, to wear underneath the skirt, might as well be part of the uniform except that they must be self-purchased, because the only way to play a full game of field hockey without exposing oneself is to spend the whole time sitting on the bench. This is about more than inconvenience, however – research shows that mandating restrictive and revealing sportswear has a real impact on young girls' desires to be active in a body-obsessed world (Howard 2021). Within the past decade, what female athletes can and cannot wear, and why, has become a serious topic of discussion, but people have been questioning the place of skirts in field hockey for far longer. As a curious high schooler, I was told that our uniform included "kilts" (if any skirt is a kilt, then I guess they were kilts) to honor the sport's Scottish heritage. This sentiment was echoed in a 1998

interview with the then-women's athletic director at Iowa State about another team's choice to (temporarily) leave the skirts behind, saying, "I was a bit dismayed, but I'm Scottish – I can't help feeling some misgivings" (Bostian 1998). But aren't kilts for men? Outside of the United States, male field hockey teams are well-established and thriving, but none of them wear "kilts" to honor Scotland (Xie 2004).[5] An op-ed by Tess Howard, a player on the women's British national team, doesn't mention Scotland at all, instead summarizing that skirts "derive from Victorian public schools where long skirted uniforms were used to ensure 'femininity' was not compromised whilst girls played 'masculine' sport" (2021). This is exactly what happened to create skirt mandates for women in tennis and golf, and it is the likeliest path for field hockey as well (Schultz 2014). The invented tradition that calls skirts, "kilts," cloaks an enduring presence of sexism in the sport.

Like tennis and golf, field hockey suffers from carrying too much of its past into the present, whether that be skirts or exclusivity. For every attempt to hide baked-in sexism by calling skirts, "kilts," there is an athletic scholarship given out to a rich white girl from New England (Thompson 2019). In over a century it has not managed to reach much beyond its original stomping grounds of the Northeast and what is now the Rust Belt (Schwartz, 122). Twenty of thirty-five players currently on the national team's roster are from the state of Pennsylvania. All thirty-five present as white (Gill 2007). The skirt is a vestigial nod to "respectability," but the kind of "respectability" that lives on in school dress codes that have zero sympathy for girls with body types that don't fit the Anglo- American standard, particularly women of color (Perry 2020). The complicated feminism of field hockey is reflective of the complicated historical legacy of feminism itself. Field hockey is a case study in progress: there is good, but progress is always more complicated than it appears.

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[1] https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-10512/p-313

[2] If the numbers seemed oddly specific, that is because I am speaking from a personal experience. I admit that he was bigger and faster than I, but then so was everyone else I played against. Read more about his story (https://www.lohud.com/story/sports/columnists/nancy-haggerty/2021/11/12/haggerty-female-athlete-victims-join-colin-ives-victims-his-ban/6386639001/) and a recent similar situation at my high school (https://tower.mastersny.org/7867/sports/co-ed-field-hockey-team-defends-against-pushback-from-other-schools/).

[3] https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transgender-athletes-rights-rebekah-bruesehoff-14-year-old/

[4] https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/31/us/brittney-griner-race-deconstructed-newsletter/index.html

[5] It isn't even remotely clear that field hockey is a Scottish invention.

The Desert A City:
A Study of Antony the Great's Life

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Between 356 and 358, Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria in exile, composed the first biography of a monk, *Life of Antony.*[1] This remarkable work was so popular and influential that it drew attention not just to Antony the Great, but also to Egypt, its monks, and its ever-growing monastic communities. Athanasius wrote in *Life* that St. Antony's fame even reached the emperors because Emperor Constantine Augustus and his sons, after having heard of him, were eager to receive an answer from him as a Father.[2] Therefore, in this paper, I will address the following questions: who is St. Antony, what are the most important elements of Antony's ascetic life, and what is the legacy of Athanasius's *Life of Antony*?

According to Athanasius, St. Antony was a Coptic-speaking peasant. He was raised Christian and grew up in a village along the Nile River. His parents died when he just reached his adolescence, leaving him with weighty responsibilities: a younger sister to take care of and a family farm. One day, when he walked into a church while the Gospel was being read, he heard the words "If you would be perfect, go, and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (Matt. 19:21). Antony was moved deeply by these words and saw himself in the reading as the man whom Jesus was speaking. Thus, he acted immediately: he gave away his lands and goods to the poor, made an arrangement for his sister to be raised in virginity, and then left to live an ascetic life.

It is interesting that Athanasius did not depict him as the first monk who pursued the ascetic life but as the one who really brought asceticism to the next level and made his ascetic life a real model and standard for the later monks. He pointed out that even though there were not yet monasteries in Egypt, the ascetic doctrine was being practiced already, and those who

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[1] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, translated by Robert C. Gregg, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980).
[2] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 84.

wished to discipline themselves lived in isolation. According to *Life*, there has already been a recognizable class of Christian ascetics who chose to live on the fringe of the villages and whom Athanasius called "men of Zeal."[3] In other words, the population of Egypt has been in contact with ascetic teachings for centuries and some of them were taught to look upon the world through ascetic eyes. For instance, during the second century in Alexandria, there was a Christian ascetic sect called Encratite, meaning "self-controlled," who held the conviction that the fallen state of humanity could be most vividly witnessed through sexuality. Thus, in order to return to a "natural state," they forbade marriage for it supported acts of sex and advocated abstinence from meat.[4] However, in response to the Encratites' heavy charges on sexuality, Clement of Alexandria, a Christian theologian, and philosopher who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria, began to develop the theory of body and self around the notion of a Christian sage. He put forward that human beings were unable to avoid some "urges" such as hunger, fear, and sensations since humans were born with these urges, which Peter Brown called "the muted creaking of the biological self."[5] They were like vapors and, if not checked by vigilant reflection, could mist over the entire mind so that human beings would lose their rationality. Thus, in order to maintain a lucid and serene vision and state of mind, it was necessary to conduct a "meticulous rhythm of life."[6] And only through a disciplined life, human beings were able to obtain discernment. However, to "form" a life, from Clement's perspective, involved no harsh mortification of the flesh. It was rather a process as meticulous and "as long as the attention that a literary man must give to the right placing of every word."[7]

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[3] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 3.
[4] Peter, Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 131.
[5] Brown, 129.
[6] Brown, 129.
[7] Brown, 130.

Antony was definitely influenced by this notion of cultivation of self, which was traceable both in *Life* and in his letters to his disciples. However, what made him special, who eventually earned the epithet "father of monks," was not his ascetic lifestyle but where he practiced asceticism. Earlier Christian thinkers such as Clement did not advocate a complete retreat from society. Rather, he maintained that the Christian sage should discipline himself while remaining a full member of the society and engaging in "God-given importance of every moment of daily life, and especially of the life in the household."[8] Thus, one of the significant developments in early monasticism that separated it from earlier ascetic traditions is that Antony decided to make a total break from his surrounding environment. Instead of practicing it at the fringe of the village, he chose to practice it in the desert, which was not a friendly place to live. Brown wrote that the antithesis between the desert and settled land in Egypt was stark enough that Antony's life in the Egyptian desert was a social equivalent of living on the Antarctic continent.[9] Other than the hostile environments, the desert itself provided many other facets for the early monks themselves. It should be noted that there was a general tendency in Egypt to flee to the desert to avoid worldly troubles. For example, early Christians tended to flee to the desert in order to escape the persecution under the pagan Emperor; others tried to avoid the heavy taxes imposed by the emperor. Another important aspect of the desert is that biblically it has been associated with the dwelling place of demons. Christ was tempted in the desert and Israelites, the chosen people, was also tested in the desert. Thus, in my opinion, Antony, being fully aware of the existence of evil demons in the desert, purposely chose to retreat to the desert in order to strengthen his mind and cultivate himself.

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[8] Brown, 128.

[9] Peter, Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," Journal of Roman Studies 61 (1971): 83

It is interesting to notice that asceticism actually comes from the Greek word ασκεσις which was used by Greeks to describe anyone who enters into strict training and disciplined practice in order to achieve a certain goal.[10] Originally, it was applied to athletes who followed strict training in order to win the contest. Subsequently, this concept was incorporated into the Christian settings as strict training in order to toughen one's body and mind for the preparation of the final moment of death in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, Christian martyrs were often referred to as athletes or fighters of Christ, who played out their devotion in the arena in the midst of a hostile unchristian Roman Empire. For example, Clement of Rome, writing in the late first century A.D., spoke of martyrs as the "noble athletes" persecuted and engaged in the "contest of death."[11] Moreover, it should not be considered solely a coincidence that both martyrs and gladiators fought and died in the same arena. One of the most famous persecutions was the death of St. Perpetua.[12] Vibia Perpetua, a member of a high-ranking Roman family, was arrested along with four other fellow Christians under the decree of Emperor Septimus Severus. On the day of the persecution, they were led to the amphitheater "joyfully as though they were going to heaven."[13] One of her fellow Christians Saturninus insisted that he wanted to be exposed to all different beasts so that he might receive more glory in heaven. At the same time, when Perpetua fought with the heifer, she asked for a pin to fasten her untidy hair because she insisted that she should die with modesty and dignity. In the end, she, fearless and proud, took the "trembling hand of the young gladiator and guided it to her throat."[14] (56). Thereafter, in the minds of early Christians, martyrs were the glorious fighters of Christ and needed to be venerated. Antony was also deeply moved by this concept. In *Life*, Athanasius described how Antony, after hearing of

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[10] Gabriel Daly, "Prayer and Asceticism," The Furrow, 22, no. 11 (1971): 676-678
[11] Daly, "Prayer and Asceticism," 678
[12] Andrew S, Jacob, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas in Late Antiquity*, edited by L. Stephanie Cobb, 1st ed (University of California Press, 2021).
[13] Jacob, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas in Late Antiquity,* 56.
[14] Jacob, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas in Late Antiquity,* 56.

the brutal persecutions of Maximin Daia in 313, decided to come out of his cell and go to Alexandria that he "entered the combat or look upon those that do."[15] He attended the trials of Christians and also accompanied those who were to be martyred to the place of execution. In *Life*, Athanasius depicted him as bold, yet restrained enough that he would not be accused of seeking voluntary martyrdom. He then withdrew again to his cell and "was there daily being martyred by his conscience, and doing battle in the contests of the faith."[16] Rather than "a single final battle," Antony was "daily martyred" by his own conscience since he put himself under a constant threat of being lured both by demons externally and by the human desire for food internally.

In *Life*, the demons were usually visible. They could be seen and heard. They could take the form of "a beguiling seductive temptress" or disguise themselves as "beasts—lions, bears, leopards, snakes, scorpions" and even beat ascetics.[17] For instance, in *Life*, Antony was badly beaten by demons disguised as a wild beast and was found motionless, speechless, as if dead, by his friend.[18] However, in some cases, some devils were even not visible bodily. In the *Seven Letters of St. Antony* ascribed to him by St. Jerome in 392 C.E, Antony warned his disciples of all the "secret contrivances" and "manifold crafts" of the devil's work.[19] For they were not visible bodily, they took the bodies of human beings and poured all their wickednesses into souls. Then, he told his disciples that only through "a spirit of discernment" that is bestowed by God could all the secret devils be revealed. In *Life*, Athanasius wrote: "the Lord did not forget the wrestling of Antony."[20] He appeared and assumed a human voice: "I was here, Antony, but I waited to watch your struggle. And now, since you persevered and were not defeated, I will be

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[15] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 46.
[16] Athanasius*,* 47.
[17] Athanasius, 5.
[18] Athanasius, 5.
[19] Antony, *Letter* 6.
[20] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 10.

your helper forever, and I will make you famous everywhere."[21] In such a way, Antony was given the spirit of discernment and was able to see the fiercest evil spirit.

Antony believed that all the burdens that devils had poured both in soul and body should be purged. Thus, according to Athanasius, he maintained a simple diet of bread and salt, only drank water, and on many occasions only ate every second day. It was believed in Late Antiquity that the human body was an "autarkic" system that was capable of running on its own "heat."[22] Ideally, the body would only need "enough nourishment to keep that heat alive." Ascetics tended to identify the bodies of Adam and Eve as the "natural" state, a state in which the body acted as a "finely tuned engine" capable of idling indefinitely.[23] However, the twisted will of fallen men had crammed the body with all these extra and unnecessary foods, thereby generating "a dire surplus of energy" that manifested itself in "physical appetite, in anger, and in the sexual urge."[24] Therefore, as Antony believed and later instructed to his disciples, only through strict ascetic disciplines could the body return to its original, natural, and "uncorrupted" state, free from anything alien that belonged to the spirit of the enemy. Contemporaries liked to think that they had sensed this state in Antony. In *Life*, when he emerged from his cell after twenty years, his friends and villagers were amazed to see that "his body had maintained its former condition and not emaciated from fasting and combat with demons."[25] Even upon his death, Athanasius claimed that Antony's body had not been conquered by old age, but remained free of injury. Upon his death, he was sound in his hands and feet, and "none of his teeth was lost."[26] Thus, through strict regulations of fasting and the intake of food, Antony released himself from the need for food and remade his body into perfection.

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[21] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 10.
[22] Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, 223.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 14.
[26] Athanasius, 96.

Even though this new form of martyrdom, "daily martyrdom," created by Antony did not draw much attention during his lifetime since the worst and bloodiest Christian prosecutions were yet to come. Under the emperor Diocletian, martyrdom reached its highest point since it was firmly believed among the Christian community as the noblest way to attest one's faith and resolution. However, after Constantine came to power and he himself converted to Christianity, the prosecution was halted and during this relatively peaceful period, Antony's life drew lots of attention from the Christian community. Under the reign of Constantine, it was observed that there was a sudden spike in the conversions among the pagans, many of whom allegedly converted to Christianity due to political interest. This sudden expansion of the Christian community aroused anxiety among the more earnest Christians because they were worried that the quality of believers was declining. Moreover, they could no longer attest their faiths through once the noblest and most revered way-martyrdom. Under such circumstances, what Antony expounded, monasticism filled the gap and provided an outlet for the enthusiasm of the more earnest Christians. In other words, he made himself, later on, the monks, the successor to the martyrs. And this surge of interest in monasticism and the life of Antony was traceable in *Life*. In the preface, Athanasius addressed to those who had requested the biography that each of their questions, such as who Antony was before his monastic career, how he began this journey, and how he disciplined himself, was given ample treatment in the text.[27] In other words, Athanasius, himself as a devoted Christian, wanted to spur his readers to action and follow the steps of Antony. Moreover, he wanted his portrait of Antony to be ideal to be imitated as well as an archetype to measure oneself against.

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[27] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* Preface.

Toward the end of the *Life*, Athanasius suggested the story of Antony was a confirmation of the promises in the Bible and this added another layer of credibility to the accounts of Antony's life:

> Such is the story of Antony […] For it is the promise of the Saviour who says: *If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: 'Remove hence!' and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. And again: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you… Ask and you shall receive.* And it is He who said to His disciples and to all who believe in Him: *Heal the sick; cast out demons; freely have you received, freely give.*[28]

By telling a story of a fearless hearer who retreated to the desert, acquired the spirit of discernment from God through his incessant prayers and fasting, whose touch could heal the sick and whose magical power could ward off the fiercest evil spirit, Athanasius provided the monks with a detailed and sufficient picture of ascetic practices. As is known, Athanasius's *Life* turned out to be a huge success since it inspired countless imitators and monasticism really flourished over the next 1000 years. The elements of Athanasius's narratives, such as the dramatic conversion, the battle with demons, unending battle with fasting, also became recurring themes and the standards in the later literature of monasticism and medieval hagiography. In the end, as Athanasius famously said, "the desert was made a city by monks, who left their own people and registered themselves for citizenship in the heavens."[29]

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[28] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* 89.
[29] Athanasius, 14.

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British Involvement in the Korean War:
The Special Relationship as a Framework for Involvement

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As the Korean War reached the three-year mark in 1953, Winston Churchill was questioned by Bernard Montgomery[1] as to what exactly British aims in Korea were. "If I were in charge, I would withdraw UN troops to the coast and leave Syngman Rhee to the Chinese,"[2] Churchill replied, referencing the Republic of Korea (ROK) President and the broader global implications of the war. "Korea does not matter now. I'd never heard of the bloody place till I was seventy-four." While the quote illustrates Churchill's characteristic wit, the mere inquisition posed by his associate reflects a prevailing lack of certainty regarding Britain's engagement in the Korean War. Churchill's response is even more telling: Korea itself was not an object of concern for him, nor for the British public more generally, until the advent of the war.

The scholarship surrounding British involvement in the Korean War raises similar questions, mainly due to the paucity of work on Britain's involvement. Cold War scholars like Odd Westad have argued that the war was the first application of containment policy as the Cold War mounted and the ideological fight over communism took shape.[3] Others, like Philip Bell, posit the war was an opportunity for Britain to regain prominence on the world stage after World War II.[4] But these arguments overlook an even more pressing motivator: the Anglo-American "special relationship."

To substantiate the argument that Britain entered the war because of their relationship with the United States, a brief outline of the economic context of Britain's decline using the work of several economic historians is useful. The trend of imperial and international decline, expressed through the words of several principle historic actors of the time, is also illustrative.

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[1] Montgomery was a prominent field marshal well known for his success as a commander in World War II.

[2] Winston Churchill quoted in Moran, Charles McMoran Wilson. *Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965*. [1st American ed.]., Houghton Mifflin, 1966 pp 423.

[3] Odd Arne Westad. *The Cold War: A World History*. Hachette UK, 2017 pp 172.

[4] Philip Bell. *Twelve Turning Points of the Second World War*, Yale University Press, 2011 pp 190.

With this context established, the salient elements of Britain's special relationship with the United States will become apparent. These elements will show why Britain's engagement in the Korean War was essential to the solidification and longevity of the special relationship, and more broadly the survival of Britain itself. Together, these sources will bolster the argument that British involvement in the Korean War was based on American interests and highlight how the centering of the interests of Americans—not Koreans—fostered a lack of collective British mythology surrounding the war and contributed to its forgotten nature.

Britain was dealing with a decline on the economic front long before the Korean War, mostly attributed to lagging productivity. Due to their early industrialization in the 19th century, the machinery that propelled Britain to an early lead in the industrial revolution faced early obsolescence just as their global counterparts were catching up. Economic historians detail how this decreased productivity in the early 20th century led the economy to "languish consistently" in the half century that preceded the Korean War as compared to sixteen other industrialized nations.[5] The First and Second World Wars provided brief respites from Britain's productivity woes but did not reverse the continued trend of British economic decline because wartime mobilization did not address underlying weaknesses of the economy. The wars did, however, saddle the British government with enough debt to make them the largest debtor in the world by 1947.[6] The fiscal policy of the wartime coalition governments had "thrown economic caution to the wind" to win the war.[7] This macroeconomic reality coincided with a decrease in the standard of living for Britons. In the period following the war, the lived experience of Britons was

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[5] S. N Broadberry. "The Long Run Growth and Productivity Performance of the United Kingdom." *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 44, no. 4, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997, pp. 406.

[6] C. C. S. Newton. "The Sterling Crisis of 1947 and the British Response to the Marshall Plan." *The Economic History Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, 1984, pp 392.

[7] Alan S. Milward. *War, Economy and Society, 1939-1945*. University of California Press, 1977.

characterized by government austerity and food rationing. In spring 1945, rationing applied to a

third of consumer spending. [8] This rationing was enacted in conjunction with a sizable increase

in taxes aimed at increasing revenue, further illustrating the economic peril faced by the British

government.[9] Coupled with the expanding welfare programs and a need for rebuilding after the

war, government spending in 1951 swelled to 37.5 percent of GDP as compared to just 11

percent a century earlier.[10]

The economic conditions of Britain were of deep concern to John Maynard Keynes, one

of the principle economic actors of the time. He believed that full employment could be reached

by government investment in the economy. But Britain was strapped for cash. Keynes and his

contemporaries had pulled all the levers in their arsenal, from increased taxation to devaluing of

the pound in 1949. In this context, Keynes believed that the longevity of the British economy

"depended on the willingness of the United States, which was the world's largest creditor, to

provide generous foreign credits."[11] The U.S. did exactly that, with an initial sum of £1 billion

through the lend-lease program.[12] But Keynes needed more, so he and Lord Halifax, the British

Ambassador at the time, traveled to Washington to secure more money. An additional $3.75

billion eventually came through the Marshall Plan.[13] Ostensibly intended for reconstruction in

the post-war landscape, the money proved essential to a British economy that was already in

danger. More broadly, the aid received from the U.S. can be seen as an early indicator for the

emerging special relationship. A famous doggerel would later recount:

[8] Martin Daunton. *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951*, Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2007 pp 521.
[9] Peter Baldwin. *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases in the European Welfare State, 1875-1975*. Cambridge University Press, 1990 pp 296.
[10] Daunton, pp 190.
[11] Newton, pp 392.
[12] Andrew Shonfield. *British Economic Policy Since the War*. Penguin Books, 1958 pp 252.
[13] Henry Pelling. *Britain and the Marshall Plan*. St. Martin's Press, 1988 pp 4.

In Washington Lord Halifax
Once whispered to Lord Keynes:
It's true *they* have the money bags
But *we* have all the brains.[14]

As the special relationship developed, leaders thought that Britain could exploit the economic and military prowess of the U.S. while guiding the naïve American giant with their imperial wisdom.

But this imperial wisdom was called into question in the 20th century as the British empire declined. The granting of independence to India 1947 (or rather, yielding to India's demands) arguably represents the peak of this decline, when the centerpiece of British colonial rule was rendered free.[15] This momentous change is situated in the years immediately preceding the Korean War, but the singular event was not necessarily preceded by a sudden and precipitous decline of the empire. Rather, this decline had been felt by all British peoples for some time. "A loss of dynamic and purpose, and a general bewilderment, are felt by many people, both at the top and bottom in Britain," one scholar argued as "those acres of red on the map [were] dwindling."[16] Leopold Amery, a conservative imperialist, shared this bewildered sentiment. As early as 1928, he was concerned about the increasing role of the U.S. and Russia. He warned that if Britain was "to drift on, with the certain result that, from a position of ever-increasing relative weakness, Great Britain, on the one side, will eventually have to be absorbed inside the European Economic Union."[17] This would happen in conjunction with new "subordinate economic dependencies, towards the great American Union."[18] Looking forward, there was only one

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[14] Robin Edmonds. *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain 1945-1950.* 1986 pp 100.
[15] Paul M. Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. Pbk. ed., Humanity Books, 2006.
[16] Jim Tomlinson "The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain." *20 Century British History.*, vol. 14, no. 3, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 201.
[17] Leopold Amery cited in Bernard Porter. *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1970*. Longman, 1975 pp 316.
[18] Ibid.

outcome Amery saw: "the break-up of the Empire."[19] Amery's comments, though intended as a warning, would soon prove to be a reality: The British Empire was falling into obsolescence in the face of an increasingly bipolar geopolitical atmosphere.

Winston Churchill's experience at Yalta in February 1945 highlights this new bipolarity of global geopolitics and the general decline of British relevance in international relations. With World War II waning, a new global paradigm was emerging wherein the United States and Soviet Union embraced their roles as the singular superpowers in the emerging dichotomy. The Americans realized this, and often disregarded British interests during the diplomatic talks at Yalta. Even before the conference, Churchill struggled to convince Roosevelt to meet with him for preliminary discussions, even despondently apologizing "pray forgive my tenacity" after several attempts at correspondence.[20] When the actual plenary meetings at Yalta proceeded, Churchill again found himself as a subordinate to Roosevelt and Stalin. The leaders' approach in Poland provides an insightful vignette for this subordination. Churchill had agreed with Roosevelt to allow for free and fair elections in Poland. However, it was ignored and overridden following a subsequent private meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt. Then Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden remarked: "The Americans gave us no warning and I don't propose to agree to their action."[21] But the British leaders never got the chance to disagree; on the Polish decision, Churchill would later recall "we were only informed of them at our parting luncheon, when all had been already agreed, and we had no part in making them."[22] The British, unable to assert their dominance on the Polish issue, were facing the reality of the diminished value their voice carried in international relations.

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Winston Churchill quoted in Martin Gilbert. *Churchill and America*. Free Press, 2005 pp 325.
[21] Anthony Eden quoted in Gilbert, pp 331.
[22] Winston Churchill quoted in Gilbert, pp 331.

Despite these instances, Churchill's subsequent reflections on Yalta illustrated his consistently positive views of Anglo-American relations and provide insight into the nature of the developing special relationship. Churchill told his war cabinet that the Americans "tell us repeatedly that they are resolved to see us through after the war till we can get into a normal position," believing that "good spirit [was] prevailing."[23] Such a 'normal position' would not come to fruition for some time. Instead, the newly lopsided special relationship as manifested at Yalta would continue for years to come, including during the Korean War.

The first skirmish in the Korean War occurred the night of June 24, 1950 and would start the first major armed conflict for the U.S. and Britain since the end of World War II. Tracing the remarks of the British Foreign Secretary at the time Ernest Bevin, one can see the lack of interest in the ideological aspects of the war and instead a commitment to appeasing American interests in the name of upholding the burgeoning special relationship. With their military barely recovered from the war, Britain was hesitant to send troops to Korea. But exactly a month after the start of the war, on July 14, Prime Minister Attlee and Bevin authorized an initial brigade to fight on behalf of and at the direction of the U.S. military. Not entirely convinced of why Britain should be involved in the conflict, Bevin commented that they were supporting America as "the well-intentioned but inexperienced colossus on whose cooperation our safety depends," again revealing the misguided conception that Britain could influence the U.S. given the history of the special relationship.[24] Bevin and other British leaders were convinced that supporting U.S. military aims, even when they did not align with British values, was a prerequisite for their continued aid. Paradoxically, this aid was for the rearmament of Britain to combat the Soviets in

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[23] Winston Churchill quoted in Gilbert, pp 330.
[24] Ernest Bevin cited in C. A. MacDonald. *Korea, the War before Vietnam.* 1st American ed., Free Press, 1987 pp 85.

Europe, and yet their resources were then being deployed in far eastern theaters with little defensive value to the British Isles themselves.

The absolutist approach to appeasing American interests was briefly challenged in January 1951 when Attlee's Cabinet voted in his absence to break with the U.S. on the issue of sanctioning the Chinese for their role in the conflict. But the break was short lived. London was soon threatened by U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson that "failure to support the US would have grave consequences in the congress on the eve of Eisenhower's crucial report on NATO defense needs."[25] Britain quickly acquiesced, backing away from their brief attempt at independence. This trend continued when Churchill returned to power in October of 1951. Both Churchill and his new Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden were admittedly committed to giving the U.S. a "free hand in Asia" given that the special relationship provided a "fundamental guarantee of British security," both economically and militarily.[26] In a January 1952 meeting in Washington, Churchill and Eden found themselves again playing "second fiddle" to the U.S. as it related to nuclear armament and being forced to accept a hastily made agreement by the preceding Labour government for U.S. base positioning in East Anglia.[27]

Churchill still reported back to his cabinet positively on the status of the bilateral special relationship despite the reality that few concessions were made by the U.S. to Britain. His commitment to the Anglo-American relationship is uncanny, but it is helpfully explained by his initial conceptualization of the relationship in his famed 1946 Iron Curtain speech. In his words, a "fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples" through a "special relationship between

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[25] Dean Acheson cited in MacDonald, 1987 pp 86.
[26] C. A. MacDonald. *Britain and the Korean War*. B. Blackwell, 1990 pp 63.
[27] MacDonald, pp 64.

the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States" was called for.[28] Churchill posited

several essential elements to this relationship:

> Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding
> between our two vast but kindred systems of society, but the continuance of the intimate
> relationship between our military advisers ... It should carry with it the continuance of the
> present facilities for mutual security by the joint use of all naval and air force bases in the
> possession of either country all over the world.[29]

Churchill's initial vision of the special relationship deemed the U.S. as essential to Britain's

security and the ability of Britain to exist as a world power, despite their recent decline. The

relationship as envisioned by Churchill tied British survival to four essential tenets, each of

which manifested in the Korean War. These were: (1) Britain remains relevant on the global

stage; (2) the U.S.'s new power was real, ubiquitous, and undeniable; (3) a determination that

closeness with this new superpower served British interests; and (4) that Britain could guide the

naïve American giant with their age-old wisdom.[30] What he failed to account for, however, was

that this relationship could not be reciprocal given Britain's position of relative economic and

international decline as outlined in this paper; Britain needed the U.S. more than the U.S. needed

them. In this context, the following framework to explains British involvement in the Korean
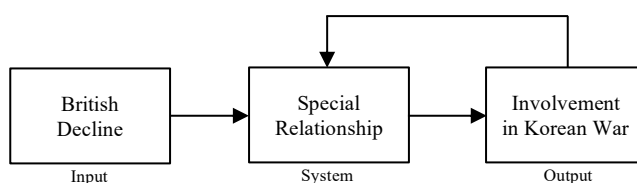
War.

Figure 1: Feedback loop framework for understanding British
involvement in the Korean War

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[28] Winston Churchill. "The Sinews of Peace" (Westminster College Commencement, March 5, 1946).
[29] Ibid.
[30] William Wallace and Christopher Phillips. "Reassessing the Special Relationship." *International Affairs (London)*, vol. 85, no. 2, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009, pp. 263–84

In this feedback loop, the historic trend of British decline in economic and imperial terms led to the necessity for the Anglo-American special relationship. But the special relationship could only be perpetuated by British subordination to U.S. interests in Korea. Notably, there is nowhere in this framework that highlights a concern for the interests of Koreans themselves. This centering of U.S. interests in the conflict via the special relationship contributed the Korean war becoming a 'forgotten war' in history.

The preeminent Korean War scholar Bruce Cumings argues that the Korean War embodies "less of a presence than an absence," and British conceptions of the war are no different.[31] Ronald Larby, a national service conscript, reflected in his journal after the war that "Korea just simply sank out of sight ... It was as though it—the Korean War—had never happened. A truly forgotten war."[32] That was because, in his view, "there were no books in the library and no films about Korea." His comment is instructive of the role of culture as a custodian of history. Unlike the preceding First and Second World Wars, there was no collective mythology that emerged from the Korean War. And unlike the subsequent Vietnam War, the atrocities of battle were not broadcast on televisions.[33] Even when it did enter popular culture, the war's historic agency was limited. For example, the wartime service of fictional Korean War veteran Basil Fawlty at the center of the famous 1970's British TV sitcom Fawlty Towers was merely the source of jokes. At one point, he tells guests at his hotel "I fought in the Korean War, you know, I killed four men" to which his wife quips "He was in the Catering Corps; he used to poison them."[34] An alleged shrapnel wound from battle flairs up only when Basil wants to get

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[31] Bruce Cumings. *The Korean War: A History*. Modern Library, 2010.
[32] Richard Larby cited in Grace Huxford. *The Korean War in Britain: Citizenship, Selfhood and Forgetting*. Manchester University Press, 2018 pp 157.
[33] Dong Choon Kim. "Forgotten War, Forgotten Massacres-the Korean War (1950-1953) as Licensed Mass Killings." *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 4, Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2004, pp 540.
[34] *Fawlty Towers*. Created by John Cleese and Connie Booth, BBC Two, 1975–1979.

out of an awkward situation. So, what put the Korean War in the historic and cultural position of being forgotten and diminished? As explained, an obvious explanation comes from the lack of mythology that emerged from the war as had happened with the previous wars of the 20th century. Moreover, the outcome was not as decisive and clear as previous conflicts in the British psyche. But Freud's commentary on memory is instructive here; forgetting is an intentional act.[35] In this case, it is being performed by a society to form a more palatable narrative of their past. Forgetting the war and Britain's embarrassing involvement as a second fiddle to the U.S. can thus be seen an intentional act. Looking forward in history, the special relationship that dictated involvement in the Korean War was tested again—and failed miserably—in the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis. When situated in this historic context, the Korean War is more easily understood as an intentionally forgotten and overlooked aspect of post-war British history.

That history of British subordination to the U.S. continues to be written, even in the 21st century. When Barack Obama assumed office in 2009, British leaders anxiously worried that 10 Downing Street might not be the first contact the new president had with a European counterpart and what that would signal for the special relationship. However, history indicates that the "unambiguous commitment to the United States" pledged by Churchill in his envisioning of the relationship, which was tested during the Korean War, was never completely reciprocal for Britain.[36] It died soon after its birth at Suez, was briefly brought back to life in Lazarus-like fashion under the premierships of Thatcher and Blair but never truly empowered Britain with the independence and self-determination Churchill thought it would. The Korean War was just the first example of this reality. Ultimately, it was the broader trend of post-war British decline on

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[35] Sigmund Freud. "Remembering, repeating, and working-through." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works,* vol. 12 pp 148.

[36] Timothy Garton Ash and Lucian M. Ashworth. "Free World. Why a Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of Our Time." *Round Table*, vol. 95, no. 383, Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2006, pp. 161–63.

the economic and international fronts that fostered dependence on American support. This created a self-perpetuating feedback loop wherein Britain was forced to support America in the Korean War as a condition for the continued support on which they had become dependent due to their decline.

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The Limits of Solidarity:
Leftist Jewish Israeli Activism for Palestine
in the 1960s and 2010s

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What does it mean for Jewish Israelis to engage in Palestinian solidarity? How do they navigate their positions of privilege in their activism? To explore these questions, I begin with a historical trajectory of the rise and fall of leftist Jewish Israeli activist organizations in response to global and local developments. I focus on two periods and their organizations: The Israeli Socialist Organization in the 1960's and 1970's and Ta'ayush and Physicians for Human Rights Israel in the 2010's. In both cases the individuals in question are a very small minority of Israelis. From there I analyze these organizations and activists' struggles to escape dominant Zionist and Israeli state narratives and the continual shortcomings in their attempts to center Palestinians in their activism. Despite radical positions, activists from both eras remain trapped in existing systems of power.

The first radical anti-Zionist critique emerged in 1962 when the Israeli Socialist Organization, known by the name of its publication, Matzpen ("compass"), broke from the Israeli Communist Party.[1] Previously the most radical leftist organizations in Israel had adopted a stance of non-Zionism. Matzpen went further. Deviating from dominant discourse on the Left and within Israeli society more broadly, these activists put Zionism in explicitly colonial terms. It was not a clash of nations, as the prevailing narrative put it (and often still does), but an imperial and colonial program that was the source of conflict in Israel/Palestine.[2] Alongside anti-Zionism, their other central tenet was naturally, as a leftist organization, anti-capitalism. In their rhetoric and activism, they fought against the combined enemies of Zionism, imperialism, and "Arab reaction," referring to Palestinian retaliation against Zionism and imperialism that had a

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[1] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 14*.
[2] Greenstein, *Zionism and Its Discontents, 166*.

nationalistic and anti-Semitic character. Only regional revolution could escape from these three and liberate the workers of Israel, Palestine, and the larger Middle East.[3]

Their envisioned future was one of self-determination for all nations in the region – of which they saw a non-imperial, minority Jewish nation as a part. However, they recognized that before equal national self-determination could become a reality, the colonial expansion of a Jewish nation-state needed to end.[4] This required the "de-Zionization" of Israel: removing colonial and imperial expansionist elements of government and society. Most of their activism centered on this idea of de-Zionization until 1967. The 1967 war between Israel, Jordan, and the United Arab Republic (present-day Egypt and Syria) ended in Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. With this major change, Matzpen activism reoriented to opposition to the occupation. It was also during this post-1967 period that the group garnered the most fame and notoriety.[5] They made connections with leftist organizations in Europe and at times Matzpen's key members were based there.[6]

Internal and external changes in the next decade weakened the organization. Division within Matzpen led to break away groups in 1970. Some members argued that Matzpen was too nationally focused at the expense of a truly radical leftist critique. Others said that the organization was overly concerned with the theoretical instead of the Palestinian reality.[7] These two opposing poles – national support and socialism – continued tugging on the fabric of the organization. In 1972 it split geographically into Matzpen Tel Aviv and Matzpen Jerusalem

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[3] Greenstein, 168.
[4] Greenstein, 168.
[5] Greenstein, 170.
[6] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles*.
[7] Greenstein, *Zionism and Its Discontents, 172-173*.

(known as "Matzpen Marxist").[8] While initially their frameworks remained the same, over time Matzpen Marxist adopted harsher rhetoric for the "destruction of the Zionist state," and became more concerned with wider Arab revolution.[9] Within Israel, much of the Israeli working class began moving to the political right and supported the government of Menachem Begin. The death of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 eroded regional support for Arab nationalism. The Camp David Accords and Oslo Accords improved Israel's diplomatic position and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) became more open to compromise. [10] Israelis, including Matzpen activists, saw a period of hope in the post-Oslo era that was shattered by an eventual recognition that the accords further benefitted Israel at the expense of Palestinian dispossession.[11] Nonetheless, in this environment "the call for the 'destruction of the Zionist state' began to look increasingly anachronistic".[12] Matzpen's platform was founded on class struggle and regional revolution. The decline in support for both, domestically and internationally, impaired an organization already weakened by internal division.[13]

In the face of internal and external complications, Matzpen activism lost momentum. In his book on radical dissent in Israel/Palestine, Ran Greenstein argues,

> [o]nly a few hardcore 'professional revolutionaries' would be able to sustain activities on a regular basis, for a prolonged period of time, under such conditions. The rest would likely become disillusioned and retire from political life – the cycle of intense involvement leading to 'burn out' feeling and ultimately to withdrawal is quite common – or seek a different mode of activism.[14]

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[8] Greenstein, 182.
[9] Greenstein, 184-185.
[10] Greenstein, 189.
[11] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles*.
[12] Greenstein, *Zionism and Its Discontents, 189*.
[13] Greenstein, 190.
[14] Greenstein, 190.

Over the next decade the organization's support and action diminished. Smaller groups replaced Matzpen. This new wave of movements grew after the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the 1982 Lebanon War, and the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Opposition to these wars, disillusionment with the 1993 Oslo Accords, and the Second Intifada brought many leftist Jewish Israelis back into Palestinian solidarity activism.[15] A humanitarian focus replaced the broad leftist political manifesto of Matzpen. These new groups involved many of the same activists with similarly leftist politics, yet the organizations themselves took on much smaller problems.[16]

It is these organizations, including Ta'ayush and Physicians for Human Rights Israel, that I examine in the second period, 2010-2011 Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Ta'ayush is a group of Jewish Israeli activists who, at the time of Fiona Wright's ethnographic research, worked to protect the rights of farmers in the occupied South Hebron Hills.[17] Activists would travel there, only possible because of Israeli settlements in the area, to physically "stand with" Palestinian farmers who faced harassment by Israeli settlers and soldiers. While not engaging directly with these other Israelis, the activists would record and document abuses.[18] Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) is an organization that works for human rights, in particular the right to medical services for Palestinians, refugees, and migrants in Israel and the Occupied Territories. They conduct research, write reports, and run free clinics.[19] At the time Wright was researching and working with the group there was an ongoing wave of resistance and backlash towards the increasing numbers of refugees coming from Sudan and the Horn of Africa. Upon entering Israel, refugees and migrants would be detained by Israeli authorities, bussed to the south of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and

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[15] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 15*.
[16] Greenstein, *Zionism and Its Discontents, 192*.
[17] "About Ta'ayush « Taayush."
[18] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 30*.
[19] "About Us."

left to fend for themselves. Political, humanitarian, and human rights organizations like PHRI took on the task of support for these groups unsupported by the state.[20] Alongside these organizations were and are other grassroots groups who lead protests and demonstrations against police and government action like the displacement of Palestinians in neighborhoods like Sheikh Jarrah.

Many modern leftist, anti-Zionist organizations can trace their origins back to Matzpen. Many are made up of former members of the group, or were influenced by Matzpen's anti-Zionist position. Yet these two periods of analysis are not just connected through lineage. Many of the problems and limitations of Matzpen's Palestinian solidarity are the same problems that present-day leftist Jewish Israelis struggle with. Leftist Jewish Israeli activism in solidarity with Palestinians is a confrontation with their identity as Jewish Israelis. In attempting to reject the nation-state of Israel *as* Jewish Israelis, for whom the state has been created and in whose name it exists, these individuals are also rejecting themselves. As the following examples will show, despite attempts otherwise, leftist Jewish Israeli activists are unable to distance themselves from the state and society they critique. Because of this close relationship, they are at risk of centering their activism in an intra-Israeli context and othering and decentering the Palestinians they aim to support.

Regarding French settlers in Tunisia, Albert Memmi wrote in 1957 in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*,

> It is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology
> while continuing to live with its actual relationships. From now on, [the colonizer]
> lives his life under the sign of a contradiction which looms at every step…How

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[20] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 92*.

can he go about freeing himself of this halo of prestige which crowns him and at which he would like to take offense? [21]

Leftist Jewish Israeli activists are in a similarly dissonant position, embedded in the society they seek to radically transform, if not end. In the documentary *Matzpen: Anti Zionist Israelis*, Elfi Pallis, a former Matzpen activist said,

> Israel during the 60's was very different than today [2003]. A person with universal and humanitarian values who believed that all citizens should be treated as equals did not have a political base in the country, in certain respects. There was a national consensus that no questions are asked.[22]

When, as a young kibbutz volunteer, Michael Warschawski asked about Palestinian refugees that he saw leaving the area near the settlement, his leader responded that they were simply moving elsewhere. Warschawski, reflecting more than 3 decades later, recognizes that he had no political consciousness to know otherwise.[23] Similarly, one activist and healthcare worker that Wright interviewed in 2010 said that "books published in the 1980's by so-called post-Zionist scholars…led him to reconsider the history of Israel as he knew it".[24] To grow up and exist in this context, these activists are forever tied to the dominant rhetoric and narratives of the state. These narratives bleed over into their activism even as they seek to distance themselves from.

Activists in Matzpen and contemporary organizations are constrained by positioning themselves as antithetical to a dominant Israeli narrative. Moshe Machover, one of the founders of Matzpen, speaking about support for the PLO as "the accepted official representative [of the Palestinians], for better or worse," said that they "had to…not look at [the PLO] in the foolish, ridiculous outlook of the time, that they're a herd of terrorists and there's no one to talk to".[25] He

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[21] Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized, 20.*
[22] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[23] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[24] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 74.*
[25] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*

justifies support for an organization that he was not "enthusiastic about" by placing it as a counter to the Israeli right's narrative. By positioning themselves as counter to a dominant Israeli narrative, what decolonial potential does their activism and framework miss?

Similarly, Warschawski, reflecting on his time as a kibbutz volunteer says, "I saw an image of [Palestinian] refugees and it's always the same, from the *Exodus from Egypt,* up till today, till Kosovo, it always looks the same".[26] He makes a rhetorical choice to associate the experience of Palestinian refugees displaced in the Nakba with the biblical Jewish exodus from Egypt. He takes a common element of Zionist justification – Jewish narratives of exodus and return to Israel – and flips it on its head by relating it to Palestinians. Whether Warschawski is 'flipping the script' in a radical way or simply resorting to common Israeli rhetorical tools is up for debate, although the casual use of the phrase in an interview suggests the latter.

Problems of recreating or relying on dominant Israeli narratives exist in the recent past as well. When the free clinic run by the PHRI was overwhelmed and underfunded, activists contemplated the problems and benefits of using the state narrative of Israel as a land of refugees to bolster support for their work for non-Jewish refugee communities. These individuals are aware of the hypocrisy of this narrative vis a vis Palestinians and Palestinian refugees and of their role in justifying state policy by utilizing this narrative. Yet, "they chose to continue, 'just now,' with this form of engagement".[27] Ta'ayush's reporting on soldier and settler harassment and violence toward Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills also relies on dominant narratives. In one publication they critiqued Israeli soldiers saying, "don't just say you're following orders," referencing the defense of Adolf Eichmann.[28] By critiquing the actions of Jewish soldiers and

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[26] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles*. Emphasis added
[27] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 92*.
[28] Wright, 34.

settlers using the language of the state, they "partially shift...attention from what the Palestinians face to ethical and political relations among different Jewish Israelis".[29] In another example, despite activists' critique of the ways that the Israeli state uses particular Jewish deaths as part of its political agenda, they did the same when mourning for Palestinians.[30] Martyrdom and the application of martyrdom is a subject of debate in a Palestinian context as well[31], however, the Jewish activists who utilize Palestinian death for rhetorical and political purposes are specifically doing so in relation to the way Jewish death is used by the state.

Jewish Israeli activists then and now must also grapple with a victim-perpetrator binary. Matzpen activists had to counteract a narrative of Jews as victims and thus not perpetrators. About this issue Matzpen member Akiva Orr says:

> A great deal of…blackmail is carried out through the self-image of being a victim. 'I'm a victim, I'm pitiful, it's your fault that I'm a victim. You owe me, I'm not responsible for anything you're responsible for everything. I'm not because I'm the victim.' Matzpen said: No! You're not the victim! The Palestinians are the victim, and you are the ones who are making them the victim.[32]

While Orr appears to still rely on a binary distinction between victim and perpetrator, Jewish Israeli activists for Palestine had to address this issue of two parties (Jewish and Palestinian) who are both, in different ways, victims of violence, death, and displacement. This is further complicated by the position of Arab/Mizrahi Jews in Israel. For Yemeni, Iraqi, Egyptian, and other Jewish immigrants to Israel from Arab and Muslim-majority countries, the conditions of their emigration and arrival is tied up with violence and racism within Jewish Israeli society.[33] The responsibility of these groups towards Palestinians and other non-Jewish victims of the

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[29] Wright, 36.
[30] Wright, 70.
[31] "There Is A Field."
[32] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles*.
[33] Ariel, "Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries"; Bashkin, *New Babylonians*; Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*.

Israeli state (like present-day migrants and refugees from Africa) is ambiguous. How Ashkenazi

Jewish activists are to engage with these two wounded groups (Palestinian and Mizrahi) or their

own group is also unclear. As Wright puts it, this is a context with "multiple layers of

woundedness – that of Mizrahi Israelis, of Palestinians, of non-Jewish refugees arriving in Israel,

and of the historical persecution of Jews".[34] This uncertain landscape is once again connected to

Israeli national discourse where "discrete layers of violence throughout Israeli history were

muted in *a discursive sphere that mostly responds to wounds with a clear-cut victim/perpetrator*

distinction".[35]

Speaking on the in-between position of Italian, Spanish, and Maltese immigrants in

French Tunisia Albert Memmi argued that "privilege is something relative".[36] While white,

European settlers to French Tunisia experienced class- and nationality- based discrimination,

they still benefitted from shared race, religion, language, etc. Whether Mizrahi or Ashkenazi,

Jewish Israeli activists exist in a privileged position. These activists have to grapple with the

reality that, while still taking a risk, they risk *less* than Palestinians. Matzpen's notoriety post-

1967 attracted a lot of hatred. Yet, "Matzpen's Jewish members mostly suffered from

spontaneous harassment during protests and threats" while "Matzpen's Arab members suffered

from methodical harassment by the state in the form of interrogations and arrests".[37] At protests

in 2010 and 2011, Jewish Israeli activists expressed having some degree of choice over getting

arrested.[38] Those who were willing went to the front and confronted soldiers, police, and

counter-protestors, while those who, for whatever reason, personal or political, were less willing

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[34] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 118.*
[35] Wright, 118, emphasis added.
[36] Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized, 11.*
[37] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[38] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 36.*

to risk arrest stayed towards the back. Jewish Israelis were able to approach soldiers and engage in legal battles because they knew they risked less and were favored by the system. Wright witnessed judgement among activists of fellow Jewish Israelis who were not willing to be arrested. For them, to not directly or physically challenge was to be more complicit. However, from another angle, arrest was a badge of honor.[39] What does it mean to utilize your privilege or to be an activist while a member of a group privileged by the state and dominant society?

The above example of the significance of arrest brings up a question of the absolution of guilt through activism. Matzpen activist Haim Hanegbi reflected on his activism, "If I reach the gates of Heaven and am asked: 'is there something you're proud of?' I'll say: Yes. The determined, unmistakable and clear opposition to the war, to the occupation. No doubts, no hesitation. Our call to immediately withdrawal from all the occupied territories, unconditionally".[40] The implication of his words is that he is in some way absolved of the guilt (or sin) of being a member of the oppressive group *through* his work with Matzpen.

For the activists in 2010 and 2011, this idea of release from ethical complicity was most discussed in the context of emigration from Israel. If you recognize yourself as a colonizing force whose presence (in combination with the violence of the state) is the source of the oppression of the Indigenous people, a clear ethical choice would be to leave that setting. However, the option of emigration itself is a privilege. The activists in question are largely Ashkenazi and have foreign passports or the means to acquire them and language skills that make emigration feasible. Other Israelis, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and especially Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are not granted this same right to leave.[41] At the end of the play "There is a Field," Nardim

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[39] Wright, 44.
[40] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles*.
[41] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 121*.

Asleh argues that choosing to stay (implying an option to emigrate) in Israel/Palestine is her form of resistance as a Palestinian citizen of Israel.[42] If her resistance was choosing to remain, how does this alter the ethics of a Jewish Israeli's decision to stay or go? If the personal/psychological goal of emigration is to "put an end to [the colonizer's] contradiction and uneasiness," then this ease of conscience is not the outcome.[43]

> Rather, practical possibility of escaping these circumstances are discussed, debated, and sometimes put into action when activists indeed decide to emigrate, but these possibilities are always found wanting as they fail to provide the moral wholeness and coherence that the rejection of violence often seems to offer.[44]

The sites of immigration likely lack an awareness of the multilayered reality of life in Israel/Palestine (for example, regarding the Mizrahi/Ashkenazi issue described above). In such a circumstance, activists may be pushed "into a corner of feeling the need to explain, historicize, and educate as well as even perhaps to defend slightly the social and political processes going on inside the country." Thus, they are "pushed into a position of identification with the state, the very state from which they have acted to disconnect".[45]

Lastly, Memmi suggested that the reality of colonized resistance to colonialism will often be in opposition to the political beliefs that bring the colonizer into solidarity with the colonized. How, for instance, is the colonizer who rejects the colonial system on the basis of humanism to reconcile with violent resistance? The beliefs that bring leftist Jewish Israelis into Palestinian solidarity similarly may contradict with the reality of the people, groups, and leaders they intend to support. This is seen most obviously with Matzpen. Akiva Orr rejected a bi-national (two-state) future for Israel/Palestine on the grounds that it was based on a false belief in distinct

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[42] "There Is A Field."
[43] Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized, 44*.
[44] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 121*.
[45] Wright, 135.

ethnic divisions (that of Palestinians and Jews).[46] The group's European connections and leftist

internationalist politics put it in a position that was not in obvious accord with prevailing

Palestinian platforms. This is upfront in comments from Warschawski on leading Palestinian

organizations:

> For people who define themselves as leftists: total conditional identification with
> the occupied people, regardless of their policy, leadership, or strategy.
> Unconditional identification with the occupied people. Also, support of the
> political powers that represent the occupied people, regardless of our approval or
> disapproval, if our approval is even relevant, of its strategy, tactics, methods.
> It…they…Today I say they, meaning the PLO, we used to say the Fatah, the
> Popular Front, the Democratic Front, they represent the Palestinian people and
> their struggle for liberation and we are with them.[47]

According to Warschawski, Matzpen is to unconditionally support the Palestinian leadership and

its policies, even as these elements are constantly changing, at times contradictory, and debated

within Palestinian activism.

Even when sharing the same political foundations, there were stark differences in

approach between Matzpen and the Palestinian groups it supported, as seen in the Ma'alot

incident. On May 15, 1974 three members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of

Palestine (DFLP), a secular, leftist organization, embarked on a mission into Israel "with a plan

to capture hostages for bargaining." In the process "between 18 and 21 students…died…and 71

people [were] injured".[48] Three adults and the three DFLP members were also killed. In the

aftermath, Matzpen published an open letter to DFLP, including the following lines:

> We can…attest that your operation has dealt a severe blow to many in the left-
> Zionist camp, sincere rank-and-file members. They had been led by recent
> events…to a better understanding and greater willingness to seek allies among the
> Palestinian Arab people. They were ready to lend an ear to different voices in the
> Arab world in general and among the Palestinian Arab people in particular, and
> some of them had been moving towards revolutionary positions while being

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[46] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[47] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[48] "1974."

willing to abandon Zionist positions. Your existence played a part in this development. Therefore, the knowledge that your organization is responsible for the operation in Ma'alot was a resounding slap in the face for them…The history of our era is replete with examples of spontaneous eruptions of oppressed masses, rising up and killing their oppressors. The Ma'alot operation is not of this kind. It was not spontaneous. It was planned and calculated… In your Ma'alot operation you disregarded elementary moral principles. This disregard cannot hide behind the – admittedly common – claim that these are bourgeois principles. We cannot accept this claim; because the standards that apply to a spontaneous outburst of an oppressed mass, or to nationalist liberation fighters, are not appropriate to fighters bearing weapons in the name of the socialist revolution.[49]

In this open letter they critique the DFLP on the basis of a shared Marxism, but also notably for damaging their appeal to Israelis predisposed to their position. This is yet another example of Matzpen placing their activism in an explicitly intra-Israeli political context. Yet, they go even further by applying that positioning onto DFLP.

I do not agree with Memmi's conclusion that these divisions and conflicting politics that bring people to the movement are irreconcilable. Disagreement over tactics, strategies, and desired outcomes are just some of numerous points of conflict within any movement. To suggest that the politics and beliefs of settlers and of indigenous people resisting a colonial power are *uniquely* irreconcilable creates two homogenous sides out of a complex mix of ideologies, motivations, and identities. However, these examples show that solidarity politics are not straightforward. Many of the Matzpen activists, rightly, express a hesitancy to take issue with tactics and strategies of a movement that is not *theirs*. Addressing these issues of divergence as a privileged outsider is difficult to navigate.

These critiques of radical Jewish Israeli activism for Palestine are not intended to devalue what were and are radical and disruptive positions. Palestinian activist Wassim Abdullah said of

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[49] "Open Letter to the Members of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine."

meeting Matzpen founder Moshe Machover, "At the time it was like…a breath of fresh air to hear someone from so-called the opposite side who is really anti-Zionist, not just talk, that could explain the events and the historical situation, what happened to the Palestinians the same way that we understood it".[50] For Khalil Hawatmeh, another Palestinian activist,

> There is no doubt in my mind that Matzpen was one of the great influences on the thinking of the Palestinian Left. It helped de-demonize the enemy…it went to show a number of people that it is possible to find descent people amongst the Israelis with whom you can have a dialogue, with whom you can even have a common front.[51]

Nayef Hawatmeh, a former DFLP secretary who was personally called out in Matzpen's open letter, said in 2003, "We regarded Matzpen as a member of the common struggle in the problems of our two people".[52] As the comments by these Palestinian activists show, Matzpen and its successor organizations on the Israeli radical left *were* disruptive and valuable movements. Yet even radical, decolonial positions remain plagued by issues of privilege and get trapped in dominant narratives and systems of power despite the best efforts of activists. There is no escape from this complicity. However, complicity, to use Wright's definition, is a problem of entanglement and not "an accusation or judgement of failure".[53] "The idea of making room for negativity and violence in our conceptions of the ethical, for leaving its ambiguities unresolved, offers a way for us to imagine potential forms of engagement and activism that would not require piety or purity in order to be considered legitimate or, simply, necessary".[54]

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[50] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[51] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[52] *Matzpen, Anti Zionist Israelis. Full Film with English Subtitles.*
[53] Wright, *The Israeli Radical Left, 150.*
[54] Wright, 149.

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"Spreading the gospel of good taste":
Home Design and American Character

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Introduction

"To some persons a dwelling is merely a habitation, a shelter from the elements, a place to sleep. To others it is a home, a place where one lives, an object of affection," declared the Committee on Types of Dwellings in their report at President Hoover's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.[1] The Conference emerged amid the Great Depression as an effort to gather the top professionals to address housing problems facing the country. Nevertheless, these problems extended beyond the immediate impacts of the Depression, reflecting more than a decade of preoccupation with, study of, and emphasis on the home. The census of 1920 had revealed that the urban population outnumbered the rural population the first time in the nation's history, and the rate of homeownership had declined slightly from 47.8 percent to 45.6 percent.[2] This provoked widespread concern among those who saw the home as a key element that defined the American character. As Calvin Coolidge stated in 1922, "Society rests on the home. It is the foundation of our institutions."[3] In the wake of the First World War, economic dislocation, labor struggles, and racial tension afflicted the United States. Addressing the shortage of homes created by wartime production shifts was seen as one way to get to the root of these societal tensions.[4]

Intricately related to this shortage of homes was the question of the interior. *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste* recognized that a demand for guidance on design would emerge in the wake of this "great era of homebuilding."[5] During the early twentieth century, a plethora of design pamphlets, magazines, organizations, exhibits, lectures, and more were established to fill this perceived demand for guidance. In this literature, there is a desire to promote "good taste," a somewhat ambiguous and subjective phrase. The frequent use of the phrase is notable for its consistent implication of elements of class in American society including the moral value of the middle class, political citizenship, and professional cooperation and market considerations. Home decoration emerged as an important method to create an American taste that reflected democratization, emphasizing thrift, hard work, and intelligence in design across the class spectrum; the nation's unique interaction with its own history and the history of the world; and the growing capabilities and responsibilities of a professional design community. Primarily

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[1] *Tentative Report of Committee on Types of Dwellings* (Washington, D.C.: President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1931), 21.

[2] Vincent J. Cannato, "A Home of One's Own," *National Affairs* (Spring 2010): 72.

[3] National Advisory Council for Better Homes in America, *Better homes in America: Plan Book for Demonstration Week, October 9 to 14, 1922* (New York: The Delineator, 1922), 5.

[4] Ibid., 7.

[5] W.G. Watrous, "Upbuilding a Great Industry Chapter XI: The Magazine as a Distributive Power," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, April 1921, 214.

through discussions of furniture, color schemes, and wall and floor decoration, popular magazines and guidebooks from the early twentieth century reflected a desire to establish an American taste characterized by harmony and cooperation. While this process was accompanied by many formal efforts, the dedication to presenting "taste" to the public at large reveals the way in which design was intertwined with issues of morality, identity, and the economy.

Democratizing Good Taste Through Thrift: Money and Morality in Design

Design leaders of the twentieth century conceived of taste as something that should manifest itself in American popular culture. The idea that "taste" was inherently linked to wealth and social status was challenged as an outdated idea.[6] Lucy D. Taylor, Director of the New England School of Art and self-proclaimed "Progressive Women Educator" declared, "America is a democracy; its national art will be democratic for it will come out of the lives and hearts of the Every Man, not the Selected Man."[7] The concept of democratic ideals transferring over to the establishment of style provides an interesting framework for understanding the rhetoric of home improvement. Loose references to the "Every Man" present the ideal of establishing a taste shared by the majority, or a broad swath, of Americans, but the emphasis raises questions about the particular values, qualities, and ideals the "Every Man" would contribute to the "good taste" project. Thrift, individual strength of character, and modest practicality emerge as some of the central tenants of a taste meant to reflect the democratic ideals of the United States.

Thrift, or avoiding waste and extravagance in spending, was seen as a moral good and thus something those of all economic standings should strive for. In 1927, a National Thrift Week was hosted in Washington to promote a new "thrift creed" in a positive light, combatting perceptions of thrift as being miserably frugal. The creed was made up of ten "financial commandments," one of which was the creation of a budget to encourage smart spending habits.[8]

This ideal was supplemented by efforts throughout guidance literature to make accommodations for those of different economic levels. The report produced by the Committee on Home Furnishing and Decoration at the President's Conference devoted a section to analyzing the capabilities of different income groups. After determining that the average family income was $1,500 or less per

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[6] James Wallen, "The Finer Kind of Retail Selling - Part I: Who are your prospective patrons?" *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, March 1920, 124.

[7] Lucy D. Taylor, "Better Designs: What a Progressive Woman Educator Says," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste,* March 1920, 117.

[8] "Follow National Thrift Week - Day by Day," Box 336, Thrift Week, Jan. 17-23, 1927, Anna Kelton Wiley Papers, National Thrift Week in Washington, D.C., 1927, Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929, Library of Congress, 7.

year, the report advised that among this group, "the most careful planning is necessary for even minimum comfort."[9] Not only was it exceedingly difficult to buy home furnishings at a low cost, but many low-income Americans were thought to have "discriminating taste."[10] Nevertheless, the report recommended increased educational efforts through schools and newspapers to suggest small changes that could make a difference. Such changes included avoiding any elaborate carving when purchasing low grade furniture, as it would likely be done poorly, or repurposing fragments of lace and linen to create sets of doilies, table-covers, or bedspreads at a low cost.[11]

The Better Homes Movement, created by the editor of the popular women's magazine *The Delineator,* became a national campaign under Hoover as Secretary of Commerce, and emphasized providing examples of houses for "families with modest incomes."[12] The movement involved the establishment of demonstration homes within different communities to encourage improvements in homeownership by modeling best practices. The local emphasis of these demonstration homes meant that adjustments had to be made based on the resources and customs of certain communities, and thus the Better Homes guidebooks set up a framework through which desired principles could be adapted and cleverly met. When reviewing some of the homes from the 1925 campaign, the guidebook made careful note of the pricing and quality of furniture. A home in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was praised for keeping furnishing costs under $1000, and one in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina cut costs by sourcing material for curtains and bed linen from local mills.[13] Additionally, the campaign included lectures on "How to furnish the small home in an inexpensive and tasteful manner" and sample budgets for the family that would occupy the demonstration home.[14]

Most of all, these manuals advised on how to prioritize investments and use intelligent planning. The 1922 Better Homes manual advised, "A house can only be considered properly furnished when it meets the real needs of the occupants."[15] Thus, homeowners were advised to prioritize practicality and avoid investing in ornaments, indulging in pictures, or choosing elaborate furnishings. By considering the cost of furniture before buying or building a home, "spasmodic and wasteful buying" would be avoided, and a house could be nicely decorated within a family's

[9] *Tentative Report of The Committee on Home Furnishing and Decoration* (Washington, D.C.: President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1931), 12.

[10] Ibid., 12-13.

[11] Lucy Abbot Throop, *The Home of Good Taste* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1920); Ruby Ross Goodnow, "New Ideas in Table Linen," *The Delineator*, February 1921, 24.

[12] Better Homes in America, *Guidebook for Better Homes Campaigns: Better Homes Week, April 25 to May 1, 1926* (Washington D.C.: Better Homes in America National Headquarters, 1926), 8.

[13] Ibid., 55.

[14] Ibid., 17-24.

[15] National Advisory Council for Better Homes in America, *Better homes in America*, 31.

budget.[16] Families with a yearly income of $1,500 to $2,000 were advised to budget twenty to thirty-three percent of the costs of their land and house on furnishing.[17] Additionally, the Committee report suggested the use of Mr. Leon Pescheret's budget, which divided rooms of the house into units and then allotted each unit a fraction in proportion to the relative importance of the items for furnishing. Using this method, overspending could be avoided and the general unity of the room could be maintained.[18]

In this way, there was an effort to promote the idea that good taste was not a function of how much one could afford but instead of how intelligently and diligently an individual worked to improve their understanding of appropriate decoration. This stemmed from an American tradition that linked home decoration to character; the taste exemplified in a home was symbolic of morals and individual personality. A pamphlet created to inform children about Thrift Week traced it back to Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, who published the *Poor Richard's Almanack* and was known for his smart spending. The pamphlet declared, "The early inhabitants in this country were thrifty because of hardships and from them we have been endowed with a glorious country."[19] Similarly, an article exploring California homes in the "Span-American" style noted that the structures reflected difficult circumstances of missionaries in the American Southwest.[20] Their challenges of labor, time, and money created a "noble spirit of intelligent economy" that was to serve as an inspiration for decorators in the modern day.[21] Overcoming adversity, such as a restricted budget or lack of design knowledge, thus provided an opportunity to improve one's environment and character. In terms of the color of a home, *Good Furniture* noted that it was not a matter of expense: "the knowing which colors to combine is the test."[22] Taste was closely linked to the female head of household, who was subjected to this test of taste in the decisions she made in her own home. Paint and wall design, in particular, were highlighted as affordable ways to personalize and tie together the home, and even presented as holding a natural attraction for most women.[23]

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[16] *Tentative Report of The Committee on Home Furnishing and Decoration*, 15.

[17] Ibid., 14.

[18] Ibid., 31.

[19] "Seven Days with a Purpose," Box 336, Thrift Week, Jan. 17-23, 1927, Anna Kelton Wiley Papers, National Thrift Week in Washington, D.C., 1927, Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929, Library of Congress, 5.

[20] WM Laurel Harris, "The Span-American Style II: the Spirit of the Missions," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, March 1920, 111.

[21] Ibid., 112.

[22] "The Suggestive Value of Color Schemes," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, February 1920, 54.

[23] "Fifth Avenue Moves," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, April 1921, 184; "The Suggestive Value of Color Schemes," 48.

The home, a place closely associated with family and the rearing of children, was exceptionally important as the environment that influenced growing minds.[24] The way children's bedrooms were designed, for example, could produce "desirable or disastrous" effects.[25] Boys' rooms were to be masculine while a girl's room would be "dainty, bright, and frivolous."[26] Character through the maintenance of the interior was applied even to young girls: "Her personality, even at a very tender age, will clearly be disclosed by the way she cares for her room."[27] This reflected the wider emergence of a separate "child's world" in popular American culture, in which children were attributed their own rights and preferences by psychologists, the U.S. Children's Bureau, and department stores.[28] In the nursery, the guidebook suggested avoiding distracting wall designs as well as excessive ribbons and lace that would frustrate children told not to touch delicate items.[29]

An appreciation for restraint, simplicity, and above all, harmony in decoration, as exhibited in the recommendations for the children's rooms, allowed thrifty spending to be codified within the American taste. In the Span-American style, the use of empty space, simple plaster walls adorned with quality draperies, and tiled roofs all represented examples of how good taste could, and should, be attractive, economical, and practical. When reviewing a charming Long Island colonial home, "the true relation of utility coupled with beauty, but in no sense sacrificed for mere prettiness," was the most laudable element.[30] Similarly, Lucy Abbott Throop complimented the "restrained elaborateness" of furniture from the period of Louis XVI, while the "splendor" of furniture under Louis XIV was not to be used in small or simple houses.[31] Thus, thrift was broadly defined and imbued with significance. It encouraged strategies like budgeting and planning as a way for common people to afford good taste, but thrift was also a lifestyle choice that demonstrated morality and justified the "goodness" of this taste.

Nevertheless, while the Better Homes manuals and Committee report exhibited an awareness of the practicalities of budgeting, other guidance relied on analysis of generally unachievable professionally done examples as inspiration. Academic Penny Sparke has demonstrated how Elsie de Wolfe, a professional decorator who served a variety of high-class clients, used images of ideally

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[24] Albert E. Lyons, "The Better Homes Movement of the National Association of Decorative Arts and Industries," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, March 1920, 114.

[25] National Advisory Council for Better Homes in America, *Better homes in America*, 39.

[26] Ibid., 40.

[27] Ibid.

[28] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 86.

[29] National Advisory Council for Better Homes in America, *Better homes in America,* 41.

[30] "American Homes that Successfully Adapt Historic Styles to Modern Requirements," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, December 1922, 251.

[31] Throop, *The Home of Good Taste*.

designed showrooms that in no way reflected the individual efforts and self-directed furnishing strategy she was encouraging for readers in her book, *The House in Good Taste*. Nevertheless, the "ideal" and "real" interiors did not seem to contradict each other, and the book still served its purpose of allowing readers to "participate in the fantasy."[32] Similarly, a *Good Furniture* article on the Turtle Bay apartments of Everett V. Meeks and Clarence Dean, architects and professors, features images of their large and expertly designed homes, and presents them as examples of how to reduce exorbitant costs on nonessentials while preserving a modern and attractive look.[33]

To borrow a phrase from historian William Leach, the "democratization of desire" of the twentieth century meant that those of any class could yearn for improvement, particularly through consumer goods. Desire and working towards ideal home design, which might not necessarily be achieved, was valuable in itself. Thus, both practical and inspirational methods played an important role in reaching the common people. Following example and instruction, the middle class would use budgeting and thrift, prove their character in their homes, and be dedicated to the best in furniture and design, making good taste uniquely American.

Establishing an American Identity: Tradition, History, and Inspiration in Design

This style was to be cosmopolitan, reflecting the best of design tradition in a harmonious way. Design sources during the early twentieth century interacted with and made judgments about the place of design traditions from Europe, Asia, and the United States in modern American design. Harmony was key. As Lucy Abbot Throop advised, "Very few of us have houses completely furnished in one period, but we do try to have a certain unity of spirit kept throughout the whole, whether it be French, Italian, English, or our own charming Colonial."[34] Nevertheless, each style had a particular context for which it was best suited based on a variety of characteristics. The Renaissance period, for example, could be hard to replicate and was too elaborate for informal rooms. The Span-American style, on the other hand, was well suited to the climate and temperament of the American southwest and successfully escaped "provincialism" because the missionaries had traveled throughout Europe and the Orient.[35]

A problem emerged, however, when specific design principles and techniques were ignored. *Good Furniture* expressed that a hybrid style of "doubtful

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[32] Penny Sparke, "The 'Ideal' and the 'Real' Interior in Elsie de Wolfe's 'The House in Good Taste' of 1913," *Journal of Design History* 16, no. 1 (2003): 74.

[33] "Fifth Avenue Moves," 185.

[34] Throop, *The Home of Good Taste*.

[35] Harris, "The Span-American Style II: the Spirit of the Missions," 112.

origin and bad taste" threatened to define the American style due to the mass production of furniture to supply large numbers of European immigrants.[36] A common complaint was that the modern American designer had become an "artistic chameleon" that simply recreated antique-like items.[37] The term "period" furniture was problematized as a non-specific mess of styles that often went over the head of the average consumer.[38] The overreliance on "period" furniture and "antiques," the magazine argued, was simply used as a tool to market furniture to the uninformed public and inhibited the production of quality furniture. Design literature argued that the role of the works of the past was to provide examples in skill and technique, so long as they did not have negative effects on contemporary production. Similarly, while traditional styles could be used to inspire modern home decoration, they had to be adapted to suit the practical necessities of the homemaker. An article on a colonial American home highlights this necessity. The "simplicity and sturdy strength" of colonial furniture was reproduced excellently, while there was a pleasant mingling of American types including Queen Anne and Sheraton.[39] Additionally, they adapted the Holy-Lord hinges, hooked rugs, and lighting fixtures from the earlier period in a way that complimented the Early American furniture.[40] Good taste involved the intentional use of specific styles based on their practical suitability for the home.

Furthermore, certain periods were representative of distinctive identifying characteristics that were not visual, but ideological, and thus helped facilitate the decision making necessary for good taste. The admirable chastity, restraint, simplicity, and practicality of the colonial American style was intricately related to the value of thrift. Similarly, Throop posits that the "sturdiness" of English furniture appealed to the American sense of appropriateness because they shared certain views on living standards.[41] Early American furniture, which included New England, Dutch, and American Empire, was complex in its origins, originally inspired by style brought over from the "mother country," England, but with important regional variations.[42] In particular, Quaker and Dutch influence in Pennsylvania is emphasized, while American Empire furniture emerged shortly after the Revolutionary War in New York City. French Empire furniture, which was solid, heavy, and used metal ornamentation, was described as a "violent"

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[36] Watrous, "Upbuilding a Great Industry Chapter XI," 214.

[37] J.H. Rudd, "Does the Demand for Antiques Hurt Current Design?" *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, April 1921, 175.

[38] W.G. Watrous, "Upbuilding a Great Industry Chapter IX: Coordinating Design and Distribution in Related Lines," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, February 1921, 109.

[39] "American Homes that Successfully Adapt Historic Styles to Modern Requirements," 252-5.

[40] Ibid., 255.

[41] Throop, *The Home of Good Taste*.

[42] "American Homes that Successfully Adapt Historic Styles to Modern Requirements," 256.

switch from the furniture under Louis XVI.[43] Furniture was consistently associated with political leaders and events to demarcate changes in style, which imbued its use with meaning.

Despite the rather broad inspirations that were identified, the adherence to a certain standard of taste was also presented as a form of "Americanization" for those on the margins of society. The Better Homes manual explained that campaigns could target immigrants and black Americans to teach them, in a rather paternalistic way, how to improve their standard of living.[44] Span-American style was seen as instructive because it had emerged from a process of "civilizing the Red Men," which was equated to the contemporary problem of assimilating different racial groups.[45] *Good Furniture Magazine* presented an imaginary foreigner that made a point to show off the American furnishings in their home whenever they had visitors.[46] The sheer number of immigrants during this period and their desire to adapt to American interior design, the magazine notes, made them a large commercial market.[47] In this way, good taste was a signifier of broader political citizenship rather than just individual character, accomplished through its strategic use of the world's "period" furniture and its extension of principles to immigrants and racial minorities.

The Profitability and Professionalization of Good Taste

The middle class was not only the main ideological target of this taste, but the primary consumers of home decoration products. As *Good Furniture* made clear, educational design instruction was not only altruistic work, but profitable as well.[48] In 1921 and 1922, the country experienced a significant depression, and businesses struggled to distribute their inventory due to wartime buildup and a lack of demand.[49] This extension of design to the middle class, then, reflected an understanding that targeting large markets in the American economy would ensure the profitability of this American cultural project. The readers of the magazine were increasingly identified as "Mr. and Mrs. Average American," and merchants, retailers, and decorators were starting to realize the necessity of expanding their

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[43] Throop, *The Home of Good Taste*.

[44] Better Homes in America, *Guidebook for Better Homes Campaigns,* 11.

[45] WM Laurel Harris, "The Span-American Style of the Southwest," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, February 1920, 109.

[46] "Current Topics of Trade Interest," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, May 1921, 222.

[47] W.G. Watrous, "Making the Most of the Better Homes Flavor," G*ood Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, April 1921, 209.

[48] W.G. Watrous, "Upbuilding a Great Industry Chapter I: The Story of Good Furniture Magazine," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, May 1920, 224.

[49] Leach, *Land of Desire,* 353.

reach to this new consumer base.[50] The strategy to do so was two pronged; first, the industry had to address problems of incoherence and confusion among manufacturers, retailers, and interior designers. Secondly, advertising and educational efforts had to be improved to impart this guidance more effectively to the middle-class housewife struggling to make design decisions.

Cooperation and professionalization were essential to creating a standardized taste that could then be effectively conveyed to the American public. The self-proclaimed mission of *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, a business publication, was to coordinate between manufacturers and retailers to improve the standards of American furniture and adequately meet demand.[51] On the side of the manufacturer, there was a noted lack of well-designed furniture at a low price point. "Modern furniture, especially in the medium and cheap grades, is apt to look as if it were encased in a hard and shining armor of varnish," one design manual warned.[52] Poor reproductions of certain styles made from inappropriate or substandard materials plagued the market and made it difficult to claim the equality of access central to the creed of good taste. On the side of the retailer, there was an enormous variation of education, capacity, and ability to assist customers. While a demand for stylistic direction had emerged, the limited knowledge of individual salesmen left customers confused and purchasing items inappropriate for their homes.[53]

Interior design had emerged in the late nineteenth century as a profession and occupation but was still in the process of development. Questions about the appropriate training for design experts, whether it be self-education, bachelor's degrees, or apprenticeships, dominated into the twentieth century. The Progressive Era had encouraged the application of scientific approaches and professionalization to various endeavors, including home decoration.[54] The first Bachelor of Science in Education with a major in home design and decoration was established at Columbia's Teachers College in 1910, and the University of Minnesota provided a degree in interior decoration starting in 1918.[55] However, the interior involved a variety of fields, including architecture, fine arts, interior design, home economics, and more. Thus, debates about who held the ultimate authority on the matter were also common. A Furniture Publicity Bureau was established in 1921 as a resource for manufacturers, distributors, and the public; by 1931, the President's Conference on Home Buying and Homeownership attempted to address these issues on a

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[50] Wallen, "The Finer Kind of Retail Selling," 124-5.

[51] Watrous, "Upbuilding a Great Industry Chapter I," 221.

[52] Throop, *The Home of Good Taste*.

[53] *Tentative Report of The Committee on Home Furnishing and Decoration*, 10.

[54] Bridget A. May, "Lessons in Diversity: Origins of Interior Decoration Education in the United States, 1870–1930," *Journal of Interior Design* 42, no. 3 (2016), 9.

[55] Ibid.

national level.[56] The conference, which emphasized collaboration between many different groups from the private and public sectors, was representative of Hoover's associationalism. It recommended creating practical working drawings of specific furniture types to keep on file for easy access by furniture manufacturers, the creation of various pamphlets for homemakers and technical workers, and six-week institutes for workers, which included teachers, industrial and commercial workers, and homemakers.[57]

The expansion of these educational efforts to homemakers was particularly important. If the average American was to buy quality furniture with a reduced budget, they would need assistance. Very few had the resources to become "intelligent homemakers" because their knowledge of furniture and design was collected from a variety of sources that often contradicted each other, and they were without the means to filter and judge this advice.[58] The Better Homes Movement represented one way to remedy this lack of critical taste awareness. *Good Furniture* labeled itself the "pioneer" of the movement in its October 1922 issue, citing its sponsorship of an exhibition of home equipment and decoration all "made in the USA" at the National Museum in Washington D.C. in 1915, their showing at Columbia's Avery Hall in 1916, the establishment of furniture galleries in Grand Rapids, and a home furnishings convention in 1917.[59] Various exhibitions followed the same strategy. The American Federation of Arts held traveling exhibitions that had expanded to include arts and crafts related to homemaking, and their secretary, Richard F. Bach of Columbia University, had an office at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[60] The Architectural League of New York held exhibitions at the Fine Arts Building in New York City and extended membership to decorators, manufacturers, and distributors of home furnishings.[61]

Advertising also played an important role in conveying taste and creating demand. Some advertisements were criticized for pricing items very highly, which would appeal only to the rich or the "social climbers" by conveying exclusiveness. This exclusive approach failed to draw in the range of customers businesses sought.[62] Instead, advertising should be used to teach and create a new standard of living. Improved practices included being aware of the limitations of newspaper

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[56] "Current Topics of Trade Interest," 218.

[57] *Tentative Report of The Committee on Home Furnishing and Decoration*, 8.

[58] "The Suggestive Value of Color Schemes," 48.

[59] Henry W. Frohne, "Good Furniture Magazine, Since 1914 Pioneer of the Better Homes Movement," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, October 1922, 193-5; "Art Notes: Fine Furniture and Textiles on View in Avery Library, Columbia," *New York Times,* November 21, 1915, 18.

[60] "Sending the Art Message to the Public," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, January 1920, 34.

[61] Ibid., 35.

[62] Watrous, "Making the Most of the Better Homes Flavor," 212.

paper and ink quality, maintaining a balance of elements in the advertisement, avoiding crowding, and making best use of illustration.[63] Armstrong's Linoleum, for example, recommended using their product to maintain a common color scheme throughout the home. Their advertisement illustrated a hall at the top of the stairs with three rooms united stylistically through their flooring and included suggestions for an accompanying color scheme for bedding, curtains, and furniture in each room.[64] O'Brien Varnish Co. promoted their "Liquid Velvet" tints as a perfect color for a bedroom that was "radiant, yet restful."[65] These advertisements also included contact information for Armstrong's Bureau of Interior Decoration and O'Brien's Department of Decorative Service, which could provide guidance for how their products should be best employed in the home. In this way, the "democratization of desire" served an economic purpose. Standardization of methods, education, and goals among producers and retailers coupled with exhibitions and advertisements to inform and inspire the American public would create an economy that functioned more smoothly.

Conclusion

In defining American "good taste," design literature had to determine how an American style could best represent cherished American ideals: accessibility and morality, a world historical lineage, and profitable economic endeavors. There was a desire to democratize the taste of the United States by incorporating thrift, strong character, and individual identity. Inspiration for American style was meant to include the best elements from French, English, and colonial American styles that preserved the idea of simplicity, harmony, and modernity. This appropriation of elements would create a distinct American taste that could spread to immigrants to assimilate them into American society. Finally, a "democratization of desire" expanded the market of people who longed and were inspired to improve their homes in accordance with this established taste. This required enormous economic coordination that was reflective of the broader associationalism and professionalism of the 1920s. Through these methods and expanded markets, design literature in the early twentieth century spread "the gospel of good taste."

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[63] "What Retailers are Doing: A review of current work in home furnishings merchandising as reflected in advertising," *Good Furniture: The Magazine of Good Taste*, January 1920, 42.
[64] "How to Treat Adjoining Rooms," *The Delineator*, February 1921, 75.
[65] "Restful Color in the Bed Room," *The Delineator*, March 1921, 57.

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Silence From the Great Communicator:
The Early Years of the AIDS Epidemic Under
the Reagan Administration

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Silence is deafening. Silence amplifies internal anxieties, transforming a quiet hospital waiting room into a fluorescent hell. Outside the doctor's doors, the anticipation for an answer is vociferous. As a young man exits these doors, his paralyzed confusion abruptly becomes a harrowing cry. Locking eyes with the man only serves to foreshadow the answer that awaits. Inside the doctor's office, the silence intensifies. But nothing is louder than when the doctor reveals: "The test confirms you have AIDS." An AIDS diagnosis evokes the most intense emotions: heartbreak, despair, anger, confusion—living with AIDS can be demoralizing. Leaving that doctor's office also means leaving behind that former world, as an AIDS diagnosis spawns a new realm in health and perspective. This was the reality for thousands of Americans throughout the early 1980s. Emerging in 1981, there was no answer to the mystery surrounding this sudden deadly disease. It began as an obscure infection among otherwise healthy gay men. As more Americans fell ill to strange ailments and died unexpectedly, it was no longer an anomaly; this disease was the beginning of a massacre.

With fears of an unstoppable epidemic, Americans turned to President Ronald Reagan for immediate direction and aid. Dubbed the "Great Communicator" by his supporters, there was no doubt that Reagan could lead the United States to successfully combat AIDS. Yet, the Reagan administration's response was not only ineffective but also excruciatingly silent for the first five years of the epidemic. Without a substantial federal response, this obscure infection evolved into an epidemic that erased a generation of Americans in the span of half a decade.

When discussing the Reagan administration's early response to AIDS, historians tend to follow one of two positions: avoid mentioning the disease in its entirety, or blame Reagan's homophobia for the deaths of thousands of Americans. Most Reagan biographers fall into the

former argument by ignoring the epidemic and refusing to acknowledge any action toward AIDS during the first term. The word "AIDS" does not appear once within Ronald Reagan's autobiography, *An American Life: Ronald Reagan.* On the other hand, historians focusing on LGBTQ+ and AIDS scholarship emboldened the latter by painting the administration's initial reactions as a permanent stain on Reagan's presidency. Randy Shilts, author of *And the Band Played On*, characterizes the Reagan administration's response as a "drama of national failure, played against the backdrop of needless death."[1] In the AIDS chapter from *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present,* historian Frank Snowden argues that "the Republican leadership under President Ronald Reagan was unenthusiastic about taking robust public health measures" because "a disease that, in Reagan's view, affected only marginal and despised groups could make little claim to his attention."[2] Similarly, Matthew Dean Hindman argues that due to the administration's failure to "subdue or even publicly address the AIDS epidemic, President Reagan threatened the safety, security and livelihood of gay Americans."[3] These historians denounce the early framing of AIDS as an exclusively homosexual affliction as the cause for the Reagan administration's reluctance to promptly address the health crisis. This resistance ultimately left disadvantaged communities to suffer the fallout of this deadly disease.

Although the initial inaction demonstrated ignorance and bigotry, the Reagan administration orchestrated this calculated silence to maintain the political support of the

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[1] Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played on: Politics, People, and the Aids Epidemic* (Penguin Books, 1988), 26.
[2] Frank M. Snowden. "HIV/AIDS: The Experience of the United States," in *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2019), 437. Accessed April 17, 2021. doi: 10.2307/j.ctvqc6gg5.25.
[3] Matthew Dean Hindman. ""Promiscuity of the Past": Gay Advocacy and Gay Sexuality Pre- and Post-AIDS," in *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens: Neoliberalism, Postpluralism, and LGBT Organizations*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 148. Accessed April 17, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv16t6gq3.7.

conservative far-right. More specifically, the "Great Communicator" remained silent during the crucial years of the AIDS epidemic to avoid an ideological departure from his political party. During the first five years of the epidemic, Reagan prioritized political expediency over American public health. The Reagan administration's delayed response to the AIDS epidemic reveals the deadly consequences of politicizing public health crises.

THE DISEASE

AIDS, which stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, culminates after years of no treatment and a decaying immune system from the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus spreads from unprotected sex, shared needles, blood transfusions, and other exposures to bodily fluids infected with HIV. The first stage of HIV occurs two to four weeks after the initial infection and includes flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, and a sore throat. Although signs of infection vary in severity, the virus permeates throughout the body. As infected cells circulate within the blood, HIV prompts the immune system to produce antibodies in a process known as seroconversion. The seroconversion process lasts a few months, in which remarkably high concentrations of HIV are in the blood and extremely contagious. Following the early infection stage and seroconversion period, symptoms eventually cease as the body enters the second stage of HIV. This stage is not a full recovery from the primary infection but rather an asymptomatic period that continues to hijack immune cells, replicate the virus, and potentially spread the disease to others. During this stage of HIV, a facade of health can last up to fifteen years until it

progresses to the most destructive and final stage: AIDS.[4] After an AIDS diagnosis, *you are on borrowed time*.

AIDS overwhelms the immune system to a point of collapse, surrendering the body to the inevitable. This final stage of HIV spends the remaining years destroying the body from opportunistic infections. People with AIDS sometimes suffer from purple, red, and brown blotches covering the face and neck, known as *Kaposi's Sarcoma*. Other symptoms range from fatigue, insomnia, depression, and extreme weight loss.[5] Although the progression of the disease varies individually, people with AIDS all undergo a painful end-of-life as the body deteriorates beyond any hope of recovery.

After the first detection of AIDS in 1981, the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) began national surveillance of these unusual and aggressive infections. As the CDC released reports of *Kaposi's Sarcoma* and *Pneumocystis Pneumonia* among homosexual Americans, the public used the term "gay cancer" to describe this disease. By the year's end, the CDC officially reported 337 cases and 130 deaths from this severe immune deficiency.

In 1982, the anxiety and confusion about this outbreak prompted gay activists and medical experts to form AIDS-related commissions. Community-based organizations, such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis and Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation, provided AIDS-related services ranging from information to counseling. During the first congressional hearing on AIDS, CDC officials revealed that tens of thousands of Americans may have had the disease. Although the CDC defined the disease as "AIDS" in 1982, many researchers opted for "GRID," Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, to describe the disease, which

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[4] Avert, "Symptoms and Stages of HIV Infection."
[5] Avert, "Symptoms and Stages of HIV Infection."

deepened the public perception that AIDS only infected gay men. Throughout 1982, the

increasing spread of AIDS resulted in a total death of 618 Americans.

1983 marked a year of collaboration and discovery. As the nation braced against the

growing epidemic, local health departments and organizations cooperated on specialized AIDS

patient care. Most notably, San Francisco's Ward 86 served as the world's first dedicated

outpatient AIDS clinic and modeled standard patient care for people with AIDS. French

researchers also discovered the retrovirus that causes AIDS: HIV. Through the advancements in

treatment and medical findings, the enigma of the disease began to fade, and the word "AIDS"

circulated in the global medical community. In 1983, there were 2,118 total American deaths

from AIDS.

In 1984, AIDS infections fiercely escalated, with no signs of a decline or pause. Medical

research unveiled that the transmission of AIDS was also possible through needle-sharing, which

added drug abusers to the list of those at risk of contracting the disease. By the end of 1984, a

total of 5,596 Americans had died from AIDS.

In 1985, AIDS became a household name, at the forefront of every American's

nightmare. There was no habited region in the world free from an AIDS infection.[6] By the end of

1985, there were 12,529 reported American deaths.[7] By this time, years after its initial discovery,

the American public and the federal government finally paid attention to AIDS, but it was too

late. AIDS transformed into a national epidemic that flourished under the homophobia,

disinterest, and defunding of the Reagan administration.

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[6] HIV.gov, "A Timeline of HIV and AIDS."
[7] amfAR, "HIV/AIDS: Snapshots of an Epidemic."

THE DISDAIN

The Reagan presidency relied on homophobic rhetoric to attract a Christian, far-right base within the Republican party, known as the Religious Right. Leading up to the 1980s, the Religious Right influenced the Republican Party to adopt socially conservative positions, which included anti-gay beliefs. Howard Clayton explains that "the growing Religious Right meant that GOP candidates increasingly chose homophobic policies."[8] Therefore, many Reagan administration officials gained political support by expressing anti-gay attitudes and apathy towards people with AIDS.

Before joining the Reagan administration, White House Communications Director Pat Buchanan disparaged people with AIDS during the onset of the epidemic. Buchanan regarded the disease as moral punishment for "the poor homosexuals [who] have declared war on nature, and now nature is exacting an awful retribution."[9] Although Buchanan released this statement before his confirmation to the Reagan administration, his sarcastic and hateful message resonated with many conservative voters, who continued their support after his confirmation.

Similarly, Reagan repeatedly appealed to anti-gay constituents during his 1980 presidential campaign. Reagan severed any affinity to the gay community: "[the gay movement] isn't just asking for civil rights; it's asking for recognition and acceptance of an alternative

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[8] Clayton Howard, "Gay and Conservative: An Early History of the Log Cabin Republicans" in *Beyond the Politics of the Closet: Gay Rights and the American State Since the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 153.

[9] Pat Buchanan. "Pat Buchanan's Greatest Hits," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, February 4, 1987), https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1987/02/04/pat-buchanans-greatest-hits/416e2224-f7cd-4271-8c9d-0712712df6f3/.

lifestyle which I do not believe society can condone, nor can I."[10] In addition to describing gay Americans as "abominations," Reagan established a clear anti-gay position for his presidency. In 1984, Reagan declared that his administration would "resist the efforts of some to obtain government endorsement of homosexuality."[11] Whether these statements reflected his personal beliefs or served as political hyperbole, Reagan earned the votes and support of the Religious Right. The Reagan administration could not afford to lose this political base. Therefore, a silent stance on the AIDS epidemic allowed Reagan to maintain his political support by neglecting the deadly issue facing the gay community.

While Reagan maintained his silence, his administration silenced other officials who attempted to properly address the AIDS epidemic. Since the administration prioritized political expediency, any deviation from the conservative ideology was immediately met with hostility. The Surgeon General under Reagan, Dr. C. Everett Koop, accounts his exclusion in his autobiography, *Koop: Memoirs of America's Family Doctor*:

> But for an astonishing five and a half years I was completely cut off from AIDS. I was told by the assistant secretary for health, my immediate boss, that I would not be assigned to cover AIDS. The department took its cue from him. Even though the Centers for Disease Control commissioned the first AIDS task force as early as June 1981, I, as Surgeon General, was not allowed to speak about AIDS publicly until the second Reagan term. Whenever I spoke on a health issue at a press conference or on a network morning TV show, the government public affairs people told the media in advance that I would not answer questions on AIDS, and I was not to be asked any questions on the subject.[12]

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[10] Robert Scheer, *Playing President: up Close with Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton* (New York: Akashic, 2006), 154.

[11] "Campaign Notes; Reagan Would Not Ease Stand on Homosexuals," *New York Times*, August 18, 1984, sec. 1, p. 8.

[12] C. Everett Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992), 195.

As a Christian, Dr. Koop's appointment as Surgeon General reflected Reagan's gratitude for his conservative evangelical constituency. Although addressing national epidemics is routine for Surgeons General, the Reagan administration deliberately silenced Dr. Koop and his team of public health professionals to maintain his presence as a conservative Christian and appease Reagan voters.

According to Dr. Koop, moral biases within the Reagan administration prevented a comprehensible and practical approach to the epidemic. The Reagan presidential campaign predisposed his supporters to homophobia, which thwarted any governmental contributions toward a viable solution. Dr. Koop explains that "a large portion of the president's constituency was anti-homosexual, anti-drug abuse, anti-promiscuity, and anti-sex education," who "would not respond well to some of the things that would have to be said in a health report on AIDS."[13] Furthermore, Dr. Koop describes the presidential advisors' apathy to an AIDS response: "AIDS was a grim and controversial subject, so [the presidential advisors] were not going to allow the President to get involved in it. As they said, "Just Say No" is a win-win; AIDS is a 'no-win'."[14] This homophobic ideology dictated the Reagan administration to concentrate on maintaining its constituency, which included avoiding a public health crisis that would deter political support. Although Dr. Koop's AIDS health report eventually reached the American public in 1987, his silencing reinforced the apathy towards people with AIDS. The Reagan administration's early disdain for the AIDS epidemic appeased his conservative constituency but ultimately permitted the disease to escalate beyond control.

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[13] Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor*, 204.
[14] Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor,* 211-212.

For the Reagan administration, the political success of the Republican party superseded the emerging threat to gay Americans. The pressure to advance political agendas restricted medical professionals from properly doing their jobs. The politicization of AIDS replaced the governmental response from battling a disease to instead battling fellow Americans, which resulted in thousands of preventable deaths.

THE DOWNPLAY

From 1981 to 1986, the Reagan administration refused to address the epidemic voluntarily. There were only a few moments of broken silence; however, the discussions about AIDS from the Reagan administration remained brief and trivial. Within these five years, the White House Press Secretary, Larry Speakes, delivered the only public remarks about AIDS after several questions about the epidemic from a reporter. Ironically, Speakes was the only White House official to "speak" on AIDS during this period. His answers minimized the disease and reassured the public that AIDS was not a priority for the Reagan administration.

On October 15th, 1982, the reporter Lester Kinsolving questioned Secretary Speakes about the emerging epidemic:

> KINSOLVING: Larry, does the President have any reaction to the announcement—the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, that AIDS is now an epidemic and over 600 cases?
> SPEAKES: What's AIDS?
> KINSOLVING: Over a third of them have died. It is known as "gay plague." (Laughter.) No, it is. I mean it's a pretty serious thing that one in every three people that get this have died. And I wondered if the President is aware of it?
> SPEAKES: I don't have it. Do you? (Laughter.)
> KINSOLVING: No, I don't. And I am relieved…

SPEAKES: How do you know? (Laughter.)
KINSOLVING: In other words, the White House looks on this as a great joke?
SPEAKES: No, I don't know anything about it, Lester.[15]

The chummy jokes and eruption of laughter throughout this questioning reflected the administration's homophobic perceptions during the beginning of the epidemic. Speakes not only refrained from providing a substantial answer to Kinsolving's questions but also expressed absolute ignorance on the subject itself. Despite the CDC's official case definition of AIDS and numerous weekly reports on the epidemic, the Reagan administration demonstrated no knowledge of the disease. This showed the lack of urgency to address an epidemic that predominantly affected gay Americans. The White House's public disinterest in AIDS continued for years.

On December 11th, 1984, more than two years later, Kinsolving again questioned Speakes on the administration's reaction to new information on AIDS:

KINSOLVING: An estimated 300,000 people have been exposed to AIDS, which can be transmitted through saliva. Will the President, as Commander-in-Chief, take steps to protect Armed Forces food and medical services from AIDS patients or those who run the risk of spreading AIDS in the same manner that they forbid typhoid fever people from being involved in the health or food services?
SPEAKES: I don't know.
KINSOLVING: Could you—Is the President concerned about this subject, Larry...
KINSOLVING: No, but, I mean, is he going to do anything, Larry?
SPEAKES: Lester, I have not heard him express anything on it. Sorry.
KINSOLVING: You mean he has no—expressed no opinion about this epidemic?
SPEAKES: No, but I must confess I haven't asked him about it. (Laughter.)
KINSOLVING: Would you ask him Larry?
SPEAKES: Have you been checked [for AIDS]? (Laughter.)
KINSOLVING: I didn't hear an answer?

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[15] Ben Dreyfuss, "Flashback: The Reagan White House Thought AIDS Was Pretty Hilarious," *Mother Jones,* December 1, 2014, https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/12/flashback-reagan-white-house-thought-aids-was-pretty-hilarious-1982/.

SPEAKES: It's hard work. I don't get paid enough here. Is there anything else we need to do here?[16]

Like the previous press conferences, Speakes deflected Kinsolving's questions about AIDS. As Kinsolving pressed about President Reagan's involvement, Speakes repeatedly interrupted his questioning, undercutting the significance of the disease. Speakes revealed that Reagan had not expressed any interest in AIDS. Speakes also expressed his disinterest in asking Reagan as his Press Secretary. Speakes again asked Kinsolving if he had the disease, degrading his journalistic integrity by alluding to his potentially being gay. After dismissing Kinsolving's follow-up question to inform the President, Speakes concluded the press conference by bemoaning the "hard work" of his duties—an ironic complaint highlighting how even questions about AIDS were considered tedious and irrelevant. These homophobic remarks captured the Reagan administration's attitude toward this deadly epidemic: AIDS was not an important issue; if anything, this disease served as an amusing punchline.

Filmmaker Scott Calonico debuted a short documentary about Speakes's press conferences and characterized the Reagan administration's response as "chilling."[17] Calonico admits that he does not know if "it was Reagan who didn't want to make a statement or his people who thought it might damage his reputation."[18] The reputation in question was a presidency that openly rejected homosexuality. Therefore, any public indication of knowledge, concern, or sympathy for the AIDS epidemic would have contradicted the beliefs of the Religious Right and potentially risked losing that political base. By downplaying this epidemic,

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[16] Dreyfuss, "Flashback: The Reagan White House Thought AIDS Was Pretty Hilarious."
[17] Dreyfuss, "Flashback: The Reagan White House Thought AIDS Was Pretty Hilarious."
[18] Harmon Leon, "Listen to the Reagan Administration Laughing at the AIDS Epidemic," VICE, December 1, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en/article/yvx4zy/listen-to-the-reagan-administration-laughing-at-the-aids-epidemic-511.

Speakes echoed the homophobic rhetoric generally shared among far-right conservatives. His consistent belittlement of the disease and those infected aligned with the social conservative ideology of Reaganism. Whether Speakes was personally anti-gay or not, his homophobic banter on AIDS represented the Reagan administration's main concern to preserve its political base over addressing public health.

Without transparent and substantial answers about AIDS, the American public was not given the proper context and information about reducing the spread and protecting themselves from the disease. Instead, the Reagan administration's downplay publicly reinforced the insignificance of AIDS to the American public, which deterred domestic pressure to take serious action.

THE DEFUNDING

A fundamental policy of the Reagan administration was the rigid economic program of "Reaganomics." With a primary objective to reduce government spending, the funding of public health service agencies was extremely limited. Under the scourge of AIDS, the severe cut in federal funding for the CDC and other health agencies became incredibly insufficient. Although the budget for AIDS-related efforts increased from $8 million in 1982 to $508 million in 1986, the federal funding remained insignificant to effectively combat the disease.[19]

The Reagan administration routinely refused to allocate additional funding towards AIDS research, prevention, and control. In the *Encyclopedia of AIDS: A Social, Political, Cultural, and*

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[19] "AIDS Funding for Federal Government Programs: FY1981-FY2009," EveryCRSReport.com (Congressional Research Service, April 23, 2008), https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30731.html.

Scientific Record of the HIV Epidemic, Raymond Smith details the Reagan administration's rejection of a congressional supplement to the CDC. According to Smith, the Reagan administration claimed that "the CDC did not need the money and opposed any congressional supplemental appropriations designed to fund the federal government AIDS policy efforts."[20] Similarly, Randy Shilts notes the Reagan administration's reluctance to grant appropriate funding. The spending allocated to public health agencies was "woefully inadequate," yet, "the Reagan administration put forward no new initiatives for AIDS funding."[21] There was no political motivation for the Reagan administration to increase AIDS-related funding.

After several years of insufficient funding, the United States Congress held a hearing in 1987 on the federal response to AIDS. The opening statement depicts the Reagan administration's efforts "to have been, at best, slow and inadequate."[22] After testimony from various doctors and researchers on the frontlines of the epidemic, the congressional committee concluded: "The Federal administration has been very reluctant to recognize the true dimensions of and propose an adequately funded federal response to AIDS."[23] The defunding of public health service agencies ill-prepared the United States for the AIDS epidemic, while the underfunding deprived health agencies of valuable resources to research the disease and potentially prevent AIDS from reaching an epidemic level. Although a suitable budget for AIDS-related efforts was attainable, the Reagan administration remained committed to reducing

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[20] Raymond A. Smith, *Encyclopedia of AIDS: A Social, Political, Cultural, and Scientific Record of the HIV Epidemic* (London: Penguin, 2002), 396.

[21] Shilts, 328-329.

[22] "The Federal Response to the AIDS Epidemic, Information and Public Education: Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, First Session, March 16, 1987," 2, Google Play (Google), accessed April 10, 2021, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=_jRxU_KauW8C&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA128.

[23] "The Federal Response to the AIDS Epidemic, Information and Public Education: Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, First Session, March 16, 1987," 110.

domestic spending to fulfill the promises of Reaganomics. Limited federal funding was a popular policy among conservative voters. The Reagan administration would not risk its political base for a disease that affected Americans they morally detested.

THE DISCLOSURE

On July 25, 1985, a publicist for Rock Hudson revealed Hudson was suffering from AIDS. As a beloved Hollywood actor, Hudson personified American masculinity. Thus, his startling announcement of an AIDS diagnosis electrified the entire country. Rock Hudson marked a turning point in the AIDS epidemic: AIDS was no longer a distant issue exclusively for gay Americans and drug abusers. Americans now held a legitimate concern of the epidemic's threat to national public health. Most strikingly, Hudson's AIDS diagnosis presented the first inklings of awareness for his close friend, President Ronald Reagan. According to Reagan's son, "the whole picture changed" for the president following Hudson's diagnosis.[24] The suffering of a friend and the growing consciousness of a national epidemic encouraged Reagan to finally consider action against AIDS. Nearly three months following this disclosure, Hudson died. So did Reagan's silence.

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[24] Karen Tumulty, "Nancy Reagan's Real Role in the AIDS Crisis," *The Atlantic* (April 12, 2021), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/04/full-story-nancy-reagan-and-aids-crisis/618552/.

THE DECEPTION

After Hudson's death, the Reagan administration faced domestic pressure to contain a public health crisis**.** Although the long-held silence had to be broken, the Reagan administration defined the epidemic as a financial triumph and moral issue to continue appeasing their conservative base.

In September of 1987, more than four years after the first reported case, Reagan mentioned AIDS publicly for the very first time in a press conference. Claiming AIDS has been a "top priority" since 1981, Reagan praised the administration's "vital contributions" while adhering to "budgetary restraints."[25] By framing the federal response as a success accomplished under Reaganomics, Reagan adhered to his constituency's conservatism without legitimizing homosexuality. To avoid a fallout from the Religious Right, the president's comments on AIDS remained limited. It would be another two years before Reagan delivered a major speech on the epidemic.

In 1987, Reagan addressed the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the United States' oldest medical academy, to favor moral education as the best solution against AIDS. Reagan considered the federal government's role to avoid "value neutral" information because, to Reagan, "when it comes to preventing AIDS, don`t medicine and morality teach the same lessons?"[26] As the Surgeon General, Dr. Koop expressed frustration with the Reagan administration's commitment to a moral crusade as its AIDS response. Koop explained that

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[25] Phillip Boffey "Reagan Defends Financing for AIDS," *New York Times*, September 18, 1985, sec. B, p. 7.
[26] George E. Curry "REAGAN SAYS AIDS SOLUTION RESTS WITH MORALS," chicagotribune.com, September 4, 2018, https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1987-04-02-8701250240-story.html.

Reagan "reasoned anecdotally instead of examining the evidence and drawing conclusions."[27] To

the Reagan administration, the AIDS epidemic emerged because Americans had "abandoned

traditional morality, and it would not get out of the situation until we returned to that morality."[28]

The Reagan administration displaced national anxieties about AIDS to instead blame

homosexuality in accordance with Christian heteronormativity. By approaching AIDS as a moral

issue, the Reagan administration remained aligned with its conservative base while addressing

the epidemic. This strategy did not effectively reduce the spread of AIDS or lessen the strain on

public health agencies, but it maintained the political expediency that Reagan prioritized.

     The second major AIDS speech Reagan delivered was at a dinner honoring the American

Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) in 1987. Reagan introduced his address with a joke:

> A man had just been elected chairman of his community's annual charity drive. And he went over all the records, and he noticed something about one individual in town, a very wealthy man. And so, he paid a call on him, introduced himself as to what he was doing, and he said, "`Our records show that you have never contributed anything to our charity." And the man said, "Well, do your records show that I also have a brother who, as the result of a disabling accident, is permanently disabled and cannot provide for himself? Do your records show that I have an invalid mother and a widowed sister with several small children and no father to support them?" And the chairman, a little abashed and embarrassed, said, "Well, no, our records don't show that." The man said, "Well, I don't give anything to them. Why should I give something to you?[29]

The crowd at the dinner reacted with laughter. Reagan then began to praise the many

contributions to the fight against AIDS. Although this joke served as a humorous way to warm

up an audience, it reflects the overall federal response to AIDS. Described as a "fable" by Shilts,

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[27] Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor,* 221 and 224.

[28] Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor* 224.. /

[29] "Documents - President Reagan's AmfAR Speech | The Age of Aids | FRONTLINE," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), accessed April 8, 2021, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/docs/amfar.html.

Reagan's joke reveals the unimportance of AIDS to the administration.[30] If Reaganomics promised and enacted reductions in federal spending for essential government agencies, then why would the administration allocate sufficient spending to fight a disease that only disadvantaged gay Americans and drug abusers?

The Reagan administration consistently sided with their conservative ideology when discussing AIDS, allowing politics to drive their solutions against the epidemic. By upholding the conservative moral standard as a more important and effective approach, the Reagan administration only accomplished its political goals, which would not attack the health crisis at its roots.

THE DEFENSE

The Reagan administration received numerous criticisms for mishandling the AIDS outbreak and early epidemic. Therefore, Reagan historians avoid acknowledging the epidemic to present his presidency in a positive light. Jennifer Brier is one of the few Reagan biographers to mention AIDS and to dedicate an entire chapter on the administration's response in *A Companion to Ronald Reagan*. Brier does not shy away from briefly judging the federal response; however, she concentrates on the benefits of the administration's silence:

> …AIDS did more to politically rally progressives than conservatives at the end of the twentieth century and in the process became a central pillar in the political opposition to Reagan. In this respect his silence made it easier to hear all the protest chants.[31]

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[30] Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor,* 596.

[31] Jennifer, Brier, "*Reagan and AIDS,"* -In *A Companion to Ronald Reagan,* 222, A.L. Johns (Ed.). https://doi-org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/10.1002/9781118607770.ch13.

Although the federal inaction on AIDS brought several communities together and strengthened the liberal opposition against Reagan, it was at the expense of thousands of American lives for several years. Brier's attempt to redeem the Reagan administration fails to acknowledge the needless deaths caused by inaction. Furthermore, progressive political opposition is not effective when an epidemic is slaughtering its members.

Despite the initial stigmatization, the AIDS epidemic did not exclusively target gay communities. The politicization of the AIDS epidemic only served to benefit the Reagan administration, a strategic silence that endangered the entire nation.

THE DANGERS

During the first five years of the AIDS epidemic, historians can observe a story of extermination and expediency. When the United States could combat this disease, the federal government abandoned its citizens. The silence from the Reagan administration represented the Christian conservative base; Reagan embodied this political base's lack of sympathy and abundance of homophobia. By demonizing homosexuality and dismissing the disease, the Reagan administration's deliberate silence secured the support of the Religious Right and other homophobic voters. Reagan understood how to communicate with his conservative constituency, even if nothing was said at all.

However, the silence from the Great Communicator did not come without consequences. The federal government's inaction resulted in thousands of American deaths, slowly and painfully deteriorating from an incurable, lifelong disease. By the end of Reagan's first term in

1985, there were over 12,000 American deaths from AIDS. Yet, this tide of death that swept through the United States was only the first wave. By 1990, there were 120,453 reported deaths, nearly ten times more than in 1985. In 2000, the total death count jumped to 448,060.[32,] By 2019, AIDS had claimed the lives of 675,000 Americans.[33] Many of these deaths were preventable, but due to the Reagan administration's politicization, the United States failed to initially implement a productive strategy on a seemingly nonpartisan health issue.

The dangers of politicizing the AIDS epidemic resulted in needless American deaths and a false sense of security; AIDS threatened every American, regardless of sexual orientation or political preference. By stigmatizing a community of Americans based on their sexuality during a calamity, the attempts to deliver a vaccine or cure become complicated and sluggish. This politicization pushed Americans to indulge in homophobic speech and apathy, discouraging efforts to properly address the epidemic. Americans died while the administration adopted homophobic rhetoric, overlooked medical findings, downplayed the significance of the disease, and denied sufficient funding. Tens of thousands of American deaths were expendable for the administration's political goals. Amidst this egregious institutional indifference, one cannot help but ask: *would they have waited until all that was left was complete silence?*

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[32] AmfAR, "HIV/AIDS: Snapshots of an Epidemic."
[33] CDC, "CDC Fact Sheet | Today's HIV/AIDS Epidemic"

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Attempted Book Bans:
The Censorship of Queer Themes in the 1950s

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INTRODUCTION

The early Cold War in the United States, specifically during the 1950s, is an often under-credited period in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) history. People started to become more open with their identities, defying traditional expectations. The government saw this defiance as a moral weakness, which led people to believe that queer people were susceptible to communist infiltration. In "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics," historian of U.S. political culture, Naoko Shibusawa, explains that after World War II, the American consensus was that any deviation from the heterosexual nuclear family was seen as abnormal.[1] During the Cold War, government officials and their initiatives aimed to fight communism through the promotion of Christian values, embracing the American family as a national weapon.[2] The image of the heterosexual nuclear family highlighted the strict boundaries of what women and men could and could not do. In order to further protect American morality, the federal government led a national book ban that pulled texts that discussed 'unsuitable' themes — including queer texts — leading to a formative period in queer literature.

For most people, the start of queer history and queer resistance traces back to the 1969 Stonewall Riots, a series of violent interactions between the police and gay rights activists at the Stonewall Inn, located in Greenwich Village in New York City.[3] Published in *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, Toby Marotta, author of multiple early gay ethnographies, wrote that Stonewall led to "an unprecedented surge of activism and organizing for gay and lesbian rights."[4] In conjunction with what Marotta stated, Stonewall is often referred to as the catalyst for the queer rights movement in the United States and abroad.[5] Though the 1950s was a fundamental period for the formation of the queer identity and queer resistance in the United States, it is often overlooked in favor of more "critical" events, such as the Stonewall Riots. The decade witnessed the formation of the first public LGBTQ+ rights organizations in the United States, as well as a rise in

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[1] Naoko Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (2012): 723–52, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2012.01052.x, pp 747.

[2] Christopher Stroop, "'A Christian Solution to International Tension': Nikolai Berdyaev, the American YMCA, and Russian Orthodox Influence on Western Christian Anti-Communism, c.1905–60," Journal of Global History 13, no. 2 (July 2018): 188–208, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022818000049, pp 190.

[3] Toby Marotta, "What Made Stonewall Different?," *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 13, no. 2 (March 1, 2006): 33.

[4] "Marotta, "What Made Stonewall Different?," pp 35.

[5] "Marotta, "What Made Stonewall Different?," pp 35.

queer literature and publications such as *ONE Magazine* and *The Ladder*.[6] This advertisement of queerness and queer subtext was seen as a rejection of traditional societal norms and threatened the Cold War-imposed gender ideology.[7]

The fear of communist expansion led to the conflation of homosexuality and communism; subsequently, the government categorized queerness and queer-related themes as unacceptable interferences in the United States' fight for democracy. During his 1950 speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wis.) characterized the Cold War as "a war between two diametrically opposed ideologies."[8] These two ideologies were not, however, capitalism versus communism. Rather, in McCarthy's eyes, the war was a moral conflict between "communistic atheism and Christianity."[9] The United States was the face of traditional Christian values, with the nuclear family at the forefront of those moral grounds. McCarthy and the government saw the nuclear family as a fundamental building block of strong societies with the idea that families could only exist between a man and a woman. In the midst of the Cold War, queer people, and queerness in general, threatened the traditional Christian values that the United States was desperately attempting to uphold.

Prominent scholarship on the subject discusses how the Cold War ideology was deeply rooted in the notions of religion. In his analysis of Western Christian anti-communism, titled "'A Christian Solution to International Tension,'" professor Christian Stroop, who specializes in modern Russia, further elaborates that religious anti-communism in late imperial Russia influenced the United State's use of Christianity during the Cold War.[10] In the United State's fight against communism, "many Americans were influenced by ideas rooted in the religious traditions of the United States."[11] Americans believed they were responsible for enlightening and helping foreigners, such as the Russians, and could do so by spreading American values. This is why, when researching the early Cold War, it is often found that there were ties between government

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[6] Lillian Faderman, *Gay L.A: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (Basic Books, c2006), https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb07713.0001.001, pp 116.
Faderman, *Ebook of Gay L.A*, pp 126.
[7] Angela E. Galik, "Queer Texts and the Cold War: How Nationalism Shaped U.S. Lesbian and Gay Writing, 1945-1960." (Thesis or Dissertation, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota, 2009), http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/54427.
[8] "Document – Joseph McCarthy, Speech in Wheeling, West Virginia (1950) - Patterns of World History 3e Dashboard Resources - Learning Link," accessed November 19, 2022, https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/von-sivers-3e-dashboard-resources/document-joseph-mccarthy-speech-in-wheeling-west-virginia-1950.
[9] "Document – Joseph McCarthy, Speech in Wheeling, West Virginia (1950) - Patterns of World History 3e Dashboard Resources - Learning Link."
[10] Stroop, "'A Christian Solution to International Tension,'" pp 188.
[11] Stroop, "'A Christian Solution to International Tension,'" pp 197.

officials, projects, and Christian organizations.[12] The spread of American religious ideology can be seen in the discussion of book bans during the Cold War, as queer books were seen as the spread of a godless evil enemy that the American public had the responsibility to repress.

American historian Elaine Tyler May corroborates some of Stroop's research in her book *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. Her discussion of family life during the Cold War draws parallels between how the American policies protected the Christian values of the nuclear family and how, in turn, these familial norms reinforced domesticity and gender roles in the private sector.[13] She notes that the American nuclear family was used in accordance with national goals and served as a less explicit way of fighting communism. By having as many kids as possible, it would allow for parents to raise and educate their children "correctly," benefiting American society in the long run.[14] Per this view, then, the family was not only a reflection of American values but also a reflection of American superiority and status.[15] Without the nuclear family, the mold of American society would crumble, leading to fears of communist infiltration.

The government's defense tactic in trying to combat the unparalleled rise in public forms of homosexuality was to emphasize the importance of the nuclear family further and demonize any deviation from traditional gender and familial roles. Political figures like McCarthy reinforced this ideology through their political campaigns, and so did public education systems through the implementation of Life-Adjustment education. The government left no room for misinterpretation. In this paper, I explore book banning as a national defense tactic, with a focus on how it led to the villainization of queerness and the censoring of queer themes in books. I also aim to understand the process of book banning by using two different queer texts, *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin and *Women's Barracks* by Tereska Torrès, and their public and private receptions as proxies for understanding the larger effect of Cold War queer book banning campaigns. To this end, I engage with primary sources, such as the congressional investigations brought forth upon these books, to further understand how and why these texts were seen as threats to democracy. I engage with the texts themselves to further analyze the claims brought forth in the aforementioned hearings. The guiding questions of this paper are: How did the representation of queerness in texts published in the 1950s, such as *Giovanni's Room* and *Women's Barracks*, lead to their attempted banning in the U.S.? How did McCarthy and the House

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[12] Stroop, "'A Christian Solution to International Tension,'" pp 190.

[13] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (Basic Books, c1988), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb01654.0001.001.

[14] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 136.

[15] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 16.

Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials use book banning as a defense mechanism when it came to protecting the American identity as defined by the U.S. government during the Cold War era? How did the public engage with book banning campaigns? How did these book bans impact queer literature and history?

I argue that book bans during the Cold War were a form of internal regulation intended to protect the public from exposure to queerness and to protect the nuclear family. Therefore, the Cold War book banning campaigns' intent to target queer literature and texts should be given the same importance as more well-known events in queer history. Accordingly, this paper sheds light on the importance of Cold War queer book banning attempts by using *Women's Barracks* and *Giovanni's Room* as proxies for understanding the era's impact on queer literature and culture.

PROTECTING DEMOCRACY AND THE NUCLEAR FAMILY: BOOK BANNING IN THE UNITED STATES

Scholarship on book banning has emerged in waves, often responding to the ever-changing political contexts that shape it. The history of book banning, particularly in the United States, is heavily influenced by the era's political climate considering that its overarching goal is to censor content, ideas, and themes that are considered inappropriate or too sensitive for the general public's consumption.[16] Most institutions or figures that attempt to censor book materials often use the argument that the public should be afraid of what the content is attempting to do. Many fear that such 'inappropriate' content is attempting to influence their reader, which can be perceived as potentially dangerous and harmful. The themes that have become targets of book banning have shifted over time to reflect the current political climate and contemporary ideas of what is anti-American.

Associate professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Emily J. M. Knox, focuses on information access and intellectual freedom. Her monograph, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, explores why people challenge, restrict and remove books. Although her research focuses on book banning in contemporary America, it discusses information that is relevant and applicable to book banning practices in the 20th century. Knox discusses how a decline in society is one of the most common themes in a book's challenger's discourse. Books challenged through this defense are often seen as out to "destroy our great nation" and as "actively

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[16] Emily J. M. Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America* (Blue Ridge Summit, United States: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/reed/detail.action?docID=1921960, pp 11.

working to put an end to American society."[17] Book challengers believe that books should improve the character and morality of a person.[18] However, banning books limits literature's ability to be indexical signs, essentially erasing texts as indicators of what was going on during a time period.[19] Books are a gateway into a world of ideas, and if books get banned, a whole audience may never get to uncover a world of knowledge.

Although the federal government of the United States is not allowed to restrict or regulate expression based on the content — with a few notable exceptions, including obscenity — under the First Amendment, this freedom of expression has been challenged throughout history.[20] In 1821, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that the distribution of a book entitled *Fanny Hill* by John Cleland was illegal due to the obscene topics of prostitution found in the book. According to a second Supreme Court case regarding the book, it was "the first recorded suppression of literary work in [the] country of grounds of obscenity."[21] This decision to rule the piece of literature as obscene gave way for others to stop or ban the distribution of books that went against the 'traditional' ways of life. On March 3, 1873, Anthony Comstock, the founder of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, an institution dedicated to supervising the morality of the public, successfully petitioned for the U.S. Congress to pass an act regarding obscenity in literature.[22] The "Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use" prohibited the possession and circulation of any obscene or subject of "immoral influence" in literature, image, or of any other material and manifestation.[23]

If the government finds an issue with certain types of material, such as literature containing obscene material, they can pass acts or amend laws to fulfill their duties of ensuring domestic tranquility and promoting the general welfare. The government believes that the protection of the public's sense of morality is of utmost importance, and anything that may contaminate their morality must be taken care of immediately. Any piece of literature that can be considered "sexually explicit," "offensive language," or "unsuited to any age group" can be

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[17] Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, pp 70.

[18] Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, pp 96.

[19] Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, pp 97.

[20] "U.S. Constitution - First Amendment | Resources | Constitution Annotated | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress," accessed November 6, 2022, https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/.

[21] Nicolas Valazza, "Obscenity Laws in the United States, 19th-21st Centuries," in *Banned Books and Prints in Europe and the United States, 17th–20th Centuries. Works from the Lilly Library and the Kinsey Institute Collections* (Indiana University Bloomington, 2019), https://bannedbooks.indiana.edu/items/show/42.

[22] Valazza, "Obscenity Laws in the United States, 19th-21st Centuries."

[23] Valazza, "Obscenity Laws in the United States, 19th-21st Centuries."

challenged at the discretion of the government, private organization, or individual.[24] While those are three major reasons for challenging speech, there are still other reasons why books are challenged. More often than not, however, they fall underneath one of those categories.

During the Cold War era, specifically the late 1940s and 50s, the government conducted book banning campaigns that were part of a larger coordinated effort to restrict materials deemed 'disruptive' and 'subversive' to society. This national campaign was led by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who is most famous for the Red Scare, a fear-mongering crusade alleging that innumerable communists, communist sympathizers, and Soviet spies had infiltrated important U.S. institutions, including the government.[25] While McCarthy-era book bans often targeted mass consumption, such as widely adopted textbooks, book bans also occurred on a smaller scale, impacting books read for amusement. Regardless of the target audience, McCarthy-era book bans focused on getting out of circulation books relating to communist beliefs and racial justice.[26]

During this time, government figures, such as McCarthy, conflated anti-familial and anti-normative representations of gender and sexuality with communist ideology. The government saw members of the LGBTQ+ community as nonconformists to the traditional Christian rhetoric that they were attempting to reinforce. The government saw their deviation from tradition and norms as a sign of moral weakness and compromised values. Not only did it see members of the LGBTQ+ community as morally defective, it saw them as national security threats. During his speech in Wheeling, McCarthy insinuated that there were communists infiltrating the State Department and that he knew of "57 cases of individuals" who had pledged loyalty to the Communist Party from within the government.[27] By implying that there were individuals with divided loyalties in the government, McCarthy made the argument no longer about just protecting the country's values but also about protecting the country's national security. It was no longer a fight between the United States and a foreign entity; it was now a war that the United States had to wage from within.

In "Politics in an Age of Anxiety: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," Professor of History K. A. Cuordileone elaborates on this discussion by exploring the gendered dynamics of

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[24] Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, pp 11.

[25] Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," pp 725.

[26] Joseph A. Custer, "Political Climate and Catastrophes: The Effects of Notorious Events on Public Library Collections, Both Then and Now," *Indiana Law Review* 54, no. 1 (June 16, 2021): 79–121, https://doi.org/10.18060/25503, pp 80.

[27] "Document – Joseph McCarthy, Speech in Wheeling, West Virginia (1950) - Patterns of World History 3e Dashboard Resources - Learning Link."

hard/soft political discourse found in Arthur M.Schlesinger Jr. 's *The Vital Center*.[28] Her analysis explores why there was an overt increase in masculine characteristics within American politics and the origins of the association of liberals with "soft" characteristics. By emphasizing McCarthy's quote, "If you want to be against McCarthy, boys, you've got to be either a Communist or a cocksucker," Cuordileone unveils the erotic language used to describe politics, essentially naming conservatives real men and anti-communists.[29] While it may seem like homosexuals were the subject of criticism in McCarthy's rather stark commentary, it was actually the "soft" liberals that were the subject at hand.[30] Yet, the lack of masculinity used to describe liberals sparked fear within politics as many feared being associated with homosexuality. Shibusawa also discusses this phenomenon in "The Lavender Scare and Empire," describing the moment as a political tactic meant to send McCarthy's counterparts into a "fearful frenzy about appearing 'soft' on communism."[31] No one wanted to be perceived as too soft on communism, and the lavender scare became about "who would control the American empire" in the fight against it.[32]

Senators Joseph Lister Hill (D-Ala.) and Kenneth Wherry (R-Neb.) spearheaded a Senate Investigation into the alleged infestation of loyalty risks that the government employed.[33] Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Department of State on February 28, 1950, Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson said that character defects were considered when evaluating employment by the government as a way to assess security risk. He stated in his testimony that a person with "any physical or moral defect" was in danger of having their morals compromised or exploited by "somebody who was attempting to penetrate into the Department."[34] When asked by Senator Henry Styles Bridges (R.-N.H.) if homosexuals were included in the

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[28] K. A. Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," *The Journal of American History (Bloomington, Ind.)* 87, no. 2 (2000): 515–45, https://doi.org/10.2307/2568762, pp 515-16.

[29] Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," pp 521.

[30] Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," pp 521.

[31] Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," pp 726.

[32] Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," pp 726.

[33] U.S. Senate. Committee on Appropriations for the District of Columbia, *Report of the Investigations of the Junior Senator of Nebraska on the Infiltration of Subversives and Moral Perverts into the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), https://ucsd.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=26481487.

[34] *Report of the Investigations of the Junior Senator of Nebraska on the Infiltration of Subversives and Moral Perverts into the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government.*

list of people that exhibit moral defects, Secretary Acheson replied, "That would be included."[35] This testimony exemplifies the phenomenon of queer people being thought of as people with moral weaknesses and as the perfect target for communist infiltration. In Shibusawa's "The Lavender Scare and Empire," the lavender scare's logic was that homosexuality was a threat to national security because homosexuals were vulnerable and potential victims of communist blackmail.[36] This logic, however, was circular because of the increasing homophobic policies that were making the LGBTQ+ community more vulnerable and exposed in society.[37]

Furthermore, political figures, such as McCarthy, Hill, and Wherry, saw queer people as morally corrupt because they were thought to be leading 'unnatural lifestyles' that deviated from the traditional Christian belief that a union should only be between a man and a woman. They posed a threat to the nuclear family, one of the fundamental building blocks of American society, which meant they were a threat to national security. In May's *Homeward Bound*, she discusses how families instill American values in their children, helping them become exemplary members of society.[38] During the Cold War, families helped reinforce the stereotypical gender roles, with women staying home and raising the children and the men acting as the head of the household.[39] There was a fear that a crisis in gender identity and roles could lead to crime, "perversion," and homosexuality."[40] As queerness posed a threat to the image of the nuclear family, the American public feared that there were homosexuals in their everyday life that could lead them astray from their roles in society and morally corrupt them. The prevailing assumption was that queerness undermined the traditional family.[41] Similar to communists, conservatives saw queer people as fundamentally immoral, and thus the war expanded to be not only against communists but the queer community as well.[42]

There were multiple efforts to eradicate any association with queerness in Cold War America. The government conducted internal investigations to dismiss any potential loyalty risks and condemned any potential queer person as a "sexual

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[35] *Report of the Investigations of the Junior Senator of Nebraska on the Infiltration of Subversives and Moral Perverts into the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government.*

[36] Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," pp 725.

[37] Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics: The Lavender Scare and Empire," pp 725.

[38] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 136.

[39] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 16.

[40] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 88.

[41] Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," pp 528.

[42] Cuordileone, "'Politics in an Age of Anxiety': Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," pp 528.

pervert." Public education emphasized the importance of gender and family roles within their curriculum — prioritizing the enforcement of the nuclear family.[43] Even television reinforced Cold War ideology, with the 1950s bringing stricter and even more rigid gender roles onto the screen.[44] Books were no exception when it came to the banishing of anything queer-adjacent. Book bans and book banning attempts rose dramatically during the McCarthy-era. McCarthy's fear-mongering and Red Scare encouraged the everyday members of society to help censor books that encouraged communism and communist-adjacent themes, lumping queer literature in with pornographic material, violence, drug use, and other sexual perversions. Thousands upon thousands of books were pulled from library shelves across the United States because they exhibited some sort of threat to the public's morals. These texts were deemed either too inappropriate, too profane, or too unpatriotic for public consumption.[45]

WOMEN'S BARRACKS: PUBLISHERS VERSUS THE GATHINGS COMMITTEE

In the midst of book banning efforts, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn (D-Texas) appointed Representative Ezekiel Candler "Took" Gathings (D-Ark.) to spearhead the House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, often referred to as the Gathings Committee. Founded in 1952, the committee sought to investigate the potential effects of "comic books, pocketbook literature, and other 'immoral, obscene, and otherwise offensive publications'" on the morals of American society.[46] While relatively little scholarship has been written about Representative Gathings and his eponymous committee, the committee's majority report, published in 1953, summarizes their investigative efforts, which concluded with a recommendation that the federal government should censor material deemed inappropriate.

The select committee was composed of nine members of the House of Representatives: three from the Committee on the Judiciary, three from the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, and three unaffiliated representatives. The committee was formed with no more than five members being of the same political party in order to facilitate a fair and productive investigation. Their main task was to determine the extent to which current literature "containing immoral, obscene, or otherwise offensive matter or placing

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[43] Elaine Tyler May, "'Family Values': The Uses and Abuses of American Family History," Revue française d'études américaines 97, no. 3 (2003): 7–22, https://doi.org/10.3917/rfea.097.0007, pp 12.

[44] May, *Homeward Bound*, pp 44.

[45] Knox, *Book Banning in 21st-Century America*, pp 11.

[46] Michael Bowman, "'Immoral or Otherwise Offensive Matter': Took Gathings' 1952 Investigation of Broadcasting," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2016): 50.

improper emphasis on crime, violence, and corruption" was being made available to the American public through any form of distribution.[47] All of the themes investigated were referred to in their report as 'pornographic materials,' hence their official title of House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials. Their task also included assessing whether or not the laws in place were sufficient to prevent the publication and distribution of such books. If they found that the laws in place were insufficient, then the committee was to include their recommendations for legislation in a report.[48]

As a result of their investigation, the Gathings Committee found that there was an alarming amount of pornographic materials at the disposal of the American public. Their investigation enlisted the help of the Post Office Department, the Library of Congress, the Department of Justice, police departments from various cities, and the attorney generals of the 50 States as well as Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The committee also surveyed people that were likely to be in favor of censoring such material, including representatives of religious and civic groups like parent-teacher associations. This extremely thorough investigation also included the voices of book publishers and independent retail booksellers.[49] The committee needed all of the evidence necessary to make the claim that literature with pornographic elements was degrading the very youth supposed to become the face of American morals.

In their majority report, which was a culmination of their investigation, the committee submitted a list of books that expatiate homosexuality and queer themes. Among the list of perpetrators, they included *Women's Barracks*, written by Tereska Torrès.[50] Published in 1950 by Fawcett Gold Medal, the book follows accounts of what life was like in the Free French Army women's barracks during World War II in London. The pulp fiction heavily drew upon Torrès' own accounts as a secretary to the Free French leader Charles DeGaulle in London.[51] While the book was considered to be mostly autobiographical, the story that unfolded within recounted multiple homoerotic instances between the women. The sexual encounters in the book defied the conventional ideologies behind

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[47] United States Congress House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, House of Representatives, Eighty-Second Congress, Pursuant to H. Res. 596, a Resolution Creating a Select Committee to Conduct a Study and Investigation of Current Pornographic Materials* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952) pp 1.

[48] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 1.

[49] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 2.

[50] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 16.

[51] Yvonne Keller, "'Was It Right to Love Her Brother's Wife so Passionately?': Lesbian Pulp Novels and U.S. Lesbian Identity, 1950-1965," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 385–410, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40068271, pp 388.

Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 9-10.

relationships at the time, and the Gathings Committee found the material pornographic.

The title of Torrès' pulp fiction appears in the majority report over 30 times.[52] Not only did the committee submit this title as an example of pocketbooks containing unjustifiably lewd, queer content, they used the book as a main focal point in their argument that low-cost paperback books were some of the worst offenders of the moral code imposed by the United States.[53] By the time the hearings for the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials in the House of Representatives began on December 1, 1952, *Women's Barracks* had sold over 1 million copies, quickly becoming one of Fawcett Gold Medal's biggest hits. Throughout the hearings, the committee engaged with members of the publishing company in an attempt to classify the book as obscene literature.

They used a previous hearing that took place in Carleton County Court in Ottawa, Canada, to further support their case. Judge A. G. McDougall of the Carlton County Court declared that *Women's Barracks* was a book of obscene nature that "deals almost entirely with the question of sex relationship and also with the question of lesbianism."[54] He further explained that the material is one that deals with "unnatural" relationships, and its content could only be seen as something that could "deprave and corrupt" any audience.[55] In the committee hearing, Mr. Burton, part of the general counsel, used this information to support his claim that *Women's Barracks* contained pornographic materials and, therefore, should be removed from the market. However, Ralph Foster Daigh, the editorial director and vice president of Fawcett Publications, Inc., defended *Women's Barracks* against the allegations presented. He maintained that it was not only a "good book" because of the sales it had made for the company but also because of the "entertainment and education it imparts."[56] As the book discusses Torrès' experiences with the Free French Army, Daigh maintained that the book's content was merely giving insight into what life was like as a woman soldier in the French Army. When asked by Mr. Burton, if the majority of the story took place in the women's barracks, Daigh gave a cheeky response, stating, "That takes a considerable portion of the book, yes, sir."[57]

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[52] U.S. Congress, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, House of Representatives, Eighty-Second Congress, Pursuant to H. Res. 596, a Resolution Creating a Select Committee to Conduct a Study and Investigation of Current Pornographic Materials.*, 82d Cong., 2d Sess. House Report no. 2510 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1952), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006765383.

[53] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 36.

[54] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 169.

[55] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 40.

[56] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 37.

[57] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 37.

Along with maintaining that there was value in the content of the book, Daigh provided a letter of approval for the book from John Bakeless, a well-known author and professor from New York University.[58] In his letter, Bakeless argued that it would be insincere and hypocritical to not describe the homoerotic events that happened in the women's barracks. He states in his letter, "These literary forms are based on conflict. Much of that conflict is between good and evil."[59] Essentially, Bakeless argued that if Torrès had not included the lesbian sex interactions in the book, it would no longer mimic the sordid and evil aspects of life, and it would lose the realistic, autobiographical element that gave it merit. Thus, sans homoerotic content, *Women's Barracks* would no longer be a faithful adaptation of Torrès diary but an artificial, sugar-coated retelling of her life.

Bakeless further supported the publishing and dispersal of the book by stating that many of the great classics "have required reading for school boys," meaning that books often include entertainment for men; why, therefore, should there be pushback on entertainment for women?[60] He demonstrated this by noting that *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* also draw upon the themes of murder and adultery and how *Hamlet* even goes further by depicting instances of incest. He also states that the lesbian scenes in *Women's Barracks* are less descriptive than those found in Plato's *Symposium* and as graphic as those found in the *Iliad*. By bringing into the conversation classic pieces of literature, Bakeless put into perspective the frequency with which books with obscene and morally degrading themes are praised by the general public and intellectuals alike. And, since the classics do not face backlash for depicting such scenes, argued Bakeless, neither should *Women's Barracks,* which dealt with real-life happenings rather than fantasy.

Women's Barracks is a product of its time and a reflection of how relationships and times were changing. Daigh further pushed back against the committee by stating that "homosexual inquiries into the State Department and other governmental agencies" sparked curiosity in the public. He claimed that the investigation and repression actually drove interest in homoerotic literature.[61] For this reason, Daigh elaborated, the public should have access to *Women's Barracks* and other books that touch on such themes, for it would be 'immoral' to not satisfy the public's interest in knowledge of such topics. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to expand readership and publish stories that appealed to the LGBTQ+ community. Daigh continued to emphasize that the scenes in the book were comparable to heterosexual sex scenes in popular books such as *Gone With*

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[58] Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, "Investigation of Literature Allegedly Containing Objectionable Material," December 1-5, 1952, pp 11.

[59] Materials, *Report of the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials,* pp 12.

[60] "Investigation of Literature Allegedly Containing Objectionable Material," pp 12.

[61] "Investigation of Literature Allegedly Containing Objectionable Material," pp 32.

the Wind and that "sex relations will have had good sales" no matter the audience it is intended for.[62]

Although Daigh and Bakeless defended the right to have *Women's Barracks* on the bookshelves and out for distribution for the general public to enjoy, the Select Committee for Pornographic Material did not allow for persuasion in their verdict. Daigh and Bakeless' counterarguments against the allegations of obscenity that plagued Torrès' book failed to sway the conservative committee. The committee decided that the contents of the book were, in fact, pornographic material that was too obscene and morally disruptive for the general public's consumption. In order to prevent the book from being banned nationwide, the publishers agreed to add a narrator that disapproved of the interactions between the characters.[63] This newly added voice was used as a method to deter people from committing the same so-called mistakes as the characters in the book. It was meant to teach the reader that homoeroticism was immoral and problematic. Even then, multiple states pulled the book off the shelves and banned it for containing obscene material.[64] The homoerotic relationships in the book were found to be "unnatural" and contradictory to the American way of life. The book was considered as propaganda glorifying lesbian relationships, therefore, it was not an acceptable moral influence on its consumers.

While the committee's verdict denounced *Women's Barracks*, the book continued to sell despite — or perhaps because of — its negative connotations. Instead of deterring the public from the book as originally intended, the trial drew more attention to a book that otherwise would have gone largely unnoticed. Pulp fiction books like *Women's Barracks* were supposed to be a cheap read, only costing around twenty-five to thirty-five cents.[65] For reference, according to an article in the *Evening Star*, a carton of eggs went for fifty cents at the time.[66] *Women's Barracks* was never expected to become as popular as it did. It drew attention to the new sub-genre of lesbian pulp fiction and became a trailblazer in books with overtly lesbian themes. The book emboldened authors and publishers alike to produce literature with content that might be judged obscene or immoral. While a shocking book at the time, *Women's Barracks* left a long-lasting impact on queer literature and representation, giving hope and reassurance to a new

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[62] "Investigation of Literature Allegedly Containing Objectionable Material," pp 29.

[63] "Tereska Torrès," The Telegraph, accessed November 22, 2022, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/books-obituaries/9566294/Tereska-Torres.html.

[64] Natasha Frost, "The Lesbian Pulp Fiction That Saved Lives," Atlas Obscura, May 22, 2018, http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/lesbian-pulp-fiction-ann-bannon.

[65] "Fresh Eggs Reign Supreme," *Evening Star*, May 10, 1950.

[66] "Fresh Eggs Reign Supreme."

generation that there were other people out there that shared the same sense of desire for love that they had.

*GIOVANNI'S ROOM***: OVERCOMING PUBLISHING OBSTACLES AND PUBLIC PUSHBACK**

The House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials was one of — if not the most — public forms of prosecution against queer literature during the Cold War era. Its aim to censor publications with pornographic themes that discussed topics such as queer interpersonal and sexual relationships had a chilling effect. Publishing companies who had previously produced these types of books started to restrict content and write guidelines around what could and could not be published. No one wanted to be put on trial and become an example of what not to do, nor did they want to be known for publishing morally compromising and degrading literature. Yet, publishers who did print "pornographic" material did not want to deviate from the content that had established them a loyal readership, as new subject matters put them at risk of alienating themselves from their already-established audiences.

In 1953, the same year that the House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials published their majority report, James Baldwin broke into the literary scene with Knopf, Inc's publication of his debut novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.[67] Baldwin established himself as a voice that spoke with the pain and struggles experienced by the Black community in the United States. His book is a semi-autobiographical text that uses his experiences growing up in Harlem to portray the various ways in which Black Americans grapple with their everyday lives.[68] It sheds light on how religion plays an important role in their lives — whether it plays an inspirational or an oppressive role. In the audience and publisher's eyes, the well-received and praised novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* set a precedent for the type of literature Baldwin would release in his career.

However, in 1956, Baldwin departed dramatically from his previous work and published *Giovanni's Room*, which focuses on an American man living in Paris and his journey of self-discovery. The book touches on the themes of homosexuality, bisexuality, gender, and interpersonal relationships, which were considered too taboo for public consumption at the time. The book's main character, David, is often in conflict with himself as he is simultaneously trying to

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[67] Josep M. Armengol, "In the Dark Room: Homosexuality and/as Blackness in James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37, no. 3 (March 2012): 671–93, https://doi.org/10.1086/662699, pp 671.

[68] "Go Tell It on the Mountain by James Baldwin: 9781101907610 | PenguinRandomHouse.Com: Books," PenguinRandomhouse.com, accessed November 22, 2022, https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/249847/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain-by-james-baldwin-introduction-by-edwidge-danticat/.

figure out how to establish his masculinity and explore his sexuality within a society that believes the two could never coexist. The book follows David in his attempt to find himself through sexual and romantic relationships and addresses his dilemma of whether or not to succumb to societal expectations. This was the first book in Baldwin's career that discussed the themes of homosexuality, bisexuality, and queer relationships.[69]

While there is not much scholarship written about the negative discourse that arose from the publication of *Giovanni's Room*, it is known that Gathings Committee had instilled fear into many publishers. Indeed, after the majority report was published, many companies were against publishing literature with any queer cogitations. To that end, Baldwin encountered difficulty when he was in pursuit of a publisher for *Giovanni's Room*. While he had already developed a relationship with Knopf, Inc. because of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Alfred A. Knopf rejected *Giovanni's Room* due to its explicit depictions of homoerotic relationships and queerness throughout the book.[70] Knopf even went as far as to say that the book "would ruin his reputation…and he was advised to burn the manuscript."[71] Knopf's reaction to the book was representative of the publishing world's prevailing thought — if you published a book with queer cogitations, your career, and your reputation would be on the line.

Written in mid-1950s America and in the middle of the Cold War, the negative reactions to *Giovanni's Room* were considered normal. The country was constantly protecting the American identity and anything associated with it. American Cold War ideologies directly opposed communism and homosexuality, making Baldwin's association of homosexuality and the American identity a slap in the face to his American audience. Publishers' critical reactions to the novel were almost predictable. Many of them simply disregarded or dismissed the manuscript, as the deviation from traditional gender and sexuality norms was considered too explicit to publish.

Finally, Dial Press, a New York City based publishing house, accepted *Giovanni's Room* and agreed to publish it.[72] Although a publishing house had finally agreed to publish the book, Baldwin still had to face another obstacle — the public. Public reaction came swiftly and critically in the form of extremely vocal discontent with the material and negative reviews of the book. One such review was titled "The Faerie Queenes," and was published in *The Crisis* magazine, the official publication of the National Association for the

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[69] James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*, First Vintage International trade paperback edition. (New York: Vintage International, 2013).

[70] Armengol, "In the Dark Room," pp 671.

[71] William J. Weatherby, *James Baldwin: Artist on Fire : A Portrait* (D.I. Fine, 1989), pp 119.

[72] Armengol, "In the Dark Room," pp 671.

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).[73] The author, James W. Ivy, claimed in his review that *Giovanni's Room* strayed from the "religious passion" that *Go Tell It on the Mountain* had profusely gloried and, instead, had decided to tackle "the scabrous subject of homosexual love."[74] Ivy reviewed the novel with disgust, stating that it was "a pity that so much brilliant writing should be lavished on a relationship that by its very nature is bound to be sterile and debasing."[75] Ivy's response was a reflection of Cold War rhetoric that criticized the "unnatural" nature of the queer relationships in the novel. He emphasized that not only was the relationship morally degrading to the characters but to anyone that agreed with that lifestyle. Ivy was not the only one to publicly denounce the novel. Although the negative reactions to *Giovanni's Room* have largely been forgotten due to the book's modern popularity, the majority of the public's reaction at the time mimicked Ivy's disappointment in the queer themes present in Baldwin's writing. Many found the themes to be incongruous with Baldwin's prior writing and were shocked that he had even dared to make such a jump from *Go Tell It on the Mountain* to *Giovanni's Room*.

In a book review published by *The New Yorker*, Anthony West emphasizes the dangers of flirting with homosexuals that the book presents.[76] He cannot stress enough that those that flirt with David are just trying to convert him into one of them, implying that this is not confined to the book but is also possible in real life. His commentary plays on the Cold War ideology that queer people are of low moral grounds and that they pose a threat to society. West feeds the public's fear by implying that there were queer people in society that would attempt to infiltrate them with the "homosexual agenda." He concludes his review by stating, "It is to be hoped that Mr. Baldwin … will soon return to the American subjects he [has] dealt with so promisingly."[77] West's hope for Baldwin's return to American themes is indicative of the American public's aversion to queer themes explored in the novel. West insinuates that if Baldwin does not return to writing books that the American public can relate to, he will lose his audience, just as Knopf warned when rejecting the manuscript for *Giovanni's Room*.

Yet efforts to deter the public from reading the novel failed. While the reviews of the novel were unfavorable or limited in their praise, it has now become a symbol of early queer literature. Baldwin became immortalized as a "father figure of the mid-century male gay movement," and *Giovanni's Room*

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[73] *The Crisis 1957-02: Vol 64 Iss 2* (The Crisis Publishing Company, 1957), http://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1957-02_64_2 pp 123.

[74] James W. Ivy, "The Faerie Queenes," *The Crisis*, February 1, 1957, 64.2 edition, sec. Book Reviews, Internet Archive, pp 123.

[75] W. Ivy, "The Faerie Queenes," pp 123.

[76] Anthony West, "Review of 'Giovanni's Room' by James Baldwin," *The New Yorker*, November 10, 1956.

[77] West, "Review of 'Giovanni's Room' by James Baldwin."

became an example of the "white homosexual abroad."[78] His novel created space for people identifying with non-normative sexualities in the U.S and abroad, allowing them to find solidarity within the narrative.[79] The book's reception demonstrates how American culture during the Cold War associated same-sex desire with moral corruption, carefully breaking down the restrictive politics of American culture.

The public's reception of *Giovanni's Room* was a reflection of the Cold War ideology being reinforced by the government. Although the House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials failed to instill a nationwide ban on queer and queer adjacent themes, their efforts inculcated fear in both publication houses and writers alike. Many refused to publish such books, fearing that they would be put on trial or ruin their reputation. Those that did choose to publish queer books faced public criticism and, like Baldwin, were shamed for giving such obscene material a platform. The public shaming and censoring of materials was a direct result of government-led book banning efforts that deemed queer themes as morally degrading and conflated them with communism.

CONCLUSION

Queer book bans during the Cold War were an attempt to erase literature and texts that amplified queer voices at a time when they were considered taboo and morally deviant. It was an attempt at erasing foundational texts essential to queer history and representation in literature. While somewhat successful in its efforts to censor these texts, the United States ultimately failed to suppress the genre completely. Instead, the government's focus and drive to erase such themes actually brought attention to them. The themes that were considered 'unnatural' and a threat to the nuclear family provided comfort to those who felt persecuted by the government, strengthening the sense of community that queer people once lacked.

In a time when women were married to their kitchens, *Women's Barracks* provided a sense of escapism to those who longed for female desire. As Daigh mentioned during the trial, it is a book that provided the audience with a realistic and honest recounting of what was going on in the world. By omitting the obscene material, the book would have no longer been an honest reflection of the author's experience but instead a censored version of it. Although the trial forced the publishers to add a condemning narrator to the book, it actually brought pulp fiction more popularity than it was ever supposed to achieve. The openness of

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[78] Magdalena J. Zaborowska et al., "Rebranding James Baldwin and His Queer Others: A Session at the 2019 American Studies Association Conference," *James Baldwin Review* 6, no. 1 (September 29, 2020): 199–229, https://doi.org/10.7227/JBR.6.13, pp 200.

[79] Zaborowska et al., "Rebranding James Baldwin and His Queer Others," pp 202.

lesbian relationships in the book brought forth a new genre in queer literature — lesbian pulp fiction — inadvertently helping define American lesbianism for closeted women.

Similarly, *Giovanni's Room* provided solidarity to its readership by centering a narrative that queer people could relate to. Although the novel was originally met with disdain and disgust, it has become a symbol of early queer literature in contemporary times. Its deconstruction of America's political climate during the Cold War communicated to its readers how restrictive it was to be a man or a woman. David's struggle with masculinity while simultaneously being queer personified the emotional turmoil that some people had to go through in order to protect themselves from being perceived as a threat to national security. *Giovanni's Room* depicted the sense of alienation that many underwent, giving a voice to those who could not outwardly speak out about it.

The House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials' attempt to restrict books with obscene and demoralizing material, such as *Women's Barracks* and *Giovanni's Room*, ultimately failed. Although their majority report resulted in a culmination of reasons why the government should go ahead with censoring books with pornographic materials, their efforts were ignored. Their efforts to deter the public from such books eventually drew more attention to them and brought a larger audience to them than intended. During a time when Cold War ideology was silencing overt expressions of homosexuality, books offered an escape and solidarity to queer members of the public, assuring them that their feelings were not unnatural. The texts offered a space where people could get rid of their homosexual shame. They also provided a space where they could walk through that shame with characters experiencing the same thing. Although not often acknowledged, Cold War book censoring gave a platform to queer literature, eventually leading to some of the most formative texts in contemporary times. The government's attempt to silence gave way to a new generation of rule breakers, giving a sense of community to those that often hid behind a mask of conformity.

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Political Economy of the Middle East: Historiography and the Making of an Episteme

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The Great Divergence accelerated a process of Western European states dominating the majority of the world's geography and people economically and geopolitically. This phenomenon is subject to significant debate within the historiography. Famed sociologist Max Weber provides a culturalist explanation for the Great Divergence. He identifies that capitalism existed far before the Industrial Revolution, including in Asia and the general non-West (which includes southern Europe in his view) but lacked the capitalist spirit, which he attributes to Protestant (specifically Puritan, Quaker, and Calvinist) religious insistence on industriousness and on identifying good opportunities (including in business) when God presents them to the faithful, as well as an admiration of middle class businessmen, as opposed to the upper classes who were seen as too decadent with their wealth.[1] Another school of thought is that of the Eurocentric Marxists, who applied specific Western class processes to the formation of the capitalist spirit that then powered the world market system. An example of this is Ellen Meiskins Wood's *The Origin of Capitalism*, in which she posits that the advent of modern capitalism can be found in the lack of "constraints" on the economic activity of the nascent bourgeois class in Western European cities, as well as a dependence on markets to determine variable rents by English landlords, an older exploitative class, that formed the market dependent exploitation characteristic to capitalism.[2] Other explanations in newer historiography steer clear of privileging one factor over any other as being sufficient for such a complicated shift in global industrial and political power. Alex Anievas and Kerem Nisancioglu attribute the Great Divergence to the capital that European states acquired through the pillaging of American raw

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[1] Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 17, 105, 108, 122.
[2] Ellen Meiskins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, 68, 77.

materials, chiefly precious metals, putting them on par with the larger Asian economies of the pre-modern capitalist period, then using the upward trajectory of their industry and capital to outpace and pillage the capital of the Asian states (which eventually led to total domination, such as by the British of India).[3]

The Middle East, like other regions outside of Western Europe, was relegated to being a cog in the Western capitalist machine without considerable political or economic autonomy. This process is the subject of interest from many scholars, who evaluated it from a variety of angles. Karl Marx wrote on the subject of integration of a non-Western region, India, into the Western dominated capitalist economy and British control in his 1853 essay "On Imperialism in India." Though not considered a part of the Middle East, Marx's understanding of the world capitalist path to hegemony is useful for a political economy study applicable to all of the world's regions. Marx contends that it was not the collapse of Indian public infrastructure and imposition of British rule over the subcontinent that were unique negative consequences of the new European imperialism; rather, the importation of the world capitalist market through its specific needs and British productive technologies disrupted the pre-existing link between agricultural (rural) and manufacturing (urban) sectors, causing a major tear in the fabric of Indian society.[4] Furthermore, Marx illustrates that the sucking of raw materials away from India for more efficient production in the mills of England eroded the village practice of weaving and spinning cloth, interrupting village life and hierarchies as well as urban manufacturing practices.[5] Marx closes by decrying the original social structure of Indian villages and states as condemnable examples of "Oriental despotism" (a term used first by Montesquieu) that, even as it should be mourned the way that

[3]Alex Anievas and Kerem Nisancioglu. How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism., 248, 262.
[4] Karl Marx, "On Imperialism in India," 655-56.
[5] Ibid, 657.

capitalism tore across the landscape, is not a better system.[6] Marx, with some degree of

effectiveness, demonstrates the general effect of the industrial revolution, imperialism, and

capitalism as it was imposed upon the non-Western regions of the world. Where Marx obviously

enters unacademic territory is his dismissal of non-Western indigenous social and economic

structures as being marked by an "Oriental despotism;" ascribing a pejorative to economies and

societies is both simplistic and erroneous. It ignores the complexity of pre-imperialist economic

structures and relations with other geographies, which later scholarship would illustrate in depth.

Roger Owen responds to Marx and to the other Orientalists in his 1972 text "Egypt and

Europe: From French Expedition to British Occupation." In the spirit of Marx, Owen

summarizes the process of 19th century world capitalist expansion into the non-West: "the

colonisation of an African or Asian territory was preceded by a breakdown of local political and

social institutions resulting from a period of enforced contact with the European economy."

Owen does not neglect to condemn the term "Oriental despotism" common to Marxist

literature's characterization of the Egyptian state.[7] Owen describes the industrialization, state

centralization, and reformist efforts of autonomous Egyptian governor Muhammad (or Mehmet)

Ali, which had the effect of pulling European creditors, capital, and business interests into Egypt,

reducing both the ability of the government to effectively administer itself, and subordinating

Egypt to dependence on European markets and moneys, which would prove disastrous.[8] Owen

points to the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention of 1838 as the beginning of the end for

Egypt's economic and political autonomy; classes (or interest groups) in Egypt, including

landowners, bureaucrats, the Ottoman ruling class, and foreigners who came to benefit from

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[6] Ibid, 658.
[7] Roger Owen, "Egypt and Europe: From French Expedition to British Occupation," 197, 209.
[8] Ibid, 200-202.

Egypt's definitive union with the world capitalist economy, were in some way subordinated to the European economy. This process escalated when Egypt went bankrupt in 1875 and the European creditors (mainly the British and French governments) scrambled to secure their interests, culminating in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.[9] Owen's account, especially as it pertains to the efforts of Mehmet Ali to industrialize and modernize the Egyptian state and its economy, demonstrates a cruel irony that is characteristic of reformist efforts by Middle Eastern polities. It was the failure of Egypt to modernize without considerable strain on its society and its inability to overcome the growing pains of an expanded military and bureaucracy that allowed European creditors to take advantage of Egypt. From there, the British and French saw Egypt, and the leverage they secured through their financing, as a realm for geopolitical competition. This is a strong thesis that links to Marx's own understanding of the British imperial expansion into India as proceeding by European capitalism; this was a story that played out across the world at different times and with different degrees of subordination.

Bryan S. Turner also responds to Orientalism in his "Ethnicity, Social Class and the Mosaic Model." The mosaic model refers to the Orientalist understanding that Islamic society was heterogenous by religion, tribal structure, and geography (city elites versus rural elites) in a way that led to a weak, inferior social fabric, and a political system prone to despotism.[10] Turner first discusses the differing strands of the mosaic model as it relates to Oriental despotism in Marx and Weber, the latter coming to the conclusion that the feudal model of expansion leads to acquisition of "booty," which pays for the state military and bureaucracy so that landlords could carry about state functions without the need to collect as much in taxes from peasants; the failure

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[9] Ibid, 203-208.
[10] Bryan S. Turner, Marx and the End of Orientalism (1978), 40.

of the empire to expand weakened this system.[11] Another problem would arise in Weber's view as surpluses were primarily invested in Islamic properties (*waqf*) for religious reasons (indicating non-capitalist spirit) and not into a merchant bourgeoisie, leading only religious minorities to be merchants.[12] That European states never built churches or invested in the architecture and the arts is simply incorrect, and this did not strictly further profits, likewise Islamic states should not be criticized for caring about their culture. Turner then engages with a study and criticism of other critiques against the mosaic theory and against culturalist Marxism, including studies on the modernizing role of the Egyptian military on the social structure and economy as a middle class, the similarities in ruling classes in Europe and the Arab world in that they both extracted surpluses from international trade in the pre-capitalist period (which invalidates the Marxist categories of feudal classes), and the integration of autonomous rural landowners into the international economy at the expense of Ottoman state functionality.[13] The process of world market integration by way of the wealthy and powerful class looking to expand its revenue is obviously less coercive than the Egyptian state's desire to fight peripheralization, though the result was the same – accepting subordination or attempting to fight it would end in European economic and/or political domination as far as the Middle East was concerned. Turner does an effective job in recontextualizing the heterogeneity of Ottoman society, instead of strictly being a reason for degradation, as simply a matter of fact in which the classes and peoples interacted in a certain way in the economic and political sphere.

Hanna Batatu, a Marxist himself, diverges from the traditional Marxist line that class analysis is not applicable in a study of Middle Eastern political economy for the reason that any

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid, 45-46.
[13] Ibid, 48-51.

given Middle Eastern society is too diverse for there to be the existence of classes, and to defend

his disagreement he critically engages with classes as he conceives them in Iraq in his work "The

Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements in Iraq." The steps in which Batatu

accomplishes this task goes as follows: he first defends the understanding of class not just as

those with property and those without but with upper and lower strata, as well as the fact that a

class is both not always a concrete and conscious unit but exists as evidenced by class

conditioned behavior, as was the case in Iraq in which the landless peasant was aware of the

disparity between themselves and the landowning shaikh.[14] Batatu does not explicitly disagree

with the fact that classes, as they are conceived of in Marxism, did not exist in previous centuries

of Iraq's history, but sees the religious, social, and political divisions that existed in urban Iraq

during the Ottoman period formed what would, by the 20th century, come to constitute coherent

classes with distinct economic and political characteristics.[15] As a result of exchange of Iraq's

integration into the world capitalist economy and the subsequent reforms, state centralization,

and social changes, private property came to be more politically and socially salient (as well as

more widespread than just in urban Iraq), a change which Batatu posits constituted the founding

of a semi-unified landowning class in Iraq in spite of the geography's diversity,[16] thereby

invalidating the classical Marxist line that class does not fit into economic analysis of the Middle

East. This brushes against Marx's belief that capitalism destroyed non-Western societies; Batatu

describes a process in which global capitalism did have social consequences but not outside of

structures and groups that already existed, in that new group identifications were formed out of

existing ones. Where this analysis does not stray from the Marxist line is in the understanding

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[14] Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements in Iraq (1978), 6-8.
[15] Ibid, 9-11.
[16] Ibid, 11-12.

that capitalism had uniquely modernizing and notable impacts on local economy, in that interaction with the global economy did not have class consequences until the era of imperialism and that it was capitalism that facilitated the creation of classes as they are understood in the Marxist school.

Immanuel Wallerstein, arguably the founder of the world systems analysis school of political economy, was also curious as to the story of the Middle East's (Ottoman) integration into the world capitalist economy. Wallerstein's understanding of the world system differentiates conceptually with the idea of the empire system, in that trade before the world system integrated a region would be largely luxury whereas a subordinated part of the world system would trade on a much larger scale in an interdependent ecosystem, and this was the relationship of the Ottoman Empire to the European system at the middle of the second millennium.[17] Wallerstein contends, through the writings of other academics, that the Ottoman economy was incorporated into the European world system by the 17th or 18th centuries, when raw materials were siphoned out of the provinces into Europe and, by the 19th century, European finished goods were sold in return which ruined Ottoman craft production and related the Ottoman Empire to a "peripheral" role in the world system.[18] One of Wallerstein's theories as to why the Ottoman Empire was peripheralized in the capitalist economy as opposed to other empires bordering the original European sphere, such as Russia, was that the Ottoman Empire's provinces were extremely geographically accessible for European capitalists to exploit.[19] This hypothesis was the most compelling in my view for several reasons, but to name one, because it strays from Orientalism in that it does not push forward a critique of the Ottoman Empire on the basis of heterogeneity;

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[17] Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire and the Capitalist World Economy: Some Questions for Research," 390, 392.
[18] Ibid, 396, 398.
[19] Ibid, 398.

the Russian Empire was extremely heterogeneous yet was not integrated and peripheralized like the Ottoman Empire was, and its lands served a far less geostrategic value to a European state with a global empire to defend than the Ottoman Empire, with its territory in Egypt and its control over the Red and Arabian coastlines. The Ottoman Empire was also extremely coastal, which besides for geostrategic reasons, makes it far closer and more accessible to Europeans than Russia's remote, inland, and cold territory. The world systems framework serves a valuable model when dealing with questions of political economy and the pre-capitalist period, though it would take a deeper analysis of class and its interaction with the world system to make a fully convincing argument for world systems analysis as a hypothesis for the process of the Middle East's integration into the capitalist system.

Huri Islamoglu-Inan wrote a 1987 text recontextualizing Ottoman history within a world systems framework and in contrast to the Orientalist theory of Ottoman political and economic systems, which stressed an inherent backwardness and simplicity Marx called "Oriental Despotism." Islamoglu-Inan, inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein, summarizes the new perspective as aiming to "challenge the ahistorical and dichotomous views of world history and seeks to place the historical development … in the context of a 'singular transformation' process – that of the European world-capitalism system."[20] In other words, the integration of the Middle East into the world market was not a function of the development of modern international capitalism as much as a truth of history for considerably longer, as research would indicate. Islamoglu-Inan examines the divergent analyses within the school of thought which include class reductionism, study of political institutions, among other sources for a complete understanding of the Ottoman Empire within the larger world system.[21] Islamoglu-Inan posits that the relevant area of study

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[20] Huri Islamoglu-Inan, "Introduction: 'Oriental Despotism' in World-System Perspective," 2.
[21] Ibid, 8-9.

when it comes to Ottoman political economy are markets and trade, which linked the rural economy with the larger empire by cash, and was vulnerable to fluctuations given interactions with the European economy and global market in general, making it a valuable realm of study for a world systems analyst.[22] Islamoglu-Inan summarizes other world system-based narratives of the Ottoman Empire and its economy (in its multiple Middle Eastern and Balkan geographies), including a local capitalism in Egypt that interacted with and resisted global capitalist incursions during the pre-imperial period, research complicating the link between large estates for production and agriculture with peasant serfdom, the competition between Ottoman and British cotton and silk in the global market, and the importation of the Western wage system to the Ottoman Empire through European-managed ports.[23] Including this research gives a well-rounded view of world systems analysis as it pertains to the Ottoman Empire – analysis from many angles and sources of local structures and classes and their interaction with the global market and other societies. World systems analysis could do more to assimilate modernization theory, which can be academically dismissed compellingly, but practically, a considerable amount of economic policy in Middle Eastern nation-states were done with modernization in mind and had a considerable effect on peoples (and classes) in the region; this of course does not dispute the validity of world systems historical revisionism. Where world systems analysis could improve is an acknowledgement that local pressures often did subvert the pressures of the international market, which would not completely dismiss world systems analysis but rather measure it by the degrees of connection a local economy had to the European world capitalist economy, which objectively varied in different times and geographies (the Wallerstein-Stern debate reflects this issue).

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[22] Ibid, 10.
[23] Ibid, 13-14, 16, 18.

Islamoglu-Inan, in an earlier piece, criticized existing scholarship with Caglar Keyder in their 1977 piece "Agenda for Ottoman History." They first hit back at Gibb and Bowen for hypocrisy regarding the failure of "Oriental despotism" to explain high points of Islamic civilizations, as well as criticizing Lewis for failing to situate the Ottoman Empire in relation to the global economy,[24] a criticism in the spirit of Wallerstein. They then proposed the term "Asiatic mode of production" to refer to the Ottoman economic system, which in their conception meant the arrangement "in which the agricultural producer is a free peasant and his surplus is appropriated in the form of taxes by the state;" they furthered this conception through the analysis of different classes, producers, and state organs and their interrelation over a diverse geography.[25] An example of this is the *sipahi* in the earlier Ottoman years, as they were awarded surpluses in the form of land rights while acting as judicial and legal (and military) agents of the state in its provinces.[26] In this vain, Islamoglu-Inan and Keyder attribute the decline in state power and revenue to the transition of the revenue colleting class to the tax farmers, who did not perform the same state ideological and judicial powers as the *sipahi*, as well as the further autonomy of the collectors leading to what could be called "feudalism" of the tax-farmer peasant relationship in Ottoman Anatolia; this occurred in tandem with the rise of commercialized production that oriented the Ottoman Empire into the world capitalist economy as a peripheral player.[27] This argument is oddly similar to Weber's understanding of class interaction, though Weber's analysis was marred by subjectivity and culturalism. This text embodies the spirit of the world systems analysis to a degree, evaluating the Ottoman system as its own sphere of gravity (though not without trade relations with states to its East and West) and examining internal

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[24] Huri Islamoglu-Inan and Caglar Keyder, "Agenda for Ottoman History," 34, 36.
[25] Ibid, 37, 39-40.
[26] Ibid, 38-39.
[27] Ibid, 49, 51.

pressures as a reason for the ability of the world capitalist economy to more easily subordinate the Ottoman economy to a peripheral status. The class analysis, as it relates to state power, and the dynamics of the "Asiatic" system as it relates to the world capitalist economy demonstrates a considerable academic leap from Marx's "Oriental despotism" – to a real Middle Eastern political economy.

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An Oriental Acropolis:
Classics as a Liminal Space Between East and West

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In the heart of Berlin stands the Altar of Pergamon: a roughly 115-foot wide, 110-foot deep altar[1] dedicated to the Greek god Zeus. The frieze on the altar depicts a battle between the gods and giants, which modern scholars named "gigantomachy," to reflect the battle as it appeared in Hesiod's *Theogony*. In the 2nd-century BCE, King Eumenes II commissioned the altar to be constructed atop of the acropolis of Pergamon to commemorate victory over invading "barbarians," who were presumably from Gaul.[2] In 1871, thousands of years after the altar's construction, Karl Humann, a citizen of Wilhelmian Prussia, discovered some of its fragments while surveying land for the Turkish government. Soon after, the German government obtained permission from Turkey to excavate the rest of the altar, and the pieces were shipped off to Berlin.[3]

In the following years, the altar's scale and detail impressed scholars of the classical world and of the Orient. In an 1882 letter to a friend in Basel, art historian Jacob Buckhardt registered awe, describing the altar as "unsuspected stored up Greek energy of the Greek sensibility and of Greek art."[4] Johann Adolf Overbeck, a professor of archeology in Leipzig, echoed Buckhardt's observations and wrote that "a work of such scope, dynamicism, and complete technical mastery … was a totally unexpected phenomenon … that caught everyone by surprise and swept [them] off [their] feet."[5] Of course, Overbeck and Buckhardt's senses of shock could be attributed to the impressive size and detail of the altar; however, both men were writing at a time in which German national identity had strong ties to notions of classical Greece. In contrast to an uncivilized Orient, the newly formed German empire was to become "die Griechen der Neuzeit."[6]

During the 19th century, European scholars of antiquity, including Overbeck, tended to believe that Greek culture became contaminated as it traveled into Asia Minor during the Hellenistic age. Heinrich Brunn, a professor of classics in Munich, subscribed to this view and in the context of Pergamon, said, "under Eumenes [II], art corresponds to Asian rhetoric … that explains why in spite of the surface agitation of the scenes represented in the Pergamon sculptures and the excitement these arouse in us, our deepest feelings are so little touched by them."[7] The altar's status as a blend of Hellenistic and Asian art and culture confused scholars such as Buckhardt, Overbeck, and Brunn, who felt the need to separate a 'civilized Occident' from a 'barbaric Orient.' The altar of Pergamon, with its history of Western "barbarians" and influences of Greek mythology, denies this interpretation, however, as it stands as proof of a liminal — if existent at all — border between the classical Greeks and the so-called Orient.

The continued emphasis on classical Greece and Rome as the birthplace of Western civilization perpetuates the myth of a separate and contained Orient. In

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[1] "Pergamonmuseum," Staatlicher Museen zu Berlin, Accessed December 6, 2021, https://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/pergamonmuseum/home/.

[2] Lionel Gossman, "Imperial Icon: The Pergamon Altar in Wilhelminian Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 3 (2006): 554, https://doi.org/10.1086/509148.

[3] Gossman, "Imperial Icon," 554.

[4] Ibid, 551.

[5] Ibid, 554.

[6] Ibid, 553.

[7] Ibid, 564.

recent years, scholars such as Edward Said, Martin Bernal, and Suzanne Marchand have worked to dismantle the problematic relationship between classics and Oriental studies in the West; however, the status of both academic fields remains uncertain.

Defining the Orient

The term 'Orient' connotes a European looking east. It is a term primarily of spatial, but also of cultural, religious, and intellectual relations. In his field-defining book *Orientalism*, Edward Said wrote, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing; in a sense it had happened, its time was over."[8] Said placed the invention of the Orient in antiquity, by which he meant Ancient Greece and Rome. Since then, he argued, the Orient came to encompass the totality of European views toward the East. Said also acknowledged the binary that the term created: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'."[9] Further, he claimed that this "style of thought" — that is, Orientalism — was not an "inert fact of nature"[10] but rather a relationship of power that gives "positional superiority" to the West.[11]

Because perspectives on the East change with each scholar in each epoch, the definition of the term 'Orient' must allow for flexibility. For this reason, I define the Orient here as a perceived East, towards which Western (European and American) scholarship is directed. Even this definition suggests a stable relationship between a distinct West and a distinct east, which is a misconception that is contained within the term 'Orient' itself.

In recent decades, the terms 'Orient' and 'Oriental' have come under more scrutiny as products of European imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries; however, Orientalism has a much deeper past. In fact, according to Marchand, "there never seems to have been a time during which Europeans did not want to learn about Eastern cultures."[12] Through observations of approaches to classics and the Orient over time, this paper aims to dismantle conceptions of a classical origin of the East/West binary that Said's notion of Orientalism aided in creating.

Classical Perceptions of the East

While historians and classical scholars frequently — and oftentimes rightly — present the Ancient Greeks and Romans as highly ethnocentric, not all

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[8] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 1.

[9] Ibid, 2.

[10] Ibid, 4.

[11] Ibid, 7.

[12] Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Racem and Scholarship* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

Greeks and Romans had the same attitude towards the Eastern 'other.' In his book, *Homer's Turk*, Jerry Toner pointed out that there was never a "fixed point of comparison" between the Mediterranean and the East, even during the classical era.

If one compares the works of well-known ancient Greek and Roman authors, it is clear that each of these authors has a different perspective on what later scholars would call the Orient. Toner cited Xenophon as a Greek author who admired the Persian Empire and who saw Cyrus as a role model and as a rational leader.[13] Toner also mentioned Aeschylus' *Persae*, which Edward Said dubbed the first Orientalist work helping to solidify the concrete idea of the Greeks opposing the Barbarians; however, Toner acknowledged that Aeschylus wrote during the Persian invasions of the 5th-century BCE — a hostile context that would have promoted a binary between the Greeks and the Persians.[14] Said's characterization of Aeschylus' play as a superficial representation of the Orient rather than as a "natural depiction" of it[15] also contributed to perceptions of a living East/West binary during the classical period. Although Aeschylus oversimplified Eastern cultures, he tried to make his characters relatable to a Greek audience. He therefore strengthened while simultaneously breaking any divide between the Greeks and the Orient. Given the complexity of his portrayal of Greeks and Persians, it would be incorrect to portray Aeschylus as the original orientalist.

Further, the Greek word βάρβαρος[16], which scholars frequently point to as a reflection of an ethnocentric attitude among the Greeks, does not often appear in Ancient Greek discourse of the East.[17] The misconceptions surrounding the frequency of the Greek βάρβαροι, along with Xenophon's admiration for Persia, show that the Greeks had diverse perspectives on the East that were not limited to ideas of barbarism. It also shows that the classical idea of the uncivilized barbarian could be projected westward as well as eastward. The construction of the Pergamon Altar after a victory over the Gauls in the west, who many in the kingdom of Pergamon viewed as barbarians, further shatters the binary of the Greek and the Eastern 'other.'

Martin Bernal, a historian of China known for his ground-breaking, though highly-controversial work, *Black Athena*, put forth that Ancient Greece itself was a product of eastern influences. To illustrate this point, he pointed to Herodotus, who he claims had a genuine interest in understanding non-Greek cultures. Bernal quoted Herodotus as writing in his *Histories*, "the Phoenicians who came with Kadmos … introduced into Greece, after their settlement in the country, a number of accomplishments, of which the most important was writing, an art till then, I think, unknown to the Greeks."[18] Herodotus' account indicates a level of respect for the Phoenicians, to whom he gives credit for the development of Greek identity and culture. Bernal also pointed out that Herodotus refused to

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[13] Jerry Toner, *Homer's Turk: How Classics Shaped Ideas of the East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 15.

[14] Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 15.

[15] Said, *Orientalism*, 21.

[16] Translates to "barbarian" or "foreigner."

[17] Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 15.

[18] Herodotus in Martin Bernal, *Black Athena*, Vol. 1 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 98-99.

admit that the similarities between Greek and Egyptian culture were coincidental: "had that been so," Herodotus wrote, "our rites would have been more Greek in character and less recent in origin."[19] Herodotus' acknowledgement of Greece's cultural indebtedness to Eastern cultures, accompanying his portrayal of an irrational Xerxes, shows a conflicted view of the Orient. Further, Herodotus' separation of the Egyptians, the Phoenecians and the Persians (even the individual rulers of Persia) suggests that he did not view the East as a constant and monolithic entity. It is not until the 18th century that scholars such as Voltaire cited 480 BCE as the beginning of western history and placed emphasis on the chapters that dealt with the Persian War.[20]

Despite his perspectives of Egypt and Persia from a more physically 'western' position, Herodotus' view of the East remained flexible and at times, contradictory. For example, Herodotus included individualized portrayals of Persian rulers such as Cyrus and his successors, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, while also focusing on a broader Persian character and opinion.[21] Although Herodotus could have made generalizations about Persia from his own perspective as a Greek, he made an effort to understand the cultures and people he wrote about. At the same time, Herodotus' prejudices towards those he spoke to seeped into his narrative. For instance, he consistently portrayed Xerxes as wrathful and uncompromising — a reflection of the overall Greek perceptions of Persian brutality. In one description, Xerxes had the body of the oldest son of Pythius of the Lydians cut in half because Pythius asked that his son stay in the city rather than join Xerxes in battle. Xerxes' troops proceeded to walk between the two halves of the corpse.[22] In another scene, Herodotus depicted Croesus as calling the Persians "unruly" and "without wealth."[23] While this is a stereotype, considering that Croesus was the King of Libya, it would be unfair to view his attitude towards the Persians as Orientalist.

Even beyond Herodotus, Homer, Aeschylus, and Xenophon, Ancient Greek and Roman receptions of the East were never fixed. Yet, the diversity in the perspectives of these authors alone left an East that was undefined and open to interpretation for later scholars studying classical writings. According to Toner, "the relationship between classics and the East was never stable, and indeed it was this very instability that made classics such a useful resource for writers seeking to portray the Orient to their audiences back home."[24] As Europe moved into the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and onward, these ancient texts took on meanings that their authors could no longer control; therefore, in the following epochs, the perception of a solid boundary between Orient and Occident took hold.

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[19] Herodotus in Bernal, *Black Athena*, 100.

[20] Suzanne Marchand, "Herodotus and the Idea of Western Civilization," (lecture, Freie Universität Berlin, October 18, 2022).

[21] Rosaria Vignolo Munson, "Who Are Herodotus' Persians?" *The Classical World* 102, no. 4 (2009): 457, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40599878.

[22] Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. George Rawlinson (Digireads.com Publishing, 2016), 7.38-7.39.

[23] Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1.89.

[24] Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 11-12.

The European Invention of the Oriental 'Other'

From the Middle Ages onward, biblical scholarship motivated much of European interest in the Middle East and Asia. In 1907, Indologist Hermann Brunnhofer said, "the Bible is the book through which the world of the West, even in times of the most melancholy isolation, remains persistently tied to the Orient."[25] To Brunnhofer, the East and the West, although separate, remained connected through Christianity's Eastern origins. Before the Bible reached Western Europe, it was translated into Ancient Greek then into Latin, allowing classical Greece and Rome to maintain their positions as an intermediary between modern Western Europe and the Orient. Of course, the perceived threat of Islam, with its presumed barbary, despotism, and lustfulness, also provided Christian scholars motivation to study the East.[26] Accompanying Ancient Greece and Rome, the Bible also transgressed the false boundaries between East and West.

While the Bible continued to hold importance in European scholarship of the Orient, other motivations emerged during the Enlightenment as European imperialist endeavors and pursuits of more secular, 'rational' subjects grew. Throughout the following centuries, Orientalism moved beyond Near-Eastern biblical lands to India, Anatolia, and the Far East[27] and took on far more scientific characteristics, outside of the Bible.

While it is difficult to summarize individual motives for studying Eastern cultures, Marchand proposed that "what enabled the forming of new canons of scholarship and ultimately, though gradually, the breaking with traditional authorities and texts was unquestionably Europe's new economic and political status in the world."[28] Marchand also claimed that the 18th century saw a simultaneous neo-classical and Oriental renaissance, and scholars such as C.G. Heyne and Friedrich Schlegel contributed to scholarship in both fields. Although many scholars saw the boundary between East and West as firm, the coexistence of classical and Oriental studies breached that boundary. For example, in 1786 William Jones recognized Sanskrit as the ancestor of Greek, Latin, and modern European languages,[29] therefore emphasizing the similarities rather than the differences between classical Greece and Rome and the Orient. Despite the vague stance of the classics in relation to growing conceptions of an East/West binary, there was an idealizing stance among eighteenth and 19th-century scholars that the Orient, with its "simplicity, courage, charismatic leaders, and cultural autonomy," but also its effeminacy and barbarity, served as a foil to an increasingly rational Europe.[30] To many researchers, the ancient Orient was to be looked down upon, but also a time and place to have nostalgia for as one might have been expected to have nostalgia for Ancient Greece or Rome.

One of the most important pieces of scholarship on classics in the Enlightenment period was Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman*

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[25] Brunnhofer in Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, xvii.
[26] Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 105.
[27] Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 15.
[28] Ibid, 92.
[29] Ibid, 15.
[30] Ibid, 54.

Empire (1776). From the opening lines, Gibbon demonstrated a feeling of nostalgia for the Roman empire: "In the second century of the Christian Era, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind."[31] The idea of "civilized" Romans also shines through this first sentence and suggests a less-civilized "portion of mankind" to coincide with it. Gibbon also demonstrated an uncertain boundary between the classical world and the Orient in his discussion of the perceived corruption of Greek and Latin:

> The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had long since been civilized and corrupted. They had *too* much taste to relinquish their language and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices after they had lost the virtues of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power.[32]

Although Gibbon upheld the idea of Greek superiority in the face of a "barbarian other" and the separation between Greek "civilization" and outside "barbarity," he also acknowledged that by the time Rome conquered Greece, Greece had come to occupy an uncertain space between barbarity and civilization. In coming to this conclusion, Gibbon strengthened the invented binary between East and West in the ancient world while also destroying it.

Gibbon ultimately fell into the trappings of his own time, in which the binary between East and West found strength in public discourse. Gibbon upheld stereotypes of the East as "barbaric" and of Ancient Greece and Rome as the epitome of Western civilization.

> Our education in the Greek and Latin schools may have fixed in our minds a standard of exclusive taste; and I am not forward to condemn the literature and judgment of nations, of whose language I am ignorant. Yet I *know* that the classics have much to teach, and I *believe* that the Orientals have much to learn: the temperate dignity of style, the graceful proportions of art, the forms of visible and intellectual beauty, the just delineation of character and passion, the rhetoric of narrative and argument, the regular fabric of epic and dramatic poetry. The influence of truth and reason is of a less ambiguous complexion. The philosophers of Athens and Rome enjoyed the blessings, and asserted the rights of civil and religious freedom. Their moral and political writings might have gradually unlocked the fetters of eastern despotism, diffused a liberal spirit of enquiry and toleration, and encouraged the Arabian Sages to suspect that their caliph was a tyrant and their prophet and imposter.[33]

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[31] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Washington D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1800), 27.

[32] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* 34.

[33] Gibbon in Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 127-128.

In this passage, Gibbon reflected his own background as an English writer during the height of British imperialism and the prevailing anti-Muslim sentiment. He also strengthened the false views of the "Orientals" as uneducated and in need of Western culture, which he claims began with Ancient Greece and Rome.

During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, upper-class Europeans considered classics fundamental for a complete education. Despite differences in individual education, Toner pointed out that it was difficult for scholars to think outside of the education they were brought up with.[34] For example, Toner referenced George Sandys, who, in 1610, compared Ottoman Janissaries to "something in antiquity" and made allusions to Homer's Paris. For Sandys, "the Turk could be fully comprehended, and indeed made fully comprehensible, only as part of a landscape that stretched back to a mythical past."[35] Classics provided Sandys with a direction from which to approach the Ottoman Empire but at the same time limited his point of view to the narrow context of Ancient Greece and Rome. Once again, European reception of the classics bridged East and West while also fueling a fundamental sense of separation.

From the 17th century through the 19th century, classics served as an important entry point for Europeans who were interested in the Orient; however, the function of classics largely depended on the scholar. Even within each individual work, authors employed the mythic Greek and Roman past both to understand the East and to distance themselves from it.

From "The Orient" to "Orientalism"

In the decades following the Second World War, the study of the Orient faced its reckoning, and scholarship focused on Orientalism — or the historiography of the Orient — entered more frequently into academic circles. Many of the new outcries against Orientalism within the context of decolonization efforts challenged European hegemony. The most vocal critic of Orientalism was Said, who focused on Orientalism as a discourse and a "political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, us) and the strange (the Orient, the East, them)."[36] Scholars such as Anouar Abdel-Malek also criticized Orientalism as an ahistorical, imperialist tool.[37] Others such as Bryan S. Turner took a Marxist approach and considered Orientalism an "anachronism of the nineteenth-century imperial legacy." To abandon Orientalist perspectives, Turner argued, "the anthropological gaze should be directed towards the otherness of Western cultures to dislodge the privileged position of dominant Western cultures."[38]

Like their Orientalist predecessors, many scholars in Said's generation continued to link Orientalism with the classics. Said traced the myth of the Orient

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[34] Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 6.
[35] Ibid, 4.
[36] Said, *Orientalism*, 45.
[37] Anour Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," In *Orientalism: A Reader*, edited by A.L. Macfie (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 47-53.
[38] Bryan S Turner, "From Orientalism to Global Sociology" In *Orientalism: A Reader*, edited by A.L. Macfie (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 372-373.

back to Ancient Greece and cited figures such as Homer, Herodotus, and Aeschylus as the original perpetrators of Orientalism.[39] He did not, however, question their positions as existing within a loosely-formed boundary between perceived Occident and Orient. Nevertheless, Said was critical in prompting Western scholars to think critically about their relationship with the East.

Unlike other scholars who assumed a divide between Orient and Occident, Said acknowledged that both entities are constructed and said that the Orient is not "merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either."[40] In this questioning of the existence of such categories, Said allows for breaches in the binary thought pattern that accompanies it. Said does admit, however, that although the Orient and Occident are constructed, they can be made real:

> As both geographical and cultural entities — to say nothing of historical entities — such locales, regions, geographical sectors as the "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.[41]

While Said's assumptions that discourse about an Orient and Occident upholds their existence, he does not recognize that scholarship on the Orient was not a monolith. Rather, it was porous — one could travel through its holes, as I have shown with intellectuals such as Herodotus and Gibbon, to completely deconstruct the East/West binary. Nevertheless, Said prompted his readers to rethink the existence of an Orient.

While Said used Ancient Greece and Rome as the origin of Orientalism, Bernal denoted them as orientals themselves. He proposed a new method for studying classics that combines the narratives of Ancient Greece and Rome with those of the Middle East and Egypt, therefore denying European assumptions of primordial superiority in a Greek and Roman past. Bernal proposed two models for studying Ancient Greece: the "Aryan Model," which describes Greece as "essentially European or Aryan," and the "Ancient Model," which situates Greece "on the periphery of Egyptian and Semitic cultural area."[42] The "Aryan Model" was rooted in European prejudices towards the East that accompanied and framed 18th- and 19th-century imperialism and Orientalist scholarship.

Bernal advocated for a return to the "Ancient Model" with some revisions, including the recognition of northern influence on the development of Greek civilization.[43] In his criticism of the "Aryan Model," which continues to dominate Western perceptions of Ancient Greece, Bernal argued that, "the Ancient model had no 'internal' deficiencies, or weaknesses in explanatory power. It was overthrown for external reasons. For 18th- and 19th-century Romantics and

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[39] Said, *Orientalism,* 84, 21, and 52.
[40] Ibid*,* 4.
[41] Ibid, 5.
[42] Bernal, *Black Athena*, 1.
[43] Ibid, 2.

racists it was simply intolerable for Greece, which was seen not only as the epitome of Europe, but also as its pure childhood to have been the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites."[44] Bernal does not adequately address the progression of classical reception in post-renaissance Europe. Even his "Ancient" and "Aryan" models are too limiting to accurately describe European intellectual activity and ultimately feed a binary between the incorrect 'western' perspective and the eastern 'truth'. While he was correct in his assumption that most European classical scholars after the 19th century ignored the connections between Ancient Greece and the Near East, this certainly was not the case with all scholars. As Suzanne Marchand pointed out in a critique of *Black Athena*, "Bernal is certainly not alone in ignoring the interplay of external and internal forces on the study of the Ancient World."[45]

In their discussion about the relationship between the Near East and Greece, both Bernal and Said uphold their own sorts of east/west binaries. For Said, this binary begins with orientalism in Ancient Greece (which I have proven to be non-existent). Bernal places his binary in the European reception of the classical world (another misconception, given the coexistence of oriental scholars and classicists and the variety of individual European perspectives) .

Despite the contradictions in their arguments, Bernal and Said, joined by many other scholars, were instrumental in redefining the Orient and questioning European presumptions of the East and previous scholarship on the East. Their work in the 1970s and 1980s opened the possibility for future scholars to further deconstruct the imagined barrier between East and West and begin to investigate the space in between.

After Orientalism?

Forty-three years after the publication of Said's *Orientalism*, one might expect a slightly more deconstructed boundary between East and West than we currently have. Political turmoil in the Middle East — especially following the September 11 attacks in the United States — has further ostracized Europe and the United States. 21st-century prejudices of the Middle East and of Islam as 'barbaric,' 'authoritarian,' and 'violent' reflect the European perspectives in 18th- and 19th-century texts.

Although there has not been a large-scale breakdown of the concept of the Orient, scholarship has tended in that direction. For example, there have been ongoing discussions as historians, anthropologists, and philologists correct flaws in the works of Said and Bernal and fill in missing information. The main flaws that I see in the work of Said and Bernal are the lacking commentary on the modern reception of the connection between near eastern studies and classical studies and the scholarly progress that modern "orientalists" made. This is a gap that Suzanne Marchand fills in her books *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* and *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany,*

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[44] Bernal, *Black Athena*, 2.
[45] Suzanne Marchand and Anthony Grafton. "Martin Bernal and His Critics." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 5, no. 2 (1997): 13.

1750-1970. In these works, Marchand rejects Said's Foucauldian model of discourse and instead prioritizes the particulars of the German intellectual environment by focusing on specific scholars. According to Marchand, "Like 'Hellas,' the 'Orient' and 'Germandom' were by no means fixed, stable concepts whose interrelationship, once demarcated in the late eighteenth century, remained preserved in imperialist or racist amber."[46] Unlike Bernal and Said, who largely ignore the instabilities of these ideas, Marchand confronts them. Her approach should be used as a model which preserves the authenticity of both classics and near eastern studies while also bringing the binary between modern understanding of Ancient Greece and the "Orient" into question.

Back to Pergamon: The Question of Memory

Dismantling the east/west binary in our own thinking about Ancient Greece and the near east will be difficult, but will ultimately help us gain a better understanding of the history surrounding it.

Returning to the Pergamon Altar can be useful in reorienting us to the past. The last few decades have seen discussion regarding the repatriation of artifacts in museums to their countries of origin. Many of the arguments for retention of these objects are made on the basis of "limited resources and political instability,"[47] such as in Syria and Iraq, which once again shows prevailing European ideas of non-European countries as dangerous. Despite these arguments, there have been greater efforts to work with countries from which the artifacts originate. Overall, the idea of repatriation has grown in favor as a tool for strengthening international relationships.[48] While there have been no discussions regarding the return of the Pergamon Altar to Turkey — logistical reasons being partly to blame — the Pergamonmuseum adopted a zero-acquisitions policy going forward. The adoption of this policy demonstrates changing attitudes regarding the ethics of European acquisitions of non-European antiquities.[49]

The Pergamon Altar carries with it memories of a mythological past, a Hellenistic past, a Western past, an Eastern past, a Turkish past — and, as it continues to stand in Berlin — a German past. Perhaps the altar's coexisting memories serve as a representation of Ancient Greece and the entire field of classics as being both here and there, whether that be the Orient or the Occident, and nowhere at all.

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[46] Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), xxii.

[47] Jack Green, "Museums as Intermediaries in Repatriation," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 5, no. 1 (2017): 7, https://doi.org/10.5325/jeasmedarcherstu.5.1.0006.

[48] Green, "Museums as Intermediaries," 7.

[49] Green, "Museums as Intermediaries," 12.

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Han-Nationalism Throughout the Ages

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Introduction

Beginning in the 1980s, a trend of traditional studies known as "*guo xue*," (国学) meaning national studies, proliferated in the wake of socioeconomic changes in contemporary China.[1] In particular, it encompassed the revival of Confucianism, giving rise to related activity such as the establishment of "national studies institutes" (国学院) and "Han study centers" (汉学中心). This intellectual trend and related activities are referred to as the "national studies craze" (国学热).[2] In the 2010s, the trend gained new traction with the aid of internet and media technologies. Activities like adorning the "*Han fu*" (汉服) historical dress of the Han people that was designed to reflect Confucian scholars' aspirations towards rituals, music, and moralistic ideals - and learning classical poetry and literature through television shows like *Lecture Room (*百家讲坛*), Chinese Poetry Conference (*中国诗词大会*), and Letter Alive (*见字如面*)* became immensely popular in urban China, especially among Chinese millennials.[3] The official response to the "national studies craze" has been generally positive. In 2014, Chinese president Xi Jinping remarked, "[the] learning of excellent Chinese traditional cultures is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation and a source of inspiration for the values of socialism."[4] Yet despite the atmosphere of enthusiasm, the legitimacy of "national studies" came under the critical scrutiny of Chinese historians and ethnic studies scholars. It is apparent that contemporary "national studies" have either consciously or subconsciously co-opted Han traditions and practices over other ethnic cultures that made up the social fabric of past and

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[1] Ao, Jia. *Guoxue Re Fangxing Wei Ai He Na Ban?* (国学热方兴未艾为哪般？) [the Difficult Rise of the National Studies Craze] (Ziyou Yazhou Diantai (自由亚洲电台), 27 Dec. 2018), 22–30.

[2] Chen Jiaming, *The National Studies Craze* (China Perspectives, 2011), 22-30.

[3] Leibold, James. *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet (* The China Quarterly, 2010), 539–559.

[4] Xi Jinping, *Speech in Commemoration of the 2,565th Anniversary of Confucius' Birth,* (US-China focus Library, 2014) http://library.chinausfocus.com/article-1534.html.

present China, thus reinforcing the idea of "Chinese-ness" as a Han-centric and exclusionary one. Historian James Leibold observes that Han-centricity is especially pervasive in the contemporary thoughts and speech of a segment of "increasingly vocal Chinese youth". In his study, *Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet*, he argues that the expression of Han-centric Chinese pride and patriotism has much to tell us about the complex nature of identity formation in post-reform China—it reflects a complicated mix of "anxiety", "frustration", "a sense of powerlessness" and "dislocation".[5]

A parallel can be seen between the contemporary "national studies craze" and the late-Qing revolutionary discourse. At the turn of the 20th century, the articulation of Han supremacism was most notable during China's transition from empire to nation-state, when a new generation of Chinese elites adapted the Western concept of race into the Chinese discourse.[6] Revolutionary intellectuals like Zou Rong (邹容), Liang Qi Chao (梁启超) and Sun Yat Sen (孙中山) were at the forefront of the anti-manchurism and modernization movements. Their cause inevitably entailed the procedure of othering the Manchus, which simultaneously reconfigured a pure Han ethnic identity.[7] After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, young revolutionaries were inspired by their newly possessed sense of racial awareness and meted out vengeance against the Manchu ethnic group, resulting in heavy casualties. Realizing the danger of Han-supremacism, the republican government began to merge Western notions of liberal pluralism with the Confucian discourse of cultural universalism to promote a more inclusive multi-ethnic society. The subsequent Communist regime took a similar stand: in 1953, Mao Zedong claimed that "Han chauvinism" (大汉主义) was ripe throughout the Party

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[5] Leibold, James, *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet* (The China Quarterly, 2010), 541.
6 Joniak-Luthi, *The Han: China's Diverse Majority* (University of Washington Press, 2015), 3-18.
[7] Leibold, James, *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet* (The China Quarterly, 2010), 543.

and among the masses, and needed to be resolutely stamped out.[8] Under the Mao era, traditional Confucianism was also labelled as feudalistic, conservative and an impediment to social progress. As such, it was subjected to organized criticism throughout the country. Yet, after the death of Mao and the end of his pervasive ideological presence, Confucianism was revitalized as a primary source of moral code and governing principle. Intellectual elites again mobilized the ancient Han ethnonym to create a sense of unity in the population and craft an image of authentic Chineseness that is memorable to the global audience.[9]

This paper seeks to contextualize the discursive terrain in which Han supremacism has been conceptualized and incubated. It compares the multiple resurgences of Han-centricity and Confucianism in the 1900s (late to post-Qing), 1980s (post-Mao) and 2010s (present day) respectively, and explores the reason for its continuity. The paper seeks to add nuance to the conventional wisdom, official narratives and assumptions that have guided popular discourse on present-day Chinese nationalism and ethnic problems, while presenting the diverse contemporary viewpoints on the latest "national studies craze". The methodology of the paper includes examining the writings of historical intellectual elites who have shaped the public discourse Chinese identity and racial politics, such as Zou Rong, Liang Qichao, Hu Shih and Sun Yat Sen and analyzing contemporary commentaries published through both formal and informal channels such as newspapers and social media. The paper argues that contemporary ethnic conflicts are a continuation of the post-Qing Han-nationalistic sentiments, which essentially stem from the Han population's feeling of anxiety and identity crisis.

From imperial to post-imperial Han ethnicity and nationhood

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[8] Mao Zedong, "Criticize Han chauvinism" in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Foreign Languages Press, 1977), Vol. 5, 87-88.

9 Song X, *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The Culture Craze" and New Confucianism" in New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403982414_4.

The Han Min Zu or Han Zu (汉族) translates as "Han nationality" or "Han ethnic group". It refers to the largest state-recognized ethnic group in China that makes up 91.5 percent of the total population.[10] In China today, Han Zu is officially recognized as the "core" of the Chinese multi-ethnic nation, surrounded by 55 "minor groups". Ironically, while the "minor groups" became the subject of various researches since the Min Zu Classification Project (民族识别) in the 1980s，the largest ethnic group – Han Zu - experienced limited attention from mainstream ethnic scholarship. Hitherto, the exact size, distribution and characteristics of the Han ethnic group remain a mystery. In scholar Peng Yong Jie (彭永捷)'s words: "the Han culture does not possess any unique features that is not shared by rest of great Zhong Hua nation" because is it "already the collective identity" of a hodgepodge of people, brought together by historical patterns of migrations and contemporary policies.[11]

Similar to the concept of whiteness in the United States, Han is constructed and institutionalized for varying purposes in different periods of Chinese history. The generally accepted view is that Han Chinese can trace their origin to the Hua Xia ethnic group, which took shape during the Shang and Zhou dynasties (21st–8th centuries BC) in the Central Plain region (中原).[12] Nonetheless, the geographical boundaries of Han during the Spring and Autumn Period were unstable because state institutions did not have the capacity to guard their lands to the degree possible in the modern and contemporary periods. As such, Han people melded together with the ethnic minorities during immigration, wars and conflicts. Moreover, territorial and lineage identities were more important than the Han ethnicity in the pre-modern

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[10] Joniak-Luthi, *The Han: China's Diverse Majority*, (University of Washington Press, 2015), 3-18.

[11] Leibold, James, *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet* (The China Quarterly, 2010), 549.

[12] Cioffi-Revilla C, Lai D, *War and Politics in Ancient China*, *2700 BC to 722 BC: Measurement and Comparative Analysis* (Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1995), 467–494.

tribal relationships and social organization.[13] To further complicate matters, the Han identity shared an indistinct relationship with other Chinese identities that originated from the same period, such as Zhong Hua (中华), Xia (夏), Hua (华), and Hua Xia (华夏), all of which can be used interchangeably to convey the meaning of "Chinese".[14] Collectively, these factors render the historical Han-ness ambiguous, flexibly, and poorly-institutionalized.

The concept of Han first emerged as a distinctive and institutionalized nationality, ethnicity or race identity during the first decade of the 20th century, during China's transition from empire to nation-state. During this period, a new generation of Chinese nationalist, famously led by the founder of Republic of China (ROC) Sun Yat Sen, adapted the Western concept of race into the Chinese discourse and reconfigured a pure Han identity that united their revolutionary cause.[15] Inspired by the history of revolutions in the West, the Chinese nationalists developed a heightened awareness of their own ethno-national identity. In Zou Rong's essay, *The Revolutionary Army*《革命军》, he opens his argument with the following lines:

The excessive rights given to the aristocrats, the harm done to the people's livelihood, the unauthorized increase of taxes...were the reasons why the English Parliament revolted against King Charles...the abandonment of the principle of the protection of the people, and unrestrained taxation were the reasons that French people ... did not flinch from violence and upheaval. A heavy tea tax, the forcible imposition of a printing tax without the consent of the legislative assembly...were the reasons that the Americans protested against the British...I do not mind

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[13] Joniak-Luthi, Agnieszka, *The Han "Minzu", Fragmented Identities, and Ethnicity,* (The Journal of Asian Studies, 2013), 849-871.

[14] Joniak-Luthi, *The Han: China's Diverse Majority*, (University of Washington Press, 2015), 3-18.

[15] Chow Kai-wing, "Imagining boundaries of blood," in Frank Dikitter (ed.), *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997), 34-52.

repeating: Domestically we are the slaves of the Manchus and we are suffering

from their abusive suppression."

与贵族重大之权利，害人民营业之生活...此英国议院所以不服查理王而倡革

命之原因也...大相悬殊，既失保民之道，而又赋敛无度，此法国志士仁人所

以不辞暴举逆乱之名。重征茶课，横加印税，不待立法院之承允...此美人所

以抗论于英人之前。吾不惜再三重申详言曰：内为满洲人之奴隶，受满洲

人之暴虐。"*16*

By drawing parallels between the famous Western revolutions - the anti-aristocratic English Revolution, French Revolution and the anti-colonial American Revolution - Zou underscores the notion that China was being governed by an alien race of the Manchus, just as how America was governed by British colonists who felt no remorse for their nameless subjects in the foreign land. Zou implies that the Manchus were no different from the exploitative aristocrats or colonizers, because their sole agenda was to "enslave" ("奴隶") and "abuse" ("暴虐"). This perception of a master-slave relationship gave rise to the conclusion that the goal of modernizing China necessarily entailed the overthrow of the Manchus and the establishment of a Han-Chinese nation state. Sun Yat Sen summarized this grand ambition in twelve characters in his rebellion slogan: Expel the Barbarians, Restore the Hua and Establish the Republic of China (驱除鞑虏，恢复中华，创立民国).[17] In Sun's revolutionary philosophy, the Han identity is exclusively possessed by the so-called civilized Hua Xia (华夏) people originating from the Central Plains who were former subjects of the Celestial empire and

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[16] Zou, Rong, and Jung Tsou, The Revolutionary Army (Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales 1968).

[17] Barabantseva, E, *From the Language of Class to the Rhetoric of Development: discourses of nationality and ethnicity in China* (Journal of Contemporary China, 2008) , 17(56), 565–589.

espousers of Confucianism. After the fall of the Celestial empire, the Hua Xia subjects were turned into an ethnic group. They embodied the spirit of the great Hua civilization, and are the rightful inhabitants of the modern Chinese territory. Vice versa, the non-Han person is an uncivilized alien who did not participate in the history of Chinese civilization in a significant and meaningful way.[18] As such, Zou Rong famously proclaimed that "中国为中国人之中国。我同胞皆须自认自己的汉种中国人之中国" China is the China of the Chinese. We compatriots should identify ourselves with the China of the Han Chinese.[19]

Zou Rong's work, *The Revolutionary Army* became the most successful piece of anti-Manchu propaganda in the revolutionary decade, and earned the honorary names of "The First Textbook of National Education" (国民教育之第一教科书) and "Oath of Human Right in Modern China" (中国近代《人权宣誓》).[20] His writing was effective because of its strong psychological appeal to the masses who were suffering from the turmoil of internal instability and foreign aggression in the late Qing-period. Zou's writing provided an assuring answer to the despondent population that all of China's 20th century problems can be attributed to the alien Manchu rulers. In doing so, he symbolically absolves the Han population of blame, while boasting their potential for achieving greatness if given the chance to rule:

The stain in the history of the country can be cleansed, your motherland's reputation is flying, and your independence flag is high above the clouds. The Liberty Bell has sounded in Yucheng, and your Independence Hall has been erected

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[18] Irgengioro, J, *China's National Identity and the Root Causes of China's Ethnic Tensions* (East Asia 35, 2018), 317–346.

[19] Zou, Rong, and Jung Tsou, *The Revolutionary Army* (Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales 1968).

[20] Lu Shan, *Zhenluo Huangguan De Diyi Sheng Jinglei* (震落皇冠的第一声惊雷) [The first roar of thunder that shook away the crown] (The 1911 Revolution Museum, 2014), http://www.1911museum.cn/view/609.html

in the centre, and your monument is towering above the high wind, and your god

of freedom is pointing to the sky with his left hand, and the earth with his right,

appearing before you.

尔国历史之污点可洗，尔祖国之名誉飞扬，尔之独立旗已高标于云霄，尔之

自由钟已哄哄于禹城，尔之独立厅已雄镇于中央，尔之纪念碑已高耸于高

风，尔之自由神已左手指天，右手指地，为尔而出现

Zou's writing left a profound impact on the public's identification with modern ideas of ethnicity, nationality and race. His narrative of the imperial Han race (皇汉人种) being the descendants of the divine Huang Di (黄帝神明之子孙) adds a sense of prestige, formality and sacredness to the otherwise uncharacterized Han identity. Simultaneously, his victimizes the Hans as slaves suffering incredible humiliation under the Manchu barbarians - "*My compradors today are straddled by the Manchu thieves like ox and horses of the herdsman"* （今我同胞受治于贼满人之胯下，是即牛马之受治干牧人也）. Zou's description of the Hans 'misery contrasts starkly against the glorious Han history of Huang Di's era, and evokes a strong feeling of vengeance, desire of restoration and patriotism to the Han-Chinese nation.

Unfortunately, Zou and Sun's revolutionary narrative went a bit too far with the othering of Manchus. The use of highly derogatory names, such as "Despicable nomads" (游牧贱族) cultivated a sense of hatred against not only the Manchu Qing-government, but also all the other non-Han ethnic groups and nomadic tribes of China. In 1991, the Xin Hai revolutionaries launched mass massacres against the Manchus across China, slaughtering the entire 20000 Manchu population in Xi'an.[21] Realizing the danger of Han-supremacist, anti-

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[21] Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, *1861–1928,* (University of Washington, 2000), 190.

Manchu nationalism, the republican elites attempted to turn back to more neutral interpretations of national identity, such as Liang Qichao's (梁启超) "Grand Nationalism" (大民族主义) that advocated for the incorporation of the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, Miao and Tibetan into one minzu, and Hu Shih's (胡适) "Liberal Pluralism" (自由多元主义) that was inspired by John Rawl's "Political Liberalism" (政治自由主义), which promoted the equality of rights and opportunity for members of the society with different ethno-cultural background.[22]

Overall, the Han-supremacist narrative of the late-Qing nationalist revolution was born out of a necessity to other the Manchus and establish a clear binary between the aggressor and the victim. Emotionally-charged anti-Manchu rhetoric appeal to the public because it exploited the sentiments of anti-establishmentarianism, disillusionment and frustration at the Qing government's inefficiencies and the general problems that China was facing. Although this narrative was effective in rallying mass support for the revolution, it produced a vicious side-effect of demonizing the non-Han ethnic groups and sowed the seed of discord for later episodes of inter-ethnic tensions. These seeds of discord were combated in the Mao era, when a more inclusive socialist identity was favored over ethnic identities.

Post-socialist Confucianism and the Search for Roots

Mao's China went through a period of relative decline in Han-centricity and exclusion of minority ethnic groups, because the communist-socialist ideology promoted "equality de facto among ethnic groups", and the proletariat movement always welcomed more members

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[22] Yang Rui Song, *Dazao gongtong de xin chou jiu hen: Zou Rong guozu lunshu zhong de "tazhe jiangou"* (打造共同体的新仇旧恨： 邹容国族论述中的"他者建构") [Fomenting Racial Hatred in the Chinese Community: Zourong's Construction of the "Other" in his National Discourse] (Journal of Shenzhen University, issue 28 volume 6, 2011),125-131.

regardless of their ethno-cultural identities.[23] Nonetheless, after the death of Mao and the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976, a "culture craze" (文化热) that promoted New Confucianism and Han-centric national studies swept across China. These developments were part of New Enlightenment Movement (新启蒙运动), a series of intellectual discourse between 1980 and 1984 that debated the meaning of nationhood and modernization for China. Intellectuals of this movement attempted to define the "national style" and "national heritage" by looking into both Chinese traditional culture and concepts of Western Modernism. In the field of literature, the "Seeking Roots" (寻根) school and "Obscure Poetry" (朦胧诗) emerged to express the sense of lost and the desire to find the cultural anchor amidst the rapid changes in post-reform China. In the field of philosophy, scholars started to re-explore traditional philosophies like Confucianism for guidance on morality and governance.[24]

In 1978, Shandong University organized a ground-breaking forum which, for the first time in decades, discussed Confucianism without condemning its negative feudal ties. In 1980, the re-evaluation of Confucianism gained prominence when influential scholars like Zhang Dainian (张岱年), Tu Wei-ming (杜维明) and Cheng Chung Ying (成中英) began to advocate for a scientific reading of the ancient philosophy. Subsequently, Confucianism — under the name of New Confucianism — became legitimized in intellectual discussions of Chinese modernization and Westernization.[25] The same period also witnessed the opening of the Academy of Chinese Culture (中国文化书院) and of the Chinese Confucius Research Institute (华孔子研究所), which can be seen as physical evidence of the revival and rebranding of

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[23]Rong Ma, *Ethnic Relations in Contemporary China: Cultural Tradition and Ethnic Policies Since 1949*, *Policy and Society* (Routledge, 2006, 25-1), 85-108.

[24]Song X, *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The Culture Craze" and New Confucianism" in New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403982414_4.

[25]ibid, pp.84

Confucianism in the reform era. Although these academies was meant to research on the Chinese culture as a whole, they placed a premium on Confucianism because of its political ties to the glory days of the imperial era: Confucianism was perceived as the "founder of spiritual civilization" of feudal China, and formed the basis of Chinese governance and political philosophy in some of the most prosperous Chinese dynasties.[26] As such, Zhao De Zhi (赵德志) concluded that "the characteristics of Chinese traditional culture are, in fact, the characteristics of Confucian thought," and "The fate of Confucian thought is tied up with the fate of the nation's future."[27] As such, New Confucianism is an indispensable part of the New Enlightenment Movement, because it is closely related to China's future of modernization. As a result of the high-profile intellectual discussions and enterprises, Confucianism, once condemned as the culprit of feudal evils in the Mao era, was now credited as the mainstay of traditional Chinese culture and the "national essence" of contemporary China.

The Chinese intellectuals 'enthusiasm in promoting New Confucianism as the "national essence" can be interpreted as a reaction to China's sudden opening to the outside-world. In the early phase of the Open-Door policy, Chinese intellectuals suffered a nasty shock from the economic gap between the West and China after the Cultural Revolution. Similar to how the anti-Qing nationalists felt about the "weak" China under Manchu rule, intellectuals of the 1980s were increasingly self-conscious, agonized and humiliated by the staggering discrepancy. They were tempted to modernize China by applying Western concepts, but at the same time hoped to preserve the cultural traditions that had been the very source of Chinese cultural pride.

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[26] Zhang Dainian, "The Impact of the Thought of the School of Confucianism and the School of Daoism on the Culture of China", *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, Routledge, 1993, 24-4}, pp.65-68

[27] Zhao Dezhi 赵德志, *Xiandai xin Rujia manlun (xu)* (現代新儒家漫論 (續)) [On Modern New Confucianism: A Sequel], Shehui kexue jikan (社会科学季刊 1988.2), 24–25.

As such, the intellectual and ruling elites decided that the Chinese brand of modernity requires a unique expression, which entails the deliberate rejection of the West when necessary. Specifically, they promoted Confucianism as China's alternative for Western modernization theories, and attempted to create a memorable image of the Chinese people as rational, scientific and nuanced.

Unfortunately, the New Confucian Movement and its associated cultural renaissance, disproportionately endorsed the Han culture over other ethnic cultures or philosophies. Since Confucianism is steeped in the imperial tradition of Han China, it seems to naturally cast the Han ethnicity as superior and more advanced. The result is that these narratives pushed the rise of racial nationalism in the post-1989 era, which prompted an increased sense that all minorities shared the same culture and blood relations as the Han, and rejection of the idea of minority uniqueness. Here, a commonality can be observed between the late-Qing period and the post-Mao period: despite its effectiveness in creating a strong sense of ethnic or national identity in the short term, nationalistic narratives premised on ethnic grounds often fuel excessive inter-ethnic tension in the long run, resulting in eventual outbreak of conflict.

Han revivalism in the cyberspace

Since the early 2000s, an increasingly vocal group of Chinese Youth started articulating Han nationalist and supremacist speech in cyberspace, via social media, websites and online communities, One of the most prominent channel of expression was the Han-net (汉网), which had 20,000 members by the end of its second year of operation in 2004.[28] The young membership of these sites reflected a growth in the sense of nationalism and Chinese tradition in the post-80s and 90s generation (80后,90后) born after China's reform. Members of this

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[28] Leibold, James, *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet* (The China Quarterly, 2010), 556

generation generally shared the opinion that Mao's "revolutionary legacy" is not representative of the Chinese nation, and the cultural revolution was more of a diversion than a cultural event worthy of remembrance. As such, the younger Chinese turned to the imperial past for the search of their Chinese roots.[29] In particular, the Han legacy was again co-opted as the essence of Chinese culture. Its supporters advocated for the study of Han classics - *Four Books and Five Classics (*四书五经*)*[30] - and glamorization of the Han traditional clothing - the Han Fu, which Han-nationalists believe to be the only true form of Chinese traditional clothing as opposed to the Qipao (旗袍) and Magua (马褂) - forms of Manchu clothing.[31] In March 2007, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference even sought to pass a motion declaring Han Fu China's national costume. Although the allure of traditional clothing and culture attracted many neutral audience to the Han Fu movement, it was started by the same group of Han-net nationalists as a campaign "for exposing "fake Chinese elements (including those masked Manchu and Mongol descendants)" who are actively hindering the restoration of Han power and consciousness. Prolific blogger Zhao Feng Nian (赵丰年) wrote that the Han-nationalist movement "does not seek revenge against any minority races," but rather the restoration of the natural order - bringing mutual benefit to both Han and minorities by destroying the violent, oppressive and pestilent culture of the nomad."[32] This vision echoed the

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[29]Geremie Barm, *Shades of Mao* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); Yang Guobin, *China's zhiqing generation,* (Modern China, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2003), 267-96; Zhu Ying, *Television in Post-reform China* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[30] The Four Books and Five Classics are classic Chinese texts that illustrate the core Confucianism values. They were made into the official civil examination curriculum during the Western Han, Ming and Qing dynasties.

[31]Shi Yi and Dong Yiran, *Women weishenma jiaru Hanfu yundong* (我们为什么加入汉服运动) [Why we joined the Hanfu move ment] (Beijing kejibao, 27 July 2005), http://www.hanminzu.com/Article/mtbd/200906/713.html.

[32] Zhao Fengnian, *Hanfu chongxian yu Zhongguo de wenyi fuxin*g (汉服重现中国的文艺复兴) [The reappearance of Han clothing and China's cultural renaissance] (Han Wenhua Wang (汉文化网), 08-02-2017, http://www.han-people.com/ bbs/article/articleshow.asp?id=235&name=%D5%D4%B7%El%C4%EA&classname=%C8A%CF% C4% 8F%CD%C5d.

words of Zou Rong from the anti-Manchu movement, and gave people an impression that the Hanists 'struggle to restore the true Chinese nation was not yet over. Evidently, the intellectual influence of the Qing nationalists endured and has permeated into contemporary thoughts. When present-day ethnic conflicts arise, Zou Rong's binary view of nomad-versus-Han becomes a straightforward framework for people to make sense of the chaotic situation, develop a sense of solidarity rooted in imagined ethnic glory, and organize themselves against a common enemy.

The younger generation's pursuit of Han restoration in the 2000s cannot be separated from the larger issues of racial and political power in China. The movement reflects the emotions of Chinese youth in the reform era: anxiety about their position within the society; frustration at the growing economic disparity and a sense of dissatisfaction at the affirmative policies targeted at minority ethnic groups. In the 1980s, the Chinese government reinstated and expanded a number of ethnic affirmative action policies which have been dismantled in the Mao era, in order to reduce income inequalities while promoting economic modernization of rural and frontier China.[33] The state provided the minorities with easier access to education and political office, certain exceptions from family planning, and special tax breaks and other economic incentives. Unsurprisingly, when the party-state altered the rules on ethnic registration to allow mixed marriage and people previously "misclassified" to re-apply, the minority populations ballooned, nearly doubling from 67 million in 1982 to 123 million in 2005.[34] Inadvertently, these policies invested minority identities with increased political significance and utility, which created resentment among the Han majority, who decry the state's action of privileging the "backward barbarians" at the expense of the more economically

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[33] Sautman, Barry, *Preferential policies for ethnic minorities in China: The case of Xinjiang* (Working Papers in the Social Sciences, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (32): 35, 1997).
[34] Leibold, James, *More Than a Category: Han Supremacism on the Chinese Internet* (The China Quarterly, 2010), 545

productive Hans. In Stevan Harrell's words: "Han identity" is now a "handicap" in the era of affirmative action".[35] The environment gave rise to a sense of insecurity within the Han population, who pondered about their identity and position in China's multi-ethnic mosaic. Many came to the realization that the Hans are actually a "silent majority" which, unlike the rest of the ethnic groups in China, lacks their own "specialized organization", unique privileges and rights.[36]

The frustration at the Han's underprivileged position became the motivation of anti-minority, Han-nationalist expressions in the 2000s. Commentaries that questioned the state's ethnic policy, and even harsh, neo-conservative racial narratives began to appear in abundance on the internet.[37] One prominent scholar and blogger Ma Rong argued that "the Han ethnicity is too weak". In contrast, the "wild wolves of the frontier have been fattened in the pigpen of the CCP's misguided nationality policies, leading to the recent riots and unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, and creating the possibility that China will follow the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia on to the path to ethnic implosion."[38] Despite the deep cynicism, the blogger's comment is not without basis. The prolonged discrimination and pent-up emotions between the Han and the Uyghur minorities erupted in the July Urumqi riots, where more than 2000 people died or injured in the violent street protests, prompting the Chinese government to drastically increase armed police presence in Urumqi and limit communication access for all civilians.[39]

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[35]Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (*University of Washington Press*, 2001),295-308.

[36]Xu Jieshun, *Han minzu yanjiu chuyi* (汉民族研究刍议) [My humble opinion on Han studies] (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe (南宁：广西民族出版社), 1985), 1.

[37]Peter Hays Gries, China's New Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 8-9.

[38]Ma Rong, *Shaoshu minzu wenti de 'qu zhengzhi hua* (少数民族问题的"去政治化"）[The 'politicization' of the ethnic minority question] (Tianya, 05-21-2006), at http://www.tianya.cn/New/PublicForum/Content. asp?strltem-no01 &idArticle=242280.

[39] Wong, Edward, *Chinese President Visits Volatile Xinjiang,* (The New York Times 08-25-2009) *Xinjiang arrests 'now over 1,500* (BBC News. 08-3-2009) *Xinjiang doubles compensation for bereaved families in Urumqi riot* (Xinhua News Agency, 07-21-2009).

Conclusion

Comparing the three periods, the common factor that gave rise to the resurgence of Han-nationalism is the Chinese nation's feeling of insecurity resultant from either domestic suppression or global exposure. In the post-Qing period, the public grievances at Qing government's ineffective and suppressive rule, coupled with the realization of China's backwardness as compared to the West, motivated nationalist elites to adopt a narrative of "restoring the Chinese nation" in their anti-Qing revolution. Their narrative emphasized the illegitimacy of the Manchu rule of China while calling for a Han take-over, which allegedly could restore China to its former glory. A continuity of this belief can be seen in the 1980s-reform era, where Confucianism was adopted as the "national essence" due to its association with the prosperous "Han-ruled dynasties" in the imperial past. Although this perception of Chinese history is factually and logically problematic, it deepened the imaginary divide between the Hans and the non-Hans, and increased one's fear and mistrust of the other. Today, the historical inter-ethnic tension is compounded by the failures of contemporary ethnic policies. Widespread frustration at the state's ethnic-based affirmative actions created an impression that the Han ethnicity is again repressed and disadvantaged. The feeling of anxiety, indignation and insecurity gave rise to a radical, Han-supremacist push-back that sought to give a voice to the "silent majority". Overall, Chinese nationalism throughout the ages can be seen as a constant attempt to identify who is inside or outside of the Chinese nation - an entity that is arbitrarily conceived without clear geographical, historical and ethno-cultural basis. More often than not, this ill-defined Han-nationalism is used provisionally as a political tactic to rally mass support or instil civil obedience during tumultuous times. Unfortunately, its political utility comes at the peril of future inter-ethnic relations, where Han-nationalism becomes a justification for discrimination and a ticking time bomb for ethnic conflicts like the Urumqi riot. The same trend can be seen in the deteriorating relationship with Uyghur minorities in

Xinjiang in the past few years. The official narrative of "poverty alleviation" (扶贫) and "modernize Xinjiang" (现代化改造新疆) tends to be paternalistic in nature and feeds into the subconscious assumption of the Yellow man's burden - a duty for the Hans to civilize the less developed frontier people.[40] In this context, the Uyghurs 'rejection of help is seen as a form of defiance and betrayal, which, in popular opinion, warrants correctional punishments. In the atmosphere of exclusion and paternalism, inter-ethnic relations soured rapidly in cities where large numbers of Han and Uyghurs live together. Their ethnic boundary has been repeatedly reinforced by differences in policy treatments - while Uyghurs did enjoy attractive affirmative policies, they are also subject to stricter security checks and limited freedom of movement and speech. The belief that Uyghurs are the main beneficiaries of the country's welfare system also exacerbated the Han civilians 'patronizing attitude towards their Uyghur neighbors.[41] The widespread discrimination and mistrust has even backed considerable public support for the hard-line measures taken to put down Uyghur protests and the controversial re-education camps.[42] These measures, in turn, heighten the sense of ethnicity and nationalism in the Uyghur population as well, resulting in a vicious cycle of mistrust and hostility - a continuation of the ethnic tension that existed since the turn of the 20th century.

In sum, the paper argues that the current state of ethnic relations in China is inseparable from the social and intellectual history of Han-nationalism since the post-Qing period. The instances of its resurgence always leave an unsavory possibility of chaos for the next

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[40]Ye M, *Thomas P. Paternalism in China Daily's coverage of Chinese Muslims (2001–2015)* (Discourse & Communication. 2020;14(3):314-331), doi:10.1177/1750481319893770.
[41]Shan Wei, Chen Gang, *The Urumqi Riots and China's Ethnic Policy in Xinjiang*, *(East Asian Policy,* National University of Singapore, 2009), 20 - 21.
[42]Xiao, B. Why many in China support Beijing's policies in Xinjiang n Hong Kong (ABC News, 30-11-2019), https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-30/why-many-in-china-support-beijings-xinjiang-n-hongkong-policy.

generation, who continue to live under the shadow of the forefather's early imaginations about ethnicity, race and the nation.

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